

THE GOLDEN KEY:
OR
MYSTERIES BEYOND THE VEIL.

BY
MISS NETTIE M. PEASE.

ALSO, THE FOLLOWING POEMS BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

The Celestial City, The Angel of Hope, The Rainbow Bridge,
Star of Progression.

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P R E F A C E .

THE following story, founded on facts, treats upon subjects of deep interest, and which at the present time are attracting the attention of scientists. As to the source from which it emanated, we can only say, that the author, owing to a peculiar physical and mental condition, possesses the faculty of abstracting herself from the outer world, and while in that condition was controlled by a power claiming to be the spirit of a person who once lived on earth, who gave his life history, which he entitled, "A Search for the Temple of Happiness." At the close of the recital, he promised to give another communication to be entitled, "The Golden Key, or Mysteries Beyond the Veil." In the month of June, 1870, he again took control and gave the following story. The amanuensis has given, as near as possible, the precise language of the dictator. At times, in exciting parts of the narrative, the utterances have been so rapid that the exact words may have been lost, but the idea has never been changed. Nearly every chapter is freighted with gems from the stores of spirit life, and contains instances of the phenomena and much of the philosophy of modern Spiritualism.

N. M. P.

CONTENTS.

I.—THE STRANGE VISITOR.	9
II.—MIDNIGHT AND SUNSHINE.	13
III.—THE HAND OF FATE.	17
IV.—THE FIRST VISION.	21
V.—THE LIVING STATUE.	26
VI.—THE SPIRIT MOTHER.	30
VII.—THE DEAD SECRET.	35
VIII.—THE PLOT THICKENS.	38
IX.—THE ENCHANTED PARK.	43
X.—THE PHANTOM.	49
XI.—THE PRAYER FOR HELP.	54
XII.—THE RULING PASSION.	58
XIII.—THE DISMISSAL.	62
XIV.—THE JEWELLED DAGGER.	70
XV.—MRS. BRADWELL'S STORY.	76
XVI.—THE YOUNG PRIMA-DONNA.	81
XVII.—MAGGIE WILD'S STORY.	86
XVIII.—DAISY'S MISSION.	93
XIX.—THE APOTHEOSIS.	99
XX.—THE SCARLET FILLET.	104
XXI.—DR. BRADWELL AND HARRY YOUNG.	110
XXII.—THE DEMON OF DISTRUST.	114
XXIII.—EVENTS AT THE CURE.	121
XXIV.—A GLIMPSE AT THE TRUTH.	126

XXV.—A SPIRIT CLAIMS DAISY.	- - -	134
XXVI.—THE DISGUISE.	- - -	139
XXVII.—ADrift IN THE TEMPEST.	- - -	146
XXVIII.—CELESTIAL MESSAGES.	- - -	155
XXIX.—THE SPECTER AT THE WINDOW.	- - -	160
XXX.—ANNA BROWN.	- - -	166
XXXI.—WHERE IS MAGGIE?	- - -	173
XXXII.—CLARA UNMASKED.	- - -	180
XXXIII.—THE DEDICATION.	- - -	188
XXXIV.—THE ROSE-EMBOWERED COTTAGE.	- - -	193
XXXV.—THE PLOTTER STILL AT WORK.	- - -	201
XXXVI.—PROOF OF GUILT.	- - -	208
XXXVII.—MRS. LOOMIS.	- - -	213
XXXVIII.—SCENES IN THE OTHER LIFE.	- - -	220
XXXIX.—THE SCARLET VELVET BAND.	- - -	228
XL.—REALITIES OF SPIRIT LIFE.	- - -	235
XLI.—THE TANGLED WEB.	- - -	241
XLII.—THE MIDNIGHT BRIDAL.	- - -	246
XLIII.—THE MIDNIGHT ASSASSIN.	- - -	254
XLIV.—THE MYSTERIOUS BOX.	- - -	260
XLV.—THE CELESTIAL MARRIAGE.	- - -	270
XLVI.—THE MURDER.	- - -	278
XLVII.—THE WILES OF THE SERPENT.	- - -	287
XLVIII.—FURTHER REVELATIONS BY DAISY.	- - -	291
XLIX.—THE PROMISE.	- - -	299
L.—THE INTERVIEW.	- - -	301
LI.—FOREST'S CONFESSION.	- - -	310
LII.—EVENTS OF SIX MONTHS.	- - -	316
LIII.—CLARA AND DR. BRADWELL.	- - -	323
LIV.—THE NIGHT BEFORE THE DAWN.	- - -	328
LV.—THE LAST CARD.	- - -	333
LVI.—HEARTS WIN.	- - -	339
LVII.—THE DISCOVERY.	- - -	344

CONTENTS.

vii

LVIII.—THALIA'S HISTORY.	-	-	-	-	350
LIX.—REUNION.	-	-	-	-	359
LX.—THE MYSTERY EXPLAINED.	-	-	-	-	366
LXI.—HARRY AND MAGGIE.	-	-	-	-	372
POEMS.—THE CELESTIAL CITY.	-	-	-	-	379
THE ANGEL OF HOPE.	-	-	-	-	385
THE RAINBOW BRIDGE.	-	-	-	-	389
STAR OF PROGRESSION.	-	-	-	-	392

THE GOLDEN KEY:

OR

MYSTERIES BEYOND THE VEIL.

CHAPTER I.

THE STRANGE VISITOR.

DR. BRADWELL sat in his well-furnished drawing-room, holding the morning paper unheeded in one hand, while upon the other his head rested, in the attitude of a man in deep thought. The doctor was a little above medium height; he had passed the days of youth, but his eye still retained its brightness; his brow was not furrowed by lines of care, and his fine silken locks remained untouched by the hand of time. He was on the shady side of forty, but was still in appearance a young and handsome man. The keen observer, however, could not, in looking upon him closely, fail to discover, beneath the smooth and polished exterior, something he could not comprehend. There were pictures upon the walls of memory from which he did not care to remove the veil. There were memories that would

not always down at his bidding. Such was the case the morning we introduce him to the reader. At this moment footsteps were heard approaching the door, and the doctor, roused from his gloomy meditation, made an effort to dispel the expression of sadness that still lingered on his face, and in a clear, musical voice, greeted his young wife as she entered the room.

"A caller," she exclaimed, holding out a card. "I presume it is some one who has come to answer your advertisement."

"Have you seen her?"

"No, I preferred to have her come where we could both converse with her. You know we must be very particular as to the one who is to have the charge of Daisy; and as I am not an adept in reading human nature, I wish you to decide for me. I never could distrust any one; I believe it would kill me to be suspicious."

"Your percepts are good," replied the doctor; "you must use them. However," he continued, gently, "as long as I have life and strength you will never need a protector; I will shield you from every sorrow, preserve you from care and anxiety, and make your life one bright summer day. I will see this stranger. Let her come up at once; I have business that demands my attention this morning."

His wife touched the bell; it was quickly answered by a servant, who received orders to conduct the visitor into their presence. Imagine a tall, slender figure, clad in garments of deep mourning, the face concealed by a heavy crape veil, and you will have before you an exact image of the stranger. As she entered, the servant offered her a chair, into which she sank with a quick, nervous movement.

"This is Dr. Bradwell, I suppose," said the lady in a low tremulous voice. The doctor bowed, making no other reply. "I have come to answer a notice I found in the

morning paper," she continued. "I come well recommended.

"Oh! we have no doubt of that," quickly responded Mrs. Bradwell. "You are good and true, I know by the sound of your voice; but will you not please put aside that black veil so that I may see your face? Excuse me for making this request, but while your face is concealed I cannot talk with you as I would."

The veil was partially drawn aside, revealing a face smooth and white as marble, the face of a woman about twenty-five years of age, a face that spoke of strength, of intense suffering, but of firm and unyielding *will*—a will that would enable its possessor to triumph over all difficulties, to wade through seas of blood or dare the fires of the tartarean pit. The hair was combed low upon the broad brow, and the eyes covered by a pair of green spectacles. The doctor appeared deeply agitated from the moment the stranger entered the room, but one glance at her face seemed to reassure him. Having regained his composure, he conversed with her in his easy, plain style, and the result was that the lady was engaged to take charge of little Daisy, the only child that brightened the doctor's home.

"It was her voice," remarked the wife, after the applicant had departed, "that attracted me; so low, sweet, and sad. She is very plain looking; not the companion I should have chosen for myself; but I believe her to be gentle, kind, and affectionate; just the person we want to take charge of little Daisy. I wish she did not wear those green spectacles and comb her hair down over her face in that strange way; and I really thought I saw the frill of a cap: do you believe it possible that she wears caps?"

"I should not be surprised," answered the doctor, with a smile.

“Well, she comes well recommended, and has the air of a lady. After she has been here a little time, I shall get dress, spectacles, and cap out of the way, and you will see, husband, what a change it will make in her appearance.”

“If she performs well her duty to the child I shall be satisfied. I think she will be a study for you, at least, if not a companion. Now I must leave you for the present.”

And with an affectionate farewell, the doctor took his departure, leaving his wife during the day to cultivate a better acquaintance with the lady who was about to become an inmate of his household.

CHAPTER II.

MIDNIGHT AND SUNSHINE.

"THERE is a fit representation of midnight and sunshine. What could Mrs. Bradwell have been thinking of when she selected such a governess for Daisy? Her personal appearance is enough to make her repulsive to an ordinary child, and little Daisy is so spiritual, so ethereal, and so sensitive, I do not see how she can exist in the heavy atmosphere of sadness that surrounds Mrs. Loomis, as she calls herself. Look at them now as they approach us; Daisy is five years old this summer, the embodiment of beauty and grace. You, I see, admire her profusion of beautiful golden-brown curls that fall around her sweet face and snowy shoulders. To me her chief beauty is not in her bright hair, her broad smooth brow, her sweet mouth, but in those large, clear, wonderful eyes—eyes that always seem to be looking into the world beyond the veil. Sometimes I have really thought the child could see the angels that I am sure do surround her. She will not be here long; I never see her without saying to myself, 'Little Daisy, go home and live with the angels.' She is too good for this earth, and if she were Mrs. Bradwell's own child, I am sure she would not have been placed under the influence of such a woman."

At this moment the governess and child approached the ladies. Mrs. Loomis was clad in the same black garb, her face entirely concealed by the heavy folds of her veil; her step was slow but firm, showing that her sorrow, whatever

it might have been, had not destroyed her will. Mrs. Spaulding, one of the ladies above referred to, extended her hand to Daisy, bidding her good morning and inquiring: "Where have you been?"

"Walking in the park," replied the little one, raising her large hazel eyes, filled with light and beauty. "It is so pleasant there under the trees, that mamma says Mrs. Loomis may take me every morning."

"You enjoy your walk, then?" questioned the lady.

"Oh yes! I am lonesome at the house, but out there the birds and the leaves and the flowers all talk to me."

"What do the flowers say to you?"

"Oh! a great many nice things: one little vine, too weak to stand alone, kept putting out its little hands until it caught hold of the bark of a tree, and said it was going to stay there. Just as I put my arms round papa's neck; though I cannot stay with papa always, for he goes away every day; but the leaves whispered to me that the great tree would not go out of the park, so the little vine can cling around it always. One poor little flower had been crushed, and told me a sad story."

"That is very nice," replied the lady, "to have the flowers talk to you. You must come and see me and tell me all they say."

"Yes, Mrs. Loomis will bring me to see you, and you can go to the park and hear for yourself, all the voices that talk to me. But I must go home now and tell mamma what I have seen and heard."

During this conversation, the governess had stood still as a statue, never for one moment releasing the little hand that was clasped in hers.

"You have truly said that they are midnight and sunshine," said another of the ladies, as the child and governess turned a corner of the street and were lost to sight.

"That child has something remarkable about her; I never saw such eyes before; one can gaze into their clear depths, and yet fail to fathom the mystery that lies buried there. I would like to know what is to be her destiny. I believe you intimated that Mrs. Bradwell was not her mother; I would like to know something of the mother of that child. Did you know her?"

"I never saw her. Come, let us go into the park, sit down in the shade, and while we rest, I will tell you what I know of her father. Dr. Bradwell's parents were residents of this city; here he received his education, graduating with great honor. Soon after receiving his diploma, his father, who was a man of wealth and position, died, leaving his wealth to his only child, the doctor. Having a natural love for change, and a desire to travel, the doctor soon left the city, to travel abroad and see the world, designing to remain away three or four years, then to return and stay with his mother the remainder of her life. The first two years he was heard from quite frequently, and often I heard his mother read letters from him, filled with glowing descriptions of the countries through which he passed and the magnificent cities he visited. At such times her heart seemed too full for utterance; tears would dim her eyes, and she would say: "My boy is gathering stores of knowledge; I shall be so proud of him when he comes back to brighten my declining years." Alas for her bright anticipations! The third year after his departure, she was stricken down by the burning breath of fever, and her frail body soon released its hold upon the spirit. Her son was at that time in Spain. He did not return upon hearing of his mother's death. Year after year passed without any reliable information of him. At last came the news that he had married a Spanish lady of great beauty, and he was about to return to his native city. Yet

years elapsed and he came not. At last we heard that his wife was dead, and he, sad and broken in spirit, was about to return. Time again rolled on; still he did not make his appearance. Judge then of our surprise when six months since he suddenly came back, bringing with him a fair young wife and little Daisy, the child of his first companion. The present Mrs. Bradwell is a sweet, pleasant woman, but I do not think she can love the child as if it were her own. For my part, for the sake of the child, I shall try to have her confided to the charge of another and more suitable governess. I shall call on Mrs. Bradwell to-day, and try to persuade her to make this change. I love Daisy too well to have the sunlight of her young life darkened by such a cloud as that woman's presence. Yes, I will go, and you must accompany me, my dear Clara," turning, as she spoke, to the lady on her right, the youngest of the party. "Who knows but that fate has chosen us to brighten or change the destiny of this fair child?"

CHAPTER III.

THE HAND OF FATE.

THE same afternoon an elegant carriage might have been seen standing in front of Dr. Bradwell's residence, from which Mrs. Spaulding and Miss Clara Gordon alighted. Miss Gordon was what the world calls a "splendid looking woman." She had passed the early years of her life in a distant city. No expense had been spared to highten and perfect the beauty which nature had so lavishly bestowed upon her, and now, at twenty-five, Clara Gordon had that proud and regal bearing which commands involuntary admiration. There was a wonderful fascination in her large black eyes, and an expression about the full firm lips, which said more plainly than words, "I was born to rule." There was a striking contrast between the dark proud beauty of Clara and the plain face and bent form of her elderly companion, Mrs. Spaulding. While we have thus been describing Clara, the ladies have entered the house and been conducted to the luxuriant drawing-room. After the servant had withdrawn, Clara turned to her friend and said:

"I like the atmosphere of this room; I like the taste displayed in fitting it up; I wish I were rich. I hate poverty, yes, I *hate* it! I never knew what it was till within the last ten years, and I have suffered more from that cause, than I ever supposed it possible for any one to suffer. Mrs. Spaulding, *I will not spend my life in poverty.* I will not be deprived of that wealth so essential to my

happiness. I have beauty, and that of no common order, and with that beauty I will purchase what is its necessary accompaniment. I will no longer be what I am—a diamond without a setting.”

“Why, Clara! what do you mean by such talk?”

“I mean,” replied Clara, while a shadow as dark as night passed over her face, “that I will have wealth if I sell my soul to obtain it.”

At this moment the door opened and Mrs. Bradwell and little Daisy entered the room. She greeted Mrs. Spaulding cordially. When presented to Clara, she seemed as though fascinated by her wonderful beauty, and could not understand why little Daisy shrunk from her and sought shelter by the side of Mrs. Spaulding. In vain were all of Clara’s efforts to attract the child to her. When Mrs. Bradwell asked Daisy, why she did not comply with Clara’s request, her reply was: “Mamma, I cannot; it is all dark there,” but, meeting her mother’s reproachful gaze, her chin quivered with suppressed emotion, her eyes filled with tears, and silently she glided from the room.

“Little Daisy is a strange child,” said Mrs. Bradwell, “and I have had so little experience with children that I do not understand her nature.”

“Yes, Daisy is a peculiar child; she seems more like a spirit than a mortal, and to tell you the truth, Mrs. Bradwell, I called to-day for the express purpose of talking to you of Daisy and her governess. I was well acquainted with your husband’s mother, and having known him from childhood, when he returned to his native city, bringing with him a young wife and an angel child, it was perfectly natural that I should feel a deep interest in them, and take the privilege of an old acquaintance to speak to you in behalf of this little one, so lately entrusted to your care.”

“I shall be truly thankful for any advice you can give

me," Mrs. Bradwell replied, "though I think we are getting along nicely, having secured a governess who seems to understand her duty and manifests a pleasure in her work. She is very quiet, and, though she has been here but a short time, Daisy has become much attached to her."

"It is about this governess that I want to talk to you," said Mrs. Spaulding. "I met her walking with the child this morning, and I felt that she was not the right person to have charge of such a nature. Where did you find her? and how came you to employ her?"

Mrs. Bradwell gave the desired information and concluded by saying that "Mrs. Loomis had come well recommended, and that notwithstanding her unprepossessing appearance, she had evidently been accustomed to good society and was a true lady." Mrs. Bradwell spoke with much earnestness, to which Mrs. Spaulding only replied: "I sincerely hope it may be so, but I have no confidence in her as a companion for Daisy."

Mrs. Bradwell's warm and impulsive nature was somewhat chilled by what she considered the ungrounded suspicion of Mrs. Spaulding, and turning away from her husband's old friend with an almost offended air, she directed her attention to Clara and entered into an animated conversation with her. Mrs. Spaulding saw that her effort was a failure, and a shade of sadness passed over her face as she whispered to herself, "it is of no use; my hand is not strong enough to turn aside the hand of an inexorable fate." Then rising to take leave, she said:

"Mrs. Bradwell, I trust you will pardon me for speaking so freely, but I cannot help warning you against the influence of that woman."

Before Mrs. Bradwell could reply, the door opened and her husband entered. The doctor greeted Mrs. Spaulding cordially, saying that he was glad to see beneath his roof,

and with his wife, one who was a true friend to his now sainted mother. Mrs. Spaulding again resumed her seat and a pleasant and uninterrupted conversation followed. The governess was not alluded to and Clara was all animation. Never had her smiles been brighter or her wit more sparkling, and Dr. and Mrs. Bradwell seemed charmed by her beauty and psychologized by her powerful will. The result was that when the ladies arose to go, Clara received an earnest invitation to come again and often, and Mrs. Bradwell expressed the hope that the acquaintance which she had formed that afternoon might not be allowed to die, but that it might grow stronger, until the mutual attraction that had drawn them together, should result in a friendship, by which they might be enabled to add to each other's happiness through the coming years.

Thus they parted, and as Clara descended the marble steps, a smile of triumph rested upon her proud lips. Little did the good Mrs. Spaulding imagine that this afternoon's call was to form the first link in a chain of events, the result of which she would have given her life to have prevented. Thus all unconsciously to herself, she had aided Clara in throwing the first card that was to shape the future destiny of Dr. Bradwell's family. It seems at times as though we were but instruments, moved by a power incomprehensible.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRST VISION.

"WELL, Clara, what do you think of Dr. Bradwell and his wife?" asked Mrs. Spaulding, as their carriage rolled homeward.

Clara had been sitting quiet and apparently absorbed in deep thought. She aroused herself for a moment at this inquiry of her friend, but replied in a tone of indifference: "They seem to be very pleasant people," and again relapsed into silence.

"I see you take very little interest in them," said Mrs. Spaulding; "but judging from the remarks you made soon after entering the house, I suppose you would prefer to make the acquaintance of some wealthy bachelor." Clara made no reply, and Mrs. Spaulding continued: "Clara, dear, I know you were not in earnest when you uttered those terrible words, for you have seen enough of the world to have learned that wealth can never supply the place of love."

"I have seen enough of life," replied Clara, "to know that for me, there can be no happiness without wealth. I have no faith in love, unless it be the love of diamonds, velvets, satins, and laces. I *do* love elegant surroundings; they are as essential to me as is sunshine to the life of the flower. I love them because they highten my beauty, which gives me position and power and, above all, sway over human hearts. I believe in the transmigration of souls, and that I was once a queen, and that for some sin,

my soul has been compelled to assume this form. From earliest childhood the love of power has been the ruling passion of my soul. It has grown with my growth, and although for the past ten years it has been sleeping, like the storm in ocean caves, this return to city life has galvanized it into new activity. Yes, Mrs. Spaulding, I do mean what I say, that I will have wealth and position. Love is a secondary consideration."

"Clara!" said Mrs. Spaulding, "have you ever loved? have you ever known what it was to have your whole soul absorbed in another? to have a look, a word, a touch of the hand thrill your entire being and make your brain reel? Have you ever become so absorbed in another as to almost lose in that other your identity?"

"No," replied Clara, her bold dark eye fixed upon Mrs. Spaulding's face with a look of amazement. "No, I have never had such an experience, and I do not believe it is possible."

"Clara!" replied Mrs. Spaulding, "it is possible; *I* have had the benediction of such a love. You have often wondered how I could remain so cheerful under the trials that have been mine. It was the inspiration of this love and a consciousness that—

Earth-life is but the dawning,
The bright and glorious morning,
Of love's flower;
For its perfect, full unfolding,
The bright future life is holding
All its power.

Clara, you cannot know the depth of your own nature nor its divine possibilities until your spirit has been crowned with this choicest of all blessings, perfect love."

"I cannot doubt what you say with regard to yourself," replied Clara. "There are some persons so organized that they are capable of higher spiritual enjoyments than others. 'Love in a cottage' would never do for me; professions of affection would never satisfy my soul; I want the glitter and sparkle of fashionable life. When I have had enough of this, it will be time to think and talk of gaining my happiness from the sphere of love. But here we are, at your pleasant home; we will talk no more upon this subject, but when you introduce me to that wealthy friend of yours, please do not hint that I am heartless, for that might spoil my expectations."

And with a merry laugh, Clara Gordon gathered up the folds of her carriage dress and ran up the marble steps, while Mrs. Spaulding followed with slow and languid step, mentally saying: "I almost regret having invited Clara to make her home with me. I wish I had not mentioned her to Mr. Aldrich, for she is heartless. Well, I must make the best of it and trust to his quick perception and knowledge of human nature. Thus reflecting, Mrs. Spaulding entered the house.

When little Daisy left the parlor, she went as fast as her little feet would carry her out into the arbor at the side of the house. There amid the vines and roses sat the governess, her white hands clasped tightly together, her head bent slightly forward, large tears rolling down her pale cheek, falling silently on her black dress. She was not conscious of the approach of Daisy, until the child threw her arms about her neck and pillowed her head upon her bosom.

"What makes you cry?" inquired the little one, noting the falling tears. "Has any one hurt you? or did you see that lady with the black shadows all around her?"

The governess made no reply, and Daisy continued to talk in her pretty childish way, her hand passing to and fro over the weary brow of the governess. Presently the little hand became still, the little head sunk down upon her shoulder, and Mrs. Loomis looked down upon her expecting to find her asleep. What was her astonishment to find that every trace of color had faded from cheek and lips, and that the large dreamy eyes, instead of being closed in slumber, were fixed with a vacant stare. For a moment Mrs. Loomis was paralyzed with terror. Before she could regain her composure, Daisy's lips parted and in slow, measured tones she said.

"I see a beautiful little girl with black eyes and hair, a wreath of lilies on her brow and lilies in her hand; she is—"

Here the sound of an approaching step was heard, a hand parted the vines, and Dr. Bradwell looked down upon the scene. He had heard the voice of Daisy, speaking in a strange unnatural manner and hastened to ascertain the cause. One glance at her white face and distended eyes and he sprung into the arbor, caught her in his arms, and turning to Mrs. Loomis, demanded to know why he found his child in that condition.

"I—sir—I," stammered Mrs. Loomis; but the doctor was too much absorbed in efforts to restore little Daisy to notice her agitation. In less than five minutes Daisy had regained her normal condition, and Mrs. Loomis, making a great effort to control herself, said:

"Daisy has been as well as usual to-day. I thought she was sleeping; it must have been a fit."

The doctor folded the little one in his arms and covered her face with kisses, murmuring; "Daisy, child of my first love, Daisy! ——"

But before he finished the sentence, Mrs. Loomis arose

and hurried from the arbor. After talking with Daisy a few moments, he led her to the house, but vain were his efforts to prevail upon her to enter the drawing-room; she insisted upon returning to the governess, while he entered the room to meet one who was to have such a powerful influence in shaping his future destiny.

CHAPTER V.

THE LIVING STATUE.

DR. BIGELOW, proprietor of a flourishing hydropathic establishment, situated in a lovely village of one of the eastern states, was sitting in his library looking over letters received that morning. The doctor was a large, portly man, with a genial countenance, clear blue eyes, and self-satisfied air which seemed to say: "I am at peace with all the world." Near the open window, on the opposite side of the room, was a tall, thin, dark-complexioned woman, the doctor's wife. After a cursory glance at the letters, they were handed to her for more careful reading. She looked over them, notwithstanding, in a sort of mechanical way, often casting her eyes upon the open novel beside her.

"Ah! here is something of interest; just what I wanted! I believe fate is favoring us," said the doctor.

"What is it?" questioned the wife, arousing from her state of indifference.

"Well, you know how anxious I have been to secure the services of an intelligent and refined lady to see that my orders are strictly conformed to in the bath-room, to see that the patients have the care and attention that ignorant servants do not give."

"Well, what has that to do with the letter?" asked the wife.

"Simply this: here is a young lady, some twenty years of age" (and the doctor glanced at the letter) "who desires

to come and make her home with us in order to devote her time to the study of medicine. She is not blessed with this world's goods, and so wishes to assist in taking care of the invalids, thus paying her board, and at the same time gaining a practical knowledge, which she could not obtain in any other way. Her letter is short and business-like. I am sure she is just the person we want, and coming as she does from the wilds of Iowa, she will have no friends or acquaintances to claim her attention and divert her mind from the object in view. I like her letter: place it by itself; I will answer it this morning."

"Maggie Wild!" said the wife, glancing at the name neatly written at the bottom of the sheet; "I don't like the name, I don't like the looks of the letter; I don't see why you want any more help; all that you receive has to be paid to lazy servants. I think it would be much better to make the idle housekeeper spend a part of *her* time in the bath-room! Such management as we have here would ruin any establishment. These women who are always wanting to get out of their proper sphere never amount to much, as you will find out one of these days. Maggie Wild! study medicine! As I understand it, she is too indolent to work and earn an honest living." Looking up at this moment, she perceived her husband deeply engaged with his letters. "It is of no use," she muttered, "he will have his own way and go to destruction." Again taking up her book, she was ere long weeping over some imaginary personage's fictitious sorrows.

The doctor was as good as his word: that very day he wrote to Maggie Wild. After sealing the letter, he reclined back in his easy chair and, for a time, seemed absorbed in thought. "I knew it would come," he mused; "I have felt that I should not always walk in the shadows. How different my life would have been, could I have persuaded

her, my wife, to have gone with me step by step in this undertaking; but no; all my efforts to interest her in my life-work have proved fruitless. Every attempt that I have made to accomplish something in life, has failed to enlist her sympathy, and to this do I attribute my non-success. I have walked alone; the inspiration and affection I have longed for, have never been mine in those higher walks of life where they are most essential. I had hoped that she would show some little interest in this enterprise, but I find that it cannot be, and to-day I feel that I am more than ever alone. Yes, more than alone, for every new plan that I suggest she discourages with the doleful words, 'It will be a failure; you can never succeed.' Oh! the horror and wretchedness of my life! Yet the world calls me a happy man. Well, let it continue thus to believe; it has not seen the inner life. But," he continued, taking the letter into his hand, "I have a presentment that my life is to change, is to grow brighter. Little Maggie Wild will be a sunbeam in this cold house, and what a pleasure it will be to feed the fires of her intellect, unfold to her understanding the sciences of anatomy and physiology, and teach her hand to minister to the sick. Oh! that my wife could have taken this position; but as that cannot be, Maggie shall be my child; I will guard her as tenderly, instruct her as carefully, as though she were my own daughter." Saying this, the doctor, taking hat and cane, hurried into the street.

Two weeks from this time, the stage running from the city of N——, stopped in front of this well-known Water Cure establishment, and a young lady of medium height, draped in a light traveling suit, stepped out of the vehicle, and her summons for admission being answered by a domestic, she was conducted into the reception room. While she is awaiting the entrance of the doctor, we will describe

her appearance. Maggie Wild had a face that once seen could never be forgotten. She was not handsome, not even pretty, but there was an indescribable expression about her face that must be seen to be appreciated. The forehead was broad and low, features small but well defined, the gray eyes large and deep, lips a bright scarlet and the face perfectly colorless; the fine silky hair was cut short and clustered in shining ringlets around her finely shaped head. The face lacked animation: it was almost as expressionless as a piece of marble; but with a close reading of the clear eyes, you could feel that there was depth of thought and wealth of soul beneath that exterior. It seemed as if her spirit had screened itself from the gaze of mortal.

Imagine the doctor's disappointment as he entered the room, with the vision of a rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed, sprightly little creature in his mind, and saw before him instead, the cold, statue-like Maggie Wild. His disappointment was apparent in his manners, although he greeted her as cordially as he could, chilled as he was by the sudden vanishing of his pleasant vision. After a short conversation he begged to be excused, saying she must be much fatigued with her long journey, and he would send a servant to conduct her to her room, where she could rest until tea-time.

"I will never trust impressions again," was his mental ejaculation as he left the room. "A pretty sunbeam she is; her very presence chills me like a northern glacier. Think I shall not adopt her as a daughter very soon! however, time will tell. If she proves faithful in the work she has undertaken and takes an interest in her studies, why should I not be satisfied?"

CHAPTER VI.

THE SPIRIT MOTHER.

Two months have elapsed since Mrs. Loomis entered Dr. Bradwell's family to take charge of little Daisy. During this time she grew in the love of the affectionate child and the respect of the parents. She was quiet and reserved, shrinking from the society of strangers, conscientiously performing her duties, and gliding through the house noiseless as a phantom, seeming to dwell under the shadow of a great fear. Usually she appeared calm and composed, but at times she would start, and become pale as death. She avoided the doctor, he being the only one to whom she manifested an aversion. She would shrink from his gaze, and if he came into her presence, would grow nervous and restless, and, as soon as opportunity offered, would retreat from the room. The doctor's wife attributed this sensitiveness to some disappointment or secret sorrow weighing upon the mind, and with a delicacy natural to one of her organization, she had hitherto avoided asking Mrs. Loomis any questions as to her past life; but to-day, as the governess closed the volume of poems from which she had been reading, Mrs. Bradwell, who had been watching the changes in her countenance, somewhat abruptly said:

"Mrs. Loomis, pardon me for the question I am about to ask you, and believe me it is not an idle curiosity but an interest in your welfare that prompts it. I know that your past life has been darkened by some great sorrow. Will you not give me your confidence and permit me to sympathize with you? It may be that I can make the burden lighter and the darkness less intense."

Mrs. Loomis dropped her head and trembled as with the palsy. For some moments she was silent, apparently trying to suppress the emotion that stirred her being to its very depth. Then in a cold, metallic tone she said:

"I thank you for your kindness; sympathy is not for me; I do not need, do not want it. If you can restore the warmth and light of love to one whose heart is colder than the northern icebergs, peace and rest to one whom fate has destined to go to and fro upon the earth like the Wandering Jew, if you can conquer the king of terrors and bid the grave yield up its dead, if you can remove a curse handed down from generation to generation until it rests upon my head in the full strength of its withering power, you may then talk of making my burden lighter by your sympathy." With these last bitter words, she sprung to her feet and commenced walking the room with a rapid pace. Presently growing calmer, she folded her arms upon her heart, and in her peculiar, low, musical voice said: "Pardon me; I see I have frightened you; you are gentle, loving, and good. I did wrong to give you even a glimpse of the dark and fearful scenes through which I have passed, and which have made me dark, fierce, and hard as themselves. Do not seek to look into the recesses of a soul forever shadowed. I will serve you well, and your child is the angel that will be the means of casting the only ray of light across my life's pathway that it will ever know."

"Make no apology," replied Mrs. Bradwell, "*I* was to blame for calling up unhappy memories. What your past life may have been I know not, but I hope to make the present and future pleasant for you. I am glad that the sunlight of Daisy's presence is felt by you. You speak of Daisy as my child. I suppose you are aware that I am a second wife. Daisy's mother died when she was an infant. She sleeps in a foreign land." As Mrs. Loomis made no reply

to this, Mrs. Bradwell, thinking she was absorbed in her own dark thoughts, and wishing to divert her attention, arose, and opening a drawer, took from it a small locket inlaid with gems. Handing it to Mrs. Loomis, she said:

"You take such an interest in little Daisy that perhaps you would like to see the picture of her mother."

Mrs. Loomis extended her icy-cold hand, took the locket, held it tightly for a moment, then touched the spring and gazed upon the beautiful pictured face within. As she looked, every vestige of color faded from her cheek and her features assumed that rigid expression seen only on the face of the dead. At this moment Daisy entered the room. A strange and bewildered expression came into her eyes as she looked from her mother to Mrs. Loomis, then, with a sudden bound, she sprung past Mrs. Bradwell, flung her arms around Mrs. Loomis, and laid her head upon her shoulder. Mrs. Loomis seemed all absorbed in the picture before her, until little Daisy extended her hand to take the locket, saying:

"That is my mamma. She died ever so long ago; she is a pretty mamma, isn't she, Mrs. Loomis? but not so pretty as my other mamma with the great blue eyes and golden curls."

Mrs. Bradwell's eyes were brown and her hair always combed smoothly back from her brow, hence the words of Daisy concerning her "other mamma," greatly astonished Mrs. Bradwell and caused Mrs. Loomis to drop the locket, as she folded the little one closer to her heart and murmured, "My God! have mercy!"

"What are you talking about, Daisy? you frighten Mrs. Loomis. Who do you mean by 'the mamma with golden curls?'"

"Why the beautiful lady that comes at night. Sometimes she sings to me until I go to sleep, and sometimes I

see her out in the park. She has a pretty white dress all shining, not like yours, mamma. Last night she told me she was my mamma, that my name was not Daisy, and that she lived away over the mountains. She said sometime I would see her home; she would take me there. I wanted her to stay with me, but she said, 'No.' Oh! I wish she had come and talked with you! her voice is like music and her breath is like the flowers. I wonder how she got here from so far away, and why did she call me *her* little girl?"

"Daisy, you have been dreaming," said Mrs. Bradwell, "and a very pretty dream it must have been. But it seems strange for little Daisy to have three mammas. Which one do you love the best, dear?"

The child raised her large, beautiful eyes as she replied:

"Oh! the one I have been telling you about; she is white as snow, her cheeks are like roses, and her eyes are blue as pansies."

"Well, don't dream too much about that pretty mamma, or I shall be jealous of her."

Mrs. Loomis did not treat the matter thus lightly. She looked very serious and in a trembling voice said:

"Daisy, what else did you dream?"

"Oh! it was not a dream, Mrs. Loomis. I was wide awake."

"Perhaps you forgot to shut the door and the lady came in."

"No; it was not a dream. But why is it that I am cold as ice?"

At this moment the door bell sounded. The child continued to shiver as though chilled. A servant entered and announced that Mrs. Spaulding and her young friend were in waiting. Mrs. Bradwell tried to persuade Daisy

to accompany her to see the visitors, but she refused to go, clinging to Mrs. Loomis for protection.

"I am cold, cold, mamma; let me stay here; there is a shadow down stairs: if I go there I shall freeze."

"Daisy has taken cold, Mrs. Loomis; will you see that she is cared for?" said Mrs. Bradwell as she left the room.

A few moments later little Daisy was asleep in the arms of her governess.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEAD SECRET.

"WELL, Forest, you live in princely style. May I ask how long you have been leading such a life?"

"I have been monarch of this estate for the last fifteen years."

"Fifteen years! Whew!" And Harry Young tossed his cigar out of the open window and settled back in his chair, repeating: "Fifteen years you have lived this independent life. What a fortunate man you have been. But tell me, Forest, why is it that you have no queen here to rule your heart and home? Why have you never married?"

"For two reasons: first, because I have never yet met with a woman that I could truly love."

"Ah? you must be hard to please; but now for your second reason."

"That is a dead secret, buried so deep that the prying eye of man can never reach it."

"Ah! some old love affair I suppose. Well, Forest, if I were in your place, I should be content with the present, and hope that the secret was so completely *dead* that even its *ghost* could not return to disturb me."

Harry Young made this remark with his keen, dark eyes fixed on Forest as if to read his very soul, but Forest either had nothing to conceal, or else his self control enabled him to hide it most effectually, for the eyes of his friend searched his face in vain. He had much experience in life, and was, at the time we introduce him to our

readers, a wealthy bachelor some forty years of age, a man of great mental endowment, but small of stature, and somewhat inferior as regarded personal appearance. He was of a nervous, excitable temperament, and had a few chosen friends, who prized him for his intellectual and moral worth. His home was some five miles from the city of A——. His friend, Harry Young, on the contrary, was genial, full of life, and gay even to thoughtlessness. Seeing that he was not likely to unravel the mystery of Forest's past life, he abandoned the attempt, and after a short silence, said:

"By the by, Forest, a new star has appeared above the horizon, a star of the first magnitude, and more than half the gentlemen in our set are revolving about her."

"Indeed?" responded Forest, carelessly.

"Why, bless me, how indifferent you are! I suppose you would like to have me believe that beauty has no attraction for you."

"Not so, Harry; I have ever worshiped at the shrine of beauty, but beauty of the mind has far more influence over me than beauty of the flesh."

"Well, one glimpse of Mrs. Spaulding's charming friend would convince you that 'beauty of the flesh,' as you term it, holds the balance of power over our destinies."

At the mention of Mrs. Spaulding's name, an expression of awakened interest passed over Forest's face as he said:

"Is it possible? has she arrived?"

"Oh! Forest! how is this? have you met her? and are you already acquainted with her? do you know——"

"Hold on, Harry; one question at a time, if you please. I have never seen the lady you refer to, but Mrs. Spaulding is my particular friend. She told me last winter that she expected a young lady to spend the summer with her and was anxious that I should make her acquaintance.

She extolled her so highly that I must admit some curiosity was aroused to see the person who could thus captivate my discriminating friend. Mrs. Spaulding promised to send me word immediately after her arrival. Do you know how long she has been in the city?"

"Two months I believe, although I had not the pleasure of meeting her until last week, and then it was purely accidental."

"I think it strange that Mrs. Spaulding does not introduce her into society and to her friends," said Forest, speaking more to himself than to his companion.

"Well," said Harry, "I can think of but one excuse, and that is, that the young lady is engaged, and Mrs. Spaulding, knowing your susceptible nature, was doubtless fearful that your peace of mind might be disturbed by the acquaintance."

"Nonsense, Harry; the woman does not exist who can destroy my happiness."

"Are you very sure of that? remember you have not seen this one. What say you to returning to the city with me this evening? We will call upon Mrs. Spaulding."

To this suggestion Forest made some objection, but finally Harry prevailed and the two started out to make a call never to be forgotten by either.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PLOT THICKENS.

CLARA GORDON reclined upon a sofa in Mrs. Spaulding's richly furnished parlor. To the superficial observer, she would have appeared cold and calm as a marble statue, but there was a manifest restlessness in the large black eyes, a bright scarlet spot on the usually pale cheek, that bespoke perturbation of soul. The small hands were clasped tightly together over the bosom as though to still the proud heart's impulsive throbbing.

"O God! I wish I were as heartless as the world believes me to be! This strange sensation—what does it mean? Two months ago I commenced what I thought would be, on my part, simply a flirtation, or—or—oh! go away!" putting out her hand as if to thrust away some demon that beset her, "away! with your poisonous, murderous thoughts! God knows, I never meant *that*. First it was his wealth that allured and dazzled me; now I do not care for it; I love *him*! I am angry with myself to think that my pride must make this humiliating confession. Yes I love him as woman never loved before, and to that one controlling power, my pride must bow—my pride, that never bent to aught before."

"It will kill her."

"Who speaks?" and Clara sprung to her feet. "Who is here? who has read my thoughts?" She ran from one part of the room to another, vainly searching among the dark shadows for the form she imagined concealed from her sight. Convinced at last that she was alone, she

smiled and said mentally: "It was a fancy, I am nervous. It will not kill her: she is weak and negative; her love is no more to be compared to mine, than the calm waters of the lake to the burning, seething lava of the volcano."

"The one will bless, the other curse."

These words were said as from the air immediately over her head. With a wild scream Clara fled from the room and paused not till she found refuge with Mrs. Spaulding, to whose anxious questionings she replied that she had fallen asleep and dreamed a frightful dream. The good Mrs. Spaulding tried to soothe her, but Clara would not be left alone, saying she felt that something was near her.

Before she had recovered from the psychological condition into which she had been thrown by the mysterious voices that had seemed to have power to read her very thoughts, Forest and his friend Harry Young were announced. A shade of anxiety passed over the face of Mrs. Spaulding as she descended to the parlor, followed by Clara.

On entering the well lighted room, Clara glanced at the sofa she had so recently occupied, an icy chill ran through her frame as she thought of the voice that had called to her from the air, but the animated conversation of the brilliant Forest, soon put to flight all unpleasant thoughts. She was not long in perceiving that she had made a favorable impression upon an accomplished and talented man, and the old love of power came back with all its force. Here was a heart worth gaining; it would indeed be a triumph to see the proud, cold, intellectual Forest her slave. On flew the golden moments, and when Forest and Harry arose to take leave, they found to their surprise that the call, designed for a few minutes only, had lengthened to two hours.

"Have you quite recovered from your fright?" asked Mrs. Spaulding of Clara, when they were once more alone.

"Yes; superstitious fancies could not remain long in the presence of such good company. I believe Mr. Forest is one of the gentlemen whose name you mentioned to me soon after I came here. Why has he not called before? he is far superior to Mr. Aldrich."

"Clara," replied Mrs. Spaulding, "Mr. Forest is a friend of mine; an honest, noble, pure minded man. Before you came here I had thought that if you and he were thrown into the society of each other, you would be mutually attracted, but the sentiments you uttered soon after your arrival, convinced me that you were not capable of appreciating a nature so high and noble as his. I will talk to you frankly, Clara, that you may fully understand my present and future conduct towards you. You have said that ambition and love of power were the influences that controlled you. I have found you to be vain, proud, fond of flattery; your greatest delight seems to be in gaining the love of all who come within the circle of your fascinations, only to cast it away as worthless, or to wear it in your girdle as a trophy of the hearts you have broken. Clara, I have studied you closely for the last two months, and this evening I saw the attempt you were making to fascinate Mr. Forest. I have invited you to make my house your home; I have done and will continue to do all I can to make it agreeable to you, but coquetry I despise, and I will not permit you to weave your chains around the heart of one of my most valued friends. You must replace the poisoned arrow and promise me that you will not attempt to trifle with the affections of Forest, or we can be friends no longer."

Clara's countenance underwent a variety of changes du-

ring Mrs. Spaulding's remarks. At first her eyes gleamed and her face flushed with anger; her fine form was drawn up to its full height, and if a look of scorn and contempt could have annihilated any one, the good little woman she confronted would have vanished out of existence. But when Mrs. Spaulding spoke of the termination of their friendship, Clara turned pale, and an appalling fear seemed to settle over her heart, and when her companion ceased speaking, a smile lingered on Clara's face and a look of reproach in her brilliant eyes.

"My best friend! she exclaimed, throwing her arms around Mrs. Spaulding's neck, "how little you understand my nature! true I love wealth, position and power, but I am not to blame; I am unfortunately organized, but why should I be despised for that? I have never yet found anybody who could understand me; many have professed to love me, but I have felt it was my beauty, not myself; hence I have delighted to cast back the admiration which emanated not from the heart but from the fancy. I know that you think me superficial and vain, but when you come to look deeper, you will find as true a heart as ever beat. Mrs. Spaulding, I solemnly declare that I never attempted to destroy the happiness of any man by winning his affection, only to cast it from me; and if you desire it, I will never see Mr. Forest again, though I will confess to you that I never met one with whom I was so well pleased upon so short an acquaintance. But you will not believe me, because you cannot understand me: there is not one in the wide world who will." Here Clara commenced weeping and sobbing as though her heart would break. "I will go, Mrs. Spaulding; I will take my shadow out of your house; I will go back to the weary, monotonous life I have lived the last few years; but the cruelest wrong

I have ever sustained will be that you have so unjustly withdrawn your love and respect."

Clara's voice became so choked with sobs, that she could say no more, when Mrs. Spaulding, whose heart had been completely softened by Clara's apparent suffering, threw her arms around her, saying:

"Forgive me; I have been unjust and cruel to one I have promised to love and cherish. Clara, you have an impulsive nature, but you have convinced me that at heart you are good; you are fond of admiration but do not intend to injure others in order to secure it. I will trust you in the future, so think no more of leaving me. And now, good night; go to your room and in sweet dreams forget this unpleasant scene."

Clara left the room, her face concealed with her handkerchief, and to all appearance trembling with emotion. No sooner had she reached her own apartment than, removing the handkerchief, she revealed eyes undimmed by tears and a face aglow with anger.

"The old fool!" she exclaimed. "So she has been watching me, has she? and thinks to bring me to her terms. Had it not been for the risk of losing my position here, I would have given her a piece of my mind! It was hard to curb my temper, but I am glad I did, for a quarrel now would spoil all. I suppose she thinks because she has given me a home, she has a right to control my actions. She is afraid I will trifle with her friend!! If men do not know enough to take care of their hearts, they ought to have them broken. As for Forest, I will make him idolize me, if for no other reason than to be revenged on her; but I must be more cautious in my future movements. I wonder if she mistrusts me in relation to Dr. Bradwell? I imagine not, or she would have spoken of it."

CHAPTER IX.

THE ENCHANTED PARK.

DR. BRADWELL, his wife, and little Daisy were sitting upon the vine clad porch enjoying the cool breeze of evening. Suddenly little Daisy said:

"See, papa, there is Mrs. Loomis standing in the arbor."

"I suppose she has been out for a walk," remarked Mrs. Bradwell.

"I would like to go to her if that big, tall man and little girl were not with her," said Daisy.

"I see no one but Mrs. Loomis; it must be the shadows you see," replied her father.

"Why no, papa; don't you see that little girl all in white, and that tall man with a GOLDEN KEY in his hand?"

"Daisy, are you dreaming?" said Mrs. Bradwell; "what is the matter with you?"

Before little Daisy could answer, Mrs. Loomis passed through the hall and stepped out upon the porch.

"See!" exclaimed Daisy, "*there are two of them!* a Mrs. Loomis on the porch and a Mrs. Loomis in the arbor."

Mrs. Bradwell screamed in affright and sought her husband's side. The doctor was speechless with astonishment, for there in the bright moonlight stood the two figures. The governess stood facing the arbor, and as she looked upon her counterpart, she murmured:

"The curse of my life!" and sank down in apparent unconsciousness, while at the same instant little Daisy cried:

"See! Mrs. Loomis has gone out of the arbor, but the big man with the GOLDEN KEY is here and is holding it over her head."

Quickly and with what seemed the effect of an electric shock, Mrs. Loomis sprung to her feet, threw one glance at the frightened group before her, and fled to her room. Dr. Bradwell was anxious to recall her and demand an explanation of the scene, but his wife was so terrified that he thought it better to defer the explanation until morning.

Early the next morning he received a professional call, demanding his immediate presence, and did not return till late in the afternoon. Upon entering the cool, shaded parlor, the first object that met his sight was Clara Gordon, sleeping upon one of the sofas. How beautiful she appeared, her dark ringlets resting upon her crimson cheeks, her full scarlet lips parted, disclosing the pearly teeth, a smile lingering upon her face, as though her soul was basking in the sunlight of pleasant dreams. The doctor thought he had never before seen so beautiful a picture. As he stood gazing upon her, her lips parted, and in a low trembling voice she said:

"I am alone, alone in this cold world!" Then followed a silence, broken only by her irregular breathing, and then came the words: "O God! will he never love me?"

Dr. Bradwell felt that he was hearing what was not designed for his ears, and turned to leave the room. At this moment, Clara opened her beautiful eyes and fixed them upon him with a look of surprise saying:

"Why, Dr. Bradwell! I did not know that you had returned. How long have you been here?"

"Only a few moments; I was not aware of your presence when I entered the room. The picture I found here was so beautiful that I could not refrain from looking at it. I am sorry that I disturbed you."

"I am glad that you have returned; Mrs. Spaulding and your wife are visiting, Daisy is with her governess, and I am quite alone."

The doctor seated himself at her side and soon became so absorbed in conversation with her as to forget the flight of time. An hour later, little Daisy entered the parlor with a beautiful rose, which she intended to present to her father, having heard his voice while walking upon the lawn, but perceiving Clara, she stopped in the center of the room, her features contracted, her eyes fixed, while in slow and measured tones, these words fell from her lips:

"Papa, I see a beautiful park with bright flowers, dancing fountains, silver lakes, and tall waving trees, casting their cool shadows far out on every side. But, papa, there is a gilded serpent among the flowers; it is crawling over the tinted shells and hiding among the soft mosses. It is green and purple and gold, very bright; but under the bright tints it is black as midnight. It is trying to entwine itself around you. Papa! don't look at the serpent in the grass. The trees are filled with birds of gay plumage, whose sweet songs invite you to repose under their drooping branches. Beware! if once you are found beneath their shelter, these shadows will be transformed to prison walls that will grow stronger and higher day by day. The song birds will change to hissing serpents and poisonous reptiles, the waters of the dancing fountains will be bitter to your taste. One step into this enchanted park, and escape from the influences that will be thrown around you, will be impossible. Papa, I have described to you what has been given to me. I am Lillie Bradwell; I died in——"

"O God!" cried the doctor, springing to his feet.

This exclamation wrought a complete change in Daisy: she was once more the sweet, affectionate, healthy child.

She seemed, however, uneasy in the presence of Clara, and handing the rose to her father, left the room without saying a word, seeming to be unconscious of what had transpired. As she reached the door, she called out:

"O papa! come and see Mrs. Loomis!" Her father hastened to her side and beheld the governess lying upon the hall floor.

"She has had a fit," said the doctor; and raising her slight form in his arms, he carried her to an adjoining room, but before restoratives could be administered, she recovered her consciousness, thanked him for his kindness, but declared that she needed no further assistance. It was only a dizziness of the head; she was now fully restored.

Clara was almost paralyzed with fear at the words Daisy had spoken. She understood their meaning, but how did the child know what she had never breathed to mortal ear? Why did the child call herself Lillie? and why say she had died? The more Clara thought of this, the more inexplicable it became. At last, solitude became unbearable and she sought her friends. She found Mrs. Bradwell relating to Mrs. Spaulding the events of the last evening.

"Now, what would you advise me to do, Mrs. Spaulding? I do not like to dismiss Mrs. Loomis, but I fear her influence upon the child is not good. Daisy never before had these fancies, and although she is perfectly well now, I fear the effect will be to undermine her health and destroy her soundness of mind. The child seems much attached to Mrs. Loomis, and this is the only reason I have for wishing to separate them."

"Have you conversed with the governess about the strange appearance last evening?"

"No; to tell you the truth, I questioned her once in regard to her past life, and I care not to do so again. I

believe her to be a good woman, but am convinced some terrible sorrow is preying upon her mind. My husband has promised to question her, but I anticipate he will get no satisfaction."

"I have felt from the first," said Mrs. Spaulding, "that she was not the proper person to have charge of Daisy."

"Is she subject to fits?" asked Clara.

"Not that I am aware; why do you ask?"

"Because the doctor has just found her lying in the front hall, and said it was caused by a fit."

"Is it possible!" said Mrs. Bradwell, "then I must go to her at once."

"She is all over with it now; I heard her say not five minutes ago, that she was well."

"I must go and ascertain her condition," said Mrs. Bradwell, and leaving the room, she went directly to the library, where she found her husband walking the floor, his arms folded across his breast and an expression of unutterable sorrow upon his face.

"What is it?" exclaimed Mrs. Bradwell, laying her hand upon his shoulder; "are you ill?"

He was silent for some moments, seeming to be considering the propriety of revealing his thoughts to her. At last, seating himself in a large arm chair and drawing his wife closer to him, taking her hands into his and looking into her face, he said:

"Did I ever tell you the name of my first wife, or did you ever hear it from any source? Did I ever tell you what name was first given to our little girl?"

"You have not; why do you ask such questions?"

"Because to-day, Daisy has spoken the name that was first given to her. She seemed to be transfigured, and during that time she declared that her name was Lillie Bradwell. Before she had finished, I became so excited

that I uttered an exclamation and disturbed her, and she immediately appeared to be again in her normal condition. Now what *is* the meaning of this? Either our little Daisy is losing her reason, or she is controlled by some supernatural power. I have never mentioned the name first given to Daisy to any living mortal, and in her normal condition she has never alluded to it. I must therefore conclude that at times she is under the influence of some spirit or demon. It cannot be the child's mother, for she would not come to me if she could, and if she did, she would not claim to be my child. I have never had anything occur to trouble me like this. It may be that Mrs. Loomis has something to do with these strange spells of Daisy's; if so, she must leave the house at once. I will talk with her this evening. I will not detain you from your visitors. Be not uneasy, little wife; all will yet be well." And with a forced smile of reassurance, the doctor opened the door for her to depart.

CHAPTER X.

THE PHANTOM.

"SHE is only a bath girl; don't let us remain here staring at her."

"But I tell you, Clara, there is something remarkable in that face. I would give much to know who she is."

"Well, Mrs. Spaulding, you have more curiosity than I gave you credit for, but if your stay of two days in this place has made you as lonesome and homesick as I am, I cannot blame you for interesting yourself in anything that promises to afford you the slightest amusement. For my part I have no faith in water-cures and no interest in the class of persons we meet here."

Saying this, Clara Gordon passed down the broad staircase and out upon the pleasant lawn for her morning walk.

"Too bad!" she muttered to herself, "to have to leave the city just at this time! I don't see why Mrs. Spaulding should come here, nor why she should have insisted upon my accompanying her. 'Cool and pleasant retreat, away from the dust and glare of the city; time for rest and thought,' says Mrs. Spaulding. That is just what *I* do not want. All was going so well: I know that I have made an impression upon Dr. Bradwell's mind, but whether deep enough to outlive my absence is another question. Four weeks in this horrid place! I will not stand it; I will make some excuse to go back to the city, as sure as my name is Clara Gordon, and I will carry out my plans, let the result be what it may. The first step is

to become a member of the doctor's family; then my way is clear. I can manage Mrs. Bradwell as easily as I could a child. I *will* have what I have set my heart upon."

"*It will be the price of blood!*" said a clear voice over her head.

Clara gave one wild look around her, then turned and sped towards the house as fast as her flying feet could carry her. She found Mrs. Spaulding conversing in the hall with a gentleman, whom, to her surprise, she found to be Mr. Forest, who had just arrived.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Forest. I was getting so lonesome, that I had begun to think seriously of returning, but I hope you are not to be numbered among the invalids here."

"No, I came simply as a boarder. Hearing that Mrs. Spaulding and her fair young friend were to spend some weeks here, I could not resist the temptation to follow."

At this moment Dr. Bigelow made his appearance, was introduced to Mr. Forest, and all entered the reception room. After a few moments' conversation, Clara left the room. Forest also left to speak to an acquaintance whom he had just observed upon the lawn, and the doctor and Mrs. Spaulding were thus left alone.

"Doctor," said Mrs. Spaulding, "I have become deeply interested in Maggie Wild. Can you give me her past history?"

"I cannot," he replied, "but I am glad that you take an interest in her, and that I can speak to you freely of this strange being. She came here for the purpose of obtaining a thorough medical education, but unfortunately, my wife has taken a great dislike to her. She is retiring and unsocial, living almost entirely within herself; for this reason she does not make as many friends as some

far less worthy. I had a strange experience with her last week which I would like to relate to you. Mrs. L., the lady occupying the large room at the right of the first flight of stairs, was brought here. She had been confined to her bed the last two years. The most eminent physicians had been employed in her case and pronounced it hopeless. Her husband brought her here without consulting me, and when I found how complicated was the disease and the length of time it had been standing, I refused to undertake to do anything for her. I had never seen anything of the kind before, and may as well acknowledge that I did not understand her complaint. While subsequently conversing with her husband, and telling him of my inability to relieve his companion, Maggie Wild entered the room, heard my last remark, and witnessed the deep sorrow of Mr. L., heard him plead that his wife might be permitted to remain a few days and try the treatment. Maggie looked at him intently, as though reading the very thoughts of his soul. Slowly every vestige of color left her face, the lids closed over her eyes, one hand was raised and extended toward the room occupied by the invalid. While in this position she gave an accurate description of the lady whom she had never seen. Then she commenced a description of the diseased organs, giving color, shape, position and names correctly, relating how each organ was affected, and prescribing the proper remedies to restore them to a healthy condition and the manner in which these remedies were to be used. This diagnosis was as correctly given as it would have been by the best M. D., had the body been upon the dissecting table. While Maggie was talking, clear and distinct raps were heard upon the floor where she was standing. After she had ceased, her arm assumed its natural position; she drew a long breath and opened her

eyes as from a deep sleep. Up to this moment the man had listened to her almost breathlessly, and now he cried out vehemently: 'It is true! every word is true! my wife will be restored to health; I have felt that she would.' Mrs. Spaulding, I can not describe the joy of the husband, and my own astonishment at what we had witnessed. Maggie seemed to be aware that something unusual had taken place, for begging to be excused, she hastened from the room before we had an opportunity to question her."

"But you have talked with her about this since that time?" said Mrs. Spaulding.

"I have attempted to do so, but she shrinks from any allusion to it, and when, in my anxiety to obtain some knowledge of this wonderful power, I almost commanded her to answer my questions, she quietly but very firmly refused, saying if I desired her to leave the Cure, she would do so. Of course, I insisted upon her remaining, hoping the future would unravel the mystery."

"Did you try the remedies prescribed?"

"Most certainly I did, and the result has exceeded our most sanguine expectations."

"How wonderful!" exclaimed Mrs. Spaulding, "I must try to become better acquainted with Maggie Wild."

"I wish you would," ejaculated the doctor. "The housekeeper has been telling my wife some very foolish stories. She says, a few nights since, she saw Maggie go to her room without a light, and half an hour after, having occasion to pass the door which stood slightly ajar, she saw the room brightly illuminated, when to her horror she found that with no material light in the room there was such a brightness that she could see every article of furniture; could see Maggie sleeping upon the bed, while by her side stood a tall form, with long shining garments.

The housekeeper was paralyzed with fear. This story has been circulated among the servants, and all begin to fear Maggie as one in league with Satan. I am sorry to say that my wife shares in these fears."

"What is your explanation?" asked Mrs. Spaulding.

"I have no explanation; but I shall never rest until I have it explained to my satisfaction. Will you help me in this?"

"I shall be delighted to do all that I can to unravel this seeming mystery."

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRAYER FOR HELP.

Two weeks passed, and Mrs. Spaulding was no better acquainted with Maggie Wild than at the time of her conversation with Dr. Bigelow. All her proffers of friendship had been met by chilling politeness, and she was almost on the point of yielding her hope of learning more of Maggie, when an event occurred which threw them much into each other's society, and partially removed the veil behind which Maggie had screened herself.

Two weeks Clara Gordon rode, walked, read, chatted, and flirted with Forest to her heart's content. Mrs. Spaulding, absorbed in Maggie, and relying implicitly upon the promise made her in regard to Forest, paid little attention to Clara's manoeuvres in that direction. Forest, who had never before met one whose positive mind could control him as did Clara's, yielded himself willingly to this delicious dream of love, and became a victim to her artful wiles. She spared no effort to rivet the chains around the heart of him whom she designed to use as a tool to carry out her plans. If Mrs. Spaulding and Mrs. Bradwell believed that she had become attached to Forest, they would be unsuspecting of her, and she shaped her course accordingly. At the close of the second week of their stay at the Cure, Mrs. Spaulding received a letter from Dr. Bradwell, stating that his wife was quite ill, and was anxious for the presence of her friend Clara. Clara could scarce conceal her pleasure at the thought of once more returning to the city.

"I know you have been lonely here," said Mrs. Spaulding, "and I would not detain you from your friend. Go, and I will join you within one week."

The following morning, Clara and Forest were on their way to the city. As Mrs. Spaulding was ascending the stairs in returning to her room after their departure, she missed her footing and fell, spraining her ankle and injuring herself otherwise so seriously as to confine her to her room through the week following. During this time Maggie was her constant companion. It was her gentle hand that administered to the wants of the invalid, and her musical voice that cheered her. The third evening after the accident, as Maggie was sitting in the bright moonlight of Mrs. Spaulding's room, distinct raps were heard upon the floor. Mrs. Spaulding, who had been anxiously waiting for some marvel of this kind, remained perfectly quiet, her eyes closed as in sleep. Soon she heard the young girl whispering, but could not distinguish what she said. On opening her eyes, seeing no one in the room, she concluded that Maggie was talking to herself. Soon after, rich strains of music floated upon the air, such music as she had never listened to before, and hearing Maggie move, she again opened her eyes, saw her kneel down, and heard the low words of prayer that seemed to well up from her soul.

"O Father! have mercy! remove this cloud that has blighted my young life; take from me the bitter cup. I cannot endure it longer. I stand alone; every friend driven from me, all looking upon me as one resting under thy curse, one in league with Satan. O God! stretch forth thy arm and save. The wild waves surge around my bark and unless thou dost send me aid, again shall I be driven out into the cold, cruel world, friendless and alone. Thou who didst pity Peter's weakness, pity thy

weaker child, who is ever trying to draw nearer to thee; but an angry gulf yawns between, and bars her back from thee. Father! I cannot drink this bitter cup; in pity, let it pass from me."

While Maggie was uttering this prayer, the raps increased in power, and when she had ceased praying, a sound was heard like that of a cannon ball falling upon and rolling across the floor. Mrs. Spaulding sprung to her feet in affright, while Maggie sunk upon the floor weeping bitterly. Remembering the experience of Dr. Bigelow, Mrs. Spaulding refrained from making any allusion to these manifestations, deciding in her own mind to take the first opportunity to communicate to him all that had transpired. But she had not been the sole witness. The morning following, the housekeeper, who had constituted herself an investigating committee, which meant that she was to follow and watch Maggie and report to Mrs. Bigelow all that she could see or hear, was standing in one of the lower bath-rooms, giving a glowing description of the strange noises she had heard in Mrs. Spaulding's room where Maggie was sleeping.

"I shall go right off and tell the doctor," said Mrs. Bigelow. "If there is not a stop put to this work at once, it will ruin the establishment. I know that Maggie ought not to have come here. I believe she has sold herself to the devil; I have heard of such cases before."

"Sure if ye'd sprinkle the room with holy wather he'd lave," said one of the bath girls, who had been standing with mouth wide open listening to the conversation.

"That's all ye knows about it, Biddy," said a servant who had been in the house but a few days. "Sure it's nothing but ghosts, jist as we have in blissed Ireland. If Miss Maggie will lave the door open, they'll not be after doing her any harm."

"Keep your opinion to yourself until it's called for," said the housekeeper, sternly.

Then with Mrs. Bigelow, she went in search of the doctor to strengthen with her story Mrs. Bigelow's entreaties that Maggie Wild might be sent adrift.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RULING PASSION.

MRS. SPAULDING, according to her intention, had an interview with Dr. Bigelow, and gave him an account of the manifestations she had witnessed, and concluded by saying:

"While listening to these sounds, I heard footsteps near the door, but whether produced by supernatural agency or by some of the servants, I could not satisfactorily decide."

"Probably the latter," replied the doctor, "and if so, the inmates of the house have heard the story before this time."

Dr. Bigelow was a shrewd man, and before leaving Mrs. Spaulding's room, he had decided what course to take. He had no doubt that the housekeeper was well aware of the events of the night before, and had communicated the same to his wife, and so was in a measure prepared for the reception that awaited him in his wife's apartments. He listened patiently to all the ladies had to say, then remarking that he would like to see Mrs. Bigelow alone, he politely requested the housekeeper to leave the room for a short time. After the door was closed, turning to his wife, he said:

"I am aware that what has been said in regard to Maggie is true; I have seen Mrs. Spaulding and from her received all the facts."

"Good! I knew you would have to acknowledge it at last. Perhaps you will be willing to take my advice next time; these women who are always wanting to get out of their sphere, are never what they should be. I told you so before you wrote for her to come; now you see that I

was right. The next thing to do is to send her away before the patients are frightened out of the house."

"Not so fast, wife, not so fast," said the doctor. "I have something of interest to tell you—"

"Go and dismiss Maggie, then I am prepared to hear you," interrupted his wife. "I cannot bear the thought of her being in the house, and shall always shudder when I pass her room. Her white face, downcast eyes and saintly air, have duped you nicely. Men never have any sense about such things."

"Well, well," said the doctor, impatiently, "I acknowledge that she is not what I supposed her to be; but now be quiet, and listen to reason, will you? You remember the lady that was brought here, whose case was apparently so hopeless that I did not wish to undertake it? You know how rapidly she has improved; you heard her husband say that if she recovered, my success in her case would bring me a number of first-class patients."

"Yes, yes; but what has that to do with Maggie?"

"Simply this; that Maggie examined the patient, prescribed the remedies, and directed me how to use them."

"She did!" And the eyes of Mrs. Bigelow dilated with astonishment. Her husband, paying no attention to her surprise, continued:

"Wife, the great desire of your life has been for wealth. We have both labored hard, but have been barely able to obtain a competency; now wealth is within our grasp. Through this mysterious influence that surrounds Maggie, she is enabled to see and describe with accuracy what the most eminent physicians in the land cannot understand. Here is the key to a great mine of wealth. Shall Maggie remain with us, and we obtain the benefit of this wonderful power?"

"Get thee behind me, Satan!" cried Mrs. Bigelow, in

an excited tone. "I like wealth as well as any one, but I do not propose to sell my soul to the devil for it, nor to have anything to do with those who are in league with him. Doctor, I am amazed at you! a member of the church, a professed Christian, to thus easily yield to the influence of *satanic* power. It is time she was sent away; if she should offer me the wealth of the world, she should not remain another hour in the house!"

"Well, my dear, you shall have your own way," said the doctor, trying to conceal his annoyance and vexation. "Mr. L. told me the other day that he considered himself under obligations to Maggie; he felt that she had been the means of snatching his wife from the jaws of death, and he should offer her a home in his family, where she would be treated as their child, and surrounded by all the luxuries that wealth could procure. Yes, we will let her go, but this power, which you imagine is from Satan, is not, but is something inherent in her constitution, and will be used to the interest of others, who already have more wealth than they know what to do with. Yes, she will go, and this establishment will be closed; I am already deeply involved, and unless some change is made, I cannot remain more than a few months longer. I had hoped that by using this strange power, I could have wrought some cures that would have so increased the reputation of the establishment as to have filled it with patients, and thus have lifted the financial cloud that threatens to reduce us to poverty; but you have decided the question." So saying, the doctor abruptly quit the room.

"I did not think our situation so bad as that," pondered the lady, as the door closed after him. "Poverty staring us in the face, and all my hopes of wealth and luxury vanished like a dream! It cannot, it shall not be! But how to prevent it—that is the question. Yes, Maggie is our

only hope. Husband says this is nothing supernatural, but something in her constitution; why should not *we* have the benefit of it? But suppose she should prefer to go? I wish I had known this before; I would have treated her very differently. I don't like her, but I will be friendly with her now, because upon her rest my hopes for the future. I cannot and will not live in poverty."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DISMISSAL.

UPON Clara's arrival at Dr. Bradwell's, she found Mrs. Bradwell much better than she had expected. The fever with which she had been threatened had yielded to prompt treatment. She was delighted to see Clara; said that she felt her presence would restore her to health.

"You know, dear," said Mrs. Bradwell, "that I have so few friends in the city. Mrs. Spaulding is away and Mrs. Loomis is no company for me. I disliked to recall you from your pleasant retreat at the Cure, yet was sufficiently selfish to do so."

"I do not consider anything that I can do for you a sacrifice; true, I was enjoying myself in the country, but I could not have been happy there after hearing of your illness, and your desire for my presence. Mrs. Bradwell, I have been very selfish, but I believe my love for you will destroy it and make me a new being. But you spoke of Mrs. Loomis; I conclude therefore, she is still with you. Has she explained the strange appearance you were speaking of, the last time I was here?"

"The doctor and myself questioned her closely, but failed to receive any satisfaction. She persists in saying that she knows nothing of the cause of Daisy's seeing and talking as she has at times. When asked whether she knew that Daisy had called herself Lillie, she shook as in a chill, her teeth chattered, and in a voice scarcely audible she replied, 'Yes.' 'Why does it affect you so?' asked my husband; 'were you aware that Daisy was once called Lil-

lie?' Mrs. Loomis drew herself up, and in tones made hard and cold by the effort to control herself, answered, 'I did not know that Daisy was ever called Lillie.' 'And you solemnly declare that you know nothing about and have had nothing to do with this supernatural power that controls Daisy?' 'I solemnly declare that I am as ignorant of the cause as you are, and have no more to do in producing it than you have.' 'I believe you,' said the doctor; 'and now another question; will you explain how it was that we all saw you in the arbor, and at the same time, perceived you standing in the bright moonlight upon the porch?' At this question she reeled as though she had received a blow; putting out her hand she grasped a chair for support, then in slow and measured tones replied: 'Dr. Bradwell, I am here to take charge of Daisy, not to be called up and catechised in regard to my past life, or any seeming mysteries that may surround me. Should I answer your question, it would lead to others which would recall scenes of the past that I dare not look upon; therefore interrogate me no further. I could not be compelled to answer you, and if I were, yourself and wife would suffer with me. Dr. Bradwell,' she continued, 'you think you have had sorrow, but your life has been like the glory of elysium, compared to the tartarean pit into which you would be plunged were I to answer your questions. I will perform my duty to the child, but my life is a sealed book whose pages you can never hope to scan.' Saying this she left the room, leaving the doctor and myself in greater perplexity than ever. He would have dismissed her at once, but I plead for her; and for Daisy's sake he consented to have her remain. But he declares if he sees anything more of what he calls her witchcraft, she shall go."

"I think he is right," replied Clara, "I believe her influence will be injurious to Daisy."

"Daisy is very fond of her," replied Mrs. Bradwell.

"Yes; it is a spell that this woman has thrown over her; I have read of persons who had that power. She wants to retain her position here, and in order to do so, she has bewitched Daisy."

"It may be so," said Mrs. Bradwell. "I shall watch more closely in the future."

One dark, rainy afternoon, about a week after Clara's return to the city, Dr. Bradwell, his wife, and their fair guest were seated in the pleasant parlor, enjoying one of those rare social treats that can be fully appreciated only by the cultured and refined. Daisy was busily engaged with her playthings, the supernatural manifestations of the past seemed to have been forgotten by her. She sat in her little chair, rocking to and fro, singing little snatches of song, the very picture of childish happiness and healthfulness. Two hours had this group been thus pleasantly engaged, when Mrs. Bradwell was called away to attend to some domestic duties. After her departure, a silence followed, broken only at intervals by the murmur of Daisy's song. At last the doctor spoke:

"Miss Gordon, I am well pleased with your friend Forest: he appears to be a man of more than ordinary ability."

"Yes," replied Clara, without raising her eyes from her work.

"He is said to be a man of wealth and position," continued the doctor.

"Yes," was again the laconic reply.

"I met a friend of his this morning, who told me that Forest had become deeply attached to a friend of mine, and that it was probable he would resign his life of single blessedness and constitute her queen of his heart and home."

"I had not heard of that," replied Clara.

"Nevertheless, I do not think you can be ignorant of the fact," he responded. "Miss Gordon, it does not require great penetration to see that Forest loves you."

"Then he had better find a more worthy object," replied Clara: "but I have no reason to believe that I am a favorite of his."

"Why, Miss Gordon!" exclaimed the doctor, smiling at her embarrassment, but far from guessing the true cause, "I should not have alluded to this subject, had I thought it would have offended you."

"I am not offended," replied Clara, "I am hurt to think that *you* could believe for one moment, that I entertain anything more than feelings of respect for Mr. Forest, or—" (here she raised her beautiful eyes, filled with the light of love, fixing them upon his face) "any one else. I have never known what it was to be truly loved and love again."

Her voice was tremulous with emotion, her cheeks crimsoned with the intensity of her feelings, her breath came short and quick through her parted lips, her white hands were extended as if imploring help. Dr. Bradwell thought her never so beautiful as at that moment, and quick as a flash of lightning, the truth was revealed. Astonished and bewildered, for a moment he was deprived of the power of speech or motion. At this moment little Daisy stepped forward, with the light of transfiguration on her face, and placing her hand upon her father's shoulder, she said:

"Papa, there is Daisy's mamma! she is standing behind a silver veil: the beautiful mamma, that lives away beyond the purple mountains. She wants me to tell you not to take the rose, there is a serpent in its leaves that will kill you. See, papa! Clara's white dress has changed to rags and tatters! don't touch it, papa!" Then suddenly throw-

ing her arms around his neck, she said: "Lillie's mamma was innocent."

"My God!" exclaimed the doctor, turning pale as death.

At this moment Mrs. Bradwell entered the room, and Daisy approached her saying:

"The lady with the silver veil, Daisy's mother, loves you; she will strike down the arm that will be raised *to take your life.*" After the utterance of these words, Daisy again appeared in her normal condition. She extended her arms and commenced weeping bitterly, saying: "Take me with you, mamma, or let little Lillie stay with Daisy."

It was sometime before Mrs. Bradwell could compose the child. When at last the vision had entirely vanished, she said: "Take me to Mrs. Loomis." Mrs. Bradwell took her in her arms and carried her from the room. Dr. Bradwell seemed to have lost all control of himself; he walked the room with rapid strides, constantly talking in a wild and excited manner. Clara, though trembling with fear, arose, and placing her hand upon his shoulder said:

"Doctor, be calm."

"Did you hear what she said? Did you understand? Lillie's mother was innocent! God forgive me! I was a wretch, a very demon to take the course I did. Is there no way to repay her for the wrong I have done? I would suffer anything, willingly be confined in the lowest den forever, if I could but compensate her for the wrong I have inflicted upon her. I frighten you, Miss Gordon; go, leave me alone; my brain reels, I am almost mad."

"You are excited; it is no wonder that you are: however, I think I can satisfy you that there is no necessity for this alarm in relation to the past. Daisy may have said some things that are true; she has certainly said some things that are false. I am deeply interested in your child, and have come to the conclusion that these spells

are caused by the presence of an evil, designing spirit; that this spirit is in some mysterious way connected with and under the control of Mrs. Loomis, for it has attempted to speak to me several times when I have been near her. She has admitted to your wife that a curse is resting upon her; you have both seen her in two places at the same time; *that* is enough to prove her to be in league with Satan or some evil power. There is no doubt in my mind that she is the cause of the disturbances in your family: what her object can be I know not. Send her away, and the cloud that now shadows your house will be removed. If she remains, I fear something terrible will happen."

"She shall go!" exclaimed the doctor, firmly, "she shall go this very day!"

"I am glad," replied Clara, "for your sake. She causes you to suffer, and *your* suffering affects me almost as much as if you were—my—brother."

With these words, Clara abruptly left the room.

"I have made a fool of myself!" she muttered, as she entered her own apartment. "He has read my heart and knows that I love him, and I am no more to him than the stranger he meets upon the street. He is perfectly indifferent to me; and yet, he shall love me! he shall! he shall! He is very kind and attentive to his wife, but I do not believe she has a much larger share in his affections than I have. How strangely he acted when Daisy mentioned his first wife! what a tide of emotions swept over his face. It was easy to see he loved *her*; yes, I may put it in the present tense, he loves her now, if she *is* dead, but had it not been for Mrs. Loomis, throwing this spell over Daisy, the memory of his first wife might have slept forever. I can do nothing while that woman is in the house. I am glad he has decided that she shall not remain."

At this moment Mrs. Bradwell entered the room and asked Clara to accompany her to the parlor, saying the doctor had left the house, leaving orders for her to dismiss Mrs. Loomis but she had not the courage to face her alone. Clara readily consented, and Daisy was sent to summon her governess.

"Now, dear," said Mrs. Bradwell, addressing Daisy, "you may go out and gather some flowers."

"The flowers tell sad stories to day; I do not want them," said Daisy, drawing closer to Mrs. Loomis.

"But mamma wants flowers; you will get them for her, will you not?" said Mrs. Bradwell.

Daisy looked upon Mrs. Loomis with a sad, imploring expression, then silently left the room. Gently and kindly Mrs. Bradwell performed the unpleasant duty with which she was commissioned, saying that Dr. Bradwell thought it better for Daisy to be under the influence of a younger and more cheerful person. They were both well pleased with the care and attention she had given the child, but a change seemed necessary.

It was terrible to witness the struggle going on in the heart of Mrs. Loomis. She, usually calm and self-possessed, now became weak as a little child, her form quivered with emotion.

"I am sorry you feel so badly, and trust you will find a home in some other family," said Clara Gordon.

At the sound of that voice, Mrs. Loomis raised her head, dashed away her tears and gazed upon Clara steadfastly without speaking. Then turning to Mrs. Bradwell she said:

"I will go to day."

At this moment little Daisy entered the room, her hands filled with flowers, all glistening with crystal drops from the late shower.

"See, the flowers are sad; they are weeping," said the

child. Then looking up and catching a glimpse of the tear stained face of Mrs. Loomis, she threw the flowers upon the floor, took one step towards her governess, then her large hazel eyes became fixed.

"See," she said, "what a beautiful rainbow! It is around your head, Mrs. Loomis; it has broken into three pieces, now it is gone; in its place is a crown, oh! such a heavy crown of thorns! it presses you down; your forehead is bleeding. See! it is changing again; there is the rainbow; not so bright as before; one part is missing. Oh! I see it now; it overhangs the other; now it is all gone and a black cloud comes over you. It will kill you! it will kill you! I see a chain around your neck. She is trying to choke you to death!" (Pointing to Clara.) "Ah! the sun is rising, the cloud is dispelled, the chain breaks in twain. She falls into the pit her own hands have dug, you rise into the light, the beautiful rainbow comes back and encircles your head."

Daisy paused; a change again came over her face, her features lost their rigid expression, her eyes beamed with tenderness, as she sprung forward and whispered a word in the ear of Mrs. Loomis, unheard by any other in the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE JEWELLED DAGGER.

ON a warm afternoon in the pleasant month of September, Harry Young might have been seen riding up the broad avenue leading to Forest's secluded home. As he neared the house, he saw Forest reclining under the shade of one of the majestic trees with which his retired residence was surrounded. Books and papers were scattered around him, of which he had evidently at the time grown weary of reading, and partially reclining against the trunk of the tree, he had fallen asleep.

"Well," said Harry, musing, "if that is not a picture of contentment, I would like to know where one can be found. I do not see why one should have all sunshine and another all shadows. Forest is a good fellow, but he does not know how to enjoy the wealth that is his. If it were mine, I would show the world how to be happy; you would not find me cooped up here alone."

"And where would you live, Friend Harry?" exclaimed the pleasant voice of Forest.

"Ah! Forest, you heard that remark, did you? Well, I'll tell you what I would do; I would have that old house brightened up, have it thrown open and filled with gay company. Youth and beauty, the song and dance, should make the hours that now hang heavy on your hands, pass with flying feet."

"I am never lonely," replied Forest, "and time never drags on my hands."

"Well, your mind is a kingdom, and I suppose you live

in it, but that kind of life would not do for me. But I came out here this afternoon to rest; I am tired, very tired, and you have here such an air of repose, that coming into it seems like getting into another world."

"I am glad," answered Forest, "if you appreciate my little world."

"I do assuredly: there is something about *you*, Forest, that attracts and holds me. I wonder if it is possible that we have met in some other stage of being. We are very different; you so calm, thoughtful, and dignified; I so gay and thoughtless. To tell you the truth, I do not believe that I ever had but one really serious thought in my life."

"What was that?" asked Forest.

"You will not be offended if I tell you?"

"Certainly not."

"Well then it was in regard to your *dead secret*. I have an unconquerable desire to know something of your past life. Come, Forest, give me your history this afternoon, then you shall have mine."

"Harry, you know not what you ask! please dismiss this subject, and if you are my friend, I ask you never to refer to it again."

Of course Harry could say no more, and a minute later, at his friend's invitation, he was strolling over the grounds, enjoying their beauty, and examining the last improvements. When they returned to the house the sun had disappeared beyond the distant hills, and the gray twilight was creeping over the earth. As they entered the supper room, Harry said:

"Well, Forest, there is one thing you cannot conceal from your friends, and that is your devotion to Clara Gordon. You are watched by jealous eyes, I can assure you, for Clara is a prize that younger men do not care to see you win so easily, and already they are speculating as to

how long it will be before you remove that star of beauty from the city to brighten your home. Ah! what a change there will be in your bachelor habits."

"Harry, Miss Gordon is a lady for whom I have respect, but she will never be my wife: there let the matter drop."

"Forest!" said Harry, while a frown rested upon his brow, "do you think you are acting honorably? It is well known that you have been paying marked attention to Miss Gordon, and that she has received you with more kindness than she has bestowed upon any other. I do not see how you can withdraw with credit to yourself."

"We are friends and nothing more," replied Forest. "A word of love has never passed my lips to her and never shall."

"Well, you are the strangest mortal I ever saw; I begin to think you are as changeable as I am. I thought Clara the most beautiful and bewitching woman in the world, until I saw and heard the young prima-donna, who made her first appearance in the city last night. She is magnificent! such large black eyes, such shining hair! it looks like blue-black satin. Did you ever see such hair, Forest?"

"Don't know that I did," he replied, with a quiet smile.

While they thus chatted in a well-lighted room, dark clouds arose and obscured the brightness of the sky, and soon a terrible storm burst upon them in all its fury.

"Too bad!" exclaimed Harry, "I had promised to return to the city, and this will make it impossible for me to do so."

"A quiet evening will do you no harm," said Forest, as he led the way to the library, where they passed the next two hours with music and conversation.

This was the first night that Harry had passed with his friend, and as he ascended the winding staircase leading to his room, he said: "If I were superstitious, I should ima-

gine this house was haunted. I hope I shall not see a ghost to-night, for I should be sure to take hold of it and not let go till I had learned something of the mysteries of that other world, if such there be."

"You will not be so fortunate as to obtain that information here," replied Forest; "the ghosts that reside here all inhabit material forms."

"That's the way with all ghosts," laughed Harry, as he entered his room. Left alone he looked around, mentally commenting. "Pleasant room, large and airy, one door opening into the hall, another upon the veranda; and here is a large tree, its branches swaying against the house, making rather a dismal noise. Wonder why Forest does not have it removed? This noise will keep me awake half the night." He opened the door, and looking out exclaimed: "Oh! how dark it is; the evil one himself would not venture out such a night as this."

Saying this, he closed the door, extinguished the light, and tried to compose himself to sleep, but the rustling of the branches and a restlessness he could not account for, kept him awake hour after hour. At last he fell into a light slumber to be awakened by a sound like the opening of a door. He listened; all was silent. "'Tis but the swaying of the branches," he thought, and again tried to sleep. He had nearly succeeded, when the sound of feet walking over the carpet again aroused him. He listened intently; the sound seemed approaching his bed. At this moment a peal of thunder shook the house and a vivid flash of lightning revealed to his gaze the form of a tall woman standing in the center of his room. She wore a crimson dress, her arms bare to her shoulders, her face intensely pale, and around her shoulders hung long waving hair of midnight blackness; around her head a narrow band of crimson velvet, fastened by a gleaming star. In the sash

confining her flowing garments at the waist, glittered a dagger with jeweled hilt. Her great wild eyes were fixed upon Harry, but his face was concealed from view by the shadow of the curtain. He was paralyzed with terror; he could not move or speak. The next flash of lightning revealed the figure standing by his bedside, the dagger grasped in her right hand, and a smile of triumph on her face.

"I must look at him first," she said in a low musical voice; "I have not seen him for five years." She placed her icy hand upon his brow, and bent down until he could feel her breath upon his cheek. "Give me more light, King Satan!" she said, "the QUEEN OF DEATH wants to see how her victim looks before she sends him where she has sent so many others. Ah! thank you, Satan! that was a bright flash. How he has changed! he has been growing young, handsome! it seems almost a pity to send him over, but death is no respecter of persons. Yes, he must go! Ah! it is glorious to be the QUEEN OF DEATH! thousands fear me as they do King Satan. But I must not tarry here. I wonder if his soul will go back to the great mountains where we lived years and years gone by. It must have been a hundred and fifty."

While she was muttering to herself, Harry summoned all his energy, sprung from the bed, and fled from the room. Not knowing where to find Forest, he fled directly to the library, where he found a light burning. Throwing a cloak around him, and taking a light in his hand, he said:

"I will not be frightened in this way; I did not know that Forest was fond of practical jokes, but he shall not discover that he has frightened me; I will go back to the room and see if the ghost will not vanish before the light of this clear, steady lamp."

He found the door open as he had left it, but the room

empty. The door leading upon the veranda was also open, and the wind threatened to extinguish his light. Stepping forward to close the door, he saw a sparkling object upon the carpet; upon picking it up he found it to be the dagger he had seen in the hand of the woman.

"This proves that it is not imagination," he said. "It is as I suspected; Forest has tried to frighten me. It might have proved more serious than he intended." He carefully examined the highly polished steel. "I will keep this in my possession and say nothing to Forest about what has transpired. When he finds that I am not going to return the dagger he will speak of it. It seems strange that he should have taken such a course; I thought him superior to conduct of this kind."

Thus Harry reasoned, but he was deathly pale, notwithstanding his effort to reassure himself. He could not look towards the bed without a shudder, and throwing himself into an easy chair, remained till morning. When at day-break he looked into his mirror, he noticed that he looked as though twenty years had been added to his life since the day before. The light-hearted, gay Harry Young was changed to a thoughtful, serious man. Great was Forest's astonishment when his friend entered the breakfast room the next morning. To all his questions Harry answered:

"If you do not know the cause, I cannot reveal it now;" and with this answer Forest was obliged to be content.

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. BRADWELL'S STORY.

"How pleasant it is here!" said Clara Gordon, as she glanced around the room in which she was sitting. "I wish Mrs. Spaulding had made it convenient to sojourn at the Cure a little longer. Two weeks since her return, and to-morrow I must go back and remain with her through the winter. I have stayed here as long as I can find any excuse for doing so. I have accomplished very little compared with what I had hoped. The doctor's studied politeness is terrible for my proud spirit to bear, yet sometimes I fancy I see a look of tenderness in his eyes. Can it be that a sense of honor seals his lips, or does he still imagine that I am interested in Forest? I cannot endure this suspense much longer; I will know my fate. I thought when Mrs. Loomis and her dark spirits were out of the way, all would be well; but I find the doctor more reserved in his manner, more constrained than when she was here. I must try some other way to accomplish my purpose. If I could destroy Mrs. Bradwell's confidence in her husband, all would be well. I will do it!"

At this moment the door opened and Mrs. Bradwell entered the room.

"Why, Mrs. Bradwell, you look as though you had seen one of the ghosts that used to frequent this house," said Clara.

"My husband has been telling me something that has frozen the blood in my veins."

"What is it?" asked Clara; "I hope nothing has happened to him or Daisy."

"No, nothing of that kind, but there have been two terrible murders committed."

"When? where?" questioned Clara.

"Last night, during that terrible storm, not far from the city, near the residence of Forest. The victims were a widow lady, who has resided there but a short time, and a young lad ten years of age."

"Horrible!" said Clara. "Have they detected the murderer?"

"As yet, no trace of the murderer has been discovered. One of the windows of the house where the deed was committed was found open, and the impress of a woman's foot was discovered on the ground beneath. This is all, excepting that the victims came to their death by a blow from some sharp instrument, both having been stabbed to the heart."

"Terrible!" ejaculated Clara. "Can it be possible that a woman could have committed such a revolting deed, and what could have been her object? She may have been an enemy to the lady, but why take the life of an innocent child?"

"Your questions no one can answer. Officers are searching for the criminal, and whoever it may be, will doubtless be brought to justice."

"Let us talk no more of this," said Clara, "it makes me nervous. As a pleasanter theme of conversation I suggest that you tell me something of your early life, and how you came to be Mrs. Bradwell."

"Clara, you are very thoughtful; you see how nervous and excited I have become, and in your anxiety for me, suggest the theme you think most pleasing and tranquilizing."

"You do me too much credit, Mrs. Bradwell, for I assure you I was thinking as much of myself as you. You

are so much younger than the doctor, and your organization so different, that I have often wondered why you married him."

"You shall know," replied Mrs. Bradwell. "When I was seventeen, Dr. Bradwell came to visit my brother, whose acquaintance he had made while traveling abroad. The doctor had just lost a young and beautiful wife, and he seemed overshadowed by a cloud of impenetrable sadness. My whole heart went out to him in sympathy. He was with us several months. During that time my sympathy had changed to a fervent love. He petted and caressed me as he would a child or young sister, little dreaming that I was learning to love him as I had never loved any being on earth. The time came for his departure; he had not breathed a word of affection to me, but I secretly cherished the hope that he would declare it before he took leave of me. The evening before he left he talked to me kindly and gently, but when he bade me good night and good bye, as he was to leave early and did not expect to see me again, my heart sunk within me. I had so longed to hear him say that I was as dear to him as he had become to me. But calmly he bade me farewell, and I sought my room and wept bitter tears of disappointment. Then for the first time the thought came to me that I had given my love unasked, and I was angry with myself and him and vowed to hate him from that time forward. With these thoughts I sobbed myself to sleep, but before the gray eyes of morning looked over the distant hills, I awoke feeling that there was a great load on my heart; that I had been unjust; that he was good, noble, and loved me, but that for some reason his lips were sealed. With these thoughts came the determination to see him once more. Quickly descending the stairs, I entered the little sitting room, where he was awaiting the stage. He was sur-

prised at my unexpected appearance, and I was so much embarrassed that I could scarcely speak. Before I had been in the room five minutes the sound of carriage wheels was heard upon the graveled walk. He arose and extended his hand to bid me a last farewell. I forgot my pride, forgot everything but that I loved him, and he was going away! Throwing my arms around his neck, I plead with him to stay, telling him that I loved him; that I could not, would not live without him. While I was making this confession, he meantime silent with amazement, my father entered the room. An explanation followed. The result was that the stage lost a passenger that morning, and I won a husband."

"And did you never doubt his love for you?" said Clara.

"Never for one moment."

"Well I should always have been afraid that he married me from sympathy, or worse still, from pity."

"I never had such a thought," answered Mrs. Bradwell.

"Oh! you are so good, innocent, and inexperienced," said Clara. "I know more of human nature, and could not trust as you do. Not that I would have you think that these remarks apply to your husband's case, but I should always be distrustful of the affection of the man who married me under such circumstances."

"I have tested his affection and found it true," said Mrs. Bradwell, rising and going to the window. "Ah! here he comes now; but who can that be with him?"

Clara arose and going to her side, said:

"Mrs. Bradwell, that is Mrs. Loomis coming back!"

"So it is," responded Mrs. Bradwell, as she left the room and hastened below to meet her husband and guest.

"What on earth brings that insane creature here?" said Clara to herself. "I hate that woman; she seems to stand in my way. The horrid looking creature, with her specta-

cles, black dress, and infernal spirits! I believe she has woven her spell around the doctor, else he never would have permitted her return. Daisy has asserted again and again that Mrs Loomis would come back, and her predictions have proved correct."

"Clara! Clara! come down stairs," called the voice of Mrs. Bradwell.

"I would as soon meet the evil one," said Clara, as with slow and stately tread she descended the stairs. She found the doctor and his wife in the sitting room, awaiting her.

"Clara," said Mrs. Bradwell, "did you see any one coming up the street with the doctor?"

"Why to be sure! why do you ask?"

"Saw who?" said Dr. Bradwell, while great drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead.

"Why, Mrs. Loomis," said Clara. "We both saw you as you came up the street and turned the corner to come to the house."

The doctor's eyes had at this moment that wild and startled expression that Daisy's always exhibited when under supernatural influence. Slowly raising his hands, he said:

"I solemnly declare that I have not seen Mrs. Loomis since the day she left this house."

"That woman is the evil one in disguise," said Clara, trembling with fear.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE YOUNG PRIMA-DONNA.

"I UNDERSTAND that you have a young lady with you who has performed some remarkable cures," said a large, coarse-looking man, as he entered the Cure and seated himself in Dr. Bigelow's private room.

"Yes, we have been very successful in removing disease; we think we have now the means of restoring to health all who *can* be restored."

"Well, I have brought you a patient; one who *must* regain her health. She shall not die. I took charge of her when she was a homeless, friendless orphan, and have spared no expense on her education. She is now one of the most popular singers in the land. Her voice promises to rival those who have for years received the homage of the public. This is her second season, and now my expectations of reaping a golden harvest through her talent, seem about to be blighted. Her strength is rapidly failing, and this morning she gave me notice that she would not be able to appear upon the stage to-night. But she *must* sing. She will soon arrive and you must give her something to renew her strength. I have brought her to you; restore her to health and you shall be liberally rewarded."

Dr. Bigelow was prevented from replying by the announcement that a carriage stood before the door.

"It is your patient," said the man. "I will conduct her to you."

"Not here," said the doctor.

Then addressing the servant, he directed that the patient

should be taken to a small room on the right of the hall, and that Maggie Wild should be sent to him.

"Another patient to be examined," he said to Maggie.

"Yes sir; shall it be here, or shall I go to her?"

"You will accompany me to her."

Arrived at the door of the room into which the young prima-donna had been conducted, Maggie stopped, saying:

"I cannot enter; my services will be of no avail; she is doomed to die."

Before the doctor could reply, a change came over her face, her eyes closed, and stepping quickly forward, she entered the room, advanced to the side of the young and beautiful lady who was sitting by the open window. Putting her arms around her and covering her face with kisses, she said:

"My child, my poor little Lottie! you have been alone all these years. I left you in the dark, cold garret. I prayed God to care for you, and desired to return to you, but alas! could not come near enough to shield you from the trials through which you have been compelled to pass. O Lottie! you cannot know how earnestly I have tried to rescue you from the influence of that man, who has been crushing out your young life in order to coin your warm blood into gold to fill his coffers. My child, God in his mercy has heard my prayer; your trials on earth are almost over; angels have opened the pearly gates, and stand ready to conduct your freed spirit to the celestial city. Lottie, tell Clarence this, and that you will return and linger near him. Have courage, my child, be not afraid; you will fall asleep to wake surrounded by friends."

During all this time, the young stranger remained speechless and motionless. When the communication ended, she commenced coughing and pressing her handkerchief to her lips: it was soon dyed with the life current. Dr. Bigelow

administered palliatives which eased the cough and stopped the flow of blood, then seeking the man who had brought the patient, he said:

"The lady will not be able to return to-day."

"Why not? I have told you she must sing to-night."

"If she does it will be at the peril of her life," answered the doctor; "her case is hopeless: the best you can do is to let her remain quiet until she gains strength sufficient to be removed to her home."

"Nonsense!" said the man, "it is only a cold; her eyes are as bright and her cheeks and lips as crimson as they ever were. I understand your game; it is to make her believe she is dangerously ill. I have seen too much of the world to be deceived. She shall return to the city at once, and appear on the stage to-night."

Dr. Bigelow saw that to reason with the man was useless; he was determined to have his own way. Returning to the parlor, he found Maggie sitting by the side of Lottie, describing a lady, who, she said, claimed to be the poor young prima-donna's mother, and who departed from earth when she was a child. Before Maggie had ended, the coarse voice of the man called to Lottie to return with him. The young girl obeyed without a murmur, though her large eyes filled with tears as she extended her hand to Maggie saying:

"You have done me much good; I am going to die; can I not see you again before I go?"

"I will call on you to-morrow," said Maggie, taking her address.

"Come, come, don't be forever getting ready," called the man.

After their departure, Maggie told Dr. Bigelow that it was the first time she had ever seen so clearly and heard the voice of an individualized spirit who claimed to have once lived on earth. "I wish I knew more of that lady."

said Maggie. "What a shame that she should be under the control of such a brutal man."

"She will soon be free," said the doctor. "Consumption has almost finished its work."

When Lottie arrived at the hotel, she found Clarence, the young man referred to in the communication, with whom she had been acquainted the last twelve months, waiting to receive her. Clarence and Lottie were truly attached to each other, and he had many times tried to prevail upon her to become his wife and thus give him the right to protect and care for her. She had always said: "Wait, Clarence, until I am eighteen," feeling in her heart that before that time she would be the bride of death. She had carefully concealed her physical sufferings from him, and he had believed the bright spot upon her cheek to be an emblem of health, but to-day she resolved to obey the command that had come to her from the invisible world, and reveal to Clarence her true condition.

"We shall not be parted; my spirit will linger near you; our bridal will be in heaven."

Clarence could not and would not believe the truth. "You shall not die," he said; "God is not just to take you from me now; I will not give you up."

"The chain of love will not be broken," she answered; "it will grow stronger and brighter year by year. Clarence, I have just had the brightest thought that ever came to me. If my mother could speak to me through the lips of that strange lady, why may I not return and speak to you in the same way? Then you will not think of me as dead, Clarence; I will tell you of my journey from this world to the next, of my home, and the objects that surround me there, the friends I meet, and the life I live. Oh! will it not be beautiful! Clarence, my Clarence, we shall not be separated. Nevermore will the harsh cold words of Rollin, pierce my soul with anguish, nevermore

can he force me to meet the rude gaze of those from whom my soul shrinks. Nevermore can he succeed in separating us for weeks and months, for I am thine, and thou art mine, and God has opened the door and will permit my spirit to go and come at pleasure. There is no death; the hills that look eternal, the stars that shine and tell the story of ages, must pass away, but beyond the starry orbs rise the evergreen mountains of life. Our feet shall press those tinted mosses, and ramble amid those bowers of beauty; together we shall sail upon the sun bright waters of those crystal seas, forever and forever we shall bask beneath the smiles of the Infinite."

"Oh! you are an angel now!" ejaculated Clarence. "You seem transfigured; the light of heaven shines upon your face. O Lottie, Lottie! stay with me! the world will be so cold, so cheerless, I cannot let you go. Your words are beautiful, your picture of the other life as bright as though sketched by angel hands; but alas for me! there will only remain the clay cold casket, eyes that will never more bless me with their pure light of love, lips that will never more return my fond caresses, hands that will clasp mine never more. For *you*, Lottie, the glory of elysium, the company of seraphs; for me the cold, cheerless earth, and the society of my own sad heart."

At this moment Rollin entered the room and demanded to know why Clarence was there, and why she was not resting to gain strength for the evening.

"I fear I cannot sing to-night," said Lottie.

"You will sing; here, take this wine, then go and rest; you are better, much better than you have been for two months. Go now, and do not come down stairs again until evening."

Lottie dared not disobey, and bowing to Clarence, she quietly left the room.

CHAPTER XVII.

MAGGIE WILD'S STORY.

BEFORE Mrs. Spaulding left the Cure, she succeeded in gaining the confidence of Maggie, and in convincing her that she was her friend.

"I have witnessed the manifestations that are given in your presence, many times when you thought me sleeping. I was trying to ascertain the cause that produced the sounds heard in your room. I have conversed with Dr. Bigelow in reference to it, and he has concluded that it is a peculiarity of your organization, an unknown power which, when understood, may be of great value to the world."

"And do you not fear me?" asked Maggie.

"No; on the contrary, I love and respect you, my child."

"Oh! thank God, that I have found one true friend."

"Yes, dear Maggie, I will be your friend through all the future. And now I have a favor to ask; it is that you will tell me of your first experience in these manifestations, and why you have been so unwilling to speak of them?"

"I will tell you all I know; then you will not wonder at my desire to conceal a knowledge of them from others. My father was a cold, stern, intellectual man, a minister, of the most conservative class. In our home his word was law; there his strong will was held over us like a rod of iron. My mother was a frail, delicate, uncomplaining

woman; long years of submission to the overbearing disposition of my father had utterly crushed her spirit. My parents had but two children. The eldest feared and hated her father, and at the age of sixteen rebelled against his authority and left her uncongenial home to seek the sympathy and love which her nature demanded, in the warm, loving heart of one whom he affected to despise. After Fannie's departure, my father commanded that her name should never be mentioned in our home. We obeyed, but I could see how my mother's heart was yearning for her child. Fannie wrote several times, but her letters were thrown into the grate unopened.

"I was kept at school until my thirteenth year. One day while busy at the blackboard, I was startled by loud raps upon the floor near my feet. The teacher supposed I was making them, and bade me to keep my feet still. I protested that I was innocent; she became very angry and ordered me to my seat. The raps followed me and commenced upon the desk. She then called me out upon the floor and demanded to know how I made those noises? Of course I could give no explanation; even while we were talking they grew louder, and finally I was sent home. Never shall I forget my feelings as I walked up the little path leading to our home. I dreaded to meet my father's anger; while thinking what I should say, he called to me, having seen me approaching. As I entered his study, the most pleasant room in the house, which he had appropriated to himself, he asked:

"What brings you home so early?"

"I—I—the teacher sent me home," I stammered.

"What for? what have you been doing?"

"I—don't know."

"Don't know?" he repeated in a voice of anger. "Yes you do know. What do you mean by telling me a false-

hood?' And with that word his heavy hand came down upon my shoulder with a force that made me stagger. 'Look up and tell me the truth,' he continued.

"The pride of my young life had been my perfect truthfulness, and thrice that day had my veracity been doubted. My blood boiled with indignation, and with something of my father's spirit, I answered:

"'I never told a falsehood in my life. I was sent from school to-day because there were noises around me, which the teacher could not account for, and which she declared were caused by me.'

"'Nonsense,' said my father; 'a woman is not fit for a teacher. Go to your studies now, and I will accompany you to your school in the morning.'

"He was as good as his word, and the teacher not wishing to offend her minister, made many apologies for having sent me from school, but no sooner had my father left, than rappings commenced with greater force than the day before. The teacher and pupils were frightened, and when I went to my dinner I carried a note from the teacher to my father, requesting his presence in the school that afternoon. He went, and the teacher related to him the annoyances of the morning, and ended by saying that it was impossible for her to attend to her duties while I was in the room. My father's brow grew dark, but he had too much policy to yield to his anger in the presence of the school, and turning to the teacher he said:

"'I cannot doubt the truthfulness of your statement, but I know that Maggie is not the cause of the disturbance. However, a child of mine shall not remain where a suspicion can be cast upon her. Come, Maggie.'

"And taking my hand, he led me from the school. Outwardly he was calm, but I knew he was very angry. Upon our return, he told my mother to prepare me to leave home,

as he should send me to the boarding school in B——, some fifty miles from our residence. I went, but only to return the next week, the noises following me night and day. After this I remained at home, pursuing my studies under the direction of my father. Thus the months and years glided on until I was seventeen, and all this time not a single rap or manifestation of any kind had occurred in my father's house. I was of an independent, skeptical turn of mind, and my father did not find it so easy to bend me to his will as he had my gentle, loving mother. I was much alone; I read and thought much, though I very rarely dared to express my thoughts upon the subject of religion; they were so new, strange, and startling, and so much in opposition to the views of my father. I saw his injustice so clearly that at last I could remain silent no longer; the fires that had been pent up in my soul so long, leaped forth, and in bitter, burning words I accused him of professing a religion which for him consisted in mere outward signs. I told him he had been unjust to his wife and children, made his home gloomy and wretched, driven one child from the protection of home, embittered the life of my mother and made her a very slave, that he had tried to compel me to acknowledge a belief in theories, which in his own soul he knew to be false. It was the first time in my life that I had dared to fully express myself. For this I was driven from the house and commanded never to cross its threshold again; sent away without being permitted to take my clothing or even to receive the parting benediction of a mother's love.

"God only knows how I suffered, but I was young and strong and determined to make my way in the world. In an adjoining town, I procured work as a seamstress; there I intended to remain until I could find more lucrative employment; but alas for my hopes! I had not been in

the house two days before the raps again commenced, the family became frightened, and I was dismissed as one in league with some evil power. I found another situation, but with the same result. At last, after wandering for two months, I made the acquaintance of a widow lady, and told her the history of my life. Like yourself, Mrs. Spaulding, she became my friend, said she owned a small, neat home, which should also be mine as long as I would accept of it. Worn and weary, I gladly availed myself of her kind offer, resolving to support myself by taking in plain sewing. Strange to say, the mysterious noises ceased. Six months I worked cheerfully, having all that I could do. After that time my tormentors returned, but in a less boisterous manner than formerly. When my friend and I were alone they would rap, take my work out of my hand, break my thread, but never would they interfere in the presence of strangers or during my hours of study. At the end of a year the manifestations were more amazing. When strangers would rap upon the door, it would be responded to by another on the inside, and frequently upon opening the door I had the mortification of seeing it closed in the face of a visitor. In a word, these manifestations so increased that my customers began to shun the house and look upon me with suspicion. I was in despair. What should I do? One day, while in this state of mind, a stranger entered, saying she had brought some work. I tried to rise to offer her a chair, but to my astonishment I could not move. Something white passed before my eyes, and then the form of the visitor became transparent to my view. I could see every bone, muscle, and sinew of her body, and more than this, I could see the emanations thrown off from the solids and fluids composing the body. These emanations were brilliant as the colors of the rainbow, but they differed, the emanations of the fluids being finer and brighter than those

of the solids. This lady was suffering from disease of the heart, and I noticed that the emanations from that organ were discolored. The beauty of this vision cannot be described. I perceived that even a drop of blood, when separated from the body, threw off those fine peculiar emanations, and from that time to this I have been able to detect the presence of this life current by the emanations rising from it."*

"Why," said Mrs. Spaulding, "I should think this knowledge would be of great advantage to the world of science. Truly the blood of a murdered man will cry aloud, and, if your statement be correct, there can be no longer a doubt in determining what is human from mere animal blood."

"I had never thought of it in that light," said Maggie. "But to return: from the time when my sight was thus opened, I became intensely desirous of obtaining a medical education, to fit myself for a broader field of usefulness. I procured a few books and studied at night. My customers continued to leave me; those who had claimed to be friends withdrew, and only the good Mrs. Bennett remained true to me. I studied and worked until my

*A very interesting description is given of the recent discoveries, made through a friend of Mr. Ruskin, which he thus narrates :

N. M. P.

"Yesterday afternoon I called on Mr. H. C. Sorby to see some of the results of an inquiry he followed all last year, into the nature of the coloring matter of leaves and flowers. My friend showed me the rainbow of the rose and the rainbow of the violet and the rainbow of the hyacinth. And last he showed me the rainbow of blood. It was but the three hundredth part of a grain, dissolved in a drop of water ; and it cast its measured bars, forever recognizable now to human sight, on the chord of the seven colors. And no drop of that red rain can now be shed, so small as that the stain of it cannot be known, and the voice of it heard out of the ground."

friend was taken sick. Her sufferings were not of long duration. Calmly she died, after having requested me to write to her son, whom she had not seen for many years. He returned in time to deposit her body in its last resting place; then he disposed of her home, and I was adrift upon the sea of life. Oh! how I now longed for my mother's presence; it seemed that I could hear her heart calling, and see her arms extended to receive me, but I could not return. Another year passed in going from place to place, working when work could be obtained and devoting every leisure moment to study. One day, while looking over a paper, hoping to find something to which I could resort for a livelihood, I saw Dr. Bigelow's advertisement, and at once applied for a position in his establishment. You can judge of my delight when I received a favorable reply. I determined to withdraw myself from every approach of friendship, and take every precaution to conceal these mysterious manifestations which have proved the curse of my life."

"Say rather the blessing," said Mrs. Spaulding, "for through them you have been guided into a broader field of usefulness than you could have found alone."

"You know what my life has been since I came here," continued Maggie, "and now that I have confided in you, I feel that a great load has been removed from my heart."

"You have concluded to remain here and complete your studies?" questioned Mrs. Spaulding.

"Yes, now that this matter is understood, I have no desire to go, but shall pursue my studies with zeal and energy."

CHAPTER XVIII.

DAISY'S MISSION.

CLARA GORDON had said farewell to Mrs. Bradwell, and, accompanied by the doctor, had started for the residence of Mrs. Spaulding. Arriving, she insisted upon the doctor's entering, and both were warmly greeted by Mrs. Spaulding, who related some of the occurrences during her stay at the Cure, spoke of Clara's homesickness, and referred to the timely visit of Forest. Dr. Bradwell looked at Clara and smiled when Forest's name was mentioned.

"Mr. Forest has been very attentive to Clara," said Mrs. Spaulding. Seeing a frown upon Clara's face she continued: "I suppose it is no secret; I understand he has been a constant and welcome visitor at the doctor's since your return from the Cure. Clara, I am pleased that you have learned to appreciate his noble nature."

"I do not think that Mr. Forest could fail to be appreciated by any one," replied Clara, at the same time rising and going to the piano. Passing her fingers over the keys, she commenced one of those strange, wild melodies that seemed to express the condition of her soul. Now the music swelled out in a grand and glorious anthem till the spirit seemed borne on the wings of song beyond the sorrows and cares of earthly life. Then its notes sinking to a low, mournful cadence, the instrument became almost a thing of life, whose heart was pulsing with anguish.

"Why, Clara! I never before heard you play like that," said Mrs. Spaulding.

"Perhaps not; I have never been in just the mood I am to-night."

"Miss Gordon, your music has wafted me to the seventh heaven, only to bring me back and leave me surrounded by the saddest influences that I have ever experienced. Will you not play again, and lift the dark shadow cast over my spirit?"

At this moment Mrs. Spaulding was called from the room, and Clara, raising her eyes which spoke of intense emotion, said:

"I can sing no more to-night. I have given you a glimpse of my life, with its great longings, its pure aspirations, its divine possibilities, then have shown you the actual, its withered hopes, disappointed ambition, and its lonely, weary, desert waste, upon which blooms no sweet flower of friendship or bud of pure unselfish love."

How beautiful was Clara as she spoke thus, with the bright tear-drops standing upon her long lashes, and that look of sadness and weariness of life, so terrible to see on the face of the young. "If I could only die!" she murmured, sinking into a chair and covering her face with her hands. Dr. Bradwell was a kind-hearted man and his sympathies were fully aroused. Crossing the room and putting his hand upon Clara's, he said:

"Miss Gordon, you are young, beautiful, and talented; many friends gather around you, hearts of the noble and true are placed at your feet; alone and unloved *you* can never be. You are sinful to murmur. But, when the hand of remorse grasps your quivering heart strings and threatens to snap them asunder, when the voice of conscience condemns you, when your spirit cries for the rocks and the hills to fall upon it and hide it from the gaze of one you have cruelly wronged, *then* you may talk of the sadness, the bitterness of life. Miss Gordon, Mrs. Brad-

well and myself are your friends, we will do all that is in our power to brighten life's path for you, but remember true happiness comes from within. We shall miss you in our quiet home: come to us as often as you can."

"*You* will miss me? Oh! if I could believe *you* would—" and her eyes looked imploringly into his face.

"Believe me, Clara, believe me, I shall miss you!" Then as if suddenly recollecting himself, he bade her farewell, and left the house.

"How cold and indifferent he seemed!" she murmured when left to herself. "But at last his heart triumphed. He loves me, I know it! I saw it in his eyes and heard it in his tremulous voice when he said, 'I will miss you.' Now, Mrs. Bradwell, all I shall have to do will be to make you distrustful of him, make you understand it is friendship, not love, he entertains for you. There can be nothing more humiliating to a wife than to receive the *pity* of her husband. Even Mrs. Bradwell's quiet nature will revolt at this, and I shall have things my own way."

"Never!" said a clear voice in the air above her.

"Merciful heaven! that demon has returned!" said Clara, as she went flying from the room.

"How my head reels!" said Dr. Bradwell as he gained the street. "Clara has a wonderful influence over me, and yet I know her to be a vain, false-hearted woman, whose highest object in life is to secure the admiration of the world. This is her food; I verily believe she could not exist without it. Once or twice I have almost believed her expressions of friendship for *me* were genuine, but reason tells me this cannot be; she is simply acting a part; she evidently intends to secure my affection that she may amuse herself by trifling with me as she is doing with Forest. I see all this, and when away from her I heartily despise

her, but when in her presence her beauty charms me like a magic spell."

The next morning little Daisy was arrayed to go out with her father for a walk.

"How beautiful she looks!" said Mrs. Bradwell, gazing fondly upon the little one, dressed in a suit of deep blue, which brought out the beauty of her transparent complexion, and heightened the charm of the golden curls that hung in waving masses around her shoulders.

Daisy had never seemed in better health and spirits than the morning when she started upon that eventful walk. Chatting gaily as they passed along, suddenly, as they were about to turn into another street, she stopped and that far off look came into her eyes. In vain her father urged her forward; for full five minutes she stood like a statue, then saying, "come," she moved off in an opposite direction from the one they had been following. On, on, and on, her dainty feet seemed scarce to touch the walk. Her father followed with rapid strides, but was unable to overtake her. At times she was entirely hid from his view by the crowd of pedestrians, the next moment a glimpse of the blue dress and the snowy plume would guide him on. In this way he followed her for an hour, when suddenly she stopped upon the stone steps of one of the largest hotels in the city. Here she waited until her father appeared, then in a commanding voice she said:

"Go in and inquire for Harry Young."

Amazed and bewildered, he obeyed, and was shown through long halls and up broad stairs, first to the right and then to the left, until they stood by the door of a room which the waiter informed them was occupied by Mr. Young. Daisy stepped forward and entered without the ceremony of knocking. Upon a bed in the corner of the room lay Harry, his face pale and emaciated, with a lan-

gaid, weary look, as if exhausted by fever. On the opposite side of the room, resting in an easy chair, sat Forest, who had been spending the night with his friend. Forest greeted Dr. Bradwell cordially, saying:

"You are just the man I wanted to see. Harry is very ill, but has refused to have a physician called. How did it happen that—"

Before Forest could finish the sentence, Daisy motioned them to silence, then advancing to the bed side and taking the hand of the sick man in her own, in a loud, strong voice she said:

"Harry Young, arise! put on your garments and go to 128 Jefferson Street, where your presence is needed immediately; relate what occurred to you on the night of the tenth of September. Go; your testimony will save an innocent person from suspicion. Will you obey?"

"Harry is ill; it would endanger his life," said Forest.

"Will you go?" said the child again, giving no attention to Forest.

"I will," replied Harry.

"At once," said Daisy.

She then quietly glided from the room, down the stairs, and notwithstanding that her father and Forest immediately followed, she was lost to their sight. When Forest returned to the room he found Harry engaged in dressing himself.

"Why, Harry! are you mad? You must not think of going into the street this morning."

"I shall keep my word," answered Harry.

"Sit down," said Forest, "and compose yourself for a moment, and I will convince you of the folly of this undertaking. First, Daisy was in a fit or spell; she is subject to them. Clara Gordon has told me that no dependence can be placed upon anything that Daisy says when in that

condition. But if you think it really necessary, I will go to Jefferson Street in your place. There is a second class hotel at the place she has indicated, and why she should want you to go there is more than I can imagine, but to satisfy you, I will go."

"Forest," said Harry, "I shall keep my word. Daisy has alluded to something that transpired at your house which I am convinced that you, the doctor, and the child, know nothing about. She has told me that my evidence would remove suspicion from an innocent person. Forest," he continued as a new thought seemed to strike him suddenly, "have you heard of a murder committed on the tenth of September?"

"Yes; I have said nothing about it to you, as you were so ill: there were two murders committed that night."

"Great God!" cried Harry, "what a narrow escape!" And overcome by emotion, he sunk into a chair, buried his face in his hands and remained silent for some moments. Then looking up, with an unyielding purpose written upon his face, he said: "Forest, I feel sure that the hand that committed those murders, drove me from the border of the beautiful stream of life, out among its shoals and quicksands, that night I passed from youth to sober, middle life. Forest, I am sure that a supernatural power has spoken to me through the lips of Daisy. I shall follow her directions."

"And I shall accompany you," said Forest, deeply impressed by the serious words and manner of his friend.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE APOTHEOSIS.

MRS. SPAULDING had become deeply attached to Maggie, and when she left the Cure it was with the understanding that her young friend should spend the holidays with her. Maggie had yielded to the earnest solicitation of Dr. Bigelow and Mrs. Spaulding, and given much of her time to the examination of diseases. In this she had been very successful, and the Cure was rapidly filling with patients. This so pleased Mrs. Bigelow that she treated Maggie with great kindness and consideration. The physical manifestations, so annoying to Maggie, had almost entirely ceased. The profound respect which she received from the doctor, the reverence, amounting almost to idolatry, paid her by most of the patients, and her joy that she was permitted to pursue her studies uninterrupted, all wrought a radical change in her appearance and added a charm to her existence hitherto unknown. It was while her life passed thus pleasantly and harmoniously that Lottie, the young prima-donna, appeared and Maggie felt irresistibly attracted to her, and for the first time, she distinctly saw the form of a spirit. She was not frightened, nor did she seem to comprehend that a change was occurring in her spiritual condition, and that the future would reveal to her sight the forms of those who had from time to time given those startling manifestations, the cause of which she so much desired to have explained.

The day after Lottie's departure, Dr. Bigelow, accompanied by his wife and Maggie, went to the city. Maggie

proceeded alone to the hotel, where she found Lottie in a small room, where the air was close and impure, the sunlight excluded, everything wearing an aspect of sadness and gloom. Lottie was reclining upon a low couch, her cheek almost as white as the pillow upon which it rested. By her side sat Clarence, and at the foot, his countenance expressing anger and disappointment, sat the man who claimed to be her guardian. As Maggie entered the room, he arose, and coming forward said:

"Ah! miss, I am glad you have come. Lottie is the most unreasonable creature in the world. Just as she has begun to be of service to me, she has taken it into her head to give me the slip. I can't see why she is so perverse. Last night was a great success; it paid well, and she left the stage literally crowned with flowers, but, instead of being pleased with her triumph, as a sensible girl would have been, she commenced crying the moment she reached her private room, which brought on a coughing spell and a severe hemorrhage. It was as much as the doctor could do to keep her alive during the night, and now she cannot speak, not even in a whisper. The doctor says any excitement will cause her death. Too bad, too bad! I don't see how she dare leave this world when she knows that she belongs to me. But, Miss Maggie, I have heard that you were a kind of a witch; now save that girl's life, and I will give you more money than you can earn in five years."

"I have not the power that you attribute to me. Lottie is past all hope for this world."

The man uttered an oath as he stepped aside to let Maggie pass, and then abruptly left the apartment. Advancing to the bedside, Maggie gave a hand to Clarence, then took one of Lottie's transparent hands in her own. The invalid opened her eyes at the touch, and an expres-

sion of pleasure lighted for a moment her pallid face as she recognized her visitor. Hour after hour passed and yet Maggie maintained her position by the side of the dying girl. She seemed to be rapidly sinking, although no external signs of suffering were visible. In the afternoon Dr. Bigelow called for Maggie, but she declined to go, saying:

"I feel that I must not leave her until she is free."

Reluctantly the doctor consented, and after his departure Maggie returned to the sick room. Lottie had fallen into a quiet sleep; so deathlike was her appearance that a casual observer would have supposed her a corpse. Hours passed and still she slept. At length, just as the sun was about to sink from view behind the western hills, gentle raps were heard near the bed. The sleeper awoke, and opening her eyes, brilliant with the light of that land to which she was so near, looked first at Clarence, then at Maggie, and then in a clear voice, asked to be raised up. Very gently Clarence complied with her request, arranging the pillows for her support. She then extended one hand to Clarence, the other to Maggie, and glancing around the room, said:

"He is not here. I am glad! . Clarence, Maggie, I am almost done with earth; I am happy, so happy! I have had such a beautiful dream. I thought that my mother and two other angels came to me, and told me they had come to take me home to a beautiful place of rest, but that I should come back again to see my Clarence. And they showed me the way; it was bright as the stars, and it led right down to you, Maggie. They said I should talk to you, for there could be no cloud between us, and you should tell Clarence all I said. Dear Clarence, I dreamed that you could not see me, but somehow I could talk to you

through the lips of Maggie, and you knew that your dear Lottie was not dead."

Here she paused, closed her eyes and seemed to be trying to recall something not remembered. The raps, which had been growing fainter, ceased. The last rays of the setting sun brightly illumed the west, and threw its parting beams into the chamber of death. At this moment strains of music vibrated upon the evening air, at first seeming afar off, but gradually drawing nearer, now in low lute-like notes of melody, then swelling out in anthems of glory, filling the room with that sweet music of the spheres which the dying often hear. While Maggie sat enraptured by these sounds, Lottie again opened her eyes, and with joy beaming in her countenance said:

"Do you hear it?"

Maggie turned her head, and the only reply that Clarence could give was his silent tears.

"See!" again exclaimed Lottie, extending her hand towards the setting sun, "see that beautiful silver sea, its diamond waters sparkling beneath the golden and purple light that hangs above them! Away across those shining waters are bands of angels, some walking upon the golden strand, others weaving garments that gleam resplendent. Ah! there is a fairy-like boat upon the sea! it is like an ocean shell, all carved in beauty, inlaid with gems, and lined with the rosy hue of morn. Three angels step into it from the other shore; they are coming; how lightly and swiftly they move over the bright waters! Oh! they know I see them; they are throwing me kisses. One is bringing a beautiful robe; it is of violet color, finer than the finest gossamer, ornamented with delicate, snow-white flowers. They are coming nearer; the flowers are silver. How beautiful! A girdle of stars! Maggie, Clarence, do you

see? they have reached the shore; they come! they come! Mother! Father!"

Her arms outstretched as if to welcome a friend, then suddenly dropped; the eyes became fixed, the fluttering pulse ceased, and Lottie had gone to dwell with angels. As her breath ceased, a peal of triumphant music rose upon the air, and the words, "rejoice! rejoice! rejoice!" were distinctly heard by Maggie, and raising her eyes from the beautiful casket before her, she saw the emancipated spirit surrounded by loving friends and borne from her sight in their tender embrace. Maggie shed no tears over the body of her friend; death for her had no terror; she cared for the beautiful casket, and with her gentle words and pure sympathy endeavored to calm the grief of Clarence. He, not gifted with Maggie's wonderful power, had not been able to see and hear all that had been revealed to her.

After Maggie's return to the Cure, she was like a new being. It seemed to her that nothing on earth could make her sad again; life had a greater significance than ever before, and now, from the very depths of her being, she thanked God for what in the past she had looked upon as a curse. Oh! good, true, inspired Maggie Wild! the angels are leading you beyond the pearly gates and enriching your soul with gems of truth which your hand shall scatter over the land.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SCARLET FILLET.

"WELL, Bennett, looking for me, are you? I have been unavoidably detained; sorry to have kept you all waiting. We'll go in now."

Thus speaking, young Brown ascended the steps leading to — Hotel on Jefferson Street. Bennett, an officer, who had been slowly walking to and fro in front of the hotel, said:

"To tell you the truth, Brown, I was not waiting for you, although it is past the hour, and I believe the others have arrived."

"Then let us enter at once," said Brown, laying his hand upon Bennett's shoulder.

"Not so fast, if you please," responded the latter, "go in and have them proceed to business. I will join them soon."

"What on earth do you want to stay out here for? I never knew you to fail before when business called."

"Brown," said Bennett, drawing himself up, folding his arms across his breast, and fixing his eagle eye upon his companion, "I never shrink from duty nor shirk responsibility, nor do I fear ridicule. To prove this, I will tell you why I decline to accompany you into the house. Half an hour ago, as I was coming to meet this appointment, I met a beautiful little girl hastening rapidly up the street. Coming close to me she placed her hand upon my arm and said: 'You are going to meet an appointment at the hotel on this street. Wait upon the steps until Harry Young arrives;

he will put you in the possession of facts that will help you to gain a clue to the murderer.' Before I could regain my self-possession sufficiently to question her, she was gone. Who she was, where she came from, or where she went to, I know not. I shall wait here a while longer."

"Strange, very strange," said Brown; then in a sarcastic tone, "I will go in and tell the boys why you wait." Saying this, Brown entered the hotel, mentally exclaiming, "Been imbibing too freely this morning, I guess."

Scarcely had time enough elapsed for Brown to enter, when a light buggy containing two gentlemen was seen approaching. Bennett watched it till it drew up in front of the hotel. The gentleman who held the reins, giving them into the hands of his companion, alighted, half way ascended the steps, then paused as though bewildered, looked at Bennett, looked at the house, and up and down the street, then returned to the buggy and said, laughing:

"Well, Harry, I don't know who to inquire for, or why we have come."

Hearing this, Bennett stepped forward and said:

"Permit me to inquire if this is Harry Young?"

"That is my name, sir," replied the occupant of the vehicle.

Bennett then gave him an account of his meeting with the child, and asked if he were the person to whom she alluded.

"Yes, yes," said Harry in an agitated voice, as he alighted from the buggy.

"There is some mistake," said Forest addressing Bennett. "My friend has been very ill, and did not even hear of the murder until to-day, therefore I know he can give you no information in regard to the criminal."

To this Bennett made no reply, and Harry, supported by Forest, entered the hotel and was conducted to an

apartment where three officers were found in earnest conversation.

"Well, Brown," said one of the men, "you have brought the best evidence that has been obtained. The facts are strong enough; she must be arrested."

Upon the entrance of Bennett with the gentlemen who accompanied him, Brown arose, and extending his hand to Forest, said:

"I have already met with this gentleman: it is from him that I have received much of the evidence that in my mind goes to prove the guilt of the person whom we have reason to suspect."

"I do not understand what you refer to," replied Forest.

"Of course you do not: we keep our secrets to ourselves until our suspicions are confirmed."

Hereupon, Bennett related the particulars of his meeting with Daisy, and concluded by saying:

"If Mr. Young can throw any light upon this matter, he will be doing an act of justice."

A silence of some moments followed, when Harry replied:

"I should prefer first to know whom you suspect of having committed this horrible crime. Is it man or woman, and what is the ground of your suspicions?"

"I will answer your questions," said Brown. "There is no doubt that both murders were committed by one person. Both victims were stabbed through the heart by what appears to have been a small dagger. The murderer was a woman. The imprint of her feet was left around the door and under one of the windows. Having assured ourselves of this much, we next inquired if there had been any suspicious appearing person seen in the neighborhood, and found that a strange looking and mysterious acting woman, calling herself Mrs. Loomis, had come into that locality a short time previous. She was stopping at a board-

ing house, half a mile from where the deed was committed. The morning after the murder she was seen returning to the boarding house, and in reply to questionings, said that she had been out for a walk, but found it too wet to go far. This and other things excited our suspicion, and we succeeded in getting the servant girl to bring us one of the shoes worn by Mrs. Loomis, which, upon comparing with the footprints before spoken of, we found exactly fitted the impress made in the soft clay. The next step was to find the direction she had taken in the walk referred to, and through the servant we ascertained that she had walked on the road leading to the house of Mr. Forest. Taking the shoe with us, the result of the investigation was the same. The hard rain of the previous night had effaced the tracks in many places, in others they were clear and well defined. After we came within half a mile of Mr. Forest's, the distance which the woman claimed to have walked, just beyond I thought I detected a track of the same size. While examining it, Mr. Forest approached. Concealing our real object and profession, we opened a conversation with him, in the course of which, one of our party asked him if he knew of any lady whom he could recommend for the position of governess. 'I do not,' was his reply; 'there was a lady, a Mrs. Loomis, taking charge of Dr. Bradwell's little daughter. I understand she has left, but where she has gone I cannot tell.' 'Did you ever see her?' 'O yes! many times.' 'What was her reputation while at Dr. Bradwell's?' 'She was a quiet, unobtrusive woman, and I believe they were well satisfied.' After some further conversation, Mr. Forest moved on, and we continued our search. The footprints appeared at irregular intervals. We succeeded however in tracing them to the gate of Mr. Forest's house; here they entirely disappeared. The woman had evidently walked upon the grass,

but not to be baffled too easily, we went to the house and made a careful search, and were rewarded by finding many well defined tracks under one of the east windows. This was not all. Almost concealed in the long grass, I found this."

Here Brown took from his pocket a scarlet velvet band, ornamented by a large silver star, upon which was engraved the words: I AM THE QUEEN OF DEATH. One glance at this, and Harry Young's strength failed him. He staggered, and would have fallen but for Forest's timely aid, and for several moments he was unconscious of of all that was going on around him.

"This excitement will kill him," said Forest, assisting to place his friend upon the lounge, and applying restoratives which he had provided before leaving his hotel. Harry soon revived and looking around said:

"Gentlemen, I will tell you what I know of this affair, but first let me say that Mrs. Loomis is innocent; your suspicions of her are groundless." He then related the occurrences of the night of the tenth of September, and said: "The woman bears no resemblance to Mrs. Loomis. She is a tall, straight, handsome woman, with a profusion of beautiful black hair. To prove that this was not a vision, here is the dagger she dropped. The scarlet velvet band produced by Mr. Brown, was upon her head that night."

"And you are sure that this was not Mrs. Loomis?"

"I know it was not."

"And I," said Forest, who had become fearfully pale during Harry's recital, "I know that it was not Mrs. Loomis."

All eyes were now fixed upon Forest, who trembled with intense emotion.

"Tell us what *you* know," said Brown. "Can you

prove that this was not Mrs. Loomis, and if not her, who who was it?"

Making an effort to conquer his agitation, Forest said:

"Gentlemen, justice to an innocent person compels me to speak. I know the woman who committed these murders, and who came so near taking the life of my friend. But as God is my judge, I did not know that she was within a thousand miles of this place, nor do I know where she has concealed herself. She is insane; has been so for many years. I—I—can tell you no more."

And Forest covered his face with his hands and wept as only a strong man can weep.

The officers took possession of the dagger, while slowly and sadly Forest and Harry returned to their hotel, Forest wondering how *she* could have found him, and where she could have secreted herself, Harry pondering upon the wonderful manner in which an innocent person had been saved from arrest for the terrible crime of murder.

CHAPTER XXI.

DR. BRADWELL AND HARRY YOUNG.

"GOOD evening, Dr. Bradwell; I am very glad to see you. Forest has gone home and I am entirely alone." Saying this, Harry Young arose from the sofa on which he had been reclining and gave the doctor his hand.

"I feared I should not find you so well after the exciting scene through which you passed a few days since," responded Dr. Bradwell.

"So Forest has told you all about it," said Harry.

"No, I have not seen Forest since the morning I met him here, but I know you were much excited by the words of my little girl. Did you follow her directions? and if so, please give me the result. It was all a mystery to me; I have been trying ever since to come and have a talk with you, but have been so engaged that I found it impossible to spare the time until this evening."

"I will answer your questions to the best of my ability," said Harry, "but first tell me how and where you found your child? Forest said she was out of sight when you reached the hall door."

"Yes; I knew not in what direction to go, nor where to look for her. I hastened up and down different streets, inquiring of all I met, and yet, too impatient to wait for a reply, I hurried on. Having thus searched until near noon, I returned home. Judge of my astonishment when I saw Daisy come out upon the porch of my house to meet me. She had told her mother that after we had gone a little way I wanted her to return, but that she had in-

sisted upon prolonging the walk. The next thing she knew it was dark around her, she was walking very fast, and then she was standing alone at the gate. She thought I had taken her up in my arms and carried her home. Mrs. Bradwell supposed that Daisy had grown weary by walking and had fallen asleep in my arms. I did not undeceive her, for to tell you the truth, Harry, so many unaccountable things have happened at our house within the last few months, that my wife is getting quite nervous, and so I concluded to say nothing about Daisy's adventure. Now tell me if her words to you had any meaning?"

"She has been the means of saving an innocent person."

"How? in what way?"

"You remember the murders recently committed?"

"Yes."

"A lady was about to be arrested and charged with the crime."

"A lady! what was her name?"

"Mrs. Loomis."

"Mrs. Loomis! Great heavens! Mrs. Loomis charged with murder!"

"Yes; she was suspected and would have been arrested but for the timely interference of little Daisy."

"That woman!" ejaculated the doctor. "I would give much to know who and what she is. I felt that she had something to do with these strange spells of Daisy's. I wish she was out of the country, out of the world. I fear her, I know not why. But tell me all you know about her."

Harry related what is already known to the reader and ended by saying:

"Who the murderess is, I do not know, nor in what manner she is related to Forest. He has not mentioned the subject to me, but has evidently suffered much since that disclosure."

"Who can she be? A sister? A wife?"

"I dare not ask him," replied Harry, "but of one thing I am sure; that she mistook me for Forest, and intended to take his life."

"Have you seen Mrs. Loomis since she left my house?"

Harry answered in the negative. The doctor was thoughtful for some moments, then said:

"Harry, can it be possible that Daisy visited Mrs. Loomis after leaving the hotel on Jefferson Street? You say that the officer saw her early in the morning. She must have gone there directly after leaving your room. She did not go home until eleven o'clock; where was she from the time she left the hotel until her arrival home?"

"True," said Harry, "that leaves room for conjecture."

"Harry," said the doctor, rising and walking the floor, "I believe she was with Mrs. Loomis. That woman exercises an influence over Daisy like fascination. Clara Gordon thinks that she is in league with evil spirits, and sometimes I am almost compelled to accept of that explanation."

"You do not believe that Mrs. Loomis is an evil disposed person?" half questioned Harry.

"I have no proof of it, and yet Clara has almost convinced me that she is. One thing I am determined to do; that is to break the spell she exerts over my child. I believe that Daisy would leave father, mother, home, and all she has on earth, to follow the footsteps of that mysterious woman who was once her governess."

"Was there anything in her deportment while with you, that gave you reason to believe that she was trying to secure the affections of your child, to draw her to herself?"

"No, I must admit that I have seen nothing of the kind. Daisy went to her at first as loving and confiding as she would if Mrs. Loomis had been her own mother."

"Strange, very strange," said Harry.

"Yes, and Daisy seems to dislike Miss Gordon as unaccountably as she likes Mrs. Loomis."

"Dislike the beautiful Clara Gordon! that seems an impossibility."

"It is the influence which that woman has exerted over her, and I will dispel it, even if it necessitates the closing of my house and the removing of Daisy thousands of miles hence. I will put an end to this. Daisy's young life shall not be shadowed by that woman, nor her happy future blighted by an unseen diabolical power."

After further conversation the doctor bade Harry good night, and took his departure.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DEMON OF DISTRUST.

"Is it not time for the doctor to return!" said Clara Gordon, closing the book from which she had been reading to Mrs. Bradwell.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Bradwell, looking at her watch, "it is ten o'clock. How quickly the evening has passed! I am always so happy with you, Clara!"

"Well, dear Mrs. Bradwell, if there is one person in the world who enjoys my society, I am glad; and I, whom the world calls cold and proud, love you as you were never loved before."

Mrs. Bradwell looked up with a pleasant smile; she did not realize the full meaning of Clara's words.

"Did the doctor tell you where he was going to-night?" asked Clara.

"No, nor was I aware that he had patients requiring his attention this evening. It is probable that an unexpected call detains him."

"What a good, unsuspecting little creature you are!" said Clara.

"What do you mean, Clara?"

"Not anything of importance; but if my husband were away hour after hour, and I not knowing where he was or how he was spending his time, I should be a little suspicious of him, especially, if I had reason to believe he married me from friendship instead of love."

"Why, Clara! *what do you mean?*" said Mrs. Bradwell, looking upon her with astonishment.

"What do I mean?" echoed Clara, laughing lightly,

"for you my words can have no meaning; you are so trusting, so confiding, so innocent; but I, who have seen more of the world and know more of human nature, I, with my jealous, suspicious disposition, could never live as you do. I must have the perfect confidence of the man I love; his heart must be an open book."

"Why, Clara," replied Mrs. Bradwell, "my husband confides in me and I trust him perfectly."

"A strange manner of confiding, dear Mrs. Bradwell, when you have to coax and plead and entreat him to tell you what you are anxious to know, while he refuses, as he did to-night, in that language most offensive to a proud woman, 'my love, you could not understand if I were to tell you.' "

"But, Clara, dear, I am sure he had reason for speaking in that way. He has been very, very sad since the morning he went to walk with Daisy. He started out early that morning, and returned about eleven o'clock. Daisy and I stepped out on the porch to meet him. He had just opened the gate and was about to enter when he caught sight of us; he stood for a moment as though petrified and then extended his arms to Daisy. She ran down the walk, but before she could reach him, he closed the gate and went hastily up the street. Since that morning he has not been like himself. I am sure something troubles him, and I do not think there was anything wrong in his saying that I could not understand it."

"You are inclined to look upon the sunny side. I do not think a man has a right to keep a secret from his wife. If she be a true companion, she will wish to share his sorrows as well as his joys, and if he love her he will desire to have her share them. I have great respect for your husband, but I think he has one great fault; he does not give you his entire confidence."

"You are mistaken," replied Mrs. Bradwell, uneasily rising and going to the window.

"Am I? perhaps so; but I will wager this ring that when he comes to-night he will not explain where he has been."

"Oh! yes he will."

"I don't want you to think, Mrs. Bradwell, that you do not possess the affection of your husband. I do not want to transfer my suspicious nature to you. You are a happy woman in having secured the love of so good and noble a man; but he would not quite satisfy my heart; I should always doubt his love as long as his entire confidence was withheld."

Mrs. Bradwell was walking up and down the room, pausing every now and then to listen for approaching footsteps. Quick as lightning her thoughts flew back to her past life. She remembered the many times her husband had evaded her questions when she had sought to obtain a history of his first wife, his life with her, her sickness and death. She recalled his look and words upon such occasions: "Wife, if you love me, never refer to the past again." Was Clara's declaration true, that "without confidence there could be no love"? For the first time in her life, Mrs. Bradwell began to distrust her husband's love. But she determined to conceal this doubt from the eyes of Clara. At this moment the sound of approaching footsteps was heard.

"He is coming," said Mrs. Bradwell, for the moment forgetting the dark shadows that were creeping around her heart.

A few moments later Dr. Bradwell entered the room, spoke pleasantly to his wife and Clara, saying: "It is late; I did not expect to find you waiting for me."

Then seating himself and dropping his head upon his hand, he became so deeply absorbed in thought as to be

unconscious of what was transpiring around him. The room was very quiet; so quiet that the ticking of Clara's watch could be distinctly heard; so quiet that Clara could almost hear the quick, wild beatings of Mrs. Bradwell's heart as she sat with her eyes fixed intently upon the face of her husband. Minute after minute dragged on until half an hour had passed. Mrs. Bradwell, unable longer to restrain her tears from falling, arose and left the room. The closing of the door aroused the doctor from his reverie.

"Excuse me, Clara," he said; "I am not in the habit of wearing my thinking cap in the presence of ladies, but must plead guilty this time. Where is Mrs. Bradwell?"

"She was a little impatient at your long absence, a little disappointed that you did not caress her when you came in. Your wife is so pretty and so childish! I often wish that I was as easily made happy as she is. If she receive a few loving words, she is content. But in your troubles, your battles with life, she takes little interest. Your high hopes and noble aspirations, those great upliftings of the soul that you have at times, and that you so long to have understood, she cannot comprehend. She is nervous to-night. I love her very much, and if you will allow me for her sake, to express my thoughts, I would say that it is better for her happiness that you conceal from her all that would tend to annoy or excite her. She lives upon the surface; therefore do not attempt to force upon her the realities of your inner life. To-night, the less you say to her the better."

Dr. Bradwell had not interrupted Clara, simply for the reason that he did not know what to say. She had never spoken to him before in this seemingly candid manner. He was astonished at her words; wondered how she had obtained so correct a knowledge of his wife. After Clara had ceased speaking, she arose, bade him good-night, and

without waiting for a reply, left the room, going in search of Mrs. Bradwell, whom she found sobbing in the darkened parlor. Clara threw her arms around her and in a voice such as one would use to soothe a grieved child, she said:

"Don't sob. Of course I knew that I should not lose the wager. He would not talk of his business affairs as long as I was present."

"Do you think that was it?" said Mrs. Bradwell in a cheerful voice.

"Certainly I do," replied Clara; "he made no conversation and was evidently waiting for me to retire from the room. You foolish little thing! to permit yourself to be made so unhappy by what I have said! I shall not come to see you any more if my visits have this effect. Go to your room now, for I know the doctor is anxious to tell you the cause of his long detention."

"Oh! you are so good, and I am so happy!" said Mrs. Bradwell, as she bade good-night to Clara.

"Little fool!" said Clara, as soon as she was alone in her own room. "Much good may you derive from all that he says to you to-night! I have accomplished it at last! It was a bold move, but has proved a successful one. He will not say two words to her to-night; she will be angry at his neglect, and the distance between them will gradually widen, for the venomous arrow of distrust has been fixed in her heart where it will rankle until its poison shall infect her freshest life-springs. I am happy to-night, happier than I have been for months. I believe the devil has changed his mind and concluded after all to assist me."

As she uttered these words there was heard a sound like that made by a heavy body moving through the air. She shuddered and became icy cold, while round her circled this invisible power, drawing nearer each moment, until at last she felt a hand cold as death, touch her upon the

cheek, and at the same moment heard a voice, as from the air above her, cry out :

“Desist! desist or perish!”

Overwhelmed with affright, Clara sunk to the floor in a deathlike swoon.

When Dr. Bradwell was left alone, a look of annoyance and perplexity settled upon his face.

“How did Clara know all this? Is it possible that Mrs. Bradwell has been complaining to her? She told the truth when she said, ‘your wife is so pretty and childish.’ *Wife!*” he repeated bitterly, “she has never been that, but perhaps I am as much to blame as she. I know that I have never loved her; to me she has been a sister, a child, but a companion, never. O Thalia! idol of my heart! why, why were we so cruelly separated?”

He dropped his head upon his breast, and trembled with emotion; then suddenly rising from his chair, folding his arms upon his chest, he said aloud:

“Away! ye beautiful visions of the past, ye are as fleeting as the summer clouds. Away! thou dream of social felicity! let the mountains fall upon me and hide me forever from your sight; let the billows of the sea of life dash over you and efface you from the memories of my heart. If I am unhappy, mine alone is the fault; if I am fated to walk alone, doomed forever to hunger and thirst for that soul-communion which can never more be mine, I only am to blame. I professed a love for her which I have never felt, and I will not cloud her life by unveiling the shadows which darken mine. Clara is right. Mrs. Bradwell can never understand my nature. It would be cruel to intercept a ray of the sunshine in which she lives, with the gloom that surrounds me. In the future I will

live more within myself; no word or act of mine shall give her a glimpse of the life I am living."

As he said this, the door softly opened and Mrs. Bradwell entered the room. Fearing that she would detect the emotion visible upon his face, he gave no heed to her presence, turned about and abruptly left the room. Two hours later, when he sought his couch, he found that his wife had sobbed herself to sleep, the bright tears still glistening upon her cheeks.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EVENTS AT THE CURE.

IN proportion as Maggie Wild gave time and attention to the diagnosis of disease, her power increased, and as her clairvoyant perceptions became clearer, the physical manifestations that had been such an annoyance to her, gradually grew less, and finally ceased entirely. This was greatly to the disappointment of Dr. Bigelow, who had become much interested in these, to him, mysterious sounds. The mystery surrounding Maggie, and her great success in discovering and removing the cause of disease, spread like wildfire over the country, and attracted to the Cure a great number of persons who would never have resorted to such treatment had it not been for the supernatural power they believed Maggie possessed. Mrs. Bigelow was conscious that the girl she had once despised was the instrument that had saved them from financial ruin; she had become convinced that these seeming miracles were not performed through satanic agency, and as fortune smiled upon her, she in turn smiled upon Maggie, and tried to make her contented and happy. Her motive, however, was a selfish one. Maggie felt this, and could not trust and love her as she did Mrs. Spaulding.

For some weeks before the visit of the young prima-donna, Dr. Bigelow had been conscious that a change was coming over Maggie. Sometimes while deeply absorbed in making clairvoyant examinations or giving medical prescriptions, she would suddenly cease speaking, close her

eyes, and then she would exclaim: "How beautiful! oh! how beautiful!" In answer to questions as to what she saw, she would make no reply, seeming not to have heard them, and upon two or three occasions, while she was in this condition, strains of music had come floating through the room. The doctor had not spoken to her of these manifestations, nor had he thought best to mention them to his wife. It will be remembered that Maggie had seen and described the spirit mother of the young prima-donna, and also that through her lips, that mother, from her home beyond the veil, had communicated with her child. Here was something entirely new, and to Dr. Bigelow's mind it opened a wide range of thought. He asked himself if it were possible for the spirits of the dead to return, or was this but another step in that mysterious path in which Maggie seemed to walk? Was it her mind, acting independently of her will? To these questions he could give no satisfactory answer.

He waited impatiently for her to come back from the city and thus afford him an opportunity to investigate the subject more thoroughly. When she returned and gave a description of the death of the beautiful Lottie, when she told him of the spiritual vision of the dying girl, of the silver sea, the fairy bark, and the angels that she beheld, the doctor was much affected, and with the light of hope illuminating his countenance, he exclaimed: "Maggie! Maggie! she did not die! The desire for immortality has not been implanted in the soul in vain! Thanks be to God! death is but the casting off of the old form. His icy hand cannot touch the soul."

Never in his life had the doctor been as happy as at that moment, when the glowing truth of immortality stood out clear and unquestionable. He had not beheld with his own eyes the scene that had been presented, but he accepted

every word spoken by Maggie, and his soul seemed to rise from the vale of doubt and uncertainty in which it had dwelt, and took its stand upon the firm rock of positive knowledge. Maggie had seen, heard, and known the truth that had just dawned upon his soul, and now all her knowledge, all her trust, all her experience in spiritual things, seemed to have been transferred to him. Mrs. Bigelow noticed the change in her husband, but was far from suspecting the cause. Week after week passed, and in the cool, shaded parlor, the doctor had spent many hours in listening to the descriptions given by Maggie of the dear ones who had gone from his circle of friends. Many messages of affection had come to him, words of kindness, comfort and advice had been spoken; but above the friendly communications he received from those he had known on earth, did he prize the high-toned and eloquent addresses which from time to time came through the lips of the entranced medium. Poems, marked by artistic beauty and lofty thought, with their sweetness and tenderness would sometimes melt him to tears, and at other times with their thrilling power would lend wings to his spirit and waft him beyond all consciousness of earth existence. How nobly pure were the pearls of truth that from day to day the hands of angels were weaving into a crown of beauty to adorn the brow and shed their luster over the soul of Dr. Bigelow. Of these communications, the little world in which they lived knew not, but slowly the truth dawned upon the doctor's mind that Maggie's position in the Cure was but a stepping-stone to something higher. He felt that she was drifting from him, and as he vainly tried to hold her, she seemed to melt away like a cloud. To him she was a bright, beautiful light that had brought joy unspeakable to his soul, and now he felt that he could not keep that light much longer to cheer his home. The world

would call her to illumine its darkness; those who sat in the valley and the shadow of death, needed the vivifying sunshine which she could diffuse. Could he let her go? could he see her drift out on the stormy sea of life, her frail bark tossed upon its merciless waves? Yet thousands would bless her, and he, who had gathered so much experience in life, knew that the balm would come to the spirit after the body had been crucified. He was a benevolent man, but he could not bring himself to say: "The world needs her more than I: she must go." Maggie knew nothing of this struggle in his mind. Her whole soul was absorbed in the new life opened before her. She would converse with him for hours upon the glory and grandeur of that unseen world that lies just beyond the material vision. Her soul basked in the sunlight of the truths that descended upon it. She was happy and all unconscious of the great change soon to take place in her life.

While all was moving on thus pleasantly at the Cure, Maggie was taken suddenly ill. She had retired to her room in usual health, but the refreshing slumber usually hers did not come. All the long night she tossed upon her feverish couch, sharp pains darting through her head. Toward morning, as she lay with hands clasped upon her aching brow, she heard the well remembered voice of her mother calling: "Maggie, Maggie!"

She sprung to her feet and answered the call, but no voice responded.

"My mother is sick! I must go to her," she cried.

After vainly waiting for the message of the invisible presence, she again laid her aching head upon the pillow. Hour after hour passed and when the gray light of morning dawned over the eastern hills, a restless slumber fell upon her, from which she was again awakened by the same sweet voice saying:

"Maggie, go to your father! Save Anna!"

Again Maggie sprung from the bed, thoroughly convinced that her mother was either very ill and needed her presence, or else had already passed the mystic veil that divides the two worlds. She hastily prepared what was necessary for a journey, resolving to take the stage early in the forenoon. She then again threw herself upon the bed, hoping that by remaining quiet the pain in her head would be less intense. Soon a drowsiness came over her which by degrees wholly closed the outer senses. She slept long. Several times had the housekeeper entered her room but she only noticed that Maggie was dressed and sleeping soundly. At length her services being wanted in the examination of a patient just arrived, Dr. Bigelow went to the door of her room and rapped, but receiving no answer, called her name. Still no response. Thereupon the doctor opened the door. Maggie was sitting upon the side of the bed, her face crimson with fever, her great eyes looking wild and brilliant.

"Did you hear her?" she said, "she has called me three times."

"It was I that called you, Maggie."

"No, it was my mother. I must go; see, I have everything ready;" and she pointed to the trunk. "I am thirsty: my poor brain seems on fire; I must have some ice water, and then I will start. Oh! what a load there is on my head, pressing me down, down."

"Maggie, you are ill, very ill," said the doctor, examining her pulse.

Yes, Maggie was very ill. A low fever kept her confined to her room for the next six weeks, and during this long sickness her constant wish was to see her mother and Mrs. Spaulding.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A GLIMPSE OF THE TRUTH.

MAGGIE WILD plead so earnestly for the presence of Mrs. Spaulding that Dr. Bigelow thought best to write to that lady, inform her of the condition of her favorite, and beg that she would come and spend a short time with her. Mrs. Spaulding and Clara Gordon were sitting at their breakfast table when the doctor's letter arrived. Mrs. Spaulding glanced at its contents, then turning to her companion, said:

"Clara, my little friend Maggie Wild is very ill, and asks for me. I shall go to her to-morrow. Will you remain here during my absence, or spend the time in visiting your friends?"

Clara was for a moment thoughtful, then, with a look of pleasure she could not conceal, answered:

"I will stay with Mrs. Bradwell. She has been very low-spirited and desponding for several weeks. I think I may help to dissipate the cloud which seems to shadow her life."

"Why, I thought Mrs. Bradwell was one of the happiest women in the world," said Mrs. Spaulding.

"So did I until quite recently. Now she seems to have some secret sorrow that she veils from all eyes."

"I am truly sorry to hear that. Does her husband seem aware of it?"

"I cannot answer. He is too much of a gentleman to speak to others of family troubles, and, of course, I would not mention the subject to him."

“Well, Clara, the poet has truly said:

‘Into each life some rain must fall.’

It is one of the greatest pleasures of life to console the afflicted. Let this be your mission, Clara, and your reward will be a happiness that this world can neither give or take away.”

“How long will you be absent?” asked Clara.

“I cannot tell. It may be one week, it may be many.”

Breakfast over, Mrs. Spaulding left the room to prepare for her journey.

“I don’t see what she finds so attractive in that bath girl,” muttered Clara, when left to herself. “To think of her leaving a pleasant home in this cold disagreeable weather to shut herself up in that horrid place, just to please a servant girl! Mrs. Spaulding must be getting into her dotage. But I am glad she is going; it will give me a favorable opportunity to work out my plans.”

The next evening found Mrs. Spaulding at Maggie’s bedside, holding the fevered hand of the sufferer, bathing her throbbing temples, and attending her as if she were her own child. As soon as Maggie was able to be up, she desired to leave for her home. To this both Dr. Bigelow and Mrs. Spaulding objected, insisting that she must wait until she had gained sufficient strength for the journey.

“My dear, you had better go home with me,” said Mrs. Spaulding. “The distance is short and the change will do you good.”

Maggie consented, and a few days later found her ensconced in Mrs. Spaulding’s elegant home. Clara received her with marked coldness, always ignoring her presence when Mrs. Spaulding was not near. One afternoon, soon after Maggie’s arrival, Dr. Bradwell, his wife, and little

Daisy were announced. Clara received them cordially, but, as Mrs. Spaulding was not in the room, she gave them no introduction to Maggie Wild. Maggie was reclining in an easy chair, her white, almost transparent face, half concealed by the bright hair clustering about it in shining curls. She was robed in a plain blue wrapper, without ornament, except a slender chain around her neck, to which was attached a gold locket. She had been looking at the contents of the locket, and, when the visitors entered, still held it open in her hand. Little Daisy, a frank-expressed child, never attempting to conceal her likes or dislikes, ran at once to her, and, throwing her arms around her neck, said:

"I love you! You are pretty and good."

The words of the child brought color to the invalid's faded cheek, and, clasping Daisy in her embrace, she said:

"Little one, what is your name? Do you live here? or are you a bright angel that has slipped through the door of heaven, wandering over the earth, trying to find your way back to paradise?"

"My name is Daisy Bradwell. Mamma says if I am very good I shall go to heaven when I die, but my pretty mamma that lives away off told me that I should never die. She said she would take me to live with her and little Lillie, far over the mountains, where the flowers are so bright and the birds sing so sweetly. Little Lillie has a bird; it is like gold; she holds it in her hand, and it does not fly away. Did you ever see my pretty mamma?" continued the child, playing with Maggie's curls.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Spaulding had entered the room, and supposing that Clara had introduced Maggie to her friends, she at once entered into conversation with them, and no one but the doctor and Maggie had heard the remarks of Daisy.

At length Mrs. Bradwell said:

"Daisy, I fear you are tiring the lady with your prattle. Come here, darling."

Daisy was twining Maggie's chain around her fingers, and, just as her mother called her, she caught sight of the open locket in Maggie's hand.

"Let me see it," she said, and, taking it in her hand, she held it up so that the light would fall upon it. As soon as she saw the picture she called out in delight: "O papa, mamma! come, come quick! see, see!" And she pointed with one hand to the picture, her face radiant with delight.

"Who is it, Daisy?" asked her father.

"Don't you see?" and she took the chain from Maggie's neck and held the locket before his face. "It is my pretty mamma."

At these words the doctor took the locket in his hands and gazed at it intently. Mrs. Bradwell and Mrs. Spaulding also came forward, and all three looked at the sweet face there miniatures. Mrs. Bradwell was the first to speak. Looking at Maggie, she said:

"Who is it?"

"My sister," replied Maggie.

"Oh! no," said Daisy. "No, lady, she is not your sister; she is my mamma. She has told me so ever and ever so many times. She kisses me, and says she loves me a great deal better than she does little Lillie, for Lillie is only staying with her, but I am her little girl. Where did *you* get this picture? Did mamma bring it to you? I wish she would bring me one. But this is not half as pretty as she is. She does not wear her silver veil."

While Daisy was talking, Dr. Bradwell's face expressed intense anxiety. He looked as though he longed to retreat from the room, but the searching eyes of Clara

were upon him, and he remained quiet. Mrs. Bradwell listened to the child's strange words in utter bewilderment, but Mrs. Spaulding, who had been made acquainted with Daisy's strange experiences, supposed the child saw some likeness between that pictured face and the angel that had appeared to her in her visions. Great as had been the effect of Daisy's words upon the doctor, his wife, and Mrs. Spaulding, it had been yet more powerful upon the feeble and sensitive Maggie. At first she had listened with a smile to the child's prattle, then, by degrees, a shadow crept over her face, she turned deathly pale, and a look of intense agony spoke from her large, clear eyes. Her lips were tightly compressed, and her hands clasped as though in prayer. All except Clara Gordon were too much absorbed in the picture to notice her. Clara kept her keen, penetrating eye fixed upon her face, and enjoyed her suffering. But intense though it was, it lasted for a few moments only. Soon Clara saw the shadow depart, the wave of agony roll away, and the face become radiant with joy indescribable. As Daisy ceased speaking, Maggie threw herself upon her knees, clasped the child to her heart, and exclaimed, as she covered her face with kisses:

"Daisy! Daisy! I might have known it when I looked at you. Daisy! Image of the departed! My own sister's child!"

The doctor sprung to his feet as though a dagger had entered his heart. Mrs. Bradwell gazed with affrighted looks from one to another of the group. While all were speechless with astonishment and dismay, Clara Gordon stepped forward with the air of a queen, and said, in a cold, harsh voice:

"This is a disgraceful scene. Poor Mrs. Bradwell! You are almost frightened to death. That girl is insane. I repeat it, she is insane." Then approaching Dr. Brad-

well who had sunk into his chair, she added: "Another Mrs. Loomis; take your child away."

As Clara ceased speaking, Mrs. Spaulding turned, and, placing her hand upon her shoulder, said:

"Clara, what do you mean by asserting that Miss Wild is insane?"

"I can prove the truth of all I have uttered," said Clara, with an undaunted air.

Mrs. Spaulding's eyes flashed with indignation as she said:

"Clara, you have no knowledge of Miss Wild's history."

"I know that she is a sorceress; that she has been in communion with evil spirits for years; that she was dismissed from two schools, and driven from home because she was considered unfit for society, and, at last, she was pronounced insane. I have this from the lips of her father. Such is the creature to whom you have opened your doors."

As she said this she cast upon Mrs. Spaulding a look of defiance. Mrs. Spaulding did not reply, but sprung to the assistance of Maggie, who sunk fainting upon the floor, and lay like a broken lily at the feet of Clara. Little Daisy bent over her caressingly and begged her to open her eyes. At Mrs. Spaulding's entreaty, Dr. Bradwell raised the insensible form in his arms and bore her to her room, followed by Mrs. Spaulding and Daisy, Mrs. Bradwell remaining in the parlor with Clara.

"O Clara, Clara! what does it all mean? my poor head is so confused I cannot think. What did she say? Oh! that sharp pain in my side. There! it is gone. Clara, did she say that Daisy was her child?"

"No, no, Mrs. Bradwell," said Clara rather impatiently. "Daisy fancied that the picture looked like the one she has seen in her dreams, and this girl seeks to take advan-

tage of it and pass herself off as the sister of your husband's first wife. I presume it was all arranged in her own mind. She has heard of Daisy's visions, and as I have said, her mind being shattered, it is not difficult for her to imagine that she is Daisy's aunt."

"You say she is insane," said Mrs. Bradwell.

"Yes, but only at times; she has been shrewd enough to enlist the sympathy of Mrs. Spaulding."

"How did you learn her history?"

"I knew Mrs. Spaulding had become interested in her, and was afraid that she would be invited to make her home here, so I wrote to Mrs. Bigelow to learn something of the girl's past history. She could tell me nothing, but gave me her father's address. I at once wrote to him and received the information I have given, and much more which I will tell you at some future time."

"Did you see this girl when you were at the Cure?"

"Yes, and felt a great aversion to her, because I saw that she was low and unrefined and would not hesitate at anything when she had an object to accomplish. I felt there must be some sinister motive in her expressions of attachment to Mrs. Spaulding. I now know this is the case. Mrs. Spaulding is a widow without children, her health is rapidly failing. This girl knows it, and intends to influence her to will the bulk of her property to her."

"Impossible!" said Mrs. Bradwell; "an insane person would never think of that."

"She is only insane at times, and believe me when I say that saintly face conceals as false and vile a heart as ever beat. Mrs. Spaulding will not believe it. I know that I have offended her by what I have said to-day. I should not be surprised if she should send me away. It has always been so," she added, sinking back and covering her face with her handkerchief, "if I try to save a friend from

imposition I am sure to be despised for it. My best and purest motives are always misunderstood or misconstrued. I have not a friend in the world. I wish I was dead! I believe I will kill myself."

"Clara, do not speak those dreadful words; I am your friend; my house shall be your home as long as you will. Go home with me to-day; my husband and I will be delighted to have you with us. Say that you will go, Clara."

This invitation was just what the artful Clara designed. She feared she could no longer remain with Mrs. Spaulding, and leave the city she would not. However she did not promise to go with Mrs. Bradwell, preferring to wait and hear what Mrs. Spaulding would say at their next interview. In her heart she hoped Mrs. Spaulding would drive her from the house. This would enlist the sympathies of Dr. Bradwell and aid in the furtherance of her plan.

CHAPTER XXV.

A SPIRIT CLAIMS DAISY.

WHILE Clara and Mrs. Bradwell were conversing in the parlor, a very different scene was being presented in Mrs. Spaulding's private room. Maggie Wild lay upon the bed, every vestige of color gone from lip and cheek, her white hands clasped, her large eyes wandering from Dr. Bradwell to Mrs. Spaulding, then resting upon Daisy with a troubled and perplexed expression.

"Oh! I remember now," she said slowly, passing her hand across her brow, as if to recall her scattered thoughts. Meeting Dr. Bradwell's penetrating glance she dropped her hands from her face, and, rising to a sitting posture, said: "Dr. Bradwell and dear Mrs. Spaulding, you both look perplexed. I do not wonder; but believe me when I say that I no more understand what has passed than you do. This locket contains the likeness of an only sister, whom I am quite sure Daisy has never seen."

"Oh! yes I have," said Daisy, coming forward and taking the locket in her hand; "I have seen mamma a great many times."

"Miss Wild," said the doctor, giving no attention to the words of Daisy, "how long has it been since the marriage of your sister?"

"Twelve years."

"You have seen her during that time?"

"Not once. She married against my father's will, and I was not permitted to correspond with her."

"Do you remember the man she married?"

"Perfectly."

"Did he bear any resemblance to me?"

"Not the slightest."

"Is your sister living?"

"I believed so until to-day."

"What has led you to doubt it?"

"Daisy's words, and the appearance of my sister's spirit before me just as I fainted."

"Do I understand you to say that you saw the spirit of your sister?"

"I certainly saw her. She drew near, threw her arms around Daisy, and whispered to me, 'Love my child.'"

For some moments Dr. Bradwell was speechless. At last he said:

"I married my first wife in Spain. In less than two years she died. Daisy is her child. I have loved her with more than the tenderness of a mother."

Here an expression of pain crossed his face, and he walked to the window to conceal his emotion. Maggie put her arms around Daisy and drew her close to her.

"I love you," whispered the child, "and will stay with you until my pretty mamma comes to take me to live with her and Lillie."

Maggie stroked the bright locks of the child, but made no reply to her words.

"There is evidently some mistake here," said Mrs. Spaulding. "It is possible that Daisy may have seen the spirit of Maggie's sister, and, as that lady appears accompanied by a little girl, it is not impossible that she has spoken to Daisy, and called her 'her child;' or, it is possible that Daisy's mother bears a strong resemblance to Maggie's sister."

"That is what I cannot understand," said the doctor.

"This lady is represented as being fair, with blue eyes and golden curls. My wife had the dark, rich beauty of a Spanish lady. Heretofore I have tried to keep Daisy away from these supernatural influences; I shall do so no longer; perhaps, by encouraging it, I may solve this mystery. Miss Wild, Mrs. Spaulding has told me that you have the power to see and commune with the spirits of the departed; if so, ask your sister why she returns, and why she claims Daisy as her child."

A smile lighted up the face of Maggie as she answered:

"Dr. Bradwell, I have not the power to call spirits into my presence at any time, nor to compel them to answer my questions."

"Seek not to lift the veil until you are better prepared for the facts it will reveal," said Daisy, in a clear, strong voice.

"This is torture!" said the doctor. "Whoever or whatever you are, angel or devil, I command you to answer my questions. Why do you come to disturb the peace of my family? Who are you that dare assert a claim to my child? Come out from behind the screen! Talk no more by hints and symbols, but speak out; say what you would say in plain language, and let the consequences be upon my head! Cease tormenting my child by your presence."

No answer came to his questions, although Daisy appeared to be under a powerful control.

"I have given you an opportunity to express your wishes; I have asked for an explanation of the manifestations at my house; you have refused to speak, have refused to explain, and now, in the name of Almighty God and his son, through whom we all hope for salvation, I command you to depart! withdraw your diabolical influence from my child!"

A low, musical laugh burst from the lips of Daisy, a convulsive shudder agitated her slight form, her hand was

disengaged from Maggie, and slowly she commenced ascending in the air: up, up, several feet from the floor; there she stood in full view of the little group. Not a word was spoken; the doctor sat as though suddenly turned to stone.

"You have commanded us to depart. Shall we take Daisy with us?" said the voice that had so often spoken through the lips of Daisy.

"Oh! no; no! my God! have mercy and give me back my child!"

"Be not afraid," said the voice; "we do not wish to remove her from earth, but only to show you how weak is your arm of flesh, and how incapable of breaking the tie that binds me to this child. We wish her no harm, and love her more, far more, than it is possible for you to love her. Daisy is not your child—she is mine. You are her guardian and protector."

"Demon of falsehood!" cried the doctor, springing to his feet, for the moment forgetting his horror of the unseen power. "Have I not watched over her infancy, sat by her cradle hour after hour, taught the little hands to play and the little feet to walk? Have I not worshiped her as I did her mother? Is she not mine, my own, as the blood in my veins is my own? Begone! you who would rob me of my only treasure! You have come up from the tartarean pit with fraud upon your tongue!"

"Listen," said the same sweet voice. "Little Lillie was your child; she is now with me. I care for her as you care for my Daisy. Are you content? You have forced the truth from me! The river of death lies between you and your child. 'Tis my wish to restore her to you. 'Tis for you to say whether the pathway shall be made plain and the beautiful bud which now blooms in Paradise gladden your heart by her presence."

The voice ceased, and Daisy was moved through the air

to the bed upon which Maggie was reclining, and, bending down over her, whispered:

"Maggie, my sister, how I have longed to converse with you; but the hour had not come; I dared not reveal myself. I have much to say to you, but not to-day. Maggie, our mother is with me. You must go to father as soon as your strength will permit. Save Anna if possible."

A kiss, and the influence was suddenly withdrawn, causing Daisy to fall to the floor. Mrs. Spaulding raised her tenderly in her arms and found that she was unhurt. Mrs. Spaulding then gave her attention to Dr. Bradwell who sat motionless as if transfixed with death, since hearing the, to him, terrible words of the spirit. It was some time before she could rouse him; he seemed to have but one thought, and that was that in some way he had lost a right to Daisy, that in some way she was going to be taken from him. Not until he heard Mrs. Bradwell calling him, did he succeed in arousing himself sufficiently to rejoin her below stairs, even then refusing to let go of Daisy's hand. As he left the room he turned to Mrs. Spaulding and said:

"There is a conspiracy to rob me of my child, but I will not let her leave my sight for one moment."

As he entered the room where his wife awaited him, Clara Gordon noticed his extreme paleness, and whispered to Mrs. Bradwell:

"See how pale he is. Do not let him come here again as long as this sorceress, Maggie Wild, is in the house."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DISGUISE.

So indignant was Mrs. Spaulding at the conduct of Clara, that she determined she should remain in her home no longer. She had given Maggie Wild a history of her acquaintance with Clara, and ended by saying:

"I believe I have done my duty by her, and this last act of selfishness has made her so disagreeable that I cannot consent to her remaining longer."

Maggie plead earnestly that Clara's fault might be overlooked.

"Clara is not to blame for disliking me; our likes and dislikes are beyond our control. She may think she has a good reason for attempting to destroy the friendship that exists between us. You will forgive her, Mrs. Spaulding. I am sure your kind heart cannot cherish bitter feelings against any one. I shall soon leave you. Let her remain. Do not compel her to return to the gloomy life from which your kindness has rescued her."

Mrs. Spaulding yielded to Maggie's entreaties, and consented that Clara's offense should be passed by. How Clara's turbulent spirit would have revolted had she known that Mrs. Spaulding's forbearance was purchased by her love for Maggie.

The evening subsequent to the eventful visit of the Bradwells, Forest and Harry Young were announced. It was the first time Harry had called since his illness. Maggie was in the parlor when they entered. Forest remembered seeing her at the Cure; to Harry she was an entire stran-

ger. As usual with Maggie, she shrunk within herself at the approach of strangers, but Mrs. Spaulding was not willing that her favorite should remain silent and unnoticed. She knew the wealth of that beautiful spirit, and was desirous that Forest should enjoy the intellectual treasures that were buried in the great storehouse of her mind. She made an effort to draw Maggie into conversation. Maggie, ever ready and anxious to please her friend, obeyed her evident wish, and was soon engaged in an animated discourse with Harry.

The events of the past few weeks had wrought a great change in Harry Young, and the clear thoughts and earnest words of Maggie found a ready response in his soul. He had thought her very plain, but soon forgot her personal appearance while listening to the, to him, new truths so beautifully presented by her. Forest, too, had become deeply interested in the subject of their conversation, and, while looking at Clara, had not lost a word of Maggie's talk. Clara perceived this, and, although she had never loved Forest, she could not endure the thought that another should rival her in his estimation. She realized that Maggie was her superior intellectually and spiritually. She felt that both Forest and Harry were conscious of this, and she hated Maggie tenfold more than before. Maggie, all unconscious of the bitter, jealous feelings that, like scorpions, were stinging the soul of Clara, continued to pour forth her eloquent words. She was talking upon a theme of the greatest interest to her, the proof of the individuality of the spirit after death, its power to return and linger near the friends it loved on earth.

"And you sincerely believe this to be possible?" said Harry.

"Faith is lost in knowledge. I know this to be true," replied Maggie.

"What a vast sum of knowledge could be derived from such a source! The reality of the existence of a spiritual zone would be of more value to humanity than any discovery that science has ever made," said Forest.

"Yes," responded Harry, "the positive proof of a real spiritual home, and a knowledge of the customs and pursuits of those who people it, must touch a chord of personal interest in every soul, as a description of a country of which we are all some day to be inhabitants."

"You say that you have had glimpses of a spiritual world. Will you be so kind as to relate something of your experience?" said Forest, in a tone of deep earnestness.

"I shall be happy to comply with your request, but when in my normal condition it is impossible to find language adequate to bring to the mind even a faint conception of the unspeakable glory of the realm of soul life, but I will try and do the best I can."

At this moment the door-bell sounded, and immediately a servant entered who said that two gentlemen had arrived who requested to see Mrs. Spaulding. Mrs. Spaulding desired to be excused a few moments, requesting Maggie to defer the recital until her return.

When Mrs. Spaulding entered the reception room, she found it occupied by the gentlemen referred to, one a tall, ministerial-looking young man, with a hard, iron cast of countenance, bringing to mind the description given of the unyielding John Calvin. The other was wrapped in a dark cloak, which extended almost to his feet; the deep collar was turned up, concealing the lower part of his face; on his head he wore a cloth cap brought down over his eyes. The most that could be seen of the man was a profusion of red hair, which the small cap could not cover. He wore a pair of spectacles, evidently to conceal his eyes. As Mrs.

Spaulding entered, the ministerial looking gentleman arose and said:

"This is Mrs. Spaulding, I believe. My name is West; I am a Presbyterian minister; I preach in the—— Church, on the avenue."

Mrs. Spaulding, bowing, answered: "Mr. West, I have attended your church several times within the last year."

"I have called with a friend this evening, who has heard that you have here a lady by the name of Wild, and who is desirous of seeing her."

Mrs. Spaulding glanced at the cloaked figure, who had not spoken since he entered the room; then turning to Mr. West, she said:

"Miss Wild is engaged this evening, and unless your business is urgent, it would be more convenient for her to see you at some future time."

"We must see her to-night," he replied. "My friend leaves the city to-morrow, and it would be a great disappointment if he fails to see her before he starts."

After some hesitation, Mrs. Spaulding left the room to speak to Maggie.

"Yes, I will see them," said Maggie. "It is probably some patient who wishes to test my clairvoyant powers."

Mrs. Spaulding accompanied Maggie into the room where the strangers waited, presented her to Mr. West, and then withdrew. Mr. West fixed his cold, steel-like eyes upon the young girl, and in a metallic voice said:

"We are told that you profess to hold communion with the dead."

Maggie at a glance read the man and fully understood that she must summon all her positive power, and looking him steadily in the eye, she answered:

"There are no dead."

"You know what I mean," said the man, coloring with anger; "you claim to have seen supernatural sights, and to have heard supernatural sounds. Is this true?"

"You have been misinformed," replied Maggie; "I have never heard or seen anything supernatural."

"What! do you deny having professed to have seen and conversed with spirits?"

"I have both seen and conversed with those who once lived on this earth," replied Maggie.

"Why could you not have given that answer at once?" said Mr. West, in a bitter and impatient tone, and without waiting for a reply, he continued: "Of course I do not believe it to be possible for any one to receive tidings from the dead, but I have a friend here who believes otherwise. Now, if you can do as you profess, call up your spirits and tell him what he wants to know."

"I have no power to compel spirits to return and impart information to me or others. I do not control *them*, and am but an instrument in their hands. However, I will see if they are willing to speak to your friend."

"No tricks, now; I shall watch you closely," said Mr. West, as Maggie moved her chair further from him. A smile was her only answer, as she folded her hands and closed her eyes. Soon in a voice entirely unlike her own, she said:

"Think you that clear spirit eyes
Cannot pierce this poor disguise?
Next time you come in search of truth
Come as you are, a noble youth,
Seeking to look beyond this life
To hear from her, your spirit wife.
Know this, she lives and is the same;
Lottie, sweet Lottie, was her name."

Here she paused, and turning to Mr. West, in a strong voice she said:

"Your brother, Joseph West, who died two years ago, stands by your side."

Here followed a description of the spirit. When finished, she again turned to the other visitor, who had thrown aside his cloak, cap, and wig, standing revealed as Clarence, the young man present at the death bed of Lottie, the prima-donna. He was much agitated, and coming forward he said in an earnest voice:

"Tell me, oh! tell me! does Lottie still live? and is it possible for her to speak to me?"

The controlling spirit replied briefly to his questions, assuring him that Lottie and other friends were present; that he was as dear to her as before she crossed the river of death; that she had much to say to him at a future time; that he need not come disguised, for she could prove her identity and satisfy him beyond a doubt that she still lived. He was requested to see Maggie again, but to come alone. The last remark seemed to anger the minister, who had been surprised and awed at the appearance of Maggie, the change in her voice, the readiness with which the disguise of his companion had been detected, the accurate description and name of his brother, and the communication given to Clarence. All this had kept him silent up to this time. He stamped his foot upon the floor, saying:

"This is sorcery, this is witchcraft; it is denounced by the Bible! We are forbidden to seek information from the dead, and commanded to put to death all who have a familiar spirit. Girl! you shall be punished for this heresy. I am fighting on the Lord's side, and I will never rest until you are brought to justice."

During these remarks, the influence was slowly with-

drawn from Maggie, so that she heard his closing words, and when she opened her eyes and looked at his face, dark with passion, a shudder went through her slight form, and her pale face became a shade whiter. Summoning all her strength, and fixing her eyes upon him, she said:

"Mr. West, I am in the hands of God and the angels. I have been chosen as an instrument to give the evidence of spirit communion to the world. I am young, and life is to me beautiful, but if this truth demand it, I will lay down my life, to take it up again upon a higher plane, and labor the more earnestly for principles which are to regenerate the world."

Then glancing at the other side of the room, great was her surprise to see Clarence. She extended her hand, and expressed pleasure at the meeting. Pointing to the disguise he had worn, she asked:

"Why did you do it?"

"Mr. West so directed; it was to satisfy him."

Hereupon Mr. West called to Clarence, saying:

"I am going: come along. As you value your soul's salvation, do not tarry here longer; the very air seems hot as the breath of Satan. Come."

Clarence bade Maggie a hasty farewell, whispering, "I will come again," and was gone.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ADrift IN THE TEMPEST.

THE morning following, Clara Gordon requested a private interview with Mrs. Spaulding. As soon as they were alone, Clara asked:

"How long does Maggie Wild expect to remain here?"

"Until her health is sufficiently restored to enable her to continue her journey," said Mrs. Spaulding.

Clara was beating the floor with her slippered foot and manifesting other signs of impatience. It was evident that there was something she wished to say, but feared to trust herself to speak lest she should say too much. Mrs. Spaulding noticed her perplexity but did not attempt to assist her. At last Clara broke the silence.

"Mrs. Spaulding, you are aware that I do not like this girl; she is extremely disagreeable to me, and I have been thinking it would be well for me to go to Mrs. Bradwell's and remain there until your visitor takes her departure."

A flush was manifest on Mrs. Spaulding's face as she answered:

"Clara, if you will take the advice of one who has had more experience in life than you have, you will not go to Dr. Bradwell's again."

"Why not?" said Clara excitedly.

"Do you wish me to answer your question?"

"Certainly I do. Mrs. Bradwell and her husband are your most intimate friends; their position in society is not to be questioned. Yes, I would like to know your reason for this advice."

"I will give it in few words. When you came here a few months since, Mrs. Bradwell was a happy woman, her husband cheerful and contented. A more united and harmonious family could not be found in this city. Now mark the change. Mrs. Bradwell is slowly but surely sinking under the weight of some mental sorrow; she is sad, listless, and disheartened; all her interest in life seems to be lost. The doctor is thoughtful and pre-occupied, careless and indifferent to the surroundings pertaining to his domestic life."

"What have I to do with all that?" said Clara in an angry tone.

"Clara Gordon, I have been watching you closely for the last two months. I know that you have made every effort in your power to win the admiration of Dr. Bradwell. Your beauty, wit, and talent have shown in strong contrast with his negative, childlike wife. Clara, I feel that you have sown the seeds of discord in that family. You have destroyed the confidence existing between husband and wife. You have taken to yourself the affections that rightly belong to another. Clara, it is not yet too late to undo your work; take my advice; return at once to your old home, never see Dr. Bradwell again: it is for your happiness as well as for his and his wife's."

"Your words are the most insulting to which I ever have listened," cried Clara, in a transport of fury. "There is not another person in the world who would dare to talk to me as you have. You acknowledge that you have watched me. I thought you superior to the meanness of playing the part of a spy! I am amazed that you should suspect, for one moment, that I would stoop to such a crime as you have charged to me, for it is a crime. I love Mrs. Bradwell as a sister; the doctor I respect and esteem as an honorable man. Mrs. Spaulding, your cruel words

have effaced the obligation felt for all your former kindnesses. Your dark suspicions and unjust accusations will burn like red hot coals into my soul. I go as you have requested, but not to the old life into which you would consign me. I go from your house this day, this hour; go to friends who know how to appreciate true and noble motives. But I shall never, no, never forget the charges you have made against me this morning, and if you ever breathe a word of them to another, as true as my name is Clara Gordon I will have my revenge. You know me well enough to be assured that this is no idle threat."

With eyes blazing with rage, she left the room, slamming the door after her, bounded up stairs like an unchained tigress, and gaining her room, cried:

"I have lost it, I have lost it! I have plotted and planned and told falsehoods enough to drag a thousand souls to perdition, and now when her health is failing and I feel myself almost in possession of the wealth for which I would barter my soul, it slips from my grasp, and will be bestowed upon one more hateful to me than the demon that is leagued with Mrs. Loomis. It shall not be!" and she stamped her foot in uncontrollable fury. "I have but two objects in life; one to become the wife of Dr. Bradwell, the other to secure this fortune, and I will not be baffled—no! not even though I must call upon the evil one to help me to accomplish my purpose. But there is a sweet drop of delirious joy in this cup of venom. Mrs. Spaulding did not know that a few of her words took away the sting of all the rest. She intimates that the doctor loves me. I had not dared to hope so, but if others see it, it must be a reality. Oh! blissful thought! I would be willing to suffer for ages could I but know this to be true. There is nothing I would not dare, to secure his love. Every obstacle must be removed. What care I if my soul be stained with

a crime the world will never forgive? the world has nothing to do with me, or my inner life. I told Mrs. Spaulding that I loved Mrs. Bradwell; I do, and I would love to see her at rest. She is unhappy here and can never be otherwise, but there she will be forever at rest. I'll do this at once! Who will help me? Come, ye demons of darkness! aid me to press forward my plans to victory, help me to live a gay, brilliant life, and take my soul as your reward after death."

A loud coarse laugh echoed through the room, a thick, heavy voice sounded from mid air, saying:

"I will aid you, but your soul must pay the forfeit whether you succeed or not."

Clara was at heart a coward, and when this unexpected answer came at her summons, an unearthly pallor overspread her face and she leaned against the wall for support.

"No, no!" she cried, putting out her hands as if to fend off an approaching power of harm. "I do not want your help; do not come near me. Go away! go away!"

"Coward!" muttered a voice close to her ear, "we did not come to aid you to carry out your infernal plan, but to give you a last warning. Your effort will fail, and if you do not desist, your life will pay the penalty. Repent, repent! seek a noble purpose in life: leave the city to-day to return no more."

"Never!" shrieked Clara; "I defy you! I will never yield my purpose, save with my life."

"Then your blood be upon your own head!" spoke the voice in solemn tone.

There was a sound as of flapping wings, then all was still. Clara sunk into a chair paralyzed with fear. The excitement had been so intense that when withdrawn she was left without the power of thought or motion. Hours passed, and when Mrs. Spaulding entered her room, she

found Clara pale and motionless as a corpse. Mrs. Spaulding was terrified, assisted to place her upon the bed, and, scarcely realizing what she was doing, sent for Dr. Bradwell. An hour passed before he arrived, and during the time Clara had not moved, or given a sign of life.

"She is dead!" ejaculated Mrs. Spaulding, walking up and down the room and wringing her hands in agony, "she is dead and I am her murderer! O Maggie, Maggie! what shall I do? God knows I did not mean it; I spoke only for her good. I shall never, never have another peaceful moment of life! Clara, Clara, open your eyes! speak to me; say you forgive me! Oh! why did I censure her so severely? I have no right to be her judge, and she so young, so inexperienced. I have killed her! This is the way I have fulfilled my trust, taken her from a life of dreariness only to cast her into the gloom of the grave. O God! forgive, forgive, and pity me."

Meanwhile Maggie Wild was sitting quietly in the room, her eyes fixed intently upon the inanimate form of Clara. Gradually a calm and beautiful influence seemed to fill the room. Maggie's face became radiant with light from the unseen world, and in a mild voice she said:

"Mrs. Spaulding, weep not; Clara is not dead."

Before another word could be spoken, the door opened, and Dr. Bradwell entered. He seemed in an instant to comprehend the state of affairs, and, asking no questions, went at once to the bedside, and after a survey of the patient, prepared restoratives, and, aided by Mrs. Spaulding, succeeded in bringing back vitality to the seemingly lifeless form. Very little was said, the doctor appearing perfectly calm and collected. After protracted efforts, Clara opened her eyes and gave signs of reviving consciousness. Mrs. Spaulding and Dr. Bradwell were standing side by side,

and as Clara gave these evidences of returning life, he turned to Mrs. Spaulding, and, with a look of joy, said:

"She lives."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mrs. Spaulding.

It was some time before Clara could speak, or comprehend the past, and as soon as it was ascertained that all danger was over, Mrs. Spaulding's strength failed her and she was obliged to yield to the entreaties of Maggie and be conducted to her room.

"Now lie down and let me bathe your head," said the gentle Maggie.

As her magnetic hand passed over the weary brow, a great load seemed to be removed, and gradually the excited brain became quiet. Dr. Bradwell was alone with Clara, one of her hands was resting in his, her hair was unbound and lay loosely upon the pillow, her brilliant eyes were fixed upon him with tenderness.

"You are better," said he, as Mrs. Spaulding and Maggie left the room. No reply came from the compressed lips.

"Clara, will you not speak to me? do you not know who I am?"

Still no reply.

"Clara, Clara," he repeated, "you are conscious; can you not speak?"

A deep sigh was the only answer. He was puzzled; he was certain that Clara heard his voice, that she recognized him, and could not understand why she refused to speak. He made another attempt. Placing his face still closer to hers, he said.

"Clara Gordon, speak to me, I implore you!"

In an instant her arms were thrown around his neck, and low, undistinguishable words came through her parted lips. He felt her warm breath upon his face, and tried to

unfasten the firm clasp of her hands. This seemed to arouse her, and quickly thrusting him away, she said:

"Do not come so near; you smother me. I am better, but I will not do as these demons would compel me. I am alone, all alone. See how the waves rise around me. Ha! I am going down, down! Dr. Bradwell was my friend, but he will not aid me; and yet I—would give my soul, my hope of immortality, to know that he loved me."

Her cheeks glowed with brilliant crimson, her wild words sunk at times almost into incoherency.

"Be quiet," said the doctor, placing his hand upon her head, "this agitation may endanger your life."

"Would you care if I were dead?"

"Yes, Clara; how could I but regret to see you pass from life so young."

"Regret!" she repeated ironically, turning her face from him. Then with a sudden movement she again threw her arms around his neck, saying:

"You are good and noble and true, but no one knows your worth, no one understands you, no one loves you; will you let me worship you as I would a god?"

These words were spoken in a hesitating, half articulate manner.

"Yes, yes," replied he, thinking her delirious, "you shall worship me as a god, and I shall require my subject to be obedient. Now you must stop talking and rest. I will sit by your side and read to you."

Clara's arms dropped; the color fled from her lips and cheek. Silently great tears rolled down her face. She was very still; she did not hear a word that he was reading. She had but one thought; that all her efforts had proved fruitless. She had won other hearts only to trample them under her feet, and now she had poured forth all the strength of her soul only to feel its stormy billows

driven back upon herself from the rocky walls of indifference. It was a fearful shock to her who had just begun to hope that her hour of triumph was at hand. The doctor thought she was sleeping, and rising softly, stole from the room. Little dreamed he of the dark emotions surging through that turbulent soul.

"Are you better, Clara?" spoke the soft voice of Maggie Wild, entering her room softly, after the doctor's departure.

For full five minutes Clara looked at the speaker without answering her question, then in a hard, cold voice, she said: "Go!"

Maggie realized that her presence was repulsive, and immediately left the room.

Clara, left alone, clasped her hands and closed her eyes as if to shut out some unpleasant sight. Several times during the afternoon the servant looked into her room, and invariably made the same report, that she was sleeping. But repose fled from the storm-tossed soul. Clara had been reviewing the past, trying to divine the cause of her failures, and laying her plans for the future. Towards evening she arose, arranged her toilet, and commenced preparations for her departure. She had just completed them, when Dr. Bradwell and his wife were announced. The doctor was surprised to find Clara in the drawing-room, and astonished at the cold, icy manner in which she received him. While he sat apart, conversing with Mrs. Spaulding, Clara addressed his wife, saying:

"Mrs. Bradwell, events have occurred in this house to-day, which make it necessary for me to leave. I go to-morrow morning."

"What has happened? Where are you going? You are not able to travel!"

"At some future time I shall tell you of my sufferings

here. I am going back to the village of N——. Yes, Mrs. Bradwell, I am ill, but the journey can no more than kill; I wish it would do that! I cannot stay here longer. That girl's presence seems to poison the very atmosphere."

"Come, then, and make your home with me. You know you have partly promised to do so. Come, return with us to-night; say that you will, and I will make the necessary excuses to Mrs. Spaulding."

Clara's manner grew agitated, as if there were something upon her mind to which she wished to give expression, yet feared to do so.

"What is it that troubles you, dear?" asked Mrs. Bradwell. "Speak freely, tell me all."

"Mrs. Bradwell, your husband hates me; he hates me, though I have never given him occasion. I will not remain in the house of one to whom I am conscious of being disagreeable."

"You are very much mistaken, Clara; he esteems you highly."

Clara's proud lip curled, and she shook her head. Mrs. Bradwell looked perplexed and made no response, but on the first opportunity she sought her husband, and talked with him aside. When she returned to Clara, she was accompanied by him, and both united in urging Clara to accept a home with them. For some time she seemed immovable, but finally yielded to their entreaties, and that night Clara Gordon left Mrs. Spaulding's house forever.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CELESTIAL MESSAGES.

SLOWLY Maggie Wild recovered her strength. Every day she became dearer to Mrs. Spaulding, who looked forward with sorrow to the time when Maggie must leave her. Maggie felt that her tired soul had found a place of rest, but she knew it was to continue but for a season, that soon she must go out to meet the conflicts of life. Maggie dreaded to leave her friend, yet felt that duty called her to her old home. The voice of an angel mother and an only sister had called to her from the higher life, and she realized that there must be a reason for the call.

Three weeks had passed since Clara's departure, and Maggie was sufficiently recovered to commence her long and tiresome journey. The evening before her setting out, she was alone with Mrs. Spaulding in the pleasant parlor. The room was not lighted, save with the warm, rich glow, thrown out by the burning coals.

"I love to sit in this soft light," said Maggie. "It seems that the angels come nearer, and their thoughts are received more clearly than in the brightness of gas-light. I hope no one will come to disturb us to-night. There is a beautiful influence here; the entrance of a third person would destroy its harmony. Mrs. Spaulding, I have been sad at the thought of leaving you, and yet I have never been so happy as to-night. I feel as though I did not touch the earth: a calm and holy influence seems to have lifted me above the material life, and like a cloudlet I drift on and

on, seeing, hearing, knowing nothing, only conscious of perfect happiness. What can it mean?"

At this moment the door opened, and a servant announced a gentleman in waiting to see Miss Wild. Maggie seemed to be unconscious of the announcement. Mrs. Spaulding, observing that Maggie did not respond, arose and left the room to see the visitor, whom she found to be Clarence. He said that he had succeeded in getting away from Mr. West, and had come to learn if it were possible for him to hear from Lottie.

"I have been so anxious," he said, "to know more, but circumstances have prevented my coming. Can I see Miss Wild to-night? and is there any hope that I may receive anything definite in regard to Lottie."

Mrs. Spaulding was acquainted with Clarence's history. She greeted him kindly, told him of Maggie's condition, and said:

"You may go into the parlor if you wish; you may hear something of interest, but I do not think that Maggie will be conscious of your presence."

He gladly accepted the invitation, and soon was sitting by the side of Maggie. She did not in any way appear to recognize him. The light from the burning embers shone upon her face, and revealed the intense brilliancy of her eyes. Soon after Mrs. Spaulding and Clarence were seated, Maggie said:

"I see away into space. There are many magnetic rivers shining like silver. I see what I shall call atmospheric hills and mountains. On one of these beautiful rivers, whose every wavelet breathes a note of music, I see a boat approaching the earth; it contains eight spirits; all seem joyous and happy. There is one tall, dark-complexioned man, having the appearance of a foreigner; he seems to have the control. They are coming nearer, Ah! how

beautiful, how radiantly beautiful they are! Ah! they are stepping out. There is Lottie; but, oh! how changed! the face is round and radiant with the light of happiness. A light, crimson robe floats around her form. How graceful her movements! She is drawing near. There is another group, and one figure is so radiant, I cannot describe her. She is covered with pearls, or what resembles them; her beautiful hair is bright as gold, and hangs like a veil almost to her feet. Pearls upon her neck, arms, and amid her curls, and adorning her dress of spotless white. Near her is another spirit who seems closely connected with her. She has an intelligent and beautiful countenance, but will not compare with the one I have described, whose name, I am sure, must be PEARL. The other to whom I have alluded is SYLVA; and there is yet another lady in the group, but I cannot get her name. There are also two gentlemen who seem to be strongly attached to SYLVA and the other lady. The foreigner is by the side of Lottie, and on the other side her mother. PEARL stands alone. What can it mean? She seems to be with the others, and yet separated from them. They come!

"Now I see a ponderous door. On this side it looks dark like rusty iron; but I can see through it, and on the inside it is laid with gems and adorned with strange designs which I cannot comprehend. Beyond this door is a veil, which upon this side looks dark and heavy, but is, in fact, as light and fleecy as a cloudlet, and easily swayed backward and forward. Now the tall, dark man draws near and waves his hand; the veil is swept aside. In his hand he holds a large GOLDEN KEY; this he inserts in the lock, and the massive door swings open. Ah! I can see clearly now! My vision seems boundless, hills and mountains, lakes and rivers, rosy bowers, vine-clad cottages, smiling villages, and cities whose grandeur and magnificence must

be seen in order to be appreciated. Birds singing, fountains playing, flowers blooming, and men and women going to and fro, active, energetic, and apparently as much absorbed in the realities of that life as we of earth are in ours. Oh! beautiful vision! Now the door is closed again; I see nothing but the river, the boat, and the spirits; the latter seem very near. Lottie has entered the room; she moves with the grace of a bird. Why, here is Clarence! I see him as clearly as if he were really by my side. Lottie has placed her arm around his neck and says:

“Clarence, behold, I have come to redeem my promise, to tell you of the spirit-world and the life I am living there. O my beloved! how lonely I have been without you, how I have yearned for your presence. I have seen the shadows through which you have passed and the darkness that has compassed you around, but alas! I could not speak to you, or make my presence known. But at last, a beautiful angel whom they call PEARL came to me and said that a little band were coming to earth, and they had a GOLDEN KEY that would unlock the door that kept mortals and spirits from communing freely with each other. They would remove the *veil* that intercepted the vision of earth's children, and permit them to have a glimpse of the mysteries beyond. I was invited to join their circle, and oh! how gladly did I avail myself of the opportunity. I shall gain much wisdom from the experience of those highly unfolded minds, but better than all, my Clarence, I shall be enabled to converse with you freely, and you shall realize that death is powerless to separate us. Come often to see Maggie or the little child Daisy. I can soon entrance them, and speak to you face to face. Clarence, keep away from Mr. West! Maggie, beware! a

snare is laid for your feet; do not take the route you intended.'"

These words so startled Maggie, that instantaneously the vision faded, and she was brought back to her normal condition.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SPECTER AT THE WINDOW.

MONTHS had passed since Mrs. Loomis left the house of Dr. Bradwell, and during all that time she had seen Daisy but once. Early one morning Daisy had come to her under the control of a higher power, had thrown her arms around her neck and sobbed with joy. During that short interview a load of doubt and uncertainty was taken from the mind of Mrs. Loomis, and Daisy grew dearer to her than ever. The child's stay was brief; in vain did Mrs. Loomis plead with her to remain; her object accomplished, she glided from the room almost as noiseless as a spirit. The memory of that morning call had cheered the heart of the lonely woman for many weeks. She had put her own interpretation upon the vision seen by Daisy on the day she left Dr. Bradwell's house, and, at the time, she fully believed that the rainbow of beauty would yet arch her life. At other times, faith grew dim, hope faded, and her heart groped amid the shadows of despair. Such was her state of mind the day we again introduce her to the reader. She had passed a restless, sleepless night; the cloudy past, with its few bright gleams of sunshine, had been again and again recalled; the darkness that surrounded her seemed to grow more and more impenetrable. Morning failed to dissipate its gloom, and as the day wore on she became more and more dejected. She had no friend in whom she could confide. She had shunned society, and her unprepossessing appearance had a tendency to cause others to shrink from her. She had lived in the

solitude of her own sad heart until cruel thoughts began to sap the very fountains of her life.

"I can endure this no longer," she said mentally; "I must see them once more!"

It had been snowing all day, and, as the evening advanced, the storm increased in fury. But in her bosom a wilder storm was raging, a pitiless storm that made her unmindful of surroundings.

"I must go," she said, throwing a cloak around her, and raising the hood so as to almost conceal her head and face, she started out into the darkness. On, on she walked, the snow and hail driven into her face and eyes and the rude blasts of the bitter west wind displacing her cloak until her teeth chattered as the keen cold struck through every fiber of her frame. Still on she went, and entered the city, but not yet did she pause until she arrived at the gate leading to the house of Dr. Bradwell. How invitingly pleasant all appeared! the light was brightly shining from the parlor windows and rich notes of music came floating out upon the frosty air. She was benumbed by cold; in that house was warmth; she was in darkness; within there was brilliant light; she was wretched; within was happiness. A poor, desolate, unfortunate, friendless woman, and before her light, beauty, happiness and love. Oh! it was a scene to make pitying angels weep, those angels that knew her life history and knew who it was that thus contrasted her misery with the joy of another.

Slowly she opened the gate and went up the winding walk; softly she ascended the steps and going up to the window pressed her face against the glass. There was a cheerful fire within, and around it were seated Dr. Bradwell, his wife, Clara Gordon, and Daisy. Mrs. Bradwell appeared thin and pale, her hands lying listless in her lap, her dove-like eyes fixed upon her husband with an expres-

sion sad and mournful. Clara was sitting in the full blaze of light which heightened and added new charms to her beauty. The doctor was stationed on the opposite side of the room, his back to the window, with little Daisy upon his knee. He was caressing her bright locks, often drawing her closer as though he feared she was about to be taken from him.

"They are happy," murmured the white lips of Mrs. Loomis. "He is happy: why should I cast my shadow across his path?"

Could she at that moment have seen the look of care and anxiety upon his face, she would have perceived the error of her judgment.

"Is it not time for you to take another powder, Mrs. Bradwell?"

Mrs. Bradwell bowed her head without speaking, and Clara left the room to prepare it.

"She is ill," said Mrs. Loomis who had heard all, "she is ill, and he loves her. Oh! that I could be there to do for her as no other could do."

"Are you no better, this evening?" she heard Dr. Bradwell ask, in a kind and gentle tone.

"No better," she replied.

"I see no reason why you should not improve; you have no organic affection."

"I shall be better soon," replied Mrs. Bradwell, in a weak voice.

"Your case is a most singular one," said her husband, rising and going to her side. "I wish Maggie Wild would return; it is possible she could give us some information."

Clara Gordon entered the room in time to hear the last remark. Instantly she became as pale as death, and the glass she held in her hand dropped upon the floor. The doctor looked up but said not a word; of late he had taken

a great aversion to Clara, and shrunk from her almost as much as did Daisy. Clara gathered up the broken fragments and again left the room.

"Strange as it may appear to you," he remarked, as she closed the door after her, "I do not like Clara; I wish she would go away; I cannot help feeling that you would be better without her."

"No, no!" cried Mrs. Bradwell quickly. "I could not live without Clara; she is the best friend I have on earth."

"Oh! yes, mamma, let her go," said Daisy. "Every time she comes near me the angels fade away."

Of late Daisy had talked much about the visits of the angels, and her father had come to look upon her as one divinely, supernaturally endowed.

"Yes," she continued, "send her away and bring back Mrs. Loomis and Maggie; I love them; they are good."

"When will Maggie return?" asked the doctor of his wife.

"I do not know," replied Mrs. Bradwell, indifferently.

"I understand she has performed some miraculous cures; she must see you. I want you to get strong and well again."

A faint smile brightened the face of Mrs. Bradwell, but before she could reply Clara again entered the room, and the doctor said:

"I do not see why our little Daisy cannot tell us what ails mamma."

Clara was again much agitated, and after a few moments of silence Daisy said:

"The angels don't want mamma to take any more medicine: take her away from home."

Daisy paused, and Clara presented the glass containing the powder which she had prepared, to Mrs. Bradwell, saying as she did so:

"Ah! little Daisy, the angels are mistaken this time. This medicine is to make your mamma well."

Mrs. Bradwell drank the contents of the glass and handed it to Clara, who received it with a smile, placed it upon a small table and then walked to the window.

"Great heavens!" she exclaimed, starting back and throwing up both hands in horror.

"What is it?" asked the doctor, startled by her vehemence.

"I saw — oh! — I saw the spirit of Mrs. Loomis looking in at the window."

Her words, which seemed to paralyze the doctor, acted like a charm upon Daisy. She sprung forward, opened the door and rushed out into the storm.

"Mrs. Loomis, Mrs. Loomis! where are you?" she cried with the full strength of her voice. There was no answer, save the low moaning of the night wind among the tall trees. She ran down the steps and out into the darkness, still calling upon the name of her governess. Her father, who had recovered his self-possession, stepped out upon the porch and called to Daisy to return.

"I shall find her, papa, I shall find her. There is little Lillie and the big tall man with the GOLDEN KEY; they will show me where she is."

He followed the direction of her voice, and found her wading around in the deep snow.

"This way, papa," she cried, "this way. See what a beautiful light there is from that GOLDEN KEY. Here she is, papa, here she is."

True enough, there was Mrs. Loomis, half buried in the snow where she had fallen. Terrified at the discovery and benumbed by the cold, she had been unable to reach the gate.

"How beautiful she is!" said Daisy. "See, papa! her

spectacles and her cap are gone! See! how shining black is her hair!"

"Daisy, go in and send out a light," said her father.

It was intensely dark; he could not see his own hand when he held it up before him.

"How cold she is," said Daisy, apparently not hearing the words of her father. "Mrs. Loomis! Mrs. Loomis!" she continued, covering her face with kisses, "I knew you would come back to little Daisy! Come in to the warm fire."

Mrs. Loomis opened her eyes, wound her arms around Daisy and drew her closer.

"Come in where it is warm," persisted the child. "Oh! what big black eyes you have, Mrs. Loomis! I am so glad you have left off those ugly spectacles."

At these words of Daisy's, Mrs. Loomis sprang quickly to her feet.

"Daisy, Daisy! I must go!" she cried. Dr. Bradwell had stood but a few feet from her, and yet he knew it not until he heard her voice. Then, for the first time, speaking to her, he said:

"Mrs. Loomis, permit me to conduct you to the house."

"Oh! no, no," she exclaimed in a frightened voice, and the next moment he heard a shriek from Daisy, as the gate swung violently upon its hinges.

"Mrs. Loomis! Daisy!" he called.

"O papa! she is gone!" sobbed Daisy.

"The woman must be insane, roaming about the city such a night as this! Come in, Daisy, and I will send Thomas out with a light to see that she does not perish in the snow."

CHAPTER XXX.

ANNA BROWN.

MAGGIE WILD had completed her long journey and once more was in her native village. Calling a carriage she directed the driver to take her to the residence of the Rev. Mr. Wild. Having arrived at the well-remembered home of her childhood, she alighted and walked up the path leading to the house. It was early in the morning, and all was very quiet about the house. Maggie stood trembling upon the porch she had so often crossed in other days. She was weak and wearied by her long journey, and the frosty air pierced through her thin clothing, but, summoning all her strength, she timidly rapped upon the door. No answer came, and a tide of bitter memories swept over her soul as she recalled the time when she was commanded never again to cross that threshold. She was about to turn away, when the thought of her mother and the command of the angels flashed across her mind, and raising her hand she once more rapped, louder and stronger than before. After a few moments, the door was opened, and her father's tall, angular form appeared before her. His cold cruel eyes were fixed upon her face, and his stern features assumed a more rigid expression. One moment they gazed upon each other in silence, then, as Maggie stepped forward to enter the house, he put forth his hand and thrust her away from the threshold, and muttering curses upon her, closed and fastened the door. Poor Maggie! Her pride and strength gave way before this inhuman repulse, and, sinking down upon the step she wept like a child.

"Alone, homeless, friendless! Mother and sister dead! No one in the wide world to whom I can turn for comfort and for that affection which every human heart has a right to demand. Alone! O mother! my angel mother! look down in pity on your child! This house was your tomb; here you suffered meekly, uncomplainingly; here you were slowly tortured unto death, and that man was your murderer!"

The thought of her mother's sufferings aroused her, and, springing to her feet, she exclaimed in tones that were almost joyful:

"My blessed mother! I am glad that you are free! You are now reunited to the child that was the idol of your heart, and no longer compelled to bow to the mandate of a cruel, exacting tyrant, who, concealing his crime under the garb of religion, kept you an abject slave by holding before your eyes the *law* which he claimed had given you, soul and body to him. I thank God that death has broken your fetters, and that there is a place where the law of God is held sacred above the law of man. Mother, your sufferings are over, but for me, your child—what is there on earth for me? Mother, sister, take me home! I am wretched, homeless, friendless, alone!"

Maggie bowed her head upon her hand, and shed the most bitter tears of her life.

"Live for my Daisy," spoke the well-known voice of her spirit sister.

Maggie started up, and looking in the direction whence the voice proceeded, said:

"Fannie, is it true? Is Daisy indeed your child?"

"She is my child, your niece; love her, live for her."

"Your husband?" questioned Maggie; "where is he?"

No answer came. Maggie drew her shawl more closely around her and pondered.

"Daisy, then, is Fannie's child. I have a claim upon her affections. I do not understand how it can be, but I know that I am no longer alone in the world. I will go to her at once, and never leave her again. But why was I sent here? Why this weary journey, this harsh repulse, and the sufferings of this morning? Why am I here?" she repeated aloud.

"To save Anna Brown," said a strong, clear voice above her.

Maggie now recalled the words which had sent her upon her errand: "Save Anna!" She remembered Anna Brown as the only daughter of one of the families who lived in the neighborhood, a gentle, affectionate, and confiding girl. She had not seen her for years, but determined to seek her at once, and, trembling with cold and excitement, she retraced her steps to the gate, and walked down the well-remembered road until she came to Mr. Brown's residence. It was yet quite early in the morning, but the family were up, and, as Maggie neared the house, she heard a familiar voice singing. As she stepped up to the door, she was greeted with—

"Good morning, Maggie Wild! How do you do? I am very glad to see you. I declare, I should as soon have expected to have seen a ghost as you. But you don't look much like a ghost; how bright your eyes are, and your cheeks are red as roses! You have been growing handsome since you were last here. But come in; I have so much to say to you, though I suppose your father has written all the news and insisted upon your returning to be here in time for the wedding. He said last night if Maggie were only here, his happiness would be complete."

Maggie made no reply, but permitted Mrs. Brown to talk on, giving no sign herself that she knew nothing of the event referred to.

"When did you arrive, dear?" asked Mrs. Brown as they entered the house.

"This morning."

"Ah! then you have not been home yet. I am glad of it. I want you to see Anna and talk with her. The fact is, Anna is very hard to manage. She has been much opposed to this marriage; has even said she would not yield to her brother's authority."

"Where are her father and mother?" asked Maggie.

"They died soon after you left here, and bequeathed all their property to John. John and I were married soon after, and Anna has been living with us. Anna is a good little girl, but she has her ways and I have mine. John and I for a long time have wanted her to get married, but she has refused every offer, until now John is determined that he will use his authority, as a brother has a right to do. Your father is a good man, he has a comfortable home, and she ought to be proud of the favor he is conferring in offering her his hand."

"What objection does she make?" inquired Maggie, trying to speak in a calm voice.

"She says she does not love him; but that's all nonsense, for love amounts to nothing. If you have it before marriage, it does not long survive. It is as well to live with one as with another, provided you are well cared for."

"Has Anna consented at last?" inquired Maggie.

"Yes; John has compelled her to consent; and the wedding is to be this evening. I am glad you are to be here. Now will you go up stairs and talk to Anna? Tell her of your father's good qualities; tell her how much happier she will be than now. I am afraid we will have trouble with her. Yesterday I was so fearful she would take her own life that I had to watch her all day."

"Does my father know how much she dreads this union?"

"Yes; but he says she will soon overcome her aversion; that the more she dislikes him the more he will love her, until at last his love will conquer, and they will be very happy. Men do not like to have it known that their wives do not love them. I suppose this is the reason your father did not write you. Come, now; I will show you the way up stairs, and leave you to talk with Anna."

Maggie followed, and soon found herself in the presence of a tall, slender young lady, whose pale face and sunken eyes told of weary days and sleepless nights, and of some great sorrow that was wearing away her life. Anna was seated in a low chair, her hands clasped, her eyes fixed upon the floor, with a look of hopeless misery. Maggie spoke to her several times before she gave any attention, and it was some time before she could make her comprehend who she was.

"Yes, I remember," she said, passing her hand slowly across her forehead, as if to recall her scattered thoughts. "Maggie, we used to go to school together long ago. You died, and now you have come back to aid them in torturing me. Go away! I do not want to see you nor hear your voice. Leave me alone for the few hours that yet remain. Go!"

Maggie drew near to her and bending down, whispered:

"Anna, the angels have sent me to open your prison door. I will save you from a fate more horrible than death."

"Can you? can you? and will you do it?" cried the girl eagerly. "Oh! no; you cannot; he is your father! You have come to mock me."

"Anna, it is for you to say whether you will be saved or not. The angels have directed me to come to you; they will prepare the way for you to escape. Will you go?"

"Yes, yes; let us go at once."

"Wait," said Maggie, placing herself before the door; "have patience, or you will frustrate our plans."

"Yes, I know that I am watched," said Anna, "I know that it will be impossible for me to escape. I believe my brother would kill me were I to make the attempt."

"Would it not be better to die in that way than to take upon yourself vows from which your soul revolts?"

"Yes, oh! yes; and yet life is so sweet. This bright, green earth is so beautiful, and the flowers, the birds, and the ever-changing sky. Maggie, life never had as great a charm for me as now. Earth holds a treasure that far outrivals the brightest jewel in the heavenly kingdom. I do not want to die; and yet, O God! what shall I do? I cannot, will not be the wife of one from whom my soul shrinks with horror. Help me, Maggie, help me, and I will be your slave for life."

"I can and will, Anna. Be calm and listen to my words. At eight o'clock this morning a train leaves for the great city where I have been living. It is now seven: we have one hour. You must profess to have become reconciled to your fate; we will go down stairs, remain a few moments, then you will give Mrs. Brown to understand you are going with me to my father's. She does not know that I have been there this morning and will not think strange that you accompany me. We will take the road leading there, and as soon as out of sight, turn about and follow the highway to the depot, which we can reach in time to take the train. Once away from here, you are safe. You are not a minor, and your brother cannot compel you to return. I will procure employment for you, and you will be independent."

"I will do anything, anything in the world, only let me escape from here."

"Come, then," said Maggie, and the two girls descended

to the dining room, where Mrs. Brown was busy preparing for the guests expected to grace the wedding. She was surprised and delighted to find that Maggie had exerted such a favorable influence over the turbulent Anna, and made no objection to Anna's accompanying her, little thinking when she bade her good bye and directed her not to remain very long, as she would soon be needed, that she was looking her last upon Anna Brown.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WHERE IS MAGGIE?

DR. BRADWELL was much disturbed that he could not ascertain the reason of his wife's failing health. He felt that she was slowly but surely passing from him, and he was powerless to stay the current that was bearing her away. He had counseled with the most noted physicians of the city, but their united wisdom had failed to detect the cause or find a remedy for the mysterious disease preying upon her life. As a last hope, he had thought of Maggie Wild, and although he had never expressed great confidence in her clairvoyant power, yet his own experience convinced him that there was something in the manifestations of this power given through Maggie and Daisy that he could not solve. He had noticed Clara's agitation when he spoke of consulting Maggie, and attributed it to her jealous fears lest Maggie should gain a stronger hold upon his wife's regard than she possessed. Never for one moment did he imagine the real cause of Clara's dread of Maggie's arrival. Day after day, the doctor thought of Maggie, and stronger came the impression that she could detect the disease that had baffled the skill of eminent physicians. Finally he determined to visit Mrs. Spaulding and ascertain where Maggie could be found. Arriving at the house, he there found Harry Young and another gentleman engaged in earnest conversation with Mrs. Spaulding. He apologized for his intrusion.

"No intrusion, Dr. Bradwell," said Harry, rising and extending his hand. "We are glad that you called just at this time; the subject of our conversation may be of interest to you. Our friend Clarence was just relating a scene or vision, described by Maggie Wild just before she left here."

"I shall be very happy to hear what has been of so much interest to your friend and Mrs. Spaulding. It is a subject in which I am deeply interested, and I lose no opportunity to obtain facts in regard to spirit existence and the identity of spirits after death. Mrs. Spaulding, I see you are surprised at my words, and I must admit that my mind has undergone a complete change since I last conversed with you upon this subject, and I am here this evening for the express purpose of ascertaining the address of Miss Maggie Wild. I wish to consult her in relation to my wife's illness."

"Does she not improve?" asked Mrs. Spaulding. "She was resting the day I called and I would not allow her to be disturbed; but Clara informed me that she was improving."

"Clara was mistaken," said the doctor. "I have exhausted the skill of my profession, and as a last resort I have determined to apply to Maggie Wild."

"Maggie will help her, if help be possible," answered Mrs. Spaulding. "Dr. Bigelow has the most perfect confidence in her powers, and looks upon her as almost infallible. But why do you not consult the spirits controlling Daisy?"

"I have, but with very little satisfaction. She sees spirits and describes them with great accuracy, but when she attempts to locate disease she always fails."

"What has she told you in regard to your wife?"

"Only three things; that she must take no medicine,"

that Clara was an improper companion for her, and that she must go away from home."

"All good," replied Mrs. Spaulding. "Why do you not follow the directions?"

"Because, first, the medicine she takes is harmless; second, she refuses to be separated from Clara; and third, she has become so morbidly sensitive that she cannot endure the thought of going among strangers."

Mrs. Spaulding remained silent some moments, as if absorbed in thought, and then said:

"You are right, Dr. Bradwell. Maggie must be sent for; but I am quite sure that she will not consent to remain in the house with Clara. Would it not be best to speak to Clara of the propriety of returning to her home for a short time?"

"I cannot do it," he replied. Then as though conscious that he had betrayed the extent of the power she had acquired over him, he continued, "I had hoped that she and Forest would have been married before this time. I think the wedding will not be deferred much longer."

"If you wait for her to become the wife of Forest, you will wait a long time," said Harry. "I am certain that there is some dark secret in Forest's life, which he is too honorable to conceal from a companion, and too noble to disclose, lest another suffer for what he is alone guilty."

"I do not understand you," said Mrs. Spaulding. "Forest has always been a favorite of mine. I have known that his life has been saddened, but not that it has been darkened by crime."

"Perhaps I have said too much," said Harry. "Forest I respect and esteem. He has never given me his confidence, but I have reason to believe that there is a very dark page in his life history."

"Let this be as it may," said Dr. Bradwell, "if he does

not intend to make Clara his bride, why has he been so attentive to her?"

"I cannot explain his conduct," said Harry, "but this I do know: Clara Gordon will never be the wife of Forest. If the spirits have advised you to send her away, why not obey them? they are wiser than mortals. She should not remain in my house contrary to their advice."

"She has been a good friend to my wife, and I do not wish to appear ungrateful," responded the doctor.

"I would not care if she were an angel: if the spirits said go, she should obey," replied Harry.

"Take care, Harry; do not place too much confidence in the invisibles or you may have to repent it."

"Dr. Bradwell, I have but little opportunity to investigate this subject, but I have seen and heard enough to convince me that spirits can and do return, and further, I believe them true and trustworthy, and my object here to-night is to hear from Maggie Wild, that beautiful instrument upon whom the angels play. The description Clarence has given of his last interview with her has filled my soul with delight. I would hear these wonderful revelations from the world of spirits."

"That reminds me of my object in calling," said Dr. Bradwell. "Mrs. Spaulding, where can I find Maggie Wild? I will send for her at once, though I think that my friend Harry will lay claim to a share of her time and attention."

"I have not heard from her since she left me," said Mrs. Spaulding, "and have had great anxiety on her account. The spirits warned her of danger, and she deferred her departure in order to avoid it."

"Is it not possible that she is at Dr. Bigelow's?" asked Clarence.

"It is possible, although I think I should have heard from her, if there."

"I will go to the Cure to-morrow, and carry a letter or any message you may wish to send her."

"Thank you," said the doctor, "I will write, and if she is not there, Dr. Bigelow will forward the letter."

Accordingly he procured the requisite writing materials of Mrs. Spaulding, and seated himself at a small table to indite his letter.

"Would it not be as well to send the letter by mail?" asked Mrs. Spaulding.

"My dear lady, you cannot appreciate my anxiety to hear from my Lottie. My soul longs for her. I feel at times as though she were close to me, and yet I cannot see her, and once this evening while we were conversing, I thought I felt her hand upon my forehead. Believe me, my motive in going to the Cure is purely a selfish one. My religious adviser, Mr. West, has warned me to have nothing to do with what he terms a satanic power. As Lottie was not a professor of religion, he assures me that her soul is consigned to that terrible pit where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. I told him of her goodness, her purity, her truth; but he answered, that unless she had sought salvation through Christ, she was forever lost. I told him of her death, or rather the new birth, the passing from death unto life; he said it was but a device of Satan, who had secured her soul and was now attempting to gain control of mine. He quoted scripture to prove all of his assertions. For weeks and months I was under the control of this man's unyielding will. He is a second John Calvin; no mercy, no forgiveness in his soul; what he terms unyielding justice is his law, and woe to the individual who does not approach his standard of right. I told him of Maggie's mediumship and Lottie's promise to commune with me. At

first he denied the possibility of such communion, and assured me that Lottie was at that moment suffering the torments of hell, whence she could never be released. Constantly in this man's society, his dreadful words and dark influence so wrought upon me as to almost craze my senses. At last my deep love for Lottie conquered all, and making a desperate effort I threw off the bands that had bound me, and told him that I would find Maggie and seek for a communication from my dear betrothed. If she were in torments, I would share them: if God had consigned her pure soul to endless misery, I would curse him and fly from his presence. Better the company of Satan than that of a deity, who, having power to save, fiendishly doomed to perdition. I hated such a God, and would seek my Lottie, if in finding her I steeped my soul in the quenchless fires of hell."

"What did he say to that?" asked Harry, who had listened with breathless interest.

"That Satan had gained a temporary sway over me; that by the power of God, he could and would break it; I was one of his flock; he would go with me and watch over me."

"And he did come," added Mrs. Spaulding.

"Yes, but Maggie's vision pierced the disguise that he compelled me to wear. She gave him tests of spirit power, but which only intensified his hatred and anger so that he went away declaring that she should suffer for disobeying the scriptural law and holding communion with the dead."

"Do you think he would dare attempt to injure her?" asked Harry in an excited tone.

"Mr. West is a religious fanatic, and for his religion he would dare do anything."

"Let him attempt to injure a hair of her head and I will

send him where he belongs," said Harry, walking the floor with a rapid step.

"I shall keep my eyes upon him," responded Clarence. "One reason why I am so anxious to hear from Maggie is because Mr. West has been out of the city for the past week. I shall go to the Cure to-morrow."

"With your permission I will accompany you," said Harry.

Here Dr. Bradwell arose and handed Clarence the letter he had written, entreating him to see it delivered early as possible, then bidding them good evening, he took his departure. The other gentlemen following shortly after, Mrs. Spaulding was left alone to ponder upon what she had heard, a prey to alternate hopes and fears for the safety of her dear young friend, Maggie Wild.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CLARA UNMASKED.

THE next day, Mrs. Spaulding called upon Mrs. Bradwell. Clara received her coldly and gave no heed to her expressed wish to see the invalid; but Mrs. Spaulding persisted, and Clara in reply said that she had received orders to permit no one to enter the sick room. Mrs. Spaulding paid no attention to her words but proceeded directly to Mrs. Bradwell's apartment. She was shocked at the woeful change wrought in so brief a space: the once rounded figure so emaciated, the once blithe face white and almost expressionless, the vivacious gesture utterly vanished, and in its stead the listless inertness of hopelessness. She evinced neither surprise nor pleasure at sight of her old and tried friend, and, with a languid gesture of recognition, motioned her to a seat.

"You are very ill," said Mrs. Spaulding, taking the thin white hand in her own.

"Yes," was the laconic reply.

"But you will be better soon," continued Mrs. Spaulding. "Life has many charms for you; many pleasures await you, many sweets not yet tasted. You do not wish to die, Mrs. Bradwell?"

"Yes, yes I do," answered the weak voice of the invalid.

"You do not wish to leave home, friends, little Daisy, and your kind, affectionate husband?"

"Yes I do."

Mrs. Spaulding's kind heart was distressed. She felt that something must be done to rouse her from the torpor of indifference into which she had sunk.

"Do you suffer much pain?" she asked kindly.

"No." The transparent hand was laid upon the heart, and the faint voice continued: "The pain was terrible once, but my heart died and then the pain was gone. Mrs. Spaulding, do you know what it is to have a dead heart entombed in a living form?"

At these words, Clara, who stood behind Mrs. Bradwell's chair, placed her finger significantly upon her forehead. Mrs. Spaulding paid no attention to the insinuation, but continued her conversation with Mrs. Bradwell.

"Your heart is not dead, dear, it is only benumbed; your life is now like a flickering torch, but it will not go out and leave all you love in darkness. Your husband has sent for Maggie Wild: she will be here in a few days, and we have reason to hope she will restore you to health."

Mrs. Bradwell made no answer and seemed to take no interest in what had been spoken. Not so with Clara: she turned deathly pale, and the next instant the hot blood flushed her face, while her trembling hands were clasped upon her heart as if to still its tumultuous throbbings. Mrs. Spaulding's eyes were fixed upon her with a gaze that seemed to search the depths of her soul. Clara dared not leave the room, yet that moment she prayed that the earth would open and hide her from the eyes that were reading her heart of hearts.

"Maggie is a good girl," continued Mrs. Spaulding, her eyes still fixed upon Clara. "She has been blessed with a clearer vision than that of ordinary mortals; *she can tell the cause of your illness.*"

These last words were too much for Clara's guilty conscience. Trembling like a leaf, she fled from the room,

shutting the door after her with a violence that betrayed the strength of her agitation.

"I am very weary," said Mrs. Bradwell, leaning back and closing her eyes.

"Poor child!" said Mrs. Spaulding, "what can I do for you?"

Mrs. Bradwell made no reply, and for an hour Mrs. Spaulding sat silently communing with her own thoughts. At length, as Clara did not appear, she arose to take her departure, saying to herself:

"It is a terrible thought, and yet I am sure it is true. I will speak to Dr. Bradwell at once, and to-morrow I will return and never leave her again until she is safe."

Alas! that "to-morrow!" How often we defer doing our duty, waiting for a to-morrow which never comes! With a heart full of benevolence, Mrs. Spaulding went out with the intention of going to the doctor's office and revealing to him her suspicions.

Meanwhile Clara was alone in her own room.

"Baffled at last, baffled on the very eve of success, and that too by the woman whom I hate above all others. If Maggie Wild comes here, all will be discovered, and I—I—Great God! I will stand before the gaze of the world branded as a murderess! It shall not be! I have a brain to think, a hand to act, and a spirit to dare! Shall my ambition, my talents, my beauty, my life, be sacrificed for that miserable being down stairs? that listless, negative creature whom I can crush as I would a worm! Never, never! I have gone too far to retrace my steps, and I would not do so if I could. Yes, Maggie (how I hate her!) can detect what I have administered with the powders; but if Mrs. Bradwell is put out of the way at once, she will not be brought here. Here then is my chance to evade exposure. If done at once I will never be suspected.

After all, this is only prolonging my suspense. The quicker she goes the better for all. Dear Mrs. Bradwell," she continued in a sarcastic tone, "to-night I will give you the last powder you will ever take, and long before Maggie Wild returns, the grave will take charge of my secret."

Having thus determined her plan of action, she tried to compose herself. Vain were her efforts. She felt that she could not dare to again meet Mrs. Spaulding, and it was long after that lady left the house before she descended to Mrs. Bradwell's room.

When Mrs. Spaulding reached the doctor's office, it was vacant, and a notice left that he would be absent two or three hours.

"I cannot wait for him," she said; "to-morrow I will see him. Clara will not dare to take any sudden step."

Consoling herself with this reflection, she went home to make the necessary preparation to go on the morrow and remain with Mrs. Bradwell.

Dr. Bradwell, on the day referred to, returned later than usual. He went directly to his wife's room to find her more listless and indifferent than ever. To his questions regarding her health she only replied:

"I am weary: let me rest."

He sighed as he turned away, went to the window and looked out into the darkness.

"How different," thought he, "is this life from the one I had pictured for myself. Disappointment on all sides. I have drank the cup of bitterness to the very dregs."

While shrouded in these gloomy thoughts, Daisy came to him and taking his hand, said in her sweet childlike way:

"Papa, tea has been waiting this long, long time, and Clara is sitting in the dark. The shadows are thick around her to night, and she looks at me so strangely! I am afraid of her, papa."

"Afraid of so beautiful a lady as Clara!" said her father, as he took the child's hand and led her from the room. He could not see the shadows Daisy spoke of. Never had Clara appeared more brilliant and fascinating than upon that evening, and when she spoke of Mrs. Bradwell, it was with touching gentleness.

"I think she has not been as well to-day," she said, "it has been almost impossible to arouse her, but I trust that a good night's rest will revive her. I do not think she can remain in this condition much longer. She will be better in the morning. I will go and sit with her; possibly she may want some attention."

"Daisy and I will accompany you," said the doctor.

Soon all were seated in the room with the invalid. It was a cold cloudy night and as hour after hour passed, the conversation gradually ceased until profound silence reigned in the room. As the time drew near for Clara to administer to her helpless victim the fatal potion, she grew nervous with guilty fear, and would frequently start and tremble like a leaf. It seemed to her that the room was filled with whispering voices; that she felt every moment that the doctor and Daisy must hear them. Daisy had not been permitted to enter the sick room, except for a few moments each morning, since the time she had warned them that her mamma must take no medicine. Clara had said that Daisy was liable to have a spell at any time, and Mrs. Bradwell was too weak to endure such excitement. Clara had not only managed to keep Daisy from Mrs. Bradwell, but also from the society of her father; but this evening Daisy had pleaded so earnestly to remain with him that he could not refuse. Clara had watched her closely, intending to take her from the room at the first indication of any manifestation, if such was likely to occur, but the time passed on and no sign was given of the storm

that was soon to burst upon that house. Daisy was sitting on a low stool leaning against her father, her large eyes wide open, no sign of weariness upon her sweet face.

"Come, Daisy, it is getting late; you must go now," said the doctor.

"Oh! let me stay a little longer," entreated the child.

"It must be a very little longer," he answered. "You can remain while I prepare the powder that your mamma always takes at night."

"I will get it," said Clara, springing quickly to her feet, and the next moment she was out of the room.

"That was a narrow escape," she muttered. "Had he opened the paper all would have been lost. What could have possessed him to have thought of getting the powder! Mrs. Bradwell, sweet be thy dreams."

She again entered the room, and approaching the invalid, said:

"Mrs. Bradwell, here is your medicine."

Before Mrs. Bradwell extended her hand to receive it, Daisy sprung forward and dashed the glass to the floor.

"Treacherous, false-hearted woman!" cried the child, "how dare you glide like a serpent into what was once a bower of happiness and beauty? I will unmask your villainy. Dr. Bradwell," she said, turning to her father, "you have been warned time and again against the wiles of that woman. You have been told that she would turn your present happiness to dust and ashes. To this warning you have given no attention: you have been dazzled by her beauty; you invited her to your home: she has attempted to steal your affections from their rightful claimant, has destroyed your wife's peace of mind, and not content with this, would now take her life. To-night was to have finished the horrible work; that cup contained enough poison to have killed two strong men. We have said that

we would strike down the arm extended to do her ill, and we have fulfilled our promise. But look well to the future; the murderous hand may again be lifted, and we may be powerless to stay it."

While these words were being uttered, Clara stood like one suddenly turned to stone. The doctor was speechless and confounded, but Mrs. Bradwell seemed oblivious to what was going on around her.

"Woman," continued the child in a tone of terrible rebuke, "look at your work; see the beautiful form reduced to a mere skeleton; the heart broken, the senses benumbed, and life almost extinct! Murder is in your heart, its stain upon your soul, and only by years of remorse, and labor for the cause of human good, can you hope to expiate this fearful crime."

Here the child raised her right arm and pointed to the center of the room, and there, stood a tall, noble form clad in a loose flowing robe of what appeared to be purple velvet. His face was stern, and his clear eye showed a determined will. His broad collar was turned back, revealing a throat delicately beautiful as a woman's. In his right hand he held a GOLDEN KEY, in his left, a book with a golden clasp, richly inlaid with gems. Clara was struck with awe; she could not remove her eyes from this vision. Suddenly at his side appeared a shadowy form which grew plainer and more fully defined each moment until the form of Mrs. Loomis stood revealed to sight. She extended her right arm towards Clara and in a sharp, shrill voice uttered the word, "murderess!"

Clara fell to the floor as though struck by a sudden blow. Mrs. Bradwell started up and gazed wildly around the room. Daisy returned to her normal condition, and so rapidly had all this transpired that the doctor could scarcely tell whether it was reality, or a mere freak of the

imagination. But when he saw the broken glass, and the apparently lifeless form of Clara upon the floor, he realized the truth of the horrible revelation that had burst upon him, and dropping his head upon his hand he appeared like one who had been instantaneously deprived of thought and motion.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE DEDICATION.

WHEN Maggie arrived in the city she went directly to the Cure, hoping to provide a permanent home for Anna. Dr. Bigelow welcomed her return and consented to give Anna permanent employment. His kindness to Maggie had been doubly repaid; her advice and assistance had done much to establish the good reputation of the Cure. Mrs. Bigelow was compelled to admit this fact, and she not only received Maggie kindly, but united with her husband in trying to persuade her to remain with them.

"Remain with us; be as our child," said the doctor. "We will shield you from the storms of life, and you shall never want for home or friends."

Maggie promised to give them an answer the next morning. The Cure was indeed a home to Maggie, such as she had never before known. Its genial atmosphere, her hours of study and repose, were all inviting the homeless wanderer. Should she remain? This question she asked in the solitude of her room. "Come up higher," answered a sweet voice near, and she retired for the night with the firm conviction that she had not found her resting place. She tried to compose herself to sleep, but thoughts of the unknown future intruded themselves upon her.

"Oh! give me rest!" she sighed, and as if in answer to this, a calm and gentle influence stole sweetly over her senses; her spiritual eyes were opened, and she saw a great extent of country over which hung a dark and heavy

fog. The soil was thin and stony, but few shrubs and trees were visible; it was a bleak, desolate land. Through the fog she perceived men and women hurrying to and fro, evidently so deeply engaged in the pursuit of some object that they did not realize the condition of the place in which they dwelt. Above the fog and mist rising from the valley, she saw a group of spirits; they were gazing downward, watching the movements of some one in the busy throng below. Soon a slight form appeared, clothed in a light flowing robe. Her face was turned from Maggie, and she was so enshrouded by the denser atmosphere, that Maggie knew not upon whom she was looking. By the side of the lady was a large basket, made of fine silver wire, and filled with fine seed as bright as gold. Near the basket stood two spirits whose duty seemed to be to remove it from place to place and refill it as its shining contents were constantly diminished by the lady sowing the seed to the right and left. The hurrying throng paid little attention to this worker. Maggie watched her as she went on, apparently many, many miles, then she paused as if to rest, and looked back over the way she had passed. The seed had sunk into the ground, been moistened by the rain, warmed by the sun, and at last the spirit thereof had burst its bonds and was looking up through the dark soil. Now the men and women who had been so indifferent when the seed was sown, were busy in trying to mar or destroy the delicate plant. While the lady stood looking sadly upon this work of destruction, a crowd gathered about her, and she appeared to be reasoning with them, although Maggie could not hear her voice. Her words and gestures seemed to excite the hatred and arouse the malice of those by whom she was surrounded. Stones and pieces of wood were hurled at her. Maggie trembled with fear lest her life should be sacrificed to the fury of the mob.

Suddenly the group of spirits approached, and threw around the persecuted one a circle bright as the sun. They then placed themselves near, and slowly those who stood by the group of spirits became more quiet, the most turbulent fell back, and the lady pursued her way unharmed. On and on she went, still sowing the golden seed. Again she paused, and now she mounted a rude platform made of rough boards: the steps leading to it were frail, and Maggie noticed that they trembled beneath even the light step of this woman. Having reached the platform in safety, she again looked back over the path she had trod. The attempted work of destruction was still going on, but to her delight she perceived that they had not been able to destroy all the plants, many of them having grown strong and put forth green leaves. Again a multitude gathered around her, and seemed to listen to her words. Soon, however, a restlessness was manifested by the people, and they began to disperse, apparently making all the disturbance they could in retiring. A few individuals remained with her to the close of her address, and over the few was a soft golden light, that seemed to enfold them like a garment of beauty.

One from the group of spirits stepped forward and beckoned the lady to follow, and bidding farewell to those who had been with her, she again resumed her journey. On, still on, over hill and vale, ever engaged in the same work. At last Maggie saw the clouds lifting, and the fog rolling slowly away. The pilgrim had entered a large city, and guided by the spirits, she reached a magnificent temple, which Maggie perceived was filled with those whose faces evinced an anxiety to know the truth. There was a deep silence as the pilgrim entered the spacious hall and ascended the platform, as white and smooth as polished marble, whereupon was a small desk, enriched and adorned

with gems, and back of it a brilliant colored sofa, upon which were seated the spirits who had accompanied the traveler. Now for the first time the speaker stood face to face with Maggie, and to her amazement, in the stranger pilgrim she beheld herself!

Her travel-stained garments had been exchanged for spotless white, and around her were many of the angels she had seen in her celestial visions. Their pure magnetic influence, like a golden baptism, was falling upon her. She saw how these positive minds controlled her more negative organization, and could hear the words of truth and wisdom that fell from her lips. While viewing this scene, a voice said, "Look," and again the long weary way over which she had passed was revealed to her, but oh! how changed: the few clouds that still lingered over the valley, were transformed to visions of beauty, and far as her eye could reach, she could see the hills and valleys covered with beautiful flowers. They were white as purest snow, blue as Italian skies, purple as the amethyst, golden as the opal, crimson as the ruby; all tints and colors mingled, blending, then flashing out in the royal beauty of each. As she gazed, she saw men and women coming from every direction to gather the beautiful flowers, that had transformed the desert into a garden of beauty. She saw sad ones, depressed with cares and sorrows; but as they took the flowers and pressed them to their lips, their sorrows vanished and joy and gladness shone upon each countenance. There came also those who were steeped in crime; the shadows around them dark as midnight, the crimson stain upon their garments. But when they touched the pure white blossoms of truth, they saw their true condition, and a desire for a nobler life was awakened, the divine possibilities of their spirit were revealed to them, and through the influence of those ministering angels, they received

strength to cast from them the dark mantles that had shrouded the soul.

Maggie saw those who were holding in their hands idols they had worshiped. They too gathered flowers, their eyes were opened and they were freed from the worship of man-made gods. Here were the blind, the deaf, the sick in body and mind; each gathered of the flowers scattered all over the length and breadth of the land and heard the anthems of praise and the songs rejoicing ascending from the millions made glad and free by these angel truths.

The vision faded away, but its memory was indelibly stamped upon Maggie's soul. She knew that it was a glimpse of her work on earth, and felt a willingness to suffer persecution, if she could thus be an instrument through which the spirits could transmit principles to bless humanity and make man and woman politically, socially, and religiously free.

Maggie now had her answer for Dr. Bigelow. She felt that the angels had a higher, broader field of usefulness for her, and from that hour she dedicated herself to that work, determined to put aside all selfishness, taking the world for her home, *all* men and women as her brothers and sisters, having charity, kindness, and good will for all, nor blame nor rebuke for any. Her resolution was formed; she was at peace.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE ROSE-EMBOWERED COTTAGE.

THE morning following, according to her determination, Maggie told Dr. Bigelow and his wife of her vision, and concluded by saying:

"You see, my friends, I cannot remain with you."

"Yes, I have long felt that there was a greater work for you," said the doctor, "but I was sufficiently selfish to wish to retain you in my home. But I now see that it is wrong to attempt to keep you from the field of usefulness to which you have been called. What are your plans for the future? Can we do anything to forward them?"

"I have no plans; I rely implicitly upon the guidance of a higher power. I realize that a great revolution is pending in the religious world. There will be a terrible struggle between truth and error, both in the political world and the religious. A new dispensation is to be ushered in, a mighty work accomplished, and we are the instruments by which a Divine Mind is to carry forward the work. I shall passively and trustfully await the commands of those who have deemed me worthy to labor with them."

"You have great faith in the spirits," said Mrs. Bigelow; "I do not think I could trust them so fully."

"I have tested their wisdom and power and have no fears in yielding myself to their guidance," replied Maggie.

"Well, it may be you are right, but I doubt the pro-

priety of the course you are taking. I think you and the doctor are becoming fanatical. I shall watch closely to see if the spirits prepare the way for you to enter this new life of which you speak."

As Mrs. Bigelow ceased speaking, Harry Young and Clarence were announced. They expressed pleasure in again meeting with Maggie, and as soon as their greeting was over, Clarence gave to Maggie Dr. Bradwell's letter. She hastily glanced at its contents, then handed it to Mrs. Bigelow, saying:

"You see my confidence has not been misplaced: already they have prepared the way for me."

Mrs. Bigelow was astonished at this unexpected call. She said, as she handed the letter to her husband:

"I must admit this looks as though the angels had charge of you."

"Can you return to the city with us?" asked Clarence. "Dr. Bradwell is very anxious that you should see his wife, and I need not tell you how much Mrs. Spaulding desires your presence."

"I will go," replied Maggie.

"Not to-day," said Dr. Bigelow, "wait until to-morrow, and this evening we will invoke the presence of the angels. It seems a long time since we have communed with them, and I have no doubt that this gentleman would enjoy it. It is possible that the gentle Lottie may return and speak to Clarence."

"We should gladly receive anything that could be given us from spirit life," said Harry. "My friend Clarence has been very anxious to have another sitting with Maggie, and I have become so deeply interested in this subject, that I would be willing to sacrifice much for the pleasure of an evening such as you speak of."

"Then it is settled," said Maggie. "I will make my

preparations to-day for an early start in the morning, so as to reach the city in the evening."

Maggie then excused herself and sought Anna, to whom she made known the arrangement that had been decided upon. Anna disliked to be left alone among entire strangers but could not object, and lent a willing hand to assist in preparing for the journey. The hours passed rapidly, and Maggie thought it one of the shortest days of her life. Evening spread her gray mantle over the earth, the distant stars looked down from their golden thrones. It was a clear cold evening, and as Maggie looked out into the silvery moonlight, she thought the Cure had never before appeared so homelike, so peaceful.

Dr. Bigelow, his wife, Harry Young, Clarence, and Maggie were seated in the pleasant and secluded room where Maggie had received and examined so many patients, and where she had delighted and charmed her kind friend, the doctor, by her brief but profound discourses, and the glimpses she had given him of the life beyond. Here they were assembled once more, waiting for some sign or token from the invisibles.

"They are coming," said Maggie. "Clarence, here is the tall spirit that I saw when Lottie first appeared to you. He stands behind the silver veil that I then described. He puts it aside and draws near; now he is holding up the great GOLDEN KEY. Hark! he is about to speak to us."

All was silence for a few moments; then Maggie was thrown into a deep trance, and rising to her feet with the air of one accustomed to command, she said:

"Life would be of little value were it not to be continued beyond the material plane of existence, therefore a knowledge of the existence and condition of that life becomes of the greatest importance to all. It is easy to prove beyond a doubt the continued existence of individu-

alized spirits, but not so easy to prove to the majority of minds the probability, possibility, and reality of the existence of a spirit world of real substance, having form and location, being to this earth what the spirit body is to the material form. Yet such a world does exist, inhabited by those who once occupied material forms. To give you information in regard to the locality of that realm, and life as it is in those higher departments of the great temple, I bring this GOLDEN KEY and place it in charge of the medium through whom I speak. It will enable her to look beyond the veil and give her power to solve many of the mysteries of that region into which a few prophets and seers in all ages have been permitted to look. This knowledge will come closely connected with those who are near and dear to you" (here she placed her hand upon the shoulder of Clarence) "and to others who will be present to receive these revelations."

A convulsive shudder passed over the medium, and the influence was partially withdrawn. Resuming her seat Maggie said:

"I am myself and yet not myself; like one who said, 'whether in the body or out of the body I know not.' I am conscious of the presence of all in this room, yet I do not see one of you. I know that I possess a physical body, yet seem to be separated from it. I see the GOLDEN KEY but do not see the hand sustaining it. Before me is the ponderous door which I described on a former occasion. I remember this key unlocked it when in the hands of another. Will it do the same for me? I will try. How easily the great lock turns and now the door stands not 'ajar' but wide, wide open.

"I see the same beautiful stream over which the spirits passed. How bright are the particles of which it is composed! it is finer, brighter, purer than water; it is a fluid

and yet every particle is as distinct as would be a drop of water separated from the great body. Now I have stepped into the stream. I can see myself; an irresistible power bears me over this magnetic stream. On and on through space! I see no sign of habitation; beneath and around is this boundless sea, and above are starry worlds, blazing with a brilliancy unseen from earth. There are many light barks upon this ocean, and many spirits who are, like myself, gliding over its surface. I realize that I am with them and yet not one of them. They look at me with curious eyes, yet no one of them attempts to approach me. On I fly with the speed of thought! Can it be that this is what is called the river of death? if so, the world has made a great mistake in describing it as a dark and angry tide. I wish that I could give you a definite idea of the vast extent of its waters. One feels so small, so insignificant when moving over their bright expanse, with suns and systems of suns blazing above. I am like a cloudlet, borne on by a power that I can neither comprehend nor resist, and yet amid all this vastness, comes the thought that the soul is superior to all these. It shall live on and climb the stairway of progression when those fiery orbs have performed their mission and gone back to their native elements. I am approaching land, or what appears like a bright belt of shining gold. The air is filled with waves of melody, and now what a glorious scene bursts upon my vision!

“Oh! how cold seems earthly language
When we would these scenes portray;
'Tis only words of angel music,
That their glory can convey.

“Every dancing wave is singing
As it meets the golden strand;
Every quivering leaf is murmuring
The praises of our Summer-Land.

“A glorious place! the landscape is covered with tall, symmetrical trees, whose long feathery branches sway gracefully in the breeze. Mosses and grasses are of the finest texture, so fine that they appear like the richest velvet. The mosses and grasses are of different shades, from the darkest green to the fainter tint, interblended with flowers of every hue, arranged with great skill and so grouped as to bring out their beauty of shape and color, and lighten by contrast. Here are delicate vines twining themselves around the trees, transforming their dark trunks into pillars of living green. Birds of every hue flit among the branches and join their notes of song with the melody of the waves. Now I see PEARL. She beckons to me and I follow her down a broad avenue shaded by beautiful trees and carpeted by soft mosses of varying shades, which appear as if cut in diamonds and laid with great care and precision. PEARL smiles upon me, but does not approach. Where am I going? Oh! I see she is conducting me to that little cottage on the hill. What a gem of beauty! the ground about it is terraced and sodded by mosses of green and gold, and beautified by choice flowers. The house is half hidden by the graceful leaves that almost meet above and around it. You will hardly believe me when I tell you that the cottage is formed entirely of vines, mosses, and roses. The most delicate leaves and most brilliant colored flowers, the fairest, sweetest buds, the brightest tints and forms of earth, grow dim when compared with this world of beauty. As I pass through the flower encircled doorway, a white moss rosebud touches my

cheek, and strange to say, its touch is as real as anything on this earth.

“Within this cottage is a neatly furnished apartment; there being no display of wealth, but neatness and natural beauty. The carpet is soft and rich; the pictures, copies from nature; the furniture of rustic style; the soft curtains of snowy white looped back with sprays of buds; flowers within and without on every hand; and there upon a low couch reclines a sweet bud that has just been transplanted from earth to bloom in this paradise of the angels. I look more closely and I see that it is Lottie. By her side is her mother, and at a little distance are PEARL and the same group of spirits who returned to earth with Lottie. They are speaking: how sweet, how melodious are their voices! like the sweet music of the lute, or the low murmuring of the ocean shell. How harsh my voice seems in comparison with theirs. Clarence, this is Lottie’s home. When her spirit broke the fetters that chained it to earth, and rose through the murky atmosphere that surrounded the city, it was conducted by waiting friends to this arbor of repose. Here, beneath the smiles of the Infinite, and with the tender, loving care of angels, she has grown stronger day by day, and will from time to time, as opportunity offers, give you a history of her life in the spheres.

“Now PEARL beckons me away. Would that I could stay! Why should I return to the cold chilling atmosphere of earth? PEARL, beautiful angel of light, oh! snap the thread that binds my spirit to the material form, and let me remain with Lottie. Where, oh! where is my mother, my sister? PEARL! send me not back to earth. She makes answer: ‘Go! perform the duty that angels have given you to do. Earn the crown before you seek to wear it. Stay until you realize that you have a right to a home in the house not made by hands. Give to others

what has been and shall be so freely given to you, always remembering that the crown of thorns shall be transformed to a chaplet of immortal beauty. Go, and be happy that you have been considered worthy to hold the GOLDEN KEY, and to look beyond the veil that conceals the spiritual from the material world.

“Go, sing to the faint and the weary,
Till the hills shall re-echo the sound,
Till down in that cold world of darkness
No sad weary heart can be found.

Go, be true to those who have chosen you to aid in the great work of giving light to them who sit in darkness. Farewell!’ and slowly PEARL vanishes from my sight.”

Maggie paused, and after the lapse of some moments, said:

“I am back again, but how I returned I cannot tell. I seemed to lose consciousness when PEARL left me. I see the tall spirit again. He has taken the GOLDEN KEY and fastened it in his girdle. The spell is broken, and I am Maggie Wild once more.”

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PLOTTER STILL AT WORK.

CONSCIOUSNESS returned to Clara Gordon, and with it the recollection of the disclosure of her crime. The first thought that took possession of her mind was to flee from the sight of him in whose eyes she felt that she was forever disgraced. Oh! that death would come. All her ambitious dreams vanished; a frantic yearning possessed her to blot out her very existence, to forget herself, to lose identity in the whirlpool of utter annihilation. But she lived; death would not stretch forth his hand to release her from the net woven around her by her own hand.

"There is but one door of escape," thought she; "it is to take my own life. I will do it! In life or in death I will triumph!"

Slowly she raised her head from the floor and glanced around the room. Dr. Bradwell had the appearance of being under the influence of some powerful drug, and Daisy had climbed into the great easy chair, and, all unconscious of the scene in which she had taken such an active part, had fallen into a sweet and gentle slumber. Clara arose, with cautious movement, from the floor, and noiselessly glided from the room. She almost flew through the darkness until she reached her own apartment. She was a coward, and conscious that the house was filled with invisible intelligences who could read the secret of her heart, she trembled with apprehension. Her room was brilliantly lighted, but she imagined that dark forms were lurking in

its shaded corners, and whispering voices taunting her with failure. She would have returned to Mrs. Bradwell's room had she dared to do so. Her own was distant from any occupied by the family, and during the long hours of that awful night, she more than realized the fabled tortures of a lost soul.

"I will not longer endure this," she muttered, "I will address a letter to him, asserting my innocence, and calling upon God to witness that I never so much as dreamed of the terrible crime with which I have been charged. Then will I call to my aid this faithful friend which has not left me for months." With these words she took from a small box a little vial, gazed upon it as though it were indeed her last hope. "I shall not linger to suffer as *she* has; one drop of this, and before morning I shall be—"

"Where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," said a voice near by.

Clara sprung from the chair and crouched in the corner of the room, her great black eyes gazing wildly into vacancy whence seemed to issue the fearful voice. One, two hours passed, yet Clara moved not. The fire languished and the chill night air crept into the room: she was benumbed with cold and cramped with weariness of the posture she had so long maintained. At last, summoning all her strength, she arose, stole forward, and replenished the fire, and drawing up an easy chair, she sat down in front of the grate. With the effort, a great change seemed to take possession of her. The tremor of fear vanished; she was calm, her movements slow and precise. There was, however, a peculiar expression of the eye which had never been there before.

"I have no need of these now," she said, closing the writing desk and turning the key. "I was mad to think of taking my own life. If death were the end, it were well

to hide my guilt, shame, and despair in the gloom of the grave, and thwart the powers of retribution. But, hapless that I am, death is not the extinguisher of existence.

“A change of state, however great,
Can never change the soul within,
Nor bring the dove of peace and love,
Nor cleanse the heart from sin.

“Who shrinks from pain and breaks the chain
That binds him to this life,
Can hope to find no quiet mind
On the shores of the higher life.

There is no annihilation, no getting away from self, no bettering of conditions by rushing rashly into the mysterious, unknown hereafter. Surely it must have been those imps of darkness that put the thought of suicide into my mind. They are impatient for their prey, and have come to torment me before my time. Once I did not believe in the existence of God. I mocked at the Christian religion. The theory of future rewards and punishments was romance to me. Now I know that it is true, but the knowledge comes too late. I have given my soul to Satan. I have committed murder in my heart, and I know that the powers of evil are even now in my room. I am not terrified now, for am I not strong? and have I not many years to live? I have rivaled the daring, the skill, the ingeniousness of the powers of darkness, and I cease to fear them. Come what will, I shall not die. I will live and grasp all the pleasure this world can give.”

“After death comes the judgment,” said a voice that had previously spoken.

“I will be ready for it,” Clara responded, drawing her form up to its full height and crossing her arms upon her

chest. "This is my hour," she continued, speaking slowly and with dread distinctness. "Leave me until it is over, then I will grace your triumphal car."

She ceased speaking, resumed her seat. There she remained until the gray light of morning entered her room. Then rising, she arranged her toilet with much care, took from the wardrobe her rich dresses, folded and placed them in her trunk, then proceeded to gather up the various articles belonging to her. Just as she had completed her arrangements, the breakfast bell called. Going to a small box, she took from it a handsome pin, the last gift of Mrs. Bradwell, with it she fastened her collar, and slipping upon her finger a plain gold ring, another gift from the wronged wife, she descended to the breakfast room. Clara was deathly pale, but never had she looked more a queen than upon that morning. Her hair was braided in heavy bands and gracefully wound around her shapely head, her dark eyes spoke sadness.

As Dr. Bradwell entered the room, Clara bowed with a stately grace, and without a word took her accustomed place at the table. He was silent during the meal, his face wearing a stern and unrelenting expression. After breakfast, requesting an interview with her, he led the way to the parlor. Having closed the door after their entrance, turning to her, he said:

"Miss Gordon, after the scene of last night, you must be aware that I cannot consent to your remaining longer in my house."

"Dr. Bradwell," answered Clara, standing before him with the pride of a queen, and speaking in the voice of one who had been greatly injured, "I certainly shall not remain longer in your house. The mere fact that you would give credence to what has been said by one you have never seen and do not know, be it angel of light or demon of darkness,

whose object is to blast my happiness and ruin me in the estimation of my best friends, this alone is sufficient to sunder us forever. This invisible being comes to you, and at once you are willing to listen to his assertions and believe me guilty of a crime, the thought of which would check the blood-current in my veins. Indeed so terrible was the effect upon me, that in the madness of the hour, I was nearly driven to take my own life, and was only prevented by the thought that *you* would always believe me guilty. Dr. Bradwell, look at me; see this pin, this ring, the last gifts of that pure and lovely woman, your wife, the gifts of her I love as I never loved a friend before. Day and night I have watched by her side and ministered to her wants until she has become dearer to me than my life. Think you that I could wear these testimonials of her love if I had cherished a thought of the crime with which I am charged? Dr. Bradwell, I declare in the presence of God and angels that I am innocent. Your eyes look coldly upon me, your voice is harsh and stern, but I know that in your heart you believe me innocent. I do not know what proof you may find of my seeming guilt. I do not know what these demons are capable of doing. If they have organs of speech, they have hands to act, and what is to prevent their administering poison if their malice so dictates? You know that Mrs. Loomis is leagued with these diabolical powers; as they had before enabled her to appear in two places at the same moment, so had they power to permit her to enter our presence invisible until it suited her purpose to unveil herself. You and I saw her, we heard her speak; if she could do this, how easy for her hand to drug the medicine that I administered to your wife! Oh! it makes my blood chill to think of the plot which that woman, with her diabolical fiends, has sought to lay for my destruction."

Dr. Bradwell listened to Clara with the closest attention. Slowly his stern features relaxed and a look of amazed bewilderment came over his face. Clara saw the effect of her words and continued:

"I have spent the night in thinking of the possibility and probability of what I have alluded to, and I have come to the conclusion that Mrs. Loomis should be secured, at least until you have an opportunity to judge whether my suspicions are correct."

"If," he responded, "it be true that this is the work of evil spirits, why did they not carry out their plan?"

Without a moment's hesitation, Clara answered, "Probably they read my thoughts. For several days past, while preparing the medicine, I have felt something like a hot breath passing over my hand, and last evening it was so strong as to cause me almost to drop the glass. Then, for the first time, I mistrusted evil, and determined to speak to you about it as soon as Daisy retired. Probably the spirits saw that they were to be foiled and thought to accuse me of the crime they were seeking to perpetrate. Dr. Bradwell, I have lived a century in the last twenty-four hours; I have suffered more than language can express, but the bitterest pang, the keenest sorrow, were in the thought that *you* were so willing to condemn me."

Clara dropped her head and the tears rolled silently down her cheeks.

"Clara! Clara! forgive me if I have wronged you. I was almost insane last night, and little better now. God knows I would do you no wrong, but when you recall the scene through which we passed you cannot blame me."

"I do not blame you, but it was cruel, oh! so cruel," she sobbed, "to accuse me, above all others in the world, me—who love her so devotedly!" Here she raised the ring to her lips, then wiping the tears from her eyes, she

continued in a broken voice, "Dr. Bradwell, I have made every arrangement to leave your home, but I cannot go with this terrible shadow over my heart. Say that you trust me as before this happened, and all other sorrow will be as nothing. I go, but shall return, and all will be explained. Say that you believe it."

"I cannot believe you guilty," he replied; "it must be as you say. I shall spare no pains to detect the guilty parties."

"Oh! thanks! thanks! Now I can breathe freely, the weight of this horrible suspicion lifted from my heart. One word more before I go, that is, look well to Mrs. Loomis. I feel sure that she is in some way connected with this affair. Farewell! I shall see you no more until I can prove my innocence."

"I have but one request to make," said the doctor in a half hesitating manner, "it is that you will not see Mrs. Bradwell to bid her good-bye."

"You do not trust me," said Clara, the hot blood rushing to cheek and brow.

He was embarrassed, and, before he could collect his thoughts to frame a reply, Clara was gone.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PROOF OF GUILT.

SOON after Clara's departure, Mrs. Spaulding was announced. She entered the parlor and confided to Dr. Bradwell her suspicions of Clara, concluding with the advice:

"Doctor, send her away."

"She has gone," he replied.

"Gone! where? when?"

"She left this morning. I do not know her place of destination. We will speak of her no more; and above all, do not name her in the presence of my wife, whose condition is very critical."

He could not bring himself to speak of the scene through which he had passed the night before, nor of the accusation that had been so boldly charged upon Clara.

"Should Maggie Wild arrive to-day," he continued, "you will please not refer to this subject, as I wish to test her clairvoyant powers."

"I shall not mention Clara's name to her," replied Mrs. Spaulding, rising to accompany him to Mrs. Bradwell's room. She found her friend lying motionless as a corpse. She opened her eyes and looked at Mrs. Spaulding, but gave no sign of recognition. All that day she remained with the doctor by the invalid's side, trying to revive the spark of life so nearly extinguished. Towards evening Mrs. Bradwell appeared better, but there was a vacant look in the eyes that proved conclusively how weakened and shattered was the mind. Late in the evening Clarence and Maggie arrived, but Maggie was too much

fatigued to visit the sick room that night. The next morning the doctor invited her into the parlor, when the following conversation ensued.

"Miss Wild, I am a believer in the existence of spirits and their power to return to earth. Whether good or evil, whether their object in returning be high and noble or low and vile, whether communion with them is refining or demoralizing, are questions not to my mind satisfactorily solved. I have had some experience in spiritual manifestations in my own family, and I do not doubt your power to see and communicate with the departed; but you possess another gift of which I have heard much. I sent for you for the purpose of having you, if possible, ascertain the cause of Mrs. Bradwell's sickness. If you can do so, you will not only ensure my gratitude, but be amply compensated for your services. But before we enter her room I desire you to give me a solemn promise that whatever you may see or hear you will never disclose."

Maggie fixed her truthful eyes upon his face and replied:

"I can make no such promise: whatever I may receive that can benefit the world, the world must have."

"You do not understand me," he replied. "Should you discover anything in regard to an individual that you felt would bring disgrace if revealed, and result in no benefit—"

"Then my lips would be forever sealed," quietly replied Maggie.

"It is enough," he said, "I am satisfied. Come."

And he led the way to Mrs. Bradwell's room.

Mrs. Spaulding had requested that she might have the privilege of being present at this clairvoyant examination, but the doctor had replied:

"I prefer to have no one near but myself and wife."

He knew not what might be said or done, and he deter-

mined that no one should hear Clara accused of the crime of intended murder. On entering Mrs. Bradwell's room, Maggie passed into the magnetic state, and commenced an examination of the patient before her. Her symptoms were all correctly given.

"But the cause, the cause!" urged the doctor in an excited, impatient voice.

Maggie for some moments was silent, during which a look of intense anxiety and bewildered astonishment came over her face. At last she said:

"There can be no mistake; I find poison. It seems to have been given in small quantities. It has had a powerful influence upon the brain, which it seems almost to have paralyzed."

"The remedy, the remedy!" cried the doctor. "Is there anything that will restore her to health?"

"She will live," replied Maggie.

She then gave directions as to the remedies to be used in restoring the patient. He listened attentively, and recorded the directions as given. When she ceased speaking, he said:

"You are sure she will live?"

"Yes, but her mind will never be as strong as before."

"One more question," said the doctor, and rising, he walked hastily up and down the room, and seemed to be trying to speak what his lips were reluctant to utter. "Can you—that is—do you—do you see—" Then, as if ashamed of his stammering confusion, he at last spoke out boldly: "Can you see who administered the poison?"

"I see spirits in the room, and Daisy and you, Doctor."

"I know, I know!" said the doctor excitedly.

"Be quiet," said Maggie, and then she related the scene of the night previous. It was evident that the doctor suffered intensely during the recital.

Maggie then related what transpired in Clara's room, and ended by saying: "Clara Gordon prepared and administered the drug that so nearly proved fatal."

"Are you sure of this?"

"If you want proof," said Maggie, "go to her room, search the under drawer of the bureau, and you will see there a small box, which in the hurry of leaving, she has forgotten. It is locked, but you can open it, and there you will find proof of her guilt."

"Can it be?" he muttered in a voice hoarse with agitation. "Yes, yes, it must be true." And again came to his face the hard, stern look. "That is all which it is necessary to give," he said addressing the clairvoyant, "I did not know but it was possible that evil spirits had something to do with this."

"I can see none beside Clara implicated in this plot," replied Maggie.

"Her object?"

"That I cannot tell, as I am not sufficiently in sympathy with her to read her thoughts clearly."

Maggie immediately after became fully entranced by a spirit who claimed to have been present the night before. He chided the doctor for thinking for a moment that spirits would return to earth to destroy his happiness and take the life of his innocent companion. In allusion to Clara, he said that he had long tried to give warning of the danger he saw surely approaching, that he could not control Daisy, and that this was the first opportunity he had ever secured of speaking freely. He told him to have confidence in the spirits who were watching over his household, to cherish the sacred gift of mediumship in Daisy, to give heed to the directions of their guardian spirits, and he would thus avoid much trouble in the future. "Your wife," continued the spirit, "will recover, but never be as

before. Do not reproach yourself, for you have done what you thought best."

"And Clara?" queried the doctor, in a trembling voice, "what course shall I pursue in regard to her? Shall I bring her to justice?"

"Leave her in the hands of a higher power. God's eternal laws hold her in their unyielding grasp. Her punishment will be severe enough. Keep a knowledge of her guilt from the world."

The spirit then withdrew, leaving the doctor in a much better frame of mind than before. He seized the first opportunity to search in Clara's room for the box that had been described. He found it, and breaking the lock, discovered that he had received an accurate description of the contents. There was the poison from which Clara had given to his wife, and also the tiny vial procured, in case of emergency, for her own use. This box Clara had intended to destroy before she left the house, but her interview with the doctor, and his refusal to allow her to see his wife, had so confounded her, that in her anxiety and haste to depart, she forgot the box, and now it had become evidence indisputable of her crime.

"Wretched woman!" he exclaimed, "I pray to my God that you may never again cross my path."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MRS. LOOMIS.

MRS. SPAULDING and her young friend had been inmates of Dr. Bradwell's house about eight or ten days. Mrs. Spaulding found that her failing strength would not permit her longer to take charge of Mrs. Bradwell, and Maggie's sensitive nature was greatly depressed by the impenetrable gloom that shadowed the house.

"I must go home, and you shall accompany me," said Mrs. Spaulding. "I have not been as well as usual this winter, and I feel that the care and anxiety consequent upon attendance on Mrs. Bradwell have been too much for my strength, and although you, Maggie, do not complain, I see that you cannot resist the depressing influence here. You are now in my charge, and I feel that I should not be doing my duty were I to permit you to remain and thus unfit yourself for the duties before you. Here comes Dr. Bradwell. I will mention to him the necessity of change. His wife is so much better that I think she can with safety be confided to the charge of an experienced nurse."

"You know that I urged your having assistance when you first came here," said Dr. Bradwell after Mrs. Spaulding had laid the case before him.

"Yes, but I objected because I disliked to have her entrusted to the care of a stranger; but she is so much improved that I think now there can be no danger in doing so."

"The difficulty is where to obtain an efficient and trustworthy woman," said the doctor

"When Mrs. Anthony's little girl was here last evening," said Maggie, "she told me that her sister had been very ill, and that they had such a good nurse to take care of her. She heard their physician say that the woman had done more than the medicine to restore her sister to health."

"Is she still there?"

"The child said she was to leave to-day."

"I will call and see her, and if possible engage her to take charge of Mrs. Bradwell."

With this remark, the doctor left the ladies and proceeded at once to the house of his neighbor. He found, upon his arrival, that the lady and her daughter were not at home, and he was told by the housekeeper that the nurse had left, but would return at noon.

"What is her name?" was his next inquiry.

The housekeeper could not recall the name, but was lavish of commendations of the individual who bore it.

"You think she has no engagement?"

"She has had many calls, but said she had not promised to go anywhere. But I think she would go to attend your wife if you solicited her. She likes this neighborhood, and many a time I have seen her standing by the window looking toward your house, and when I asked her why she looked in that direction so often, she answered that there was something about it that recalled events of her own life. Then she would try to choke back the sobs that would come."

"If she is subject to such depression of spirits, I do not consider that she would be a proper companion for an invalid," said the doctor.

"She is always cheerful in the sick room. It is only when she believes herself to be alone that she yields to such feelings."

"Well, if she is willing to come and take charge of Mrs. Bradwell, send her to my house as soon as she returns."

"Yes, sir, I am sure she will go," said the housekeeper, and the doctor withdrew to inform Mrs. Spaulding and Maggie of his success.

"I am very glad," he said, "that you are willing to have another take your place, for I know that you have over-taxed yourself. I shall miss your society, but for your sake I am glad of the change. Mrs. Spaulding, shall I order your carriage? A ride in the morning air will do you both good, and I will remain until the nurse arrives."

To this arrangement Mrs. Spaulding assented, and soon after bade Mrs. Bradwell adieu, and, accompanied by Maggie, returned to her own quiet home. Mrs. Bradwell was able to sit up, but still retained her languid, indifferent demeanor to all around her. She had not even once inquired for Clara; her very existence seemed forgotten. Her husband, who had ever received her heart's deepest devotion, was treated as only a passing acquaintance. It was impossible to engage her in conversation. His hope was, that as she gained strength of body, she would recover the powers of her mind. His attention was unremitting, and every thing that kindness could suggest was obtained for her, for from the time of Clara's departure, he had neglected all business and devoted himself wholly to his invalid wife.

On the morning of which we write, he was sitting alone, absorbed in reverie. Very weary of life was he, and as the hours dragged slowly on while he awaited the arrival of the expected attendant, his spirits sunk to the lowest plane of despondency.

"Why should I live?" he mused; "life for me has no blessings. Oh! that I could forget all in the silence of the grave!"

His gloomy musings were interrupted by the announcement of a stranger, who desired his immediate attendance upon a gentleman who had been very suddenly taken ill.

"It is but a few steps," he urged, seeing the doctor hesitate, "it will not detain you long."

Stepping into the next room, the doctor gave some directions in regard to his wife, adding:

"I am expecting a woman to take charge of her. Should she arrive before my return, show her up to Mrs. Bradwell's room."

Having given these directions, he announced himself ready to go with the stranger.

Soon after his departure, the nurse arrived, whom no doubt the reader has recognized as Mrs. Loomis, who according to directions was conducted to the room of the invalid. Mrs. Bradwell seemed to have no recollection of her, and received her with the same indifference that she manifested toward all others. But when Mrs. Loomis passed her hand over the invalid's brow, and in gentle, loving words talked to her of the bright future that awaited her, the silent tears flowed over her pale cheeks, and looking into the face of her new attendant, she said:

"You are good, very good and kind. I think I have seen your face sometime in my dreams, but you must not talk to me of the future. See, you have made me weep; these are the first tears I have shed for many months."

"It will do you good to weep; it will relieve your poor sad heart. I *must* talk to you of the future: you are to regain your health and strength and be happy—happier than you have ever been before."

"Happy, happy!" said Mrs. Bradwell. "No, no, I shall never be happy again; the sunshine of love has vanished, and my heart is frozen."

"It is winter now, but the sweet birds of spring will

return and sing in the garden of your soul," said Mrs. Loomis.

"No, no, it cannot be; the great icy glaciers of distrust stand there; the snow lies thick where once the flowers of trust and love bloomed so beautifully. Do not talk to me any more," she said, putting out her hand toward Mrs. Loomis, "but stay near me, very near me; let me hold your hand; do not go away when *he* comes. I am always so cold, and when he comes near I shiver from head to foot. Don't leave me, and by and by I will tell you how my heart died and was buried in the snow drift."

Mrs. Bradwell ceased speaking and Mrs. Loomis made no further attempt to draw her into conversation. The hours passed on, and late in the afternoon Dr. Bradwell returned and went directly to his wife's room. As he neared the door, a low murmuring sound reached his ear. Looking through the partly open door, he beheld a scene never to be forgotten. Mrs. Bradwell was resting upon a low couch, her eyes closed, and apparently she was in a profound and peaceful slumber. On the floor by the side of the couch knelt Mrs. Loomis. Her face was turned partly from the door, she was looking intently upon the sleeper with such an expression of tenderness and pity as an angel might wear when looking down upon the sorrows of earth. Her hands were clasped, and in a low pleading voice she was uttering one of those deep, earnest prayers that can be uttered only by those who have themselves suffered. She prayed not for herself, but for the suffering one before her.

"O Father God! give her life. Take me if thou wilt, for I am but a withered leaf, drifting upon the sea of existence. Take me, but oh! spare her; restore her confidence, her love. Oh! give her back to him whose happiness depends upon her; compel him not to drink of this

last bitter cup. Guardian angels, spirits of the departed, strike me to the earth, drink my life blood if you will, but oh! for his sake, spare, and restore her to health. If she be taken, the lamp of his life will go out in darkness. Angels, you have the power; come and do for him what these feeble hands cannot do."

Long and earnestly she continued thus to supplicate, till the inadvertent listener, overcome by his feelings, turned noiselessly from the door and sought another room, that he might control himself before meeting one whom he little dreamed would ever again find shelter beneath his roof.

"It is Mrs. Loomis, Mrs. Loomis," he repeated; "she whom I despised and drove from my house. She comes to me in my sorrow and despair, she soothes my wife into the sweetest slumber she has known for weeks, she pleads with God and angels to restore that wife, always saying for *his* sake, for *his* happiness. Who is she? and why does she plead so earnestly for me? I am like one walking in a dream; I can scarcely tell the real from the visionary; but one thing is certain, Mrs. Loomis is here. I should have been dismayed had I not seen her thus, and heard the deep utterances of her spirit. Even now I am not sure that she is really here: it may be that she has only appeared to vanish again as many times before. I will go and see."

Retracing his steps, he again stood in the presence of Mrs. Loomis. She was now sitting by the side of the invalid, making magnetic passes over the weary brain of the sleeper. As he entered, she arose with perfect self-possession, and said:

"I am here at your request."

He bowed, too much confused to speak, and in his bewilderment he could not recall that he had solicited her presence.

"I did not arrive as soon as you expected me," she said; "I was unavoidably detained. I have been with your wife three hours. She has been resting thus over an hour, and I trust she will awaken with her mind strengthened."

"She is recovering slowly," he answered, "but I have been troubled as to the inaction of her mental faculties. If we can interest her in any subject or person, I think this fearful lethargy that holds her mind in its leaden grasp, may be broken. But she refuses to converse with any one, and I am beginning to fear that her system has received a shock that will baffle the skill of the best counsel that I can procure."

"She will be at rest, she will recover," answered Mrs. Loomis, "and it is possible that I may find the cause that underlies this state of apathy, though I may not be able to procure the remedy."

"How do you propose to do this?"

"Through my sympathy for her; by entering into her life and causing her to realize that I too have been in the valley of despair, have suffered as she is suffering, have triumphed at last over all that combined to destroy me, and have reached in safety the arbor of repose."

"Do this, and I will bless you forever."

Mrs. Loomis had greatly changed since her last interview with Dr. Bradwell. She was now the positive and controlling mind, he the negative. She referred to Mrs. Bradwell as one belonging to her as much as to the doctor, and instead of submitting to his directions, she gave to him her orders, in a low but firm voice, and he obeyed, wondering how the timid, shrinking governess had acquired so much valuable information, and what had changed her into such a self-poised, commanding woman.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SCENES IN THE OTHER LIFE.

"CLARENCE," said Harry Young, as he met his friend on one of the great thoroughfares of the city, "I understand that Mrs. Spaulding, accompanied by Maggie, returned to her house over a week since. Can you arrange to go thither with me this evening? I do not wish to intrude, but I was so well pleased with the communications we received at the Cure, and am so deeply interested in this subject, that I feel that it would be a privilege to meet her again for investigation."

Clarence fixed his eyes upon Harry and humorously asked:

"Is it the communications or the medium in which you are most interested, Harry?"

"I do not deny being much interested in Miss Wild," Harry answered. "A nature so pure and elevated as hers could not fail to command the respect of all who come within its influence."

"But I thought you had always been a worshiper of beauty," said Clarence. "Maggie is very plain."

"There may be a difference of opinion in regard to that, however," Harry continued. "It is her intellectual and spiritual superiority that win my admiration."

"You are very frank, Harry."

"Why should I not be? I look upon her as one above and beyond the reach of earthly love. Has she not been permitted to enter the home of the angels? to see and converse with the advanced minds living in the higher realm?"

To me she is now a spirit. No taint or stain of earth-life remains upon her garments. I worship her as I would a star, whose light and beauty are far above me, or like some great truth that comes to inspire and take us nearer to the Divine."

"Well, Harry, I think you do not understand your own heart. However, we will not discuss this subject now, but leave it for time to explain. I too enjoy those hours of communion with the departed above everything else on earth. Yes, we will go to-night. I will be at your rooms at seven." And with this understanding the friends separated.

Maggie was very happy in the society of Mrs. Spaulding, and the evening previous to the conversation given above, she had received intimation from her celestial companions that she was soon to commence a course of public lectures. Maggie's timid nature shrunk from this, but she had determined to follow the direction of her spirit guides. She was discussing this prospective with Mrs. Spaulding when Harry and Clarence were announced. After a brief but pleasant conversation, Clarence asked if they could be favored with something from the spirits.

"I will see," said Maggie, who was always ready to aid all who were in search of truth. After a few moments of silence she said:

"The GOLDEN KEY is again in my hand, although I do not know when it was placed there. I see the same great door opening again, and the same sea, over which I glide as before. On, on! it is wonderful to me that an organized body can move with such rapidity and not lose its identity. I will not repeat a description of the scenes on the way, but remain silent until I reach my destination."

Harry took out his watch and noted five, ten, twenty minutes, then Maggie spoke:

"I have once again reached the shore, and here PEARL awaits me. She is alone, and smiles sweetly upon me as I step upon the strand. One thing I cannot understand; PEARL always appears a little above and beyond me; never stands at my side as do other spirits, and seldom speaks, but when she does her voice sounds like the combination of all melodies. She is beckoning me to follow her. How lightly and easily she moves through this beautiful atmosphere! I can walk upon the moss-covered earth, or float just above it, though for some cause I am not able to rise to the height occupied by PEARL. This way of traveling produces a strange sensation. I think I could be content for ages to float through this rose-tinted atmosphere, gazing down upon the various objects of beauty and grace that adorn this home of the spirit.

"While we have been talking, I have passed over a great extent of country and now stand at the entrance of an immense park. Here are silver fountains, whose waters are dancing and sparkling in the mellow light; rare flowers of every form and hue; lovely bowers formed of vines and blossoms; tall, graceful trees beneath whose shade wander groups of spirits. It is evidently a festive occasion, for the park is filled with forms all radiant with light and beauty. Men, women, and children walk beneath the leafy shade, recline or rest in the rosy bowers, and weave garlands of beauty to adorn the brows of the fair maidens whose radiant loveliness I will not attempt to describe. All seem to be gay, light-hearted, and happy. But among the cheerful throng, I see here and there a group of God-like minds, who seem to be deeply absorbed in solving some profound question. These spirits have evidently come from a different sphere from a majority of those in the park. There is about them that calmness and repose only to be attained by culture. In a distant part of this vast park I

see a platform beautified by flowers and mosses, and around it are gathered a great number of spirits. Now I see the speaker for whom they have evidently been waiting. He is one of those to whom I have referred. His form is tall and commanding, his brow broad and full, features regular, eyes of a clear, calm, beautiful blue. His apparel is easy and elegant, and as he speaks the great concourse who have assembled become silent. There is a powerful magnetic influence in those eyes, a charm in the voice, a depth of thought and expression, holding the attentive listener as spell-bound."

"Can you hear what he says?" asked Clarence.

"Yes, he is a missionary sent from one of the higher spheres of spirit life. PEARL and a spirit called SYLVA stand very near him. I should think from SYLVA'S look of love and pride as she gazes upon the speaker, that he is her companion in the land of souls."

"The Bible informs us that there is no marrying or giving in marriage in heaven," said Mrs. Spaulding.

"What God hath joined together, man or spirit cannot put asunder," spoke a clear, deep voice above them.

This manifestation so awed Mrs. Spaulding that she made no further objection to companionship in the spheres.

"Do you see Lottie?" asked Clarence.

"She has been listening to the address; she is surrounded by friends, and seems happy and contented."

"Who is with her?"

"Her father and mother, and a number I do not recognize. Sitting by her side is the spirit who gave to me this GOLDEN KEY."

"Who is he?" asked Clarence.

"I do not know; she seems to know him well. They are now walking apart from the rest, and he has plucked a spray of snow white blossoms and placed them in her hair."

"And she seems happy?" said Clarence in a sad voice.

"Yes, her cheek is flushed, her eyes bright, and her step as light as a fawn's."

"She has forgotten me," said Clarence. "I do not wonder; the grave is between us. I am mortal, bound to this lowest plane of existence, she an angel, surrounded by the glory of elysium, and free to roam from star to star, from world to universe. Her spirit is emancipated from the clay, and now she is all absorbed in obtaining great truths that angels only know. She is constantly ascending, reaching forward for something higher, while I am forgotten and left to drag out a miserable existence alone. O Lottie! I would not bind you to earth, or retard your progress, but I would to God that I could have retained you! Maggie, tell me no more of the glory of that realm. Better annihilation than to live as I am doomed to live."

Clarence dropped his head and groaned aloud. Harry and Mrs. Spaulding were deeply affected by his grief, but Maggie seemed not to have heard his words.

"They are coming," said Maggie, "the same group that first came to you, Clarence. Lottie has in her hand a golden harp. I seem to be traveling with them, we are nearing the earth. They are apparently unconscious of my presence. Lottie is singing. It seems as if you must hear her now, Clarence. I will try and repeat a few lines for your comfort:

"Oh! what were the beauty of heaven
And the rapturous bliss of that shore,
If death were a parting eternal,
And I could see thee never more!
Then down from that region of beauty,
Down from that bright shining shore,
Borne on the wings of affection,
I come to thee, darling, once more."

"Lottie, Lottie!" exclaimed Clarence, springing to his feet, "is this indeed true? Have you heard the deep cry of my spirit? have you seen me extend my arms for you? have you left the beautiful home of your spirit to return to the shadows of earth? Lottie, are you mine, still mine, or has another, more worthy, but not more loving, taken you from me?"

"Doubting mortal," said Lottie, "know you not that—

"This earth life is but the dawning,
The bright and glorious morning,
Of love's flower?
For its perfect, full unfolding,
The bright future life is holding
All its power.

"Oh! then cease thy vain repining;
See, the golden sun is shining
Overhead.
See old superstition falling;
Hark! the voice of love is calling
From the dead.

"Dead no more, but swift returning,
To thine own my soul is yearning
As of yore;
Swift on wings of love descending,
With thine own my soul is blending,
Evermore.

"You doubted me, Clarence. Did I not tell you that death could not chill the affections of the soul? True love is immortal, cannot die, cannot be transferred, and the highest angel that has ever descended from the highest planes of spirit-life, would fail to awake in my heart one

throb of that affection which is wholly thine. Clarence, the great longings of my soul after truth and wisdom are being answered, but as I drink from the celestial fountain, the thought that inspires me most is that I may be more perfect and more worthy the love of him by whose side I am destined to walk through the countless ages of the future."

"O my Lottie!" said Clarence, as the medium paused, "do not speak of making yourself worthy; you are now so far above me that I despair of being able to meet the demands of your rapidly unfolding soul. I may be compelled to live amid the darkness of earth for many years, while you will be climbing the shining steeps leading to the higher spheres, forgetting the heart that mourns for you in solitude and tears. Lottie, do not leave me. In time I will make myself worthy of your love. Oh! that I could believe it to be impossible for you to go from me."

"Believe it," replied Lottie, "for it is as impossible for me to leave you as it would be to go out of existence. But do not anticipate a long dreary life on earth; it has been given me to know that we shall soon walk together in the flowery gardens of paradise. There are many places of interest which I have desired to visit, but knowing that you are soon to come, I have waited for you."

"Lottie, is this indeed true? it is joyful news, and yet I cannot understand it. I still am young and strong."

"Much as I long for you," replied Lottie, "I realize that it would be better for you to remain the allotted time on earth: but it will not be so. The golden bowl will be shattered, and I shall be the first to greet you in that land where parting is no more."

Clarence had many questions to ask in regard to the time and manner of his departure, but could obtain no further information, Lottie saying that she had gained her knowledge from one who had power to discern the future,

but he would not reveal the particulars. Here the spirit who had given Maggie the GOLDEN KEY, threw her into a deep trance and addressed the little group, explaining much that she had been unable to understand. He spoke of the other life as but a continuation of this, and said that Maggie did not leave the body as she sometimes supposed. That what she saw were but psychological views, pictures taken from real objects and presented to her by the controlling mind. The sounds she heard were produced in the same way, but the voice of Lottie and other spirits speaking to them in the room was a reality, the substance, not the shadow, of what really did exist.

As the spirit ended, Harry asked permission to have another interview the next week, which was readily granted.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE SCARLET VELVET BAND.

MRS. SPAULDING, Maggie, and Daisy were sitting by the cheerful fire, Daisy, busy with the new doll Mrs. Spaulding had presented to her, while the other two occupants of the room conversed upon the events of the night previous.

"Maggie," asked Mrs. Spaulding, "do you think it possible that there can be hills and valleys, lakes and rivers, flowers and vines, birds and fountains, in the spirit world? Can there be lowly cottages and palatial mansions, smiling villages and magnificent cities, halls of art and schools of learning? Do spirits pursue their various occupations as upon earth? If so, why have we received such false impressions of the life beyond?"

"Because mankind have been so wholly absorbed upon the material plane of existence, have been so content with the visible instead of pushing their inquiries into the unseen where exists the formative power, the creative principle of all realities," said Maggie.

"You speak of the mind of man being too much occupied upon the material plane of thought, and yet you speak of the spiritual world as being matter or substance. Be careful, Maggie, or with all your spiritual advantages, you will become a materialist."

"We want the truth, by whatever name called," replied Maggie. "Heat, that we can neither weigh nor measure, is substance. The invisible air, moving over the earth like a conquering giant, is substance, and far more potent than the great waters of the ocean, which are composed of a

much coarser form of matter, for it tosses old ocean into heaving billows. Magnetism is substance, yet behold how much greater its power than are the forms which appear to the physical senses. Thought is substance; behold with what rapidity its darts through earth and to heaven."

"Would you teach that *spirit* is substance?"

"It has been so explained to me," answered Maggie.

At this moment Daisy dropped her playthings, and coming to Maggie, putting her arms around her neck, said:

"Aunt Maggie, I have seen that beautiful world far away beyond the mountains, where mamma and Lillie live. Oh! it is beautiful there! Lillie holds the little birds in her hands and they sing for her sweetly: they do not try to fly away. Lillie does not walk on the ground as I do, but floats through the air. Some day she is coming to take me to live with her."

"Daisy, do you want to go? Are you not afraid?" asked Mrs. Spaulding.

"Oh! no; I shall not be afraid, for my pretty mamma and Lillie will go with me. I shall not be afraid. Lillie says there are a great many little girls there. They have beautiful parks to play in, and when they are tired they do not go into a great dark house to rest, but lie down upon the roses; they are not afraid, for there is nothing to harm them. But, Aunt Maggie, Jennie Ashnell told me that my mamma was put into the ground and I could never see her any more. I told her it could not be, for I saw my mamma every night, and sometimes in the bright sunshine; she talked to me and loved me, and she could not do this if she had been nailed up in a box and put into the ground. Then Jennie laughed at me and said I was dreaming. What made Jennie tell me such a story, and say that my other mamma, too, would be put into the ground?"

"Daisy, do you remember the flower seeds that your mamma put into the ground last spring? The rain fell upon them, the sunshine warmed the cold earth and called to the little germ to come out of the darkness; and then the seed burst its bonds and the little tender shoots came up to greet the sunshine."

"Yes, I remember. I watched it every day until the flowers came."

"Well, Daisy, dear, your body is a shell, the covering of a beautiful, spiritual body. Inside of this little hand of yours there is a spirit hand, but like the little plant, you are bound here within this little casket, or shell. This body is heavy; you cannot go through the air as Lillie can, but every day the spirit body is growing stronger, and those spirit eyes are looking away into a far world, and by and by you will hear the angels say, 'Daisy, come up higher.' Then your spirit body will rise out of the shell just as the little germ came up out of the dark form that held it. This body, Daisy, will be like a garment that is of no use to you. Our little Daisy will go to live in that beautiful clime she has so often seen, and this little form will be put into the ground, for you will have no more use for it."

"Thank you, Aunt Maggie; now I know what Jennie means, and I shall be so glad when I can put this body to sleep with the flowers while I go to live with mamma."

"No, Daisy," said Mrs. Spaulding, deeply affected, "you must not wish to go. Do you know, darling, that there are a great many people in this world that do not know anything about that spirit world which you and Aunt Maggie have seen? You must live, grow strong, and work as Aunt Maggie is working, to teach the people, so that they may not be afraid to die or let their friends go from them."

"Did you ever have a friend die?" asked Daisy.

"Yes, Daisy: a husband and a dear little boy."

"Did you see them when they rose out of their bodies?"

"No, love; I thought as Jennie does, that they were buried in the grave."

"But why did you not see them? and why did they not speak to you as mamma does to me?"

"Daisy, do you remember the little blind boy, who could not see you even when you were close to him?"

"Yes, his eyes were wide open, and yet he could not see."

"So every one has spiritual eyes, but all cannot see as you do."

"Oh! that is sad; I will try to make you see me, when I get my new body and my dress is shining like mamma's."

"I hope it may be many years before they call you away," said Maggie.

"Is it not strange," said Mrs. Spaulding, addressing Maggie, "that you have never seen my spirit friends? You have made my life happier than it has been for many years, and if you could but give me a communication from him with whom I spent my early life, if you could but find my child and tell me who has the charge of him and what are his surroundings, you would brighten with untold glory the declining pathway which I am rapidly descending."

"I would gladly do anything in my power to add to your happiness, dear Mrs. Spaulding, but I trust your days on earth may yet be many."

"Maggie, my treasures are on the other side. I have no regrets for the past, and oh! how beautiful looks the dawn of that morning fast approaching. I could sympathize with Clarence last night, for at times I have thought that my loved ones have forgotten me, but the sweet words of Lottie reassured me, and now I know that somewhere on the other shore they are waiting to welcome her from whom they have been so long separated."

"Mrs. Spaulding, your child is no longer an infant; he has grown to the full stature of manhood. In infancy and youth he was cared for and educated by those who found their highest happiness in the sweet work of unfolding the powers of the soul. Frequently he has been brought back and permitted to linger near you, whom he now loves with all the deep devotion of his nature."

"Maggie, how know you this, and why did you not tell me before?"

Maggie was silent; her head drooped and bright tears filled her eyes.

"Speak, Maggie! what is it? Tell me all."

But Maggie's sobs choked her utterance.

"Dear child, I have known it this long time, and it will only add to my happiness to have it confirmed."

"Oh! I cannot let you go, Mrs. Spaulding! I cannot give you up. They have wanted me to tell you for a long time, but I could not; let us hope they are mistaken. Why is it that every one I love is taken from me? I am selfish; I would keep you here even when I know it would be for your happiness to go."

At this moment the door opened slowly, and a tall, magnificently attired lady entered the room. Bowing gracefully, she said:

"Pardon the intrusion; I have been riding a great distance, and I am almost benumbed with the intense cold. I could not wait to reach the hotel or to be announced upon my arrival here."

Mrs. Spaulding bade her welcome, and drew forward an easy chair in which the stranger took a seat. Her intensely black eyes fixed themselves upon Daisy, who shrunk from her. She removed her gloves and extended her small white hands to the glowing fire.

"How comfortable you are! I am a stranger in the city;

was never here but once before, and then the weather was warm. I do not know why I started on such a journey at this time of year. I became restless by staying in one place, and something said, 'Go,' and here I am."

"Have you friends in the city?" inquired Mrs. Spaulding.

"Oh! yes; any number of them."

"I have lived here many years," continued Mrs. Spaulding, "and may be acquainted—"

The woman, without waiting for Mrs. Spaulding to finish the sentence, turned her blazing eyes upon her, saying:

"So you are suspicious of me too, are you? Well, ask as many questions as you please, you will never know the truth; but do not dare to follow me; if you do, you will have one of the hardest journeys you ever undertook."

Rising, she drew on her gloves, and looking down upon Mrs. Spaulding as though she would crush her like a worm, she said:

"I have found shelter beneath your roof, warmth at your fire; but if you attempt to betray me I will take your life. I am the QUEEN OF DEATH. My hand is sure, my stroke is mortal."

She then abruptly left the room. Mrs. Spaulding followed her to the door in time to see a two-horse carriage dashing wildly down the road. Returning to the parlor, she said:

"Why, Maggie! I do not believe you have moved since that woman entered the house. You and Daisy are deathly pale; were you afraid of her?"

"She has a dark, dark cloud around her, and both her hands are red with blood," said Daisy, shuddering.

"It was the heat of the fire that made her hands red," said Mrs. Spaulding.

"No, no! there was something dripping off them."

"Mrs. Spaulding, did you notice the scarlet velvet band upon her wrist?" said Maggie.

"Yes; what of it?"

"It was stained with human blood. I saw the emanations rising from it before she had been in the room two minutes."

"It cannot be possible that this poor insane creature has committed murder."

"I hope not; but I know that band of velvet was stained with human blood."

"We shall probably hear of her through the public papers. She has evidently escaped from some asylum."

CHAPTER XL.

REALITIES OF SPIRIT LIFE.

At the appointed time, Harry Young and Clarence again met at Mrs. Spaulding's to seek for light from beyond the material plane of existence. After sitting quietly for a short time, Mrs. Spaulding asked:

"Did either of you hear anything? I thought I heard a human voice, speaking in a whisper."

"It is the spirit with the GOLDEN KEY," said Maggie; "he stands near, and is evidently attempting to make us all hear his voice. I cannot see him as plainly as at first. A heavy, impenetrable atmosphere surrounds him."

"How is it that spirits can speak so as to be heard by mortals?" Harry inquired.

"They materialize the organs of speech," replied a voice in a loud whisper above their heads.

"How is this effected?"

"By using the material emanations arising from individuals peculiarly organized."

"Can you form a hand that can grasp material substances?"

"Some spirits can."

"Is it in that way that furniture is moved from place to place?"

"No; it is done by and through electricity, we having a better knowledge of its use. The desire for immortality presupposes its reality, and immortality necessitates a location for the spirit. Spirit being substance, its home must also be substance, else it would not meet the demands

of spirit existence. Glimpses of the realities beyond the veil have been given you, and it is the desire of advanced minds to give earth's children a more rational view of the life beyond, and explain, as far as possible, many things that have hitherto seemed wrapped in a cloud of mystery. Life in the world beyond is no idle dream. Active, aspiring mind is not content to fold its wings of thought and rest when it has but just commenced its great pilgrimage, just begun to look out through the open windows and catch a glimpse of the glory and beauty, power and wisdom that await it in the future. There the desire to advance becomes intensified as the individual ascends each shining step in the ladder of growth. To study and comprehend more perfectly the laws that control the realm of mind and matter, to look from the visible objects surrounding them to the invisible fountain of principles, is the delightful occupation of many advanced minds. Others are employed in bringing out the inherent powers of their being, which have never been properly unfolded in earth life. Those who have had a great love for music, yet have never been so situated as to give their time and attention to it, here have opportunity to give full and free expression to the divine melody, a part of their nature."

"Do you have musical instruments in the spirit world?" again asked Harry.

"The first, or lowest Summer Land is an exact counterpart of the material worlds, from which have ascended the fine particles that compose it. Here is found all that is necessary to meet the demands of its inhabitants. Millions of souls could not be satisfied without musical instruments, consequently they find them here, but finer, more beautiful, more perfect than their similitudes upon earth."

"You speak of spirits demanding music. Does the time ever come that the soul advances beyond this need?"

"No, for music is a principle in the soul, which cannot be outgrown; but on the higher planes of spirit life, where there is a more thorough knowledge of the human voice, instruments are not necessary."

"We do not quite understand you; please explain," said Harry.

"The human voice contains the all of melody, and when its power and sweetness are understood, culture and a proper combination not only enable a group of singers to imitate, but to far excel all harmonies derived from instruments made by the hands of man. No hand can excel the workmanship of the great creative principle of nature, nor is it possible for mortals to have the faintest conception of the angelic music which sweeps in waves of harmony through the higher spheres."

"How beautiful!" exclaimed Harry. "Will all eventually become musicians?"

"Yes."

"And poets?" asked Clarence.

"Yes; poetry is the language of that realm."

"Then I fear some of us will be compelled to remain silent," said Mrs. Spaulding.

"Shakspeare and Milton, Cowper and Byron, are but guides to inspire and awaken within each soul the desire to ascend loftier heights than they have ever reached. Poetry is the birthright of the soul, and under proper conditions, it will express itself."

"You have shown us your power of reading our thoughts," said Harry; "is this the manner in which spirits converse, or do they speak as you are talking to us?"

"The music of speech is necessary, hence we have it here; but on the higher planes it is not a necessity and seldom used excepting for the pleasure produced by the sounds of cultured angelic voices. There each soul is

transparent to the dear eyes of those around. No thought can be concealed. There is no deception there, nor is there a necessity for it, for the needs of every soul are met."

"You imply that deception is necessary under certain circumstances," remarked Mrs. Spaulding, who was uncompromising in her strict integrity.

"Deception is always an effect of unfortunate or immoral surroundings. The soul is hampered or bound in some way, and it uses deception to obtain that object or condition which rightly belongs to it. Study the laws of cause and you will admit the position I take."

"Maggie has spoken of temples, towers, villages, and cities: will you please tell us of what substance or material those buildings are composed, and how and by whom erected?" said Clarence.

"I have said that the lowest plane of the Summer Land was composed of the finest emanations thrown off from material orbs. You are aware that all rocks, stones, crystals, as well as grasses, leaves, and flowers, are constantly sending forth the finest and best parts of themselves; thus, the fragrance of the rose is finer and better than the form that the material eye can see. These brilliant colored emanations from the vegetable and animal worlds, and the bright, flame-like particles rising from the emerald, ruby, amethyst, and all precious stones, all are substances: that will eventually be acknowledged by science. Think you that the creative power that formed this and other worlds was not competent to build and furnish a yet more glorious temple for the spirit to inhabit? But we first have the natural and then the spiritual. Through laws which are instruments, the great Unknown has purified and refined, then attracted to their proper sphere all those atoms of which we have been speaking. Hence you will perceive that there is no lack of fine, beautiful material from which

to construct the magnificent temples and the great halls dedicated to art and science, and also the elegant homes that beautify the lowest planes of spirit life. It is easy for you to understand that during the vast period of time that this and other worlds have been sending spirits to that more advanced state of existence, there have been many millions whose great delight has been found in the work of which we have been speaking. When satisfied with this, they have advanced beyond what I may term the beautifying of their homes. Then some beautiful truth, or some holy aspiration found its way into their souls, and step by step they rise to greet a higher good, a dearer life."

"And the flowers and the birds, are they realities too?" asked Mrs. Spaulding.

"Yes; as said before, this is a real world, and yet a knowledge of the unseen forces of nature, gives spirits a power that seems almost miraculous. For instance, when your friend Lottie was about to pass from the loving arms that would have kept her here, a bower of beauty was prepared for her reception. The flowers and buds and mosses were made for that purpose."

"Not made by spirits!" said Clarence.

"Yes; they who possess sufficient knowledge, can concentrate the elements necessary for the production of these floral treasures. This is often done on festive occasions; immense halls are thus prepared with little labor."

"Do they remain? do they live?"

"They are short-lived, but not more so than the flowers of earth. Their life depends much upon the skill of those by whom they are created."

"Wonderful!" said Clarence. "Can fruit be produced in the same manner?"

"Yes, by those who understand it, the most delicate and delicious fruit can thus be produced; and the time is not

far distant, when the earth and its atmosphere will be sufficiently refined, and mediumistic powers sufficiently developed and understood, for spirits to accomplish the same here. But the specimens which they will thus be able to produce will not compare very favorably with those of which I have been speaking."

"Is it necessary for spirits to partake of food in order to retain individuality?" asked Mrs. Spaulding.

"No; spirits once individualized can never be absorbed by the great Positive Mind. There is no such thing as annihilation for matter or spirit. Spirits exist by absorbing the nutritious properties which fill the atmosphere. They partake of food; and if you could look with clairvoyant eyes upon the plane which I have just left, you would perceive a joyful company who have met to discuss one of the subjects upon which we have spoken; viz., the power for good which they may obtain over mortals. You would also see that preparations have been made for what you of earth would call a grand evening entertainment. It is pleasant and profitable thus to meet together, and the great variety of delicate dishes and luscious fruit with which the tables are spread is partaken of with as much enjoyment as it would be here with you. I can answer no more questions to-night. While I have been speaking to you, Maggie has been in a death-like trance: it would be unwise to keep her in this condition longer. Asking you to make the truths I have presented the subject of candid consideration, I bid you adieu."

CHAPTER XLI.

THE TANGLED WEB.

WHEN Forest heard of Clara's sudden departure, he was surprised and grieved. A long acquaintance with her had revealed to him many of her faults: he knew her to be proud, vain and ambitious. Notwithstanding this, his heart rebelled against his better judgment, and he loved, or rather was fascinated by her. And now she had gone without a word and without an intimation as to her future life or place of destination.

"She never could have been mine," said Forest, as he left the house of Dr. Bradwell. "I know that no stronger tie could ever have bound us, and yet there were times when I thought she loved me almost as well as I do her. She has been like a flash of sunlight across my darkened path, and yet this magnificent woman I have dared to criticise, though her faults, when compared to mine, grow dim and almost invisible. I have lived on in this dream of love, hoping it would last forever; now, without warning, the blow has fallen and I am alone. Clara cannot tear herself from me in this way; I am sure she will write and let me know her whereabouts. Yet I fear she may blame my reserve. Alas! she did not know my lips were sealed with a silence which honor forbade me to break. May not this have had something to do with her sudden departure? Can it be that I have lost her forever? Oh! that I could but break the hateful chains that bind me and be free to seek her who is the only being in the universe, notwithstanding her faults, whose soul can answer mine. She is

not, cannot be indifferent to me and will not long suffer me to remain ignorant of her destination. Why have I vainly submitted to this curse of my life? why have I not aroused myself and thrown off this incubus that has borne me to the earth? I will do it now! it may not be too late. Yet something seems to whisper:

“‘If thou hast loosed a bird
Whose song of joy could cheer thee,
Still, still it may be won
From the skies to warble near thee.
But if upon the troubled sea,
Thou hast cast a gem unheeded,
Hope not that wind nor wave will bring
The treasure back when needed.’

“I wish these words would not continue to ring in my mind. I will not accept them as a prophecy of the future, but will spare no effort to bring back a treasure that I have permitted to slip from my grasp.”

Cheered by this resolution, Forest sought an interview with Harry. To him he spoke of Clara's absence.

“Yes, Forest,” said Harry, “Clara has gone and I do not regret it. I have an impression that Dr. Bradwell has never been as happy since Clara entered his house.”

“You are mistaken,” replied Forest, “Clara has no warmer friends in the city than Dr. Bradwell and his wife.”

“Well, perhaps I am wrong,” said Harry, as he sought to avoid a subject evidently painful to his friend. “She made a long stay in the city, and probably was quite anxious to return to her friends. But, Forest, there is something of more interest on my mind at present than Clara's departure; something concerning which I should have spoken to you before, had you not been so absorbed in your own affairs as to seem to take but little interest in

your old friends. Do you remember the young prima-donna of whom I spoke on the eventful evening I was last at your house?"

"Yes, I remember your mention of such a person."

"Well, she died soon after, and I have made the acquaintance of the young man to whom she was engaged. Forest, she has in spirit returned and spoken to us through the lips of Maggie Wild."

A smile was the only response with which the statement was met.

"You doubt it, Forest, but it is true: not only has she returned, but many others, and have conversed freely with us."

"Well!" answered Forest.

"Well!" repeated Harry. "Is that all you have to say when I tell you that the doors of heaven have been opened and that the spirits of our departed friends are permitted to return?"

"I have never doubted it."

"What! and have you been blessed with the light of this truth and never imparted it to me?"

"You were not prepared to receive it, Harry, but I am glad that it has begun to unveil itself to your understanding."

"Forest, how can you speak of this subject with such calmness and seeming indifference?"

"We should go into ecstasies over the sun, could we see it but once in a lifetime, but long familiarity with it causes us to become apparently indifferent. I have long been familiar with the fact of spirit communion. Deliberate reflection has cooled the enthusiasm that once was as much a part of my nature as it is now of yours."

"Well, Forest, I cannot understand how you should lose your interest in a subject that could add so much to your happiness here and hereafter. Will you go with me and

call upon Maggie Wild? She is making her home at Mrs. Spaulding's."

"Yes, if it be your wish; though to tell you the truth, I have no desire, at the present time, to seek society."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a third party, and Forest took his leave promising to accompany Harry that evening.

How vividly that anticipated visit recalled to the mind of Forest the evening when he first met Clara Gordon. Through how many changing scenes he had passed since that time, and as he pursued his way through the busy street, he mentally said:

"I am now more than ever alone, and am willing to sacrifice anything if I may yet again enjoy the society of Clara."

A pleasant evening was passed at the house of Mrs. Spaulding, pleasant to all but Forest. He was not in the frame of mind for enjoyment. Associated with that house were memories which were ever drifting him away from the channel of conversation. Over an hour passed, and Forest was anxious to leave.

"Mr. Forest," said Mrs. Spaulding, "I think you must have frightened the spirits away; it is seldom that Harry receives nothing from them."

"I fear my condition of mind is not such as to produce harmony," said Forest.

"I have seldom seen you look so sad. You remind me of the way Maggie appeared a few mornings since, when a strange creature, calling herself the QUEEN OF DEATH, rushed so suddenly into our midst."

"The QUEEN OF DEATH!" exclaimed Forest, springing to his feet, while a crimson torrent covered face and brow.

"Yes, a poor lunatic who gave herself that tragic-sounding title."

"When was she here? how did she look? where was she going? where—"

"Stop, stop a moment; you ask too many questions at once. You appear as much concerned as if you had known of her before."

Forest, recalled to self-consciousness, resumed his seat and tried to assume an air of indifference.

"It is a strange title for any one to assume, and suggests unpleasant thoughts," he said.

"Mrs. Spaulding, please tell us all you know about her," said Harry, who sympathized with Forest in his anxiety.

Mrs. Spaulding complied with his request, and Harry trembled as she spoke of the emanations, seen by Maggie, arising from the scarlet band.

"How long since this occurred?" asked Forest.

"It is more than two weeks ago," answered Maggie.

"Have you not seen or heard from her since?"

"No."

Harry now sought to change the conversation, and soon after the gentlemen excused themselves and went out into the dark, stormy winter night, each with heart filled with apprehensions which neither dared put into words.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE MIDNIGHT BRIDAL.

HARRY YOUNG and Forest exchanged no words as they passed through the gloomy streets on their way from Mrs. Spaulding's, till their arrival at Harry's boarding house, when in answer to his friend's invitation to enter, Forest silently followed him into the house.

"Oh! this cheerful fire and bright light make a striking contrast with the darkness and storm without," exclaimed Harry, and as he looked upon his friend, whose moody dejection formed a yet greater contrast to the cheerful glow, he said, "Forest, there is some terrible sorrow weighing upon you: as a friend, let me entreat you to confide your sorrows to some one who can sympathize with you." Forest was silent, and Harry continued, "I do not wish your confidence unless you are willing to give it, but I would do anything, as far as lay in my power, to aid you, if you will let me know what I can do. Speak to me freely as to a brother."

Forest raised his pallid face; his lips moved, but no sound came from them, and rising, he took his hat and said, "I thank you for your offer of sympathy and friendship, but I cannot bring myself to speak of the past."

"You surely do not intend to go out into the storm again to-night?"

"I am going home."

"Not to-night," said Harry; "I want your company, and if you will not talk to me, I have much to say to you."

Forest, it was a long time before I appreciated your true worth; I now understand your high, noble nature, and I know that some hidden sorrow is wearing out your life. Like moth and rust, it has been destroying all that would have made your life useful. You are exceedingly sensitive and very proud. A stain upon your name would be to you worse than death: you would conceal even from your dearest friends anything that would cast a shadow upon your reputation, or cause the world to look upon you with contempt. For this reason you have suffered untold agony; how long I know not. Nay, Forest, do not frown upon me; you know that I speak the truth. I am aware that my words pain you, but the surgeon finds it necessary to use keen instruments to save the life of his patient. I have studied you closely and I am determined to save you whether you are willing or not. I know the woman that calls herself the QUEEN OF DEATH, is in some way related to you, and that she aimed at your life when she attempted to take mine. It was just such an evening as this, and she may be on the same errand to-night. I know that you would be free from her: what can I do to aid you?"

"Harry, you are indeed my friend and seem to understand me. You desire my confidence and have a right to it: believe me when I tell you that it was not through lack of faith in you that I repelled it, but, as you say, 'I am proud and sensitive, and I have borne in silence conditions that might have been changed had I possessed the moral courage to give my history to the world.'"

"It is not too late now, and you are not justified in remaining silent until the hand of the midnight assassin takes your life."

"I know, I know, and there are other reasons why I should take measures to end the persecution I have endured for many years. Harry, I do not value life as

highly as I ought, but I do value above all on earth, the love of one from whom I am eternally separated by the person to whom you have alluded."

"Who is she? and what claim has she on you? Speak freely."

"Years ago," began Forest, "when I was a mere boy, traveling with a tutor to whose care my father had confided me, I met at a hotel in a rural village an aged gentleman and his daughter. He was a person of very peculiar appearance, richly dressed, wearing a great quantity of showy jewels. He avoided society and remained much of his time in his secluded apartments. His daughter was a being of loveliness, and at once my young heart was captivated by her rare and exquisite beauty. My affection seemed to be reciprocated; the old gentleman smiled upon me and gave me ample opportunity to improve my acquaintance with his daughter. No sooner did my tutor discover the state of affairs than he made preparation for departure. The beautiful girl was in despair and plead with me not to leave her.

"'Do not make yourself unhappy, my dear,' said her father, 'we will travel in the same direction.'

"It was thus arranged to our satisfaction, and the day after our arrival at our destination, Mabel and her father made their appearance. Again I was taken away, and again Mabel and her father followed. The old gentleman had asked me many questions as to my position in life present and prospective. He seemed pleased when I told him that I was an only son, and my father had been a widower for many years.

"'Your fortune, my boy; what of that?' he asked.

"He seemed satisfied with my answer, and was more than ever attentive. But strange as it may appear, it is nevertheless true that I soon grew weary of the affection

lavished upon me by the beautiful daughter, and I became as anxious to avoid her as even my tutor desired. While in this state of mind, I was one night awakened and summoned to the old gentleman's room. He had been taken ill very suddenly: it was evident that he could live but a short time. Mabel was standing by his bed weeping bitterly, and as I entered the room she ran to me exclaiming:

“‘Father is dying, dying in this strange land, and I am alone, all alone! Do not leave me.’

“‘Come here, Forest,’ said the old man, extending his hand to me, ‘Mabel says truly I am dying! she is here among strangers; no friend or relative to whose care I can entrust her. I have wealth; my child loves you; I have confidence in you and know that you cannot be indifferent to her. I have a request to make; grant it, and the blessing of a dying man shall rest upon you.’

“‘I will be Mabel’s friend,’ said I, a vague and undefinable fear creeping over me. ‘I will protect her and be to her as a brother.’

“‘You are not a brother, and the world would not recognize the friendship you proffer. I have sent for a minister, and before I close my eyes in death I want you to have a right to protect my child.’ Seeing me hesitate, he continued, ‘If you do not comply with the request of a dying man, if you do not consent to save that young and innocent being whose life is your love, I will come up from the grave and walk by your side; I will haunt you day and night, and you shall have no peace this side the grave.’

“‘O father, father! do not talk in that way! it is terrible to hear you.’

“‘Mabel, go into the next room for a moment.’

“After she had gone, he turned upon me his dying look, and in a beseeching tone said, ‘Forest, do you not love my child?’

“‘I do not know,’ I replied. ‘Sometimes I have thought I did, but again I have doubted. I know the anxiety you feel and would gladly comply with your desire, but I cannot take so important a step hastily, nor do I wish to deceive her or myself.’

“‘Forest, never let her doubt your love; she idolizes you. Some day you will marry, and you will never find any one more beautiful, more truthful, more loving than she. You will learn to love her deeply and truly. I hear steps approaching. Forest, I cannot make my peace with God until I witness the ceremony that will ensure the happiness and protection of my child.’

“‘Before I could make reply the minister entered, and bewildered as was my brain, ere I fully realized the fact, Mabel was my wife. The father then requested to see me alone.

“‘Bring me that little box,’ he said, designating the article with a feeble gesture. I obeyed, and would have put it into his hand, but he pressed it back, saying, ‘Keep it; it is yours.’ Then detaching from the guard around his neck a small key, he placed that, too, in my possession, saying as he did so, ‘That box contains valuable jewels, belonging to Mabel. It also contains a paper, giving an account of her childhood and youth, and many facts relating to her family history. That paper is sealed; it contains a secret which in time you must know, but promise me that you will not open it until one year from this day. Nay, that is not enough; place your hand upon the Bible and swear that you will comply, and that you will carefully keep a knowledge of the contents from Mabel.’

“‘Trembling with vague dread, I took the oath.

“‘Now, Forest, swear that you will never neglect or forsake her for any reason whatever; that you will make it the duty of your life to treat her with the most unre-

mitting gentleness, shield her from danger, and, if need be, sacrifice your life to protect her.'

"The occasion was solemn. The dread hour of night, the silent room, the faint, flickering light, the dying man bolstered up with pillows, the well-worn Bible by his side, and I, alone with one who was almost on the other side of life, blindly binding myself to protect, under all circumstances, even at the cost of my life, the child of this strange being who appeared more an inhabitant of some other world than a being of earth. After I had taken the oath required, he grasped me tightly with his icy cold fingers, and in a hollow whisper said:

"'You are the only one on earth that could be entrusted with this work. See that you prove faithful to the task; should you be recreant, curses, curses on your head!'

"With these last words, he sunk back exhausted, and before the attendant could reach his bed, he was gone.

"No language can portray my feelings. For a time I tried to believe all a dream; but there were the box and the key, and I shuddered as my fingers touched them. I walked the room in a state of mind akin to insanity. I called to mind my father's pride, and thought how it would revolt at the disgrace this sudden alliance with one unknown might bring upon him. Before morning I had resolved to keep the whole transaction a profound secret, at least for one year, when the contents of the paper would decide my future action. After this I sought Mabel and told her of my father's position, his pride, his stern, unrelenting will, and begged that our union should remain a secret for one year. To this she readily consented saying:

"'I can pass the interval in study at the convent.'

"Her ready acquiescence removed a load of apprehension from my mind, and the same day I wrote to the superior of the convent, whose address I obtained from her,

giving notice of her intended sojourn there for a specified time. My tutor was anxious to hurry me off, but I excused myself from going, saying that I had promised not to leave Mabel until a friend arrived who was to take charge of her. All now seemed to be going well, and in a few days a lady arrived to accompany Mabel. She left me with many expressions of affection, but I must admit that I felt a sense of relief when she was gone. I felt that I was respited, and hoped that before the year came round, something would transpire to render me entirely free. I went from place to place, and tried to forget that horrible night, but alas! the memory was too indelibly stamped upon my soul.

“Six months I was thus tortured, and at last I determined to return home, hoping that the society of friends might dispel the gloom settling over my spirit. I did not then realize that ‘coming events cast their shadows before.’ I frequently asked myself the question—why should I make myself so unhappy over the irrevocable? Nor could I see any real cause for my gloomy forebodings. My wife was young, beautiful, and affectionate, and did I not hold in my hand the key that would unlock the mystery of her life, if mystery there were? Perhaps by reading that manuscript I should find her one whom even my proud father would be glad to welcome as a daughter. But these thoughts did not brighten my life. As time flew on, I grew morbidly sensitive and irritable. I had been at home two months: four months longer and I would be compelled to speak. I could not endure the suspense so long; why not at once break the seal? It would give me positive knowledge in place of vague anxiety, and could do no possible harm. Besides, I had not heard from her since my return, and was harassed by the fear that she might leave

the school and suddenly appear at my father's house. 'I will decide the question; I will put my mind at rest,' I said.

"Locking the door of my room, I took the box, turned the key, raised the lid, and glanced at the bright jewels that flashed from the snowy velvet upon which they rested. On the other side was the paper I wanted. It was securely sealed and directed to me, and under my name these words were written:

"Remember your vow! I call to you from the grave and warn you not to open this package until the time.'

"I trembled as I read. It seemed as though Mabel's father had indeed risen from the grave and was standing beside me. I could again hear his words: 'Curses, curses on you if you break your vow!' and replacing the sealed paper in the box, I fled from the room."

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE MIDNIGHT ASSASSIN.

BEFORE Forest had proceeded further with his narrative, they were startled by a rap upon the door. Answering the summons, Harry was informed that a stranger in waiting had inquired for Forest.

"Why does he call at this late hour? Forest, have you any idea who it is?"

"Not the slightest; I will see him."

"No, no; do not go down," interposed Harry, as his friend made a movement to leave the apartment; "let him come here. Forest, I am suspicious of this stranger, and I shall not suffer you to meet him alone."

Before Forest could reply, a slight, dark-complexioned man entered the room. His form was partially concealed by a long, dark cloak which he threw aside upon entering, and bowing gracefully to Harry and Forest, he took a chair without awaiting the ceremony of an invitation. When Harry Young met the flashing eyes of the stranger, he turned deathly pale and seemed suddenly transformed to a statue. Forest, too, was strangely agitated by the magnetic glance of the wild black eyes fixed upon him. With an effort he regained partial composure, and in a voice tremulous with suppressed emotion, he said:

"To whom am I to attribute the honor of a visit at this late hour?"

"My name is Raymond," replied the stranger, with a

smile, and without removing his eyes from the face of Forest.

"May I inquire the object of your visit?"

"I have been sent to you," was the curt reply.

"By whom?" asked Forest, nervously. He remarked the agitation of Harry, and felt his own strength and courage rapidly failing.

"By the Great Spirit, who never fails to deal justly by all his children. The law of compensation is unchanging; if you have sown the wind you must reap the whirlwind. God selects instruments through which he may work to bring guilty souls to justice."

"I do not understand you," said Forest.

"You will not long remain in ignorance," replied the visitor. "God has sent me to punish you for injustice done to another."

"Madman!" said Forest in an indignant tone, "why have you forced yourself into my presence? Leave me at once, or I will have you removed by force."

Saying this, he extended his hand towards the bell cord.

"Not so fast," said the stranger, rising to his feet, stepping forward and throwing the full force of his magnetic power upon Forest. "Do you not know me? Have you forgotten the old man? Have you forgotten the sacred pledges you made in my chamber of death? Have you forgotten that you vowed to love, honor, and protect the innocent child that I entrusted to your care? Have you forgotten the voice that from time to time has called to you from the grave, and my solemn vow to make your life wretched, to embitter its sweetest cup of joy, blast it by my curse, and at last drink your life blood, should you prove false to the oath so solemnly sworn? Viper! did you think that the grave could hold me, while you trampled upon the heart of my child, making her a wanderer

upon the face of the earth? Learn now your mistake. Know that death nor hell could chain me, while you were transforming her heart's blood into poison! Know that what you have heard has been no freak of fancy or imagination, but was the warning voice of him whose heart's idol you have won only to destroy. Again and again have I called upon you to retrace your steps and fulfill your promise. Warning has been vain, and at last you believed that you had eluded the demon voice that once haunted you. I permitted you to repose, but never have I left you for one day. My curse is still upon you; my revenge is certain. The hour for warning is passed; to-night I come to close the scene! I have aided others in preparing a snare into which you have stepped, causing you much heart sorrow; but what is that in comparison to what you have caused my child to suffer? I told you that she was my idol, that wrong done to her should come back with redoubled power upon you. It shall be so!"

He paused and drew back a few paces, for Forest had sunk into a chair, overcome with bewilderment. Had it not been for the reference made to the events of his early life, he would have believed the strange visitor a lunatic; as it was, his heart beheld in him the spirit of the old man who had helped to embitter his whole life, returned once more to torment him through the organism of another, to compel him to yield to his wishes. At this moment the image of Clara Gordon rose before his mind, and for the first time he realized how impossible it was for him to take any step that would separate him from her. His resolution was formed, and summoning all his will power, he thus addressed the stranger:

"Man or demon, whoever or whatever you are, I command you to depart, and never again to cross my path. If I have done wrong in the past, it has not been intentional,

and no one in this or any other world has a right to taunt me as you have. Know now that you have gone to the extent of your power. I will not wear the galling chains that were once forced upon me. For years I have been in doubt as to my right to break this tie; I am now decided, and all your threats will fail to intimidate me. Do your worst; I fear you not."

"Do you refuse to acknowledge your wife before the world?" asked the stranger in a deep voice.

"I have no wife! I do positively refuse to acknowledge as such, one who, through your influence, was forced to repeat words which *you* claim have made us one. Here in the presence of God and angels I solemnly declare that I have no companion. God, not man, must unite the souls of those who are one."

"This is your final answer?" said the stranger.

"It is."

"Then receive my curse and die!"

Uttering these words, the stranger sprung forward, raised a glittering dagger, and aimed a stroke at the heart of Forest.

During this whole scene, Harry had not for a moment removed his eyes from the stranger, in whom he now recognized the QUEEN OF DEATH; and when the arm was raised to strike at the heart of Forest, he sprung forward and struck aside the dagger. The stranger's eyes flashed, and quick as thought, the murderous weapon descended upon Harry, and as the crimson blood stained his hand, she laughed wildly, crying:

"My blow is sure. I am the QUEEN OF DEATH!"

And with a sudden bound, she gained the door and fled from the house into the dark and dreary night.

"Harry! Harry! she has stabbed you. Oh! this is terrible."

"It is a mere scratch. Forest, do not remain here; follow and prevent her escape; see that she is secured and prevented from committing other acts of violence."

Forest obeyed, but long before he reached the outer door, the QUEEN OF DEATH had disappeared in the midnight darkness. In an almost distracted state of mind he returned to his friend's apartment.

"I feared as much," said Harry, as he entered, comprehending at a glance. "But why did you not set detectives upon her track?"

"I could not," replied Forest, dropping into a chair, pale with the anguish of the trial he was undergoing; "I know that my personal safety demands that she should be secured, but I cannot do it."

"Then I will," responded Harry, rising and removing his blood stained coat, revealing to Forest a strong, muscular arm, from which blood was freely flowing. "I shall not soon forget that," he continued, as Forest dressed the wound, "nor do I forget that for years your life has been jeopardized. This half crazed woman has already committed murder in your neighborhood, and we know not how many lives have been sacrificed to her insane malice. She evidently intended to kill you on that night when she first appeared to me; to-night she has made another attempt, and yet you hesitate to have her restrained."

"Harry," said Forest, after a brief pause, as of self questioning, "what you say is true; it is a duty I owe to myself and others. She must be arrested. Twice you have stood between me and death. Harry, my life is yours; take such steps as to you may appear best."

"Thanks for your confidence," replied Harry, "but before laying my plans for the future, I must know who this woman is and what she is to you."

"I will tell you all, but it is now late; you are wounded

and should rest. Would it not be better to defer the revelation until some future time?"

"No, no, let me hear it at once. We are both too much excited to rest, and this painful arm will keep sleep from my pillow to-night. Therefore proceed with your history."

Yielding to the solicitation, Forest continued his narrative as follows.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE MYSTERIOUS BOX.

“FOR two weeks subsequent to my attempt to open the sealed package I suffered more than I had supposed it possible for mortal man to endure and live. Fear lest she should make sudden appearance, dread of my father’s anger, anxiety concerning the haunting secret contained in the mysterious package, all conspired to render me almost frantic. At last I could endure the torture no longer, and I determined to know the contents of the paper, confess all to my father, then go abroad and remain until his anger had subsided and he was willing to forgive and receive me. As for her who had caused me so much sorrow, I would send her the box of jewels, and all the money I could procure, and bid her to think of me no more. I chose a bright morning, drew back the heavy curtains that the sunlight might flood every corner of the room, then summoning all my courage I opened the box, took out the package, and without daring to glance at the terrible words of warning upon the wrapper, I broke the seal. The parchment it contained was yellow from age and exposure, and as I took it in my hand, these words were spoken in a shrill voice close by my ear:

“‘Curse you for this perjury! a life of torment and an unnatural death shall be your reward.’

“My blood chilled with horror, and for a moment my heart ceased its beatings. A dizziness crept over me; I thought I was dying. Summoning all my strength of will, I picked up the manuscript which had fallen from my trembling hands, fled from the room and the house, out

where the pure air and free sunshine were all about me. Sitting down under the branches of a giant oak, I commenced to decipher the strange cramped, crooked and at times almost illegible writing. It was a history of her whom I had been induced to marry, evidently written by her father, the man who was with her when first we met. He commenced by giving a sketch of his own life history. He had been a wild, reckless man, and the wealth so freely lavished upon his daughter, had been obtained at the gambling table.

“At last, he spoke of meeting a young and lovely woman, and of his determination to change his mode of life, make her his wife, and conceal from her all his past. Then came the account of his failure to win her affections, his despair and wretchedness, and his final determination to ruin her father and so control the circumstances surrounding her that she would consent to become his wife. In this he failed, for the brave girl refused to profess an affection she did not feel, and though reduced to poverty, she preferred to spend her days in honorable toil, rather than give her hand to one whom her soul abhorred. Maddened by what he termed her obstinacy and determined that he would not be foiled, he at once laid his plans to gain by unlawful means, what his wealth and his importunities alike had failed to win. He succeeded in removing her from her native city and keeping her a prisoner subject to his will. For five years she remained with him, her aversion strengthening to hatred and her beautiful mind becoming partially deranged. She imagined that spirits came to her, and many times she would tell him of the fearful retribution sure to overtake him. But notwithstanding her bitter words and her hatred, his love for her became more and more intense, and when at last death called the weary sufferer home, leaving to his sole care a

little daughter, an exact counterpart of the mother, the woman whom he had made the victim of his cruel selfishness, all the rebellious feelings of his nature were aroused.

“He had often said there was no God, but now his days and nights were spent in cursing and blaspheming the power that had thus thwarted his designs, opened the prison door, and released his captive forever from his toils. After he had partially recovered from the shock occasioned by his loss, he turned his attention to the little one left to his charge. The brutal nature of the man seemed to be transformed when associated with this pure and beautiful child. All other interests, all other thoughts seemed to be absorbed in his great love for her. She was the idol of his soul, and until her fourteenth year, a bright intelligent girl, one fully satisfying to the pride of any parent. Now he noticed that at times the large dark eyes assumed a startled look, that the child, hitherto gentle and affectionate, grew sarcastic, cold, contemptuous, almost defiant in her demeanor toward him, her father. After a few days these novel peculiarities would disappear and she was his loving little one again. And yet ere long the clouds would return, the fair brow would darken, the black eyes glare fiercely, and the mild voice borrow tones of harshness. He consulted eminent physicians, but the case baffled their skill, until at last she became so violent during these attacks that it was found necessary to restrict her liberty lest she should inflict injury upon herself or others. Her great desire seemed to be to take the life of her father. As she grew older she could tell when those dark hours, as she called them, were coming on, and would appeal to her father to leave home, saying:

“‘Already I feel a desire to take your life: fly, fly from me.’

"The same mysterious power that had bound this man to the mother, now bound him to the daughter, and many bitter tears he shed over the hapless fate of his child. He loved her, had spared no expense in her education, and had determined to keep the secret of her illegitimacy, and present her to the world as his heiress. But fate, stern fate, had prepared for him a bitter cup. Finding that medicine failed to bring about any change in his daughter's malady, the physicians recommended travel. The necessary arrangements were made. Taking his daughter and one attendant, he left home to be absent for an indefinite period. Here followed a description of the places visited, and his despondency as month after month passed without giving any hope of change in the condition of his beautiful child. He was about to return home and give up all hope of restoring her when he met my tutor and myself. He described my personal appearance and my tranquilizing influence upon Mabel, and expressed his delight that at last one had been found who, unknown to himself, had the power to exorcise the demon which he believed at times possessed her. He seemed to have placed implicit confidence in me and rejoiced in the thought that our love was mutual. He dwelt long over the description of those, to him, happy days, and told of the promise he made his daughter that no power on earth should take me from them. Then he spoke of my departure, of the return of the old symptoms, and his daughter's anxiety to again be under the protection of the magnetic power that kept her free from the demon that haunted her life.

"The latter part of the manuscript was written just before his death. He felt that I was losing my interest in his child, and perceiving that it was not love that attracted me to her, but his will and the power of her beauty, he feared that I would gradually throw off the influence that held

me, and that Mabel would relapse permanently into her former condition. I was his only hope, and he resolved that I should not escape, that he would place me in a position from which I could not recede. My unhappiness was to him nothing in comparison to hers, and her rescue from the doom that threatened to veil her young life in perpetual darkness. You are aware how well his plan succeeded, and how he bound me by the most solemn oaths to faithfully care for and shield his child under all circumstances. The last words of the manuscript were these:

“‘I have requested you not to open this package under one year, believing that by that time my daughter’s mind will have become perfectly balanced. Should you become aware of these facts earlier, you might shrink from her with fear and distrust, and intuitively she would realize that you were acquainted with her history, which she looks upon as a disgrace, and this consciousness would so affect her sensitive nature that your influence would lose its hold upon her, and a relapse into her old fits of insanity would follow. After you have been in the society of each other for one year, you will become more perfectly united, and your confidence in her will be perfectly established. But as you value your happiness and peace of mind, never treat her with harshness or unkindness, lest the demon should again be aroused in her nature. I write thus freely because I believe it better for you to learn all from me than that it should come to you through bitter experience. Forest, I know that I am soon to die. I shall leave her in your charge; heed well all I have told you. But should you neglect or cast her off because of her father’s sin, which has been so woefully visited upon her, I will come from the grave and haunt you day and night. She will become a raving maniac and curse you with her presence, from which you cannot free yourself. When you read this,

she will have been your wife one year; she is yours for time and for eternity; no power can separate you. I have trusted to your kind and gentle disposition for the first twelve months; now you know all, and will realize that whatever is a disgrace to your wife is a disgrace to you and your proud family. You will therefore carefully conceal from her, what I have revealed to you. I shall stand by your side while you read this, and should you drive my child back into the midnight darkness from which you have rescued her, *beware!* for I will be with her and aid her to visit upon you a fearful retribution.'

"Scarcely had I finished the reading, when the same sharp, shrill voice heard in my room, again called to me saying:

"'You have broken your word! dare refuse to acknowledge her as your bride and I will summon the demons of perdition to my aid.'

"The voice ceased, the paper dropped from my trembling hands, and quivering with apprehension, I leaned against the great tree for support, and tried to recall my scattered thoughts and arrange some definite plan of action. What could I do? One thing was certain; then and there I firmly decided that I could not accept of such a person as a companion for life: death would be preferable to such an existence. I had been hasty and impulsive in the past, but, I would not knowingly be guilty of a wrong. No power could have induced me to have bestowed my name upon one whose very life was tainted with the terrible sin of the man who called her his child. My whole being shrunk from one who had been so vile, and I cast the paper, polluted by his touch, from me. He would have me call by the sacred name of wife one into whose soul was woven the diabolical thought that his sin had generated in the mind of the mother. This child, whose physical beauty

was the counterpart of the wronged mother, whose mind was the mirror reflecting the turbulent, selfish, cruel heart of the father—this was the woman I had thought of bringing into the presence of my proud father. Upon her I had conferred a name of hitherto unsullied honor. How my cheeks burned with shame, and my blood boiled with indignation at the deception that had been practiced upon me.

“But in these dark hours I had the consolation of knowing that I had acted honorably and was worthy to be the son of my noble father. Then and there I made a solemn vow that I would never see her again, or profess an affection for her from whom, now that I understood her nature, my soul revolted. Young as I was I felt that her unfortunate condition was not attributable to evil spirits, but was the result of causes which at that time I was not capable of comprehending. I realized that her father’s spirit was near me, that the same will-power which had been used to force me into this hateful union would be employed to compel me to confess it to the world. I did not then realize the power of spirits to accomplish their designs, and with a feeling that defied him to do his worst, I took up the paper, folded it, and with a firm step re-entered the house. Placing it again in the box, I at once wrote a long letter to Mabel, explaining how it came into my possession, the deception of which I had been the victim, and the impossibility of our ever sustaining to each other a nearer relation. I told her if she wished to marry she could break the tie; I should remain single through life, but she should have no trouble from the legal fetters that had been so lightly thrown around her. This letter and the box I placed in the hands of a trusty messenger, requesting him to say to her that I desired no reply.

“The next day I left home and remained abroad a

number of years. Vain were my efforts to free myself from the haunting memories of the past. Her father's spirit seemed ever near me to destroy all peace of mind and to render the most beautiful scenes, the most pleasing society distasteful. During this time I had received no tidings of her, and was tormented with the thought that perhaps my sudden withdrawal had been the cause of her death or driven her to a yet more terrible fate. Thus five long years passed away, at the end of which time I was summoned to return to my father who had been taken suddenly ill. Eagerly I retraced my steps and arrived in time to receive his parting blessing.

“‘You have never caused my heart one pain,’ he said, ‘have always been a good, dutiful son. To you I have left all my worldly possessions. There was a time when I believed you unworthy of them. Soon after you left home, there came to the house a young and beautiful woman, dressed in black, trimmed with a profusion of scarlet velvet. She sought me, and, with a dignified air, told me she was the wife of my son, and desired to be recognized as such. She would not believe you were absent and refused to leave the house until she could see you, and when she realized that you were really gone, she declared she would not rest until she found you. She denounced you in bitter words and cried wildly: ‘I dreamed I killed him! I wanted to kill father, but he is gone; now I will never rest until I find and destroy your son!’

“‘Did you believe her?’ I asked.

“‘At first her vehemence almost made me mistrust your honor, but before she left I was convinced that her words were but the ravings of an unsettled mind.’

“‘What became of her?’ I asked.

“‘She was secured for a time, but bribed her keeper and escaped.’

“‘Have you never heard from her since?’

“‘Never.’

“The response I made was such as to allay any distrust that might yet linger in his mind, and then I sought to divert his thoughts from the subject. So while my father lived, not another word in relation to the strange lady passed between us. Soon after his death, I again went abroad. Six months from that time, she who had been the curse of my life again stood before me. She was magnificently attired in a dress of scarlet velvet. The jewels that I had seen in the mysterious box were gleaming on her neck and arms. Language is powerless to describe her queenly beauty as she advanced with stately tread, and asked, in a commanding voice, if I were prepared to acknowledge her as my wife.

“I as determinedly answered, no, and bade her leave me forever.

“‘Beware how you trifle with me. I am no longer a child. Aided and guided by the spirit of my father, I have become strong; I am the QUEEN OF DEATH, my stroke is sure, my hand never fails. Deal justly with me, and you are secure; continue to wrong me, and this dagger shall drink your blood.’

“It was midnight, and I alone with this strange, wild woman; yet I felt no fear as her fierce black eyes were fixed upon me, and her small hand raised as if to make good her threat. Never in my life was I so recklessly indifferent. At this moment the cry of fire ran through the house, the door of my room was thrown open, and muttering, ‘we shall meet again!’ my visitor vanished as suddenly as she had appeared. For four years she followed me from place to place, appearing and disappearing in an almost miraculous manner, always threatening my life, although I do not believe she really intended to harm

me. At last, worn out by the persistent persecution, and at times praying death to release me, I returned to my native land, came to this city, where I spent a year without molestation. Then I purchased the house you so much admire, hoping to pass the remainder of my days away from the world of which I had grown so weary. But rest was not for me. She traced me out, and in the night of that terrible storm she made her first appearance, and nearly succeeded in depriving me of the dearest friend I have in life. Since I have been conscious of loving Clara Gordon, I have been aware that the hatred of that woman has increased tenfold. Several times she has crossed my path of late, and now she comes disguised as a young man. But, Harry, my greatest fear now is that she will take the life of Clara Gordon."

These last words were spoken in a whisper, as though he were almost afraid to utter them. As Forest ceased, he drew aside the curtains from the window, and was surprised to see that the light of daybreak was casting its pale hues over the eastern sky.

"Yes, Forest," said Harry, "morning has dawned, and the morning of a new existence. This revelation shall dispel the night in which you have so long hopelessly groped, and the sun of happiness will soon rise for you. Be hopeful, my friend, all will yet be well."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE CELESTIAL MARRIAGE.

WINTER was giving way to genial spring. During this time the little band of investigators had met regularly at Mrs. Spaulding's, and had, from time to time, received the lessons of truth and wisdom which the angels were ever prepared to impart. There had been no perceptible change in Clarence's health; he was strong and vigorous, and, his confidence in Lottie fully restored, he was happier than he had been since her death. Mrs. Spaulding was rapidly declining. Her energetic spirit was compelled to yield to bodily weakness, and most of her time she reclined upon an easy couch. As she neared the shining river she grew more and more cheerful, and was never weary of having Maggie, who was her constant attendant, describe the various scenes presented to her clairvoyant vision.

One warm balmy evening, she was resting upon a sofa by the open window. Near her sat Maggie Wild and Harry Young.

"Children," said Mrs. Spaulding, "the evening shadows are gently falling on the earth, but the sky is like one vast picture gallery. Forms of beauty are passing and repassing, glowing with a brilliancy of dyes and tints that no artist's canvas has ever pictured. Maggie, you have not left me to-day; go out now into this beautiful twilight. Oh! how I do wish you could go out into broad green fields; it would so invigorate and refresh you."

At first Maggie refused to leave her friend alone, but Mrs. Spaulding insisted, saying:

"I shall not be lonely; already I realize the presence of the loved ones you have so frequently described to me. Go, and when you return perhaps they may have some words of cheer to give us."

Maggie hesitated no longer, and soon, accompanied by Harry, she stood in the purple twilight of that lovely evening. Maggie felt that Mrs. Spaulding could not remain much longer with them, and her heart was very sad and lonely. Looking up to the pale sky, she counted the stars as they appeared one by one, and beneath their light she saw those cloud-like forms, atoms that had performed their first great duty, and now were ascending to other worlds of beauty.

"Oh! that I too could go," she exclaimed aloud.

"Go where?" asked Harry.

"Pardon me, Mr. Young. I had become so absorbed in my own sad thoughts that I was almost unconscious of your presence. I was thinking of the change that must soon occur with our friend, dear Mrs. Spaulding."

Harry looked upon the sweet, upturned face whose eyes glistened with tears unshed, and thought her an angel. "It would take little to transplant you from your native earth-soil to heaven," he mused, and then came the thought, "what if she should go?" Then the full depth of his love for Maggie Wild was revealed to him. He had long known that he loved her, but to-night he understood more of the nature and strength of his affection for her than ever before. He had said to Forest, "I love her as I love art, science, a beautiful star, or God." Now he was not willing to have her stand upon the mountain peak while he lingered in the valley. He wanted her by his side, a mortal on earth, not an angel in heaven. He could imagine her as a spirit lingering near him, as Lottie near Clarence, but this was an unsatisfying thought. He would hear her voice and watch

the changing expressions of her face; he would sit at her feet, and receive from her own lips the truths which she gathered from the celestial heights to which his less harmonious soul had not attained. He had not spoken to her of his love. Many times had words of affection struggled for utterance, and as often had they died unspoken.

Maggie had not dreamed of the intensity of his love: he was a pleasant, genial, and intellectual companion whose society she appreciated, but the two lives she lived, and the great future for which she was preparing, so absorbed her spirit that she gave little thought to the friendship that day by day was growing stronger. When she did look upon the picture sketched by unseen fingers upon her soul, she perceived that although she had raised an altar, and asked for friendship to kneel at its shrine, it was love that had entered its sanctuary. Then came the struggle, for Maggie had consecrated herself to the work assigned her. She had solemnly promised that no selfish interest should divert her from the line of duty. Hence she said to the fair picture of happiness, "Go from me! tempt me not with worldly prosperity." She had said to her heart, "Be still." With a firm resolve, she put from her the sweet cup of affection for which her heart had pleaded, and she thought she had conquered. Future revelation will show whether the victory was real.

For several minutes they had stood watching the fading twilight, no word spoken between them. At length Maggie broke the silence, asking:

"Have you heard from Clarence yet?"

"I have not: his silence I cannot account for. Four weeks ago, in good health and fine spirits, he left here to visit friends in the West, promising to write immediately upon his arrival. I am anxious about him; I fear he has met with some accident."

"I too have felt anxiety, but hope there is no occasion for it. Clarence is a noble young man; he would be a loss to the world, should he be taken now."

"True; there are many who could better be spared than he," responded Harry in a mournful voice.

Maggie met the clear gaze of her companion, and at that moment the heart of each acknowledged its love for the other. The discovery that Maggie loved him filled his heart with a tumult of emotions; his agitation was so great that he dared not trust himself to speak. Maggie dropped her eyes and said:

"Let us return to Mrs. Spaulding," and before he could make a reply, she was gone.

"The fresh air has done you good, Maggie; your lips and cheeks are bright carnation. Now sit down by my side, let your bright eyes look into the future, and tell me how much longer I am to remain here. I am growing impatient as I near the banks of the river of death."

At this moment Harry entered.

"Maggie," he said, "do you not think that Lottie could give us information of Clarence?"

"I have not seen Lottie for six weeks; but we may at least seek for intelligence of him from others. We will be quiet for a few moments and await the result." An hour passed and not a word was spoken. Maggie said:

"There are many spirits around, but they do not seem desirous of communicating. Oh! here is the GOLDEN KEY. I am to have another vision. Slowly the great door opens and I glide over the beautiful sea. I pass the place where Lottie's spirit was welcomed by her friends. Now I am in sight of a large city. Its palaces are reflecting the brilliant light that falls from the arching sky. You cannot conceive the beauty of the rays of light thrown off from those great bejeweled temples. I have reached the city;

it gleams with a flood of light so dazzling that my eyes cannot endure the full splendor of its brilliancy. A group of spirits meet me. Prominent among them is he of the GOLDEN KEY. He is richly attired in flowing garments of a substance resembling velvet, richly embroidered in gold and adorned with precious jewels. This costume does not appear gaudy, but rich, and becomes his stately form and noble bearing. Others of the group are strangers to me, but all are elegantly attired as if for a festive occasion. They move lightly through the rose-tinted atmosphere beckoning me to follow. They go rapidly. I would like to pause and give a description of some temples, evidently erected as places of worship. I would also like to examine and describe the objects that are new and strange to me; the beauty of proportion, the perfection of design, the delicacy of coloring. We have now left the city, and are nearing a pavilion that stands on an eminence surrounded by a broad lawn, which could very appropriately be called a park. There are winding walks, above which tall trees interlace their graceful branches; gorgeous flowers, sparkling fountains, and here and there beautiful arbors of vines and roses. It is illuminated by various colored lights. This appears to have been done simply to lighten the effect and bring out from the dark shade of the thick foliage the tints of the flowers disposed in groups or clusters beneath them. In the center of the park stands a large mansion built of material whiter and smoother than marble, and on the surface are designs and images, the beauty of which earthly language cannot describe. The windows are open and the gentle breeze sways the delicate curtains. The palace and grounds are melodious with the sweetest music to which I have ever listened. It rolls, swells, and slowly melts away, to again peal forth more rapturously than before. The guide has entered the house and beck-

ons me to follow. We enter a spacious hall and pass to an apartment on the right. It is very large; the ceiling and walls are richly adorned with delicate vines of gold, from which drop in clusters small blue flowers. I cannot tell of what these flowers are composed; they appear like sapphires that blaze and glow with a light that fills the room. Exquisite paintings in frames inlaid with precious gems, are seen on every side. My guide called my attention to them and informed me that they were the works of advanced spirits who had reached a higher plane of life, and had descended and tried to transfer to canvas some faint idea of the beauty and glory of the realm which they inhabit."

"Describe them, please describe them," said Harry.

"Impossible! could you describe the glory of the tinted sky to one totally blind? or could you give the music of the sweet wild songster to ears that have never heard a sound? It is as useless to attempt a description of these works of art. The floor of this room is covered with a soft, velvety carpet, snowy white, and over it runs a delicate blue vine, with the same small blue flowers as seen upon the walls. The curtains have the appearance of fine soft white lace. They are looped back by sprays of gleaming sapphires. The furniture corresponds, blue and white prevailing. The musical instruments baffle my powers of description.

"Assembled here are a great number of spirits, many of them reminding me of PEARL, so ethereal, so perfect in their loveliness. They have evidently met for some special object, but what, I cannot determine. They are freely conversing, without any of that restraint witnessed in what is called the best circles of society on earth; neither is there that carelessness and inattention which often marks the lower circles of life. Here I see an easy cheerful fa-

miliarity which does not degenerate into rudeness nor prompt an individual to display his wit at the expense of the feelings of another. Why was I brought here? what lesson is to be learned? My guide directs my attention to a door through which I can see a number of spirits advancing. I recognize PEARL, SYLVA and that sweet little spirit seen on former occasions, whom my guide tells me is NINA. A number of gentlemen are with them. PEARL as usual is alone, and a little in advance of the others. How beautiful she appears! she must have performed many, many noble deeds to have illuminated her face with the light of such a divine love. Her robe is of azure blue, soft and light as the fleecy clouds. She wears no ornament save the snow white pearls that rest upon her neck and are twined among the waves of her golden hair. O PEARL! PEARL! to be as beautiful, as good as thou art, I would sacrifice anything, anything on earth! She has heard me and turns with smiles upon me and replies:

“‘Only through obedience to the laws of your being can you hope to reach perfection.’ It is a reproof, yet so sweetly, gently given. PEARL, hear me; I will never again be false to my nature, I will walk in the light, let the world say what it may. PEARL smiles again upon me and moves on, the group taking position near the center of the room. Others are coming. Mrs. Spaulding, here are your friends—and here are my own dear mother and sister! Here too is Lottie. Sister and mother and Lottie! and—can it be true? yes, yes, it is Clarence! Can it be that he is gone? It must be so. Oh! I understand it now. He looks proud and happy as he gazes into the face of Lottie. Harry, Mrs. Spaulding! can it be possible? Yes, it is true; this is a celestial marriage in the Summer Land. Lottie and Clarence have taken their position also in the center of the room.”

"Is it necessary to have marriage ceremony in the other world?" asked Harry.

"I should think so, and yet I see no one who has the appearance of a clergyman. I see! PEARL advances, she joins their hands, she speaks. 'Flower whispers to flower, star answers to star, truth responds to truth, and spirits—the concentration of all beauty, grace, wisdom, light, and truth—respond one to another, becoming more perfectly united as they assimilate to themselves more of the principles of wisdom and love. May these two spirits continue to ascend and unfold while the cycles roll, while the love of the Infinite Father shall find each day a more perfect expression through these souls that his will has united so firmly that no time or conditions can draw them asunder. What the Eternal Mind has united, we cannot make more closely one, but simply acknowledge that we realize the law of true marriage and bid them joyfully pursue the upward path which will culminate in a yet more perfect union.'

"It is very quiet here, and yet I lose many of PEARL's words. As she ceases speaking, a band of little children float into the room and crown the bride with a garland of of snow white blossoms. The sight is beautiful; and now they sing a song of rejoicing; no tears are shed here. Is it because homes are not broken, loving hearts not sundered? Lottie's mother looks almost as young and happy as the bride."

"This is all incomprehensible to me," said Harry. "Can you not ascertain how long Clarence has been in the other life and how he left the body?"

"I think not; they give me no attention; I think they are not conscious of my presence. I would like to remain with them but my guide says I must return. All fades from my vision: as swift as light I am wafted back to earth."

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE MURDER.

As spring returned, Mrs. Bradwell regained her health and strength, but the affectionate, confiding spirit of former days returned not. In vain did Mrs. Loomis strive to solve the mystery and restore the harmony that once existed between Mrs. Bradwell and her husband. There were no unkind words, no neglect of duty on either side, but Mrs. Bradwell seemed perfectly indifferent, an icy coldness in her manner which could be felt but not described. After the day of Mrs. Loomis' arrival, Mrs. Bradwell had never spoken of the condition of her mind, and now as she grew better, Mrs. Loomis again wrapped herself in the mantle of seclusion. She avoided the doctor's presence, and seemed anxious for the time to come when she should accompany Mrs. Bradwell to the Cure, where she was to remain several months. During this time not a word had been heard from Clara, and strangely, Mrs. Bradwell had never mentioned her name.

It was a calm and lovely evening in the month of March, that Mrs. Bradwell sat by the window watching the gray shadows of twilight as they crept over the earth. Mrs. Loomis and Daisy had gone to inquire as to the health of Mrs. Spaulding, and Dr. Bradwell had not yet returned from his round of professional duties. Mrs. Bradwell was entirely alone, gazing listlessly through the open window, when a thin white hand came up over the window sill, and

a note fell at her feet. Without any apparent surprise, she ran her eyes over the contents, which read as follows:

"My only friend, I have braved many dangers for the sake of seeing and speaking to you once more. I have watched the house for hours; you are all alone; let me in.

"CLARA GORDON."

Mrs. Bradwell manifested no interest until her eye rested upon the name. Then a bright color flushed her cheek and a look of joy beamed from her eye as she sprung quickly up to open the hall door. There upon the steps stood Clara Gordon. But she could hardly recognize, in the pale emaciated form before her, the beautiful Clara who had left her but a few months before in the pride of health and beauty. Mrs. Bradwell led her into the house, threw aside the dark veil, smoothed her hair, covered her face with kisses, and lavished upon her all the fond caresses and sweet words of affection that she had once bestowed upon the chosen of her heart.

"Clara, my own dear Clara! where have you been, and what have they done to you! Oh! I have so longed for you! my heart has called and prayed for your return, but I dare not mention your name to those around me. The little note you slipped under the door before you left, I kissed a hundred times before destroying it. Oh! how cruel it was to take you from me—I so ill, and you my only friend."

"Dear Mrs. Bradwell," said Clara, speaking in a hollow voice, "what we have to say must be said quickly. Your husband may return at any moment, and should he find me here, my life would pay the penalty."

"Your life!"

"Yes, you were so ill that I dared not in that note tell

you all, but now you are strong enough to know all I have suffered. He, your husband, charged me with attempting to take your life, and then drove me from the house without even permitting me to see you."

"No, no, Clara, it is not possible; he did not do that."

"But he did do it, Mrs. Bradwell. Poison was found in the house, and he assumed that to be evidence of my guilt."

"It is dreadful to think of," said Mrs. Bradwell, drawing closer to Clara.

"Yes, but it is evident that there was an attempt made upon your life, and it has been my work, since I left you, to detect the guilty one, and prove my innocence."

"That is unnecessary; I know that you are as innocent of such a thought as myself. But have you succeeded in finding the guilty party?"

"Yes; in my own mind I am fully convinced."

"Then why not speak at once?"

"Because I must first obtain proof."

"Can you get it?"

"Yes, with your assistance."

"I will do anything, anything; but you know they watch me closely, for they think me deranged. Whom do you suspect?"

"Mrs. Loomis."

"Mrs. Loomis!" said Mrs. Bradwell, passing her hand across her brow as if to recall her scattered thoughts. Then in a firm voice she said, "No, no, you are mistaken: it cannot be."

"I will convince you that I am not mistaken. But hark! I hear Daisy's voice."

"Step into that closet and remain quiet until Mrs. Loomis takes her away for the night," said Mrs. Bradwell.

Clara obeyed, and when at last free to emerge from her concealment, she feared to remain longer lest she should

encounter the doctor; so bidding Mrs. Bradwell farewell, she left the house.

Four weeks had passed since this stolen interview. During the time, Clara had perfected her plans and was now ready to put them into execution. Dr. Bradwell had received warnings that the serpent had again entered his family circle, that the shadows were again gathering about him, and that his spirit friends might not be strong enough to prevent the impending calamity. Mrs. Bradwell, accompanied by Mrs. Loomis, had gone to spend a week at the Cure, and notwithstanding the warnings of the spirits, the doctor felt no uneasiness on his wife's account. He heard daily from her, and rejoiced in her returning strength and the prospect of her being restored to health and happiness. Little did he dream of the bitter cup that he would be compelled to drink. During this time the spirits had repeatedly urged him to go abroad with his wife and Daisy, to remain a year or more, but some power seemed to make it impossible for him to heed their counsel. Daisy had accompanied her mother, and he was left alone. But one night, gloomy forebodings which he could not dispel filled his mind.

"I will go to the Cure in the morning," he said mentally. "I believe all is well, yet a strange, undefinable fear has taken possession of my soul."

With this determination he retired, but not to rest; for all night long he was disturbed by some mysterious, invisible presence, who seemed to be Mrs. Loomis. She called to him for help, plead for him to come before it was too late.

Meanwhile, we will take a clairvoyant view of the Cure, and learn what is transpiring there. It was a clear, beautiful night; not a cloud marred the beauty of the azure dome or the brightness of the golden lamps that the hand

of infinite wisdom had suspended through the boundless expanse. The silver moon threw a flood of light over the sleeping earth, bringing out the shadows of the tall trees standing on either side of the road leading from the city to the hydropathic establishment of Dr. Bigelow. Late in the evening a woman might have been seen passing silently but rapidly over the dusty highway. Occasionally she would pause in the dark shadows and look around as though fearful of pursuit. Then she would hasten on until another group of trees afforded her the obscurity she seemed eager to gain. At last she was almost opposite the building, and crouching in the shadows, she muttered to herself:

“She is there—there in her beauty, pride, and happiness; she is there, the woman that *he* loves. How I hate her! Ha! that queenly form shall soon be food for worms, those brilliant eyes and magnificent tresses that have made him forget his early love, that beauty that conquered his fear of the living and dead—all shall soon go out in darkness. How he loves her! Oh! it will be sweet revenge to wring his heart with anguish and make him suffer as I have suffered. He had no pity, no compassion on me; with careless, cruel hand he destroyed my youth and blasted my life; now *I* will have no pity, no sympathy. Ah! it was sweet to love, but it is a thousand times sweeter to hate. How I shall delight to see my victim writhing in the tortures I have prepared for him. I shall clap my hands in glee and laugh over the grave of his dead idol. I am willing to die if I can but visit upon his head this just retribution.”

While this woman, whom no doubt the reader has recognized as the QUEEN OF DEATH, is thus exulting over the deed she is about to commit, we will enter the Cure and see what is transpiring within those darkened rooms.

It is late; the patients have all retired, the lights have been extinguished, and to all appearance the Cure is as calm and tranquil as the moonlight scene without. But this calmness is only seeming. We enter, and ascend the broad staircase, and pass into the large room at the right. Here, walking to and fro with restless hasty steps, is Clara Gordon. She, like the insane woman without, is holding evil communion with herself, and trying to nerve her arm for the deed she has vowed shall be accomplished that night.

"I shall succeed this time," she muttered, "and the deed that deprives him of a wife, will forever remove Mrs. Loomis from my path. No one knows that Clara Gordon is within a hundred miles of this house. This disguise, with an assumed name, has served me well. Strange I do not shrink as at first from the deed. I know it is the only way that I can attain my object, and so well do I love Dr. Bradwell that I would descend into the depths of perdition, if it must be, to ensure his love. To-morrow my way will be clear; a few months will dispel his grief, for he has never loved her, and as for Mrs. Loomis, bowed to the dust under the imputation of this crime, he will hate *her* more intensely than I do. My tranquillity restored, health and beauty will return. I shall accidentally meet him, my power over him will be re-established, and at last I shall have the wealth I have coveted, and more than that, the love for which my proud nature has stooped to plead. Oh! if Dr. Bradwell were a beggar in the street, a felon in a prison cell, a criminal doomed to die, I would love him, worship him, and move earth and heaven to save him. What is the worth of the childish affection of such a woman as Mrs. Bradwell when compared to the wild, tumultuous torrent that sweeps over my soul? He has never known what it is to have a beautiful woman love him as I do. It is said that the strength of love is tested by the sacrifices

we are willing to make for it. I have already hazarded life and honor, and am willing to sell my soul if need be, yes, dwell in the regions of darkness forever for the sake of this love." She paused, took from the table beside her a glittering dirk and carefully scrutinized its keen edge. "I do not like the instrument, but it is hers and will help to fasten suspicion upon her. All is ready, the side door unfastened for my escape. But what was that?" she exclaimed as the sound of footsteps was heard in the hall.

While she stands listening, we will ascend another flight of stairs and enter the neatly furnished room at the left of the landing. The curtains are drawn aside and the moonlight falls upon the pale face of Mrs. Bradwell and kisses the coral lips and golden curls of little Daisy sleeping by her side. The dark form we left crouching under the shadows of the great trees has entered the room.

"This must be the place," she whispered; "Clara has charge of the child." At this instant a gust of wind closed the shutters, leaving Mrs. Bradwell's form in the shadow. A low laugh escaped the lips of the insane woman. "'Tis father's spirit; he wants the deed done in the darkness. Now, Clara Gordon," she muttered, as she tried the point of the jeweled dagger, "death to you for daring to trifle with one who is mine, all mine. Go! go! dwell with the demons of darkness! I am the QUEEN OF DEATH; my hand is sure!"

With these words, her hand descended with a fatal stroke, and the warm life-blood gushed forth from the heart of Mrs. Bradwell and stained the white hand and scarlet band that encircled the wrist of the murderess. Scarcely had the deed been committed when a slight sound at the door caused her to look up, and catching sight of Clara Gordon, she dropped her dagger and fled rapidly from the room.

"It is well," muttered Clara, the momentary shock of amazement giving place to an expression of demon satisfaction, "Satan is aiding me to-night."

Dipping her hand in the warm blood, she stained the weapon she carried, dropping it upon the bed, and stealing from the room, hastily crossed the hall, and left the bloody prints of her fingers upon the door of the room occupied by Mrs. Loomis. No sooner did she commence descending the stairs leading to her own room than a shriek rang through the house, a shriek that made Clara's heart almost cease its beatings. She dared not retrace her steps, but concealing in the folds of her dress the dagger dropped by the QUEEN OF DEATH, she finally gained her apartment. The scream that had so startled Clara, also startled the household, and lights were gleaming from every part of the building. Mrs. Loomis was the first to enter the fatal chamber of death. The door leading to Mrs. Bradwell's room was open, and as she stepped in, all was quiet as the grave. The heavy curtains had fallen, making the room totally dark.

"I am glad they were not disturbed," said Mrs. Loomis, mentally. She drew aside the curtain, and at that moment the sound of approaching steps was heard, and Dr. Bigelow, his wife, and Clara Gordon entered the room. Mrs. Loomis had just turned from the window, and the moonlight had revealed to her astonished gaze the terrible scene. White as marble and trembling like an aspen leaf, she leaned against the bedstead for support. Now the light from the lamp carried by Dr. Bigelow revealed more clearly the horrible picture. Evidently Mrs. Bradwell had died without a struggle. The white counterpane was crimsoned with her blood, and the cruel instrument of death lay near her. Daisy sat upright in the bed, her little hands clasped over her face, white as marble. On the floor near

the bed lay Anna in a death-like swoon. The individuals of the group gazed upon each other in speechless horror.

Clara Gordon was the first to break silence.

"The child must be removed," she said. "Daisy, come to me." Daisy moved not, and seemed unconscious of all that was passing around her. But when Clara attempted to remove her by force, Daisy recoiled from her touch and cried in a voice of horror:

"Away, away! your hands are dripping with blood."

Clara shrunk back intimidated by the fierce words and strange look of the child. Mrs. Loomis went to Daisy, and the little child put her arms around her neck and was carried from the room.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE WILES OF THE SERPENT.

WHILE the intensest excitement over the horrible murder prevailed among the inmates of the Cure, and before the dawn of morning, the sound of horses' feet, coming with rapid pace, broke the death-like silence of the street. Nearer and nearer they came and stopped before the Cure. The next moment the door bell rung out a loud sharp peal. A servant answered the call and admitted the coarse, repulsive man first introduced as the guardian of Lottie, the young prima-donna. He bowed politely and inquired if Mrs. Loomis was stopping there. Being affirmatively answered, he expressed a desire to see her immediately. The girl left him alone and hastened to the apartment of Mrs. Loomis, whom she found with little Daisy, who had sobbed herself to sleep in her arms. The white face of Mrs. Loomis became a shade paler as she received the summons. Gently she unclasped the clinging arms of Daisy, and with trembling steps descended to the parlor.

"Is this Mrs. Loomis?" inquired the man as she entered the room. She bowed assent, and he continued:

"I have a letter for you, ma'am, and the one that sent it gave me particular directions to give it into no hands but yours. She is mighty bad off, *she* is, and it is not certain whether she will be alive when I get back."

Mrs. Loomis took the letter and glanced over its contents, which were as follows:

"DEAR MRS. LOOMIS, my only friend, in life I have hated, despised, and wronged you. Now I am about to die alone and among strangers. I ask you to forgive my injustice and come

to me at once. I ask this not from purely selfish motives, for I have a revelation to make which is of the greatest importance to you and those you love. The doctors say I cannot live, and oh! I cannot die with this load of guilt upon my soul. You are the only one in the world to whom I can speak. Let nothing prevent you from complying with my last request. The distance is short; you will not be detained more than two hours. Come, for God's sake! come and receive the confession of

“CLARA GORDON.”

Mrs. Loomis was so astonished and bewildered that for some moments she knew not what to do. Then an icy chill ran over her, a terrible fear took possession of her soul, and sinking into a chair she exclaimed:

“I cannot, I cannot.”

“Well, then, all I have to do is to go back without you, but I can tell you one thing, ma'am, her ghost will be sure to haunt you as long as you live, for she said she could not rest in this world or the next until she had told you all, and it's my opinion you had better receive it from her now than to have her ghost following you all the days of your life.”

Mrs. Loomis had been greatly unnerved by the events of the night, and the man's words made her tremble with apprehension. She could almost imagine that the spirit of Clara Gordon was lurking in the dark corners of the room, and calling to her. Nerving herself, she rose, and with a firm voice said:

“Sir, an event has transpired in this house the past night that renders it impossible for me to accompany you. Return and say to Miss Gordon, that I will answer her call as soon as Dr. Bradwell arrives and I have placed his child under his protection. I cannot leave Daisy alone, at this time.”

“You need have no anxiety on that account,” spoke the

soft, oily voice of Clara Gordon, as protected by her disguise she glided into the room. "I am a stranger here, but you need not fear to trust the child to my care. I understand that Dr. Bradwell has been sent for; it cannot be long before his arrival, and if your friend is dying, as I judge she is from what the gentleman has said, the delay may prove fatal, and all through your life your heart will repeat the terrible words, '*too late.*' Mrs. Loomis, you are a stranger to me, and although I have been at the Cure but a short time, I have not failed to notice your devotion to Mrs. Bradwell and her child, and this morning, when we entered the room and found you alone with the dead, I noticed the expression of anguish upon your countenance. I admire that devotion that even now would keep you from the death-bed of a friend to watch over the child of her you served so well, but the voice of duty never calls in two directions at the same time. The child is sleeping; I will watch and guard her as tenderly as could a mother. Go to your friend and return with a consciousness that you have brightened her last moments, and made it possible for her spirit to find rest in the other world."

Mrs. Loomis arose, fixed her eyes upon Clara as though she would read her very soul, but the disguise was perfect and no suspicion came to her of the plot that this woman had laid for her destruction. Thanking her for her kind offer, she again ascended the stairs and stood by the side of Daisy.

"Dear little one," she said, bending over the sleeper, "I feel that I ought not to leave you, yet the time will be short, and no harm can possibly come to you."

With these words she put on her bonnet and shawl, and again kissing the white brow of the sleeping child, she said, addressing herself to Clara, who had that moment entered the room, "I hope she may not awake till my return."

Little did Mrs. Loomis think that many, many long weeks would pass before she would again meet with little Daisy. Leaving the room, she passed down the staircase and out upon the broad avenue where the carriage stood waiting. As she was about to enter it she looked back, and there saw the spirit so often described by Daisy as her "beautiful mamma." She was beckoning Mrs. Loomis to return, and then wringing her hands as if in despair.

"Why don't you get in? I never saw any one as slow as you are," spoke the harsh voice of the man.

"I must go back to the house," she answered, and she removed her foot from the carriage step.

"You don't play any of your tricks on me," said the man, and raising her in his arms, he lifted her into the carriage, despite her struggle to escape, quickly shut the door, and at the next moment was driving off at a rapid rate. The first piercing scream of hopeless anguish that this woman had ever uttered was lost in the noise of the carriage as it rattled over the pavement. Mrs. Loomis was now fully satisfied that she was the victim of a plot, and she had done wrong in following the advice of the strange woman and leaving Daisy in her charge. She resolved to procure a conveyance and return to the Cure the moment the carriage stopped and she was free. Little did she realize that freedom was to her only a name; she was a prisoner in the hands of this coarse, brutal man. Not until she found herself confined to the limits of a small dark room, did she realize that she was no longer free, nor could she divine the cause for her detention. When she re-read the letter purporting to have been written by Clara Gordon, she vaguely felt that Clara must have been chief agent in this plot, yet her pure, innocent nature could not fathom the depth of Clara's infamy.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

FURTHER REVELATIONS BY DAISY

"HE is coming," spoke Clara Gordon, as again the sounds of horses' feet were heard approaching the Cure. Concealing herself within the folds of the lace curtains, she looked out to catch a glimpse of him whom she had so terribly wronged. Yes, Dr. Bradwell had arrived, and with him a number of gentlemen. All entered the house, and Clara withdrew from the window, trembling with agitation.

"Oh! that I could go to him," she said, "and let him know how my heart sympathizes with him. Yes, he suffers, although she was incapable of calling out the depths of his affection; he suffers more than I anticipated. How pale he is! Oh! that I could in some way have shielded him from this great sorrow! Yet it was necessary to the accomplishment of the purpose that is rooted in my life, and if fate had not supplied another instrument, my hand would have done the deed. Now that my path is plain, now that all things are as I would have them, I feel an intense desire to go to him and reveal all the past. Is there a law which will compel me to confess my crimes and destroy my prospect of future happiness for which I have periled my soul? In my heart I am a murderer, but he shall never know it—never, *never*. If there be such a law, it is not strong enough to make me break the seal of secrecy. I must see him; it has been long, oh! so long, since I heard the sound of his voice. Yet I dare not," she said, shrink-

ing back after her first impulsive step towards the door. "My emotion would betray me; he would penetrate my disguise. I will be prudent. What happiness it would be to take the place occupied by Mrs. Loomis, but it must not be; one wrong move now would ruin all. I will go into obscurity and remain until this excitement is over, then return with the proof of my innocence, and from that hour I pledge myself to live a better, truer life. Blessed with his love, dwelling in the sunshine of his presence, I shall have attained the end of my ambition, and the good that is in my nature will grow stronger day by day, and he will never know the dark secret of my past life."

At this moment the door opened and Dr. Bradwell, accompanied by Mrs. Bigelow, entered the apartment. Clara shrunk into the darkest corner of the room. Her fears of detection were groundless, for the doctor seemed unconscious of her presence. He went directly to Daisy, and gazed upon her with a look of deepest affection. His face was very, very pale, and the expression lingering about the firm mouth bespoke a voiceless pain. While he thus stood, Daisy awoke and extended her little arms, saying:

"Papa, take Daisy home."

He took the child in his arms, and kissing her white brow, murmured:

"She is all I have of life."

Daisy's head dropped upon his shoulder, her eyes closed, and in a changed voice, and a manner totally unlike her own, she said:

"Papa, dear papa, all have not gone; your Lillie lives in the higher world. Papa, Lillie's mother is not dead! Daisy's mamma died long, long ago, and now your beautiful sister is coming to live with us. Her spirit is free. But, papa, they say you must not let them move her body!"

"What do you mean, Daisy? of what are you speaking?"

"I tell you, papa, what the bright spirit with the GOLDEN KEY tells me. He says that your second wife was, in reality, only your sister. An insane woman has murdered her, and on account of her unnatural death, her spirit-body will be longer in forming. So do not disturb her for two or three hours. He says the crime will be charged to an innocent person. Papa, he wants me to tell you that you have not lost all. Daisy is not your child; I, Lillie, was taken from you in infancy and Daisy put in my place. I died in my mother's arms. Your first wife still lives, and is innocent of the charges you once brought against her. He says, trust the future, and guardian angels will do all in their power to smooth the way for you, and though they cannot reclothe the departed in her earthly form, they can do much to render her condition happy, and can bring her to communicate with you, and in this way they may be enabled to thwart the designs of a guileful woman, who even now is preparing snares for your feet. They know not how well they may succeed in this, as their control depends so much on surrounding influences; but however dark the night may appear, be assured the angels will not cease to bring the light of their presence to comfort, and if possible, to aid you. For your consolation, he says that your sister did not suffer as much in death as she has during her late illness. The great wrong to her is in depriving her of earth's needed experiences, and compelling her, by this unfortunate death, to remain in an unconscious condition for a time, and depriving her of the pleasure of the transit from this world to the next. Therefore be not disconsolate. Papa, he has gone, and Lillie can now tell you how much she loves you and mamma."

"Where is your mamma?" spoke the doctor in a voice scarcely audible.

Before reply was made, the door was thrown open, and the officers of the law entered the room. One of them held in his hand the weapon which Clara had left in the death chamber.

"Excuse the intrusion," he said to Dr. Bradwell; "we are in search of Mrs. Loomis, and have been informed that we could find her in this room. I suppose this is the lady." And he approached Clara as he spoke.

"No," said Mrs. Bigelow, "this is Mrs. Young, a lady who has been in the house but a few days."

"Is this the lady who entered Mrs. Bradwell's room with yourself and husband this morning?"

"The same," answered Mrs. Bigelow.

"Will you have the kindness to describe the appearance of the room and the persons in it when you entered?" continued the officer, at the same time fixing a searching glance upon Clara.

Clara arose to her feet, and in a cold voice, in which there was not a sign of emotion, gave the necessary answers, and concluded by saying:

"On the floor lay one of the servants, who had evidently been aroused by the scream of Mrs. Bradwell and had fainted upon viewing the scene. On the bed by her side knelt her little girl, whom the scene of sorrow seemed to have frozen into a statue. Bending over the corpse was Mrs. Loomis."

"Where is she now?"

"That question I cannot answer. By her request I have taken charge of the child. She claimed that she had been summoned to see a friend who was very ill; that she was going but a few steps from the house and would return in a few moments."

"How long has she been absent?"

"Over an hour."

"Did you ever see this instrument before?" asked the officer, exhibiting the dirk.

"I can only say," replied Clara, "that yesterday, as I entered the room of Mrs. Loomis, I saw such a weapon upon her toilet table. When she perceived me she hastily concealed it from sight."

At this moment a shudder convulsed the body of Daisy. For a few minutes she seemed to be in contortions, then springing to her feet she confronted Clara, and in a strong voice exclaimed:

"Wicked, deceiving, guilty woman! do not try to throw the crimson mantle of guilt around the innocent. I denounce you as ——"

The moment of suspense was terrible. Clara's face was livid with mingled rage and fear. So great was her excitement that she forgot her habitual prudence and caution, and raising her arm and muttering the single word "Devil!" she struck the child a blow that sent her reeling to the floor. In the midst of the confusion that ensued, Clara made her retreat into the next room. Seizing an opportune moment, she sent for the officers, gave her own explanation of the extraordinary occurrence they had just witnessed, and also many things tending to confirm suspicion against the party suspected as guilty of the murder.

The officers listened respectfully to Clara's words, although it was evident that they were more interested in trying to fathom her reason for implicating Mrs. Loomis than in the information they gained from her. The quick eyes of the detectives had perceived that the terrible wound which had caused Mrs. Bradwell's death was not made by the instrument he held in his hand, bearing the name of Mrs. Loomis. Again, they had decided that the bloody marks upon the door opening into the room of Mrs. Loomis, were not made by any one passing in, but were

placed there by some one passing along the hall. For these and other reasons, to them it was evident that Mrs. Loomis was not guilty of the crime; neither did they suspect Clara, but they were anxious to fathom her reasons for desiring to cast suspicion upon one who was clearly not the criminal. Clara had also tried to impress upon their minds the conviction that Mrs. Bradwell's child was subject to fits of insanity; that this fact had been confided to her by Mrs. Loomis who had charge of Daisy. After obtaining all the information from Clara that she desired to impart, they again returned to Dr. Bradwell, with whom they held a long conversation, which tended to confirm their belief in the innocence of Mrs. Loomis. During this interview Daisy listened to the conversation with the deepest interest. The officer observing this, addressed her, saying:

"Well, little girl, can you tell me of anything that occurred in your mother's room last night?"

"Yes," replied Daisy, fixing her truthful eyes upon the man. "I was asleep, but a noise in the room awoke me. I heard some one whispering, but I kept quiet, for I thought that my pretty angel mamma and little Lillie had come to me again. Soon after, I opened my eyes and saw a strange, wild-looking woman standing by the bed, and I was afraid of her. I saw her raise her arm, holding in her hand something that sparkled in the moonlight, over my mother. I tried to scream but could not, for when I saw her hand I knew who it was, for her fingers were dripping with blood, just as when I saw her before. She struck mamma, then laughed, and I did not see or hear anything more until Dr. Bigelow came into the room with that woman" (here Daisy pointed towards the room occupied by Clara) "who wanted to take me away."

"Is this what the strange woman held in her hand?" said the officer, holding up the instrument.

"No, no," said Daisy, shuddering, "take it away! I cannot look at it."

"You spoke of having seen this woman before. Can you tell me where?"

Daisy gave an account of the scene at Mrs. Spaulding's. Then folding her arms and looking into Dr. Bradwell's face, she said;

"My work is done; I have told him all I know. They will find the QUEEN OF DEATH, but will not take her life. She did not know what she was doing. Mamma will forgive her, God will forgive her. Papa, Daisy can help you in another way. My pretty mamma came this morning and said that I must stay until the broken links in your life were reunited; until the beautiful rainbow I saw so long ago over the head of Mrs. Loomis should shine more brilliantly than in her early years. Then I asked mamma to tell me what all this meant? and she answered, 'be patient, Daisy, and you shall know.' O papa," she added, putting her arms about his neck and resting her head upon his shoulder, "I am so glad that I can help you, and make you happier; I am so glad that I can help Mrs. Loomis, although I cannot tell in what way. This morning, when I lay here so quiet that Mrs. Loomis thought me asleep and left me, bright angels came, took me in their arms and talked to me until the pain was all gone from my heart, and they told me that before long they would come and take me to the beautiful home where your Lillie lives. They showed me a long park, in the center of which was a beautiful mansion, clear as crystal, and all around it was a portico sustained by coral pillars, and around them twined vines, dark green leaves, and snow-white flowers. They will take me there, papa, where Lottie and Clarence and mamma live. I asked if Aunt Maggie could not go too, but they shook their heads and said, 'Not yet.' I

shall be so happy there with your little Lillie. Are you not glad that I am going?"

The doctor folded her closer to his heart, and bending over her, whispered:

"This is the last drop in the bitter cup! I can bear no more."

The officers were now satisfied that the murderess was none other than the insane woman known as the "QUEEN OF DEATH," against whom Harry Young had entered a complaint. To watch Clara's movements, find Mrs. Loomis, and to arrest this mad woman, was now the work of the detectives.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE PROMISE.

MAGGIE WILD had received a great shock in the intelligence of the assassination of Mrs. Bradwell, but did not communicate the terrible tidings to Mrs. Spaulding, who was rapidly sinking into the valley of death. Maggie had been fully occupied in attending to the wants of the invalid, and her mind absorbed in the thought of the great change about to take place in the condition of her dear and revered friend. Day by day the failing body grew weaker, and as the spirit neared the immortal shore it seemed to grow brighter and stronger, and the vision clearer. During the last days of her illness, Mrs. Spaulding had frequently attempted to converse with Maggie upon subjects relating to her material welfare. But Maggie, from a sense of innate delicacy, had avoided the subject, begging her friend not to give one thought to her.

"I am young and strong," she said, "and with the aid of the angels under whose care I am, I shall be supplied with all that is necessary for my material needs."

"Maggie, you are alone and inexperienced," Mrs. Spaulding replied, "you are beautiful and confiding, and the great world is cold and selfish. O my little one! I tremble to think what your fate may be."

"Not alone, dear Mrs. Spaulding, not alone, for ever the angels are with me; nor unprotected, for their magnetic influence is thrown like a wall of fire around me, and although the way be dark, and snares be laid for my feet,

yet I fear no evil, for the same overruling power that has protected and guided me in the past will care for me in the future."

"Maggie, your heart is as pure as untrodden snow, your perfect trust is beautiful, but there may be times when your guardian angels cannot approach. Then it will be well to have strength of your own, through which you may be able to control your surroundings and live independent of those who through envy and malice would destroy the peace which envelops your soul, and cast you from a position which they could never hope to attain; those who would poison the cup of friendship and break the golden links in the chain of love, destroy your usefulness and make your earth life a failure. I have had experience in life, and know what it is to buffet with the darkness of ignorance and superstition, and now, as my material form grows weaker, my perception becomes clearer and I seem to see what will be your future if you are left to struggle on alone and uncared for. I sincerely believe that the angels who have lifted the pall of darkness from my soul and brightened my declining days by the sunlight of their presence, caused me to be strongly attracted to you, and have so shaped events that you have found a home and rest beneath my roof. Your gentle hands now soothe my last hours of earth life, your pure love fills my heart with peace; your sweet words of faith and hope lead me to the brink of the beautiful river, and point me to a land where friendship and love are free from the cold breath of distrust that too often mars their beauty, and chills their life on earth. Maggie, the same influences that sent you to me, now reveal the way in which I am to compensate you for the happiness you have afforded me. Did I not give heed to these impressions, I should be unworthy the blessings received. You are aware that my

husband left a large fortune in my possession, and that I have no near relatives. I have lived economically, and the interest has more than supplied my wants, therefore the property remains. This I design to leave so that it may be put to the best use. I have studied you closely, and believe you will use it wisely. Do not turn from me, Maggie, it is all yours. More than a week since, the papers were executed making you my heiress."

Maggie was too much overcome to speak, and her bright tears fell upon the hand of her beloved friend.

"Now, Maggie," continued Mrs. Spaulding, "there is another subject upon which I wish to speak, and you will pardon me if I speak as freely as I would to my own child. The angels have chosen you as an instrument through which they can give light to the world, and you are willing to sacrifice *all* for what you believe to be the truth. In this you may be mistaken. The great object of life here and hereafter, is happiness; true happiness can only come through harmonious growth and development. To develop your intellectual nature by the sacrifice of the social is an error; to live wholly absorbed in the spiritual, shunning the society of your kind, standing on the mountain summit, ever seeking the companionship of those who have left the earth plane, striving to crush every emotion of love for those upon the material plane, may add to your intuitive or spiritual growth, but it is not the true way to attain happiness here or hereafter. One attribute of the soul, one organ of the brain, must not say to another, away! we have no need of thee! How many men and women there are who are intellectual giants, yet are social and spiritual dwarfs. Such will be the fate of those who would withdraw from the needed experiences of earth life, and live wholly in the ideal realm. You are naturally a warm-hearted, affectionate girl; to crush out this nature is to

destroy your own usefulness. I would not have you leave the beautiful work the angels have given you to do, but I would have you be as nature designed you. All the influences from the higher life cannot meet the demands of your warm, loving heart. I once hoped that before I closed my eyes in death, I should have had the pleasure of seeing you the wife of him I so much esteem and respect, Forest. But long ago I gave up this hope, for I saw that your heart had twined its tendrils around another soul. Nay, Maggie, do not shrink from me when I speak thus plainly. Pure affection ennobles and exalts, but I have found that you would trample it beneath your feet, through an erroneous idea that it is your duty to sacrifice it to something higher."

"I have thought so, I have thought so," responded Maggie, repeating the words and raising her tear-stained face to Mrs. Spaulding.

"Dear child, you are mistaken; there is nothing higher, nobler, truer than pure affection. Men have said that God was love, because it was the highest conception of the Divine they could form. Maggie, be true to the promptings of your heart; know that in all the broad universe there is but one soul that can truly answer them. Cherish this true affection, be true to it under all circumstances, and from it shall come the strength that will give you power to rise to heights whose summits you have not yet seen. Be true to it, and from it will flow the sweet and holy joy, the calm and sacred peace that will transform the cold earth life into the warmth and beauty of the heavenly realm, and better prepare you for your life work. Our Father does not ask the sacrifice you would make; he desires his children to be happy, and through that happiness to accomplish the greatest good. Maggie, will you promise me that you will no longer seek to destroy the beautiful buds of affection just opening in your soul? Be-

lieve me, if you would help others, and add to the happiness of the world, you must yourself be good, wise, and happy. Promise me, Maggie."

"Oh! Mrs. Spaulding," replied the weeping girl, "do not ask me to place myself in a position where my mind would be diverted from the great purpose to which I have dedicated my life. I love Harry with all the depth of my nature, but I cannot be false to my chosen mission, cannot permit anything to draw my mind from heaven to earth. Companionship I need; I will have it from the other life. I shall suffer, suffer by thus voluntarily renouncing the happiness which you have so beautifully portrayed, but by constant endeavor I shall outgrow and rise above it. Suffering will purify my spirit, and if it be true that Harry is the only soul that can speak to mine, then some time in the great future, sometime when the cares and responsibilities of this life are over, we shall meet where there will no longer be need of dissimulation."

"Maggie, have you told Harry of this?"

"Not yet."

"Then promise me that you will not for one year. It is my last request; promise, and I shall die content, for I know that before that time your heart will triumph over the fancies that have now the possession of your mind, and you will acknowledge that social and domestic happiness in no way interferes with spirit culture or soul growth. Do you promise this?"

"I will," replied Maggie, "but I should not be true to myself, if I permitted you to believe that there was any hope of a change."

Mrs. Spaulding smiled faintly, then murmured: "I am very weary." For some time she lay silent and motionless, apparently in a sweet slumber. Maggie sat at her side, looking at her pale face and then at the rich vermillion

that was glowing in the chambers of the west. Soon Mrs. Spaulding opened her eyes, and taking Maggie's hand, said:

"See, the sun is almost down; when it rises again, my spirit will be in the land of souls."

She then requested Maggie to call the friends. Looking at them with a peaceful smile upon her face, she said:

"I am almost there; a few moments since, I saw the partner of my earth life, and with him my child. Oh! it is sweet to go. Hark! I hear the music of angel voices, and the sound of approaching steps. It is growing dark around me, so dark that I cannot see. Ah! this is the valley of death. Now it grows light, so dazzling. O Maggie! I see the beautiful land you have so often described. Why, there is—yes, there is Mrs. Bradwell! She has gone to the spirit world. I see her; she sleeps; she rests. Here is my—my—" She hesitated, then continued, "I am going. Farewell! joy, joy! My husband, my child!"

With these last words, the spirit took its departure from earth, leaving the face of the mortal body radiant with the light of ineffable joy.

Maggie sunk down by the side of all that now remained to her of her faithful friend. Soon she was lost in a deep trance, in which she remained for two hours, describing to those around her the process of death, the emancipated spirits present, and at last the departure of the angelic band as they bore away the new-born spirit. Maggie forgot her great work for humanity, her interest in life, and for once her warm, loving nature expressed itself, and she prayed that she might be permitted to go with her friend. But vain were such prayers and entreaties. Life was before her, its experiences were needed, and with a sad heart she arose, and coldly, calmly as a statue, went forth to its feverish strife.

CHAPTER L.

THE INTERVIEW.

THE QUEEN OF DEATH had disappeared and no trace of her could be found. Clara had retired into obscurity, comforting herself that she need remain thus but for a short time. Three or four weeks she confined herself to the house, but growing restless, she determined to visit Mrs. Loomis for the purpose of obtaining all the information she could use against her, then cause her to be released, thinking she would be immediately arrested by the detectives, whom she supposed were in search of her. Assuming the disguise she had so successfully worn at the Cure, she repaired to the place where Mrs. Loomis was confined, and was received with the quiet self-possession characteristic of that lady.

"I have sought you out to ask an explanation of your prolonged absence," said Clara, assuming the air of a much injured person.

"It is unnecessary for you to attempt to deceive me longer, Miss Gordon; you might have saved yourself the trouble of assuming a disguise which I can now penetrate. I have long known that your smooth words concealed hatred and bitterness of heart. Your gentle and, at times, affectionate manners are assumed to conceal your true nature, your real motives. Miss Gordon, I know that it is to you I am indebted for this treatment. Your *object* I cannot fathom. Why you should wish to add another weight to the sorrow of my life, another pang to the heart that

has endured so much, is more than I can understand. I am not aware that I have ever injured you or given you reason to suppose that I was not your friend. Why do you hate me? Why have you taken me from the child I love, and who needs my care? Why do you now come here to insult me?"

Mrs. Loomis, while uttering these words in slow and measured tones, was very calm. Her very calmness added to Clara's irritation. She sprang quickly to her feet, and walked rapidly up and down the room, then confronting Mrs. Loomis, said:

"Further disguise is useless; you know who I am, and have asked why I hate you. I hate you, Mrs. Loomis, because you have always stood in my way; I hate you because you have the affection of Daisy when it should have been given to me; I hate you because you tried by your infernal arts to influence Daisy to warn her father against me; I hate you because you stand between me and the only being I ever loved. But for you my plans would not have been thwarted. I have understood your designs, and know that you have hoped, by gaining the affection of the child, to reach the heart of the father. I hate you for all this, and have had revenge upon you by taking you from Daisy, disgracing you in the estimation of those who have been your friends, and causing Dr. Bradwell to despise and scorn you and shrink from you as he would from the breath of a pestilence." The last words were spoken slowly, while Clara Gordon's eyes were fixed upon her victim, enjoying the suffering that could not be concealed. Ah! you cannot always be so calm. I have found a way to make your cheek blanch and your heart quiver with the agony I have suffered."

"What did you tell him?" asked Mrs. Loomis, trying in vain to suppress her deep emotion.

"That you murdered his wife, then fled to escape detection."

"May God forgive you," exclaimed Mrs. Loomis, wringing her hands with agony.

Clara's eyes flashed and her cheeks crimsoned as she noticed the effect of her words.

"He did not believe it," said Mrs. Loomis, in an imploring tone of voice.

"He *did* believe it," replied Clara. "He has placed the officers upon your track, and I alone have power to save you from the doom that awaits you." Clara paused, but Mrs. Loomis made no reply; she appeared the picture of mute despair. "I can save you," repeated Clara. And again she paused; still no reply. Clara then placed her hand upon her shoulder and said: "Hear me, Mrs. Loomis, listen to reason, follow my advice, and I will save you from the clutches of the law."

"What would you have me do?"

"Promise me that you will never see or communicate with Dr. Bradwell or Daisy, and I will see that you are consigned to a place of safety; refuse, and an ignominious death or imprisonment is inevitable.

"Is this all you have to say?"

"All," replied Clara.

Mrs. Loomis, rising to her feet and confronting Clara, said:

"Then let me be at once relieved from your presence. I could not have believed it possible for a woman to have been guilty of the falsehood and treachery to which you confess. You know, Clara Gordon, that I am innocent of even the thought of the terrible crime with which you have charged me. If you have poisoned the kind feeling that existed in the heart of Dr. Bradwell towards me, if you have made him believe me guilty of this fearful crime, I

have no desire to prolong a life which for years has been a burden. I should despise myself were I capable of accepting succor at the hands of one who has admitted that she hates me, and who has plotted against me. I fear not the law of justice, and shall make no effort to avoid the fate which you say awaits me. Now leave me; your presence makes the air heavy; leave me, and pray God and angels to give you strength to turn from the wayward paths into which your feet have wandered."

"Fool!" exclaimed Clara, "do not preach to me. If there be a God, call upon him for help, for you have sealed your doom, and are beyond earthly aid."

While this was transpiring, the following conversation occurred at the room of Harry Young. Forest had been greatly depressed in spirit since the last appearance of the woman who had darkened his life from its very morning. In vain had Harry tried to inspire hope. The fact was that to him Forest's affection for Clara was unknown. He did not divine that it was her unaccountable absence which had driven the sunshine of happiness from the soul of his friend.

"Do not look so sad," said Harry, "that mad woman cannot evade the search of the detectives. Have patience a little longer and you will be free."

"Not free," answered Forest, "I am now more a captive than ever before in life. Harry, at times I am almost desperate. It is terrible to love, yes, idolize, one who is cold, and to your affection indifferent."

"Forest, are you so deeply attached to Clara? I say to you frankly, I do not believe her worthy of your affection, and I had hoped that in her absence you would throw off the psychological influence that binds you to her."

"It is not psychology, it is not fascination, but a love

that has taken possession of my entire being. I can no more cease to love her than I can cease to exist; no more forget her than I can forget the mother that smiled upon my childhood. Absence only augments the feeling and transforms her faults into qualities that draw me yet more strongly towards her. Harry, you have no conception of the strength of this love. Think of it; remember that during the long months since she left, not one word from her has reached me. Harry, I know you will think me a madman, but I am going in search of Clara."

"Forest, do not take any hasty steps. Wait until you are free. Were you to meet Clara now and know that your affection was reciprocated, you could not make her your wife. Wait a few weeks."

"I cannot," replied Forest, "my arrangements are made; I go to-morrow."

"Forest, you are more impulsive than a boy."

"What is boyish love in comparison to mine? Harry Young, a power that I cannot resist impels me to go."

"In what direction?"

"I know not. I shall first see Maggie Wild, and shall shape my course according to the suggestions received through her clairvoyant power."

CHAPTER LI.

FOREST'S CONFESSION.

FOREST sought Maggie Wild, and placing in her hands a note written by Clara Gordon, requested her to tell him where the writer was. Maggie held the note for some time in silence, then said:

"I see Clara Gordon: she is at Dr. Bradwell's."

"She was there when the note was written, but where is she now?" queried Forest, impatiently.

"She seems about to take her departure; yes, she is preparing to leave, and seems to be much agitated." Maggie then spoke of Clara's journey to her home in a small country town, related her experiences there, followed her as she returned to the doctor's, saying that she seemed to remain concealed for some weeks. Again she traced her to her home, thence to the Cure, where she witnessed the scene already familiar to the reader. This she did not reveal to Forest, but gave him only a brief outline.

"Have you lost sight of her? Where is she now?" asked Forest, as Maggie paused, lost in silent thought.

"She has returned to the city.

"To this city! where is she?"

At 98 Grover Street. The house is large, built of brick. She is now seated in an upper room, engaged in writing."

"Thanks, a thousand thanks for the information. I will go to her at once."

"Wait a few moments, please; I have something to say to you."

Maggie could not let Forest depart without giving him some intimation of Clara's duplicity. Aware of his deep attachment, she shrunk from giving him pain, and while she was studying how best to introduce the subject, Dr. Bradwell was announced. He had called to request Maggie to go and remain for a time with Daisy, who had not yet recovered from the shock caused by her mother's death. Maggie loved Daisy with a deep and pure affection that would make almost any sacrifice.

"I will go," she answered, "and I hope that the mysteries which have so long shrouded Daisy's life may be solved."

While Maggie conversed with the doctor, Forest became impatient and could not remain longer. Bowing to Maggie and promising to see her again, he took his departure, and at once started in search of Clara. Late in the afternoon, he stood upon the steps of the house indicated; with trembling hand he sounded the bell, and with beating heart awaited the response. His faith in clairvoyance was not misplaced, and in a few moments he was in the presence of her who seemed to hold his destiny at the caprice of her will. Oh! how he had longed for this meeting! He had arranged in thought what he would speak in words; he could not, would not longer make a secret of his love for her. He would tell her all, pour out the treasures of his heart, and she would not be indifferent to them. She had trifled with others; but it was because they had not called out the depth of her affections. They had not given her the heart's true devotion. With him it was otherwise, and gladly would he have coined his heart's blood into burning rubies wherewith to adorn the hand of her who had become the controller of his fate. Those who have ever given free

expression to thought and feeling can never realize the strength and power they gain when impeded in their natural and harmonious growth. For a time he had stemmed this tide of love, but now its turbulent billows overleaped all barriers and swept over his soul, overwhelming reason, judgment, wisdom, and bearing its victim on to inevitable destruction. Forest thought not, cared not for the result. He would have chosen a life of torture with Clara, to one of unalloyed felicity if it stipulated separation from her. Thus, with a heart glowing with love, and lips burning with words of affection, he came into her presence. But quick as a flash of light, his whole being seemed changed as he gazed upon the cold, proud, stately Clara, who advanced to meet him without one look of tenderness to soften the brilliancy of the large, clear eyes, not an emotional expression to change the perfect composure of that statue-like face. Her clear voice was steady with the calmness of indifference, and Forest seemed suddenly transformed to stone. His heart sunk like a dead weight, his tongue seemed paralyzed and refused to obey his will. The result was a greeting of icy coldness, which she seemed not to notice, as she talked of the weather, the last novel she had been reading, and other topics of the most superficial stamp, but did not dare to allude to subjects nearest her heart. In vain Forest tried to throw off his constraint and appear natural. At last he mentioned the death of Mrs. Spaulding. At this announcement Clara started in amazement, asked many questions in regard to her, and remarked that she supposed Mrs. Spaulding had left her property to some charitable institution.

"I think not," replied Forest, "I believe all was placed in possession of Maggie Wild."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Clara, for the moment forget-

ting her usual composure; "it cannot be! was Mrs. Spaulding thus deceived?"

"I do not understand to what you allude by her being deceived. To-day Maggie has gone to Dr. Bradwell's to remain with Daisy, who has been quite ill since the death of her mother. Of that terrible event you have no doubt heard?"

"Yes," said Clara, dropping her eyes and striving in vain to ask a question to which her lips refused to give utterance.

"It was a severe blow to the doctor," continued Forest.

"Has he recovered from it?" asked Clara.

"Partially, but he is not the same man as before. Why have you not called to see him? I believe your presence and sympathy would do much to lighten his grief."

"Do you think so?" said Clara, her cheeks flushing to bright carnation.

"Certainly. I have noticed that your presence seemed to have a more soothing influence upon him than that of any other person. Why do you stay away?"

"I feared to intrude upon him in his grief."

"It would be no intrusion, Miss Gordon. He is alone, and it seemed very sad to have no friend near to sympathize with him. Maggie is now there. She is good and true, but could never inspire and strengthen him as you could."

In a moment the barrier that seemed to stand between Clara and Forest was broken down. He wondered what had wrought this wonderful change. Little did he dream of the true cause.

"She loves me!" he mentally exclaimed, "but because of my past silence she has withdrawn herself from me. Now in speaking of another she has gained a glimpse of my heart, and in turn her heart responds. She is mine!"

And as this thought fixed itself in his mind, he impetuously cast himself at the feet of Clara and poured forth in words of burning eloquence the deep emotion of his soul. Clara was surprised and bewildered. She had dreaded, judging from Forest's reserve and constraint, lest he had been made acquainted with the suspicions that had been cast upon her while in Dr. Bradwell's family. This fear was now removed, and in its place came the unlooked-for assurance that he loved her as she had never been loved before, and the wily woman was quick to discern that this blind idolatry might be used to forward her designs. Her beautiful lips were wreathed with smiles, her large eyes grew bright with the semblance of tenderness; and as Forest, clasping her hand, repeated the story of his life, her tears fell, and in a low, sweet voice she responded:

"The darkness of your life is almost dispelled."

She who was so proud and beautiful that Forest had hardly dared to speak to her concerning his relation to another, now talked calmly with him in regard to their future life.

"The frowns of the world," she said, "need not interfere with our lives, which will flow on in a calm and peaceful current, till they blend with the great ocean of immortality, as blest with each other's love, we shall walk together on the shores of the higher life."

"Clara," replied Forest, "do you in your heart believe that you can be entirely happy in my love? It seems wrong to cast over your life the shadows that have darkened mine, the stigma of having been for years the husband of a mad woman, the disgrace of having separated from one whom the law recognizes as bound to me for life. Clara, can you forget this? Can you be happy with me under these circumstances?"

"I have lived for society and found it void; I have dreamed of fame and position and found them gilded bubbles that dance in the sunshine for a moment, then disappear. I have lived for wealth, for beauty, and find that they are powerless to satisfy the soul. Now, and only *now*, I know the value of life: it is love. Forest, I care not what position I occupy; so long as I am assured of your love and confidence, life will be radiant with unspeakable joy."

"And you will be mine, all mine?" said Forest in reply.

"All thine," replied Clara, dropping her head to conceal the smile of triumph that appeared on her face.

Ah! Forest, the serpent has encircled thee in its folds. Beware! beware!

CHAPTER LII.

EVENTS OF SIX MONTHS.

SIX months have passed since the events last recorded Harry Young had spoken to Maggie freely, and exhausted all his powers in trying to persuade her to give up the wandering, unsettled life for which she seemed so little adapted, and to shed the light of her presence over his home. He used all the arguments that had been urged by Dr. Bigelow, and to this he added the burning words inspired by pure and holy love. Maggie was not indifferent to the picture so vividly drawn of the quiet and peaceful home, the shrine of pure affection; but over its brightness, swept the dark memories of early days. She shuddered as she recalled the cold and repulsive atmosphere she once called home. The life-long suffering of her gentle mother was again before her, and in the agony of her soul she called upon the spirit of that mother to save her from a like fate. Maggie loved and trusted Harry as only a true woman can love and trust, but she realized the injustice of the marriage relation that deprived her of individuality, and gave her, body, soul, and spirit, to another. Harry might prove worthy of her confidence, but there was a great wrong somewhere to cause such a vast amount of suffering in the social relation. She felt that her great life work was not only to bring to earth a light from the realm immortal, but to deal with the practical questions of the hour, and aid in removing the oppression which defrauded many of earth's noblest minds of the enjoyment

of their God-given rights. The intellect had been warped and the intuitive nature shadowed, as a consequence of the keeping of woman on a low plane and in an undeveloped condition, thus depriving the world of the high spiritual truths, the clear perception, and the pure system of morality that would speak through the life of a harmoniously unfolded woman. Maggie felt that she could not fold her arms in idleness, while thus around her were those who were calling for the assistance she might give. She perceived that through the misdirection of the affections, thousands of earth's fairest children were dragged down into the mire of pollution. She saw that it was woman's highest, divinest nature that was first appealed to, not their fondness for dress, admiration, or the love of ease. It was the deep need of the soul, it was the cry of the lone desolate heart for companionship, for that love and affection which every spirit has a right to demand. It was this higher nature to which the false appeal was made, and woman believing, trusting, thinking she was to be led into the garden of paradise, awoke from her trance of love to find herself deserted by him she had believed to be the soul of honor. Scorned by society, despised by those who had been shielded by more favorable circumstances, alone and thrown upon her own resources, unprepared to meet the conflicts of life, with every hand upraised to crush her, with a heart torn and bleeding, what, oh! what must be her doom? Often the cold waves receive her in their pitying arms and hide her sorrow from an unfeeling world, or one who has sunk lower in crime, presents the wine cup, bidding her drink and forget her woe. Then it seems that pitying angels withdraw, leaving her alone to sink down, down, down.

As these thoughts passed through the mind of Maggie, she grew strong and brave with the inspiration received

from a noble purpose, and fixing her clear, beautiful eyes upon Harry's face, she said:

"Harry, I cannot tell you all that is within my heart. A solemn promise seals my lips for one year."

"Tell me, Maggie, are you indifferent to me? No it cannot be, for I have read your love in a thousand ways. You love me, Maggie: why then make such a promise?"

"Yes, Harry, I love you as a guardian spirit might love you, as I love a great truth that floods my soul with joy, as I love all that is good and true, for in you I see the embodiment of all that is noble. But my views of life are peculiar, I cannot explain them now for the reason given. Wait until the close of the year."

In vain did Harry plead; Maggie was unyielding, and not only did she refuse to answer his question, but asked that no words of affection should pass between them during that time. Harry in reply said:

"Maggie, I cannot live in this way. If I did not know you to be so good and true, I should fear you were trifling with me. There must be something on your mind which you do not reveal to me; what it may be I cannot imagine. But your wish shall be respected. I will wait the time indicated, but when you ask me, seeing you every day, to yet give no expression to the love that fills my soul, you ask too much; I cannot comply. It would be easier to go from you and remain until the long months have passed."

This was to Maggie an unexpected blow. She had not dreamed that Harry would leave her for that length of time, yet in her soul she said it was best. His absence would give her time to acquire strength for the great work to which she had dedicated her life, and it would in a measure, alienate him and enable him the more easily to give

her up. It was accordingly arranged, and at the time of the opening of this chapter, he had been gone six months.

During this time, Forest had lived in a transport of joy. Like one of old, he hardly knew whether he was in the body or out of it. The earth never before looked half so beautiful. He saw goodness and beauty in every soul; all that was coarse and rude seemed to fade from his view, and heaven each day seemed to draw nearer. Love was the magic power that had transformed earth into the brightness and glory of the celestial realm. Clara had persuaded him to say nothing to Dr. Bradwell of having met with her.

"I have a good reason for wishing to remain in obscurity for a time," she said; "my presence would not be acceptable now. Maggie Wild is with Daisy. Wait, six months, and I will comply with your request."

He, willing to accede to her wishes, had waited the time specified. He was too happy to gainsay her will; she was his promised bride; he had obtained his freedom from the chains that had galled his proud spirit for so many years.

His residence was being prepared, and within the year Clara was to be his bride. Why should he not be happy? And now the time had expired, and in a few days Clara was to make her appearance at Dr. Bradwell's. As Forest was rejoicing over the anticipated pleasure of introducing his betrothed to the home of his friend, Dr. Bradwell, he little dreamed of the wild and tumultuous thoughts that swept over the mind of Clara. Once she would have been happy as the wife of Forest, but now she loved another with all the deep intensity of her wild nature. Forest's wealth, position, intelligence and noble nature were all lost in this overmastering passion. Clara loved Dr. Bradwell with an idolatry that brought unrest—a mad,

jealous love, in which there was nothing of that sweet pure and holy influence that uplifts the soul, rendering it superior to jealousy and distrust, intensifying all that is good in the nature and lulling to rest all its disquietudes. Such a love as this had come to bless the life of Maggie Wild and all with whom she came in contact, but Clara was incapable of such an experience.

Six months had passed, what had become of Mrs. Loomis? Weeks lengthened into months, and yet she was not allowed to leave her apartments. Clara had visited her several times, and tried to persuade her to accept of her terms of release. Mrs. Loomis always declined, briefly and determinedly. At last, wearied and angered by her failures, Clara told her that Dr. Bradwell was dead, that she had possession of Daisy, that now there was no longer a reason why she should refuse to leave the country. Mrs. Loomis had grown weak and nervous by her long confinement, for want of proper food and exercise. This last blow was so terrible that she could not withstand the shock. Her very life seemed to go out in the low moan that escaped her lips as she fell upon the floor. Clara ordered her to be placed upon the bed, and restoratives were applied. But the last drop in the bitter cup had been drained; the result was an attack of brain fever. In her delirium she raved of her childhood, her youth, weaving together past and present in a strange and incomprehensible manner. Sometimes she imagined the physician in attendance to be Dr. Bradwell. At such times she would plead her innocence and beg him to believe her.

“It is false, all false! Why will you not hear me?” she would ejaculate. Again she would say: Yes, I took the child; I stole her; I could not live without her; she was mine, all mine. I carried her in these arms. Oh!

how glad I was to have her with me. But they took her away again! my little Lillie! They tore her from me. She was all I had in the wide, wide world. They put their icy hand into my heart, and tore it out and carried it away with the child. I tore my hair in desperation, but they put her into the darkness and I never saw her more! Then I was blind for a thousand years. I went up and down the earth, but I could not find her. At last I met him. Do you know him, Clara? I found him, but there was a gulf between us—deep, fathomless, and wide. I came out of the darkness and I was near him. Now he is dead, dead, and you, Clara, have killed him, I see his blood on your hands. Go from me! serpent, demon, go!”

Thus day and night did Mrs. Loomis rave, blending fancy and actuality strangely together.

With the lapse of six months, little Daisy grew thinner, more transparent and spirit-like. She said she was not sick, only tired, but all who looked upon her knew that she was rapidly nearing the shore of the beautiful river of death. Her clairvoyant vision became clearer, and for many hours would she describe the scenes that she beheld with the eyes of the spirit. Maggie was with her much of the time, and together they often floated out into the unseen realm, and while two spirits conversed with Dr. Bradwell through their material forms, their souls wandered amid the flowers of the higher life, conscious of each other's presence, and holding converse with many friends who had passed on before. The great waves of sorrow that had come to Dr. Bradwell, saddened yet harmonized his soul, and as he listened to the words of wisdom that came to him from the entranced mediums, his spirit was filled with perfect trust and that calm repose that comes only to those who have suffered and grown strong.

After one of these sittings he took up an evening paper and in glancing over it, his eyes fell upon a notice of the death of Mrs. Loomis. The paper fell from his hands and after remaining for some moments in deep silence, he said to Daisy:

“Would you not like to see your friend, Mrs. Loomis?”

“Oh yes! where is she, papa? The angels have said she would come to me before I went away. Papa I am going to call her.”

She closed her eyes and sent the cry of her Spirit over the world for the one she so much loved.

CHAPTER LIII.

CLARA AND DR. BRADWELL.

"THE hour of my triumph has come," said Clara Gordon as she passed up the walk leading to the residence of Dr. Bradwell. "I am fortunate in eluding Forest and coming alone. Now heart, be brave! one more trial and then the great object of my life will be attained."

She touched the bell and was admitted into the house where she had gone through so many trying scenes. How well did she remember her last interview with Dr. Bradwell and his suspicions of her guilt in the commission of one of the darkest of crimes; and well too she remembered the power of her words over him.

"He believed me innocent, notwithstanding the evidence against me. He could not but know that I loved, him, and I do believe he admired the daring spirit, thus willing to suffer and endure for the sake of that love. If my influence over him was so great then, it will be more powerful now, as he looks upon me as one deeply wronged."

While these thoughts were passing through her mind, Dr. Bradwell entered the room. He manifested no little surprise when he recognized his visitor, and received her with a coldness and formality not anticipated. The first greeting was followed by an awkward pause which he seemed to have no desire to break, and in proportion as he became more collected, Clara grew nervous and agitated. After several unsuccessful attempts to speak, she said:

"Dr. Bradwell, I will make known at once the object of my visit. You are aware of my deep and pure affection for your wife and her beautiful child. You know of the circumstances that forced me to remain away from them so long, and when I heard of Mrs. Bradwell's untimely death I had all that I could do to restrain myself from coming to see her remains. No one has ever realized the depth of my affection for her. The one thing that kept me away was that I had not then obtained the proof of my innocence of the crime with which the demons of darkness had charged me. To obtain that evidence, I have toiled day and night, and only a few days since, it came into my possession in a manner unexpected. But I should not have alluded to this painful subject so soon, were it not for an uncontrollable desire to see your child. Rumors of her illness have reached me, and I determined to risk incurring your displeasure and come to her."

Clara paused for a reply. The doctor's lips were firmly compressed, the expression of his face showing a firm and unrelenting purpose. After waiting in silence for some moments, Clara said:

"Dr. Bradwell, do you refuse me permission to see your child?"

"Miss Gordon," he said, "the painful circumstances under which we parted, the dark suspicions resting upon you, which *can never be removed*, and the terrible event which has since followed, makes your presence exceedingly unpleasant to me. I would have supposed that feelings of delicacy would have prevented your again appearing at my house. Miss Gordon, I wish you no ill. If you have done wrong you must suffer the penalty. But I would not have my peace disturbed by the presence of one who is continually bringing before me the distressing scenes through which I have passed since our acquaintance. Of

your professions of friendship for my wife and child, I will only say that one has gone where the love or hate of mortal can influence her no more, the other is gliding from the arms that would hold her forever. Daisy will soon be an inhabitant of that realm which has so often greeted her spirit vision. Already her little feet seem treading the borders of the Summer Land, and her pure spirit has become radiant with the light of that morning which is never darkened by the shadows of doubt, deception, or suspicion. Miss Gordon, I cannot permit you to see my child, nor to disturb the calm and holy peace of my home by your presence. Go! and live a truer, better life. Our paths part now, and forever. Farewell!"

Dr. Bradwell opened the door for his unwelcome visitor to pass out, but Clara had no intention of being thus coldly dismissed, and forever blotted out from his heart and life.

"Dr. Bradwell," she said, assuming her softest, sweetest tones, "your grief has frozen your heart and congealed the rich vein of sympathy and kindness that once lay so near the surface. I know that you cannot mean what your words imply. You could not be so ungenerous as to send me from your house and refuse to give heed to the proofs of my innocence which I have been so long in obtaining. You must look upon me as innocent until my guilt is established. That can never be, Dr. Bradwell. You are good and noble, and I would die a thousand deaths rather than live, feeling that I had not your confidence and esteem. You promised to hear me, and now would coldly turn me away without a word. Who has done this? Who has made you so unjust? I no longer ask to see your child; I ask not your friendship; only give me the opportunity to clear myself from the imputations cast upon me. Let me know that in your estimation I stand pure and spotless, then I will gladly go from you forever,

out into the cruel, heartless world, to lose myself amid its busy throng. Yes, I can struggle and toil on unloved, uncared for, friendless and alone. If in your sight I am blameless, I will welcome the darkness, the agony that is mine. If sorrow presses too heavily on my overburdened heart, if the crown of thorns chafes the brow that must henceforth wear it, if the reeling brain and tortured heart grow too weary, if the bleeding feet falter and sink upon the highway of life, alone and friendless I will die, thinking of you, praying for you, with a sweet consciousness that you will drop the tear of pity on the grave of her who might have been an honor to society, and the instrument of much good in the world, had it not been for the terrible circumstances that blighted her life, crushed her ambition, and brought her to an untimely grave. O Dr. Bradwell! in the name of the love you cherish for your departed wife, the love for the child soon to be with her, in the name of humanity, for the sake of the friendship once ours, hear me, hear me, and then I will go—will take my shadow from your home forever.”

Clara had thrown herself upon her knees, her hands were clasped, and tears of agony coursed over her pale cheeks. This was no acting, it was the expression of a soul driven to the verge of desperation, a spirit plunged into the depths of agony in the thought that he for whom she would barter her soul, was about to drive her from him forever. She spoke not of the love that was burning in her soul; her plea was, “Let me prove my innocence: drive me forth without your forgiveness and I am lost!”

Dr. Bradwell's opinion of Clara was unchanged; her eloquent words and agonized appeal might as well have fallen upon marble as to any effect produced. He had lost faith in her and it could not be restored. His only wish was to rid himself of her presence and influence.

But she would not go, and reluctantly he consented that she should remain until the following day, when he promised to hear her defense, and devoutly did he hope that, that interview would terminate their acquaintance. A domestic was summoned by whom Clara was conducted to a distant apartment, for the doctor in his own mind, determined that she should not meet Maggie or Daisy.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE DAWN.

"It was by a hard struggle that I succeeded, but I was at last triumphant. One more card remains in my hand; upon my success in playing that, depends my life. Yes, the long struggle is almost over. The light of morning will crown me victorious or mock my last hours. I have two objects to attain: first, to remove from *his* mind the last shadow of suspicion; next, to feign sickness, so that I may not be compelled to leave until I have regained my influence over him. All will be decided speedily. Oh! I long for the hour to come, and yet I so much dread the interview, that I wish something might occur to prevent its taking place so soon."

Fate seemed to favor Clara, and her wish was granted in a manner unexpected. The last faint light of day had vanished, a few pale stars made their appearance, heralding the coming night, and Dr. Bradwell had retired to his room, where he was preparing himself for the interview with Clara. When about to go to meet her in the parlor, he encountered Maggie in the hall, who requested him to come at once to Daisy.

"She seems to be rapidly sinking, and all that we can do fails to restore her."

He complied without a moment's delay, and found his child resting upon the snowy white couch, her little hands clasped, her face almost as colorless as the pillow on which

it rested, her large eyes closed as if in sleep. He placed his fingers upon her pulse and bent down to catch the throbbing of the little heart that would soon cease to beat. The fluttering breath came only at long intervals, and the pulse was so faint as to be scarcely discernible. There are moments of grief when the brain seems suddenly paralyzed and is powerless to think or act; such was Dr. Bradwell's condition. He had long felt that Daisy must go from him, but not until this moment had he realized the crushing weight of the blow about to fall upon him.

"Can we not do something for her?" asked Maggie. "She is sinking every moment. Daisy, Daisy! we cannot spare you so soon."

He made no reply, but on his face was stamped an expression of sorrow too deep for words. An hour passed in perfect silence, then Daisy opened her eyes and said:

"Dear papa and Aunt Maggie, the spirits will not let me go now; they have kept me here for two or three hours, and made me strong enough to speak to you. I have been far, far away to the happy home where I am going to live. I thought I was done with this body, but I did not want to go without bidding you good bye, nor without seeing dear Mrs. Loomis once more. Papa, I shall not die until she comes."

"My dear child! you will meet Mrs. Loomis in the other world, but never in this."

"No, no, papa, you are mistaken; she will come to me. She was very, very ill, but I went and stood by her side and called to her spirit to come, and she heard my voice, though she could not see me. My angel mamma was there too; she said that she could not take me away until Mrs. Loomis came here. Now, papa, Aunt Maggie, come close to me and I will tell you how the spirits are keeping me in my body."

Daisy paused for a few moments as if to gain strength, and then commenced:

“Around my bed stand a circle of spirits, men and women; some of them are Indian spirits. At first they frightened me. They have hold of each other’s hands: they are very strong. From this circle there flows a peculiar influence—I do not know what to call it, papa, but it is bright like silver; it fills the room all around the bed, and it seems to go into my brain. My body is like a piece of sponge that takes up those bright particles, and I can breathe, talk, and feel strong, when this circle is unbroken. Over this circle is another band of spirits, and among them are many that I have seen and some that I love very dearly. Mrs. Spaulding is there: she looks very happy, and does not seem to want me to stay on earth as she did when she was here. Aunt Maggie, your pretty Lottie, and Clarence too, whom we met in spirit life, are there. This circle is larger than the lower one, and all of the spirits have bright, beautiful garments, and the influence thrown off by each spirit, blends with that of every other, forming the most beautiful, golden light all around them. In this light are seen all the colors of the rainbow, interblending so that I cannot tell where one color begins and another ends. Then they flame out, each with its own peculiar brilliancy. This influence is showered down through the magnetic currents flowing from the lower band, and those finer emanations strengthen my spiritual perceptions, and thus I live, sustained materially by the strength of the spirits nearest earth, and receiving spiritual illumination from the higher spirits. But there are others present who do not join in the circle. Here, standing by your side, Aunt Maggie, is the spirit with the GOLDEN KEY. He has in his hand a scroll that seems to be of the purest gold, and as he unrolls it, I see it is covered with writing. The letters are

formed of jewels; they flash and sparkle until my eyes are dazzled by their brilliancy. Aunt Maggie, the writing is for you, but I am not permitted to read it. He has closed it so that the letters are concealed. In the other hand he holds a book in which your name is written. The leaves are white, smooth, and beautiful. There are many names there, yours being the last, written in golden letters. Now he shows me a cup filled with a dark fluid which he hands you to drink, and now over your head he holds a wreath of laurels, upon which is enameled the word *victorious*. O Aunt Maggie! why do you weep? By his side stands PEARL, and she holds a garment for you no less bright than the one she wears. Aunt Maggie, an angel might envy the future foreshadowed for you.

"Here in the room are many other spirits, but I do not see the one that I called my earthly mamma. Why did she not come to go with me? Oh! they say she will be here before I start upon my journey. There is another spirit standing by my bed: it is my beautiful spirit mamma, who was the first to speak to Daisy. She is here, papa, and has a light robe, all beautiful as her own, for your Daisy to wear. Lillie stands close to you and wants me to say that she will be with you the most of the time hereafter. I wish I could tell you all I have seen to-night, but I cannot."

Daisy's voice grew faint and was finally lost in an indistinct murmur. Time flew on; the room was as silent as though death had already entered and frozen the hearts of the occupants. Daisy slept—a sleep hardly to be distinguished from the sleep of death, but her sweet words, her perfect trust, her willingness, nay, her joy in the thought of entering the higher life, her knowledge of that world, had soothed the grief of her father. In all his experience of the past, he had never so fully realized the

presence of disembodied spirits as upon this occasion. He fancied he could almost hear the gentle whisperings of the angels, who had come to transplant the beautiful bud from the chilly atmosphere of earth to the genial clime and more harmonious surroundings of the "home not made with hands." A calm, sweet peace took possession of his soul. He felt that the last struggle was over, and that he was now willing to resign his little one to the care of guardian angels.

"Beautiful spirit," he said, "go! dearer arms than ours enfold you. Sweet bird of song, go sing your sweetest notes in paradise. Angel of purity, beautiful jewel, I give thee back to God! go, adorn that higher realm for which you were created."

All the long hours of that night Dr. Bradwell sat holding the little hand that must so soon be given up. Clara waited in vain to be summoned to his presence, and at last concluded that for once fate had smiled upon her, and with a hopeful heart she resigned herself to sleep.

CHAPTER LV.

THE LAST CARD.

CLARA GORDON awoke refreshed, and prepared herself for the interview which she had so much dreaded the previous day.

"He will send for me this morning; it will soon be over."

But when the servant entered to summon her to breakfast, she was informed of the serious illness of Daisy, and that Dr. Bradwell and Maggie had been up with her all night. Clara returned to her room where she spent the long hours of the morning. At noon she was again summoned to the dining room and took dinner alone. She was told that Daisy was better, and confidently expected that the doctor would soon send a summons for her. But hour succeeded hour without the expected message. She was becoming impatient; the gray shadows of evening were gathering over the earth.

"To remain longer inactive is impossible," she said, and leaving her room she descended to the parlor. The blinds were partly closed, and the rays of twilight that entered were insufficient to dispel the gloomy shadows from every part of the large room.

"How cold and desolate it is here!" she said, as she entered the room, but the next moment her eyes fell upon Dr. Bradwell, who was sleeping upon a sofa in another part of the room. A light flashed into the face of Clara as she perceived him, and moving carefully to his side she gazed with deep emotion upon the pale, calm face before her.

His trouble had weighed heavily upon him; it had driven the color from his cheek, and scattered threads of silver amid his dark hair. As Clara gazed upon him she forgot all prudence; the love which she had determined to keep under control rose involuntarily to the surface and swept away all thought or care as to what the consequences might be. She twined his locks around her snowy fingers, murmuring words of love and tenderness.

"How noble he is! it is no wonder that for the first time in my life my heart has been made captive. He has wound chains around me that I am powerless to break. He has made me worship him as never woman worshiped before. He is mine by virtue of this love! he must, he shall return it with all the strength and devotion that dwells in his soul. He will, he will! I know he will."

Clara raised his shining locks and pressed her lips to the polished brow. With a start the sleeper awoke and gazed around in a bewildered manner. The room was so dark that he could only see the outlines of Clara's form.

"My Thalia!" he said, springing to his feet and throwing his arms around Clara. "Spirit or mortal, I have you now, and never shall you depart until I have your full and free forgiveness for the wrong I have done you."

No sooner had he uttered those words than icy coldness ran through his form, and swift as light came the impression that he had made a terrible mistake. Clara had thrown one arm around his neck and dropped upon his shoulder. She had not a doubt that the words were intended for her. Had she been less under the control of her emotional nature, she would have guessed the truth; as it was, her love blinded her. When the doctor discovered his error, he attempted to apologize by saying he had been dreaming, that he had seen an angel appear and actually felt her kiss upon his brow.

"Waking so suddenly," he said, "I imagined you to be the spirit. You will pardon my —"

"There is no occasion to ask pardon," said Clara, "your dream was a reality. I came here not knowing that the room was occupied. Forgive me, Dr. Bradwell! the temptation was great: I did touch my lips to your forehead."

Dr. Bradwell was at a loss how to reply, but tried to unclasp her arms.

"Oh! do not drive me from you, she said; you do not know how much I have suffered. I have crushed my emotions for a time that seems to me an eternity. Now I must speak. I know that you are wearing a mask to me. You do not let me read your heart. This is torture to one who loves you as I do. Oh! do not draw away from me. I know I am rash, and that you will shrink from hearing such words so soon, but oh! think how truly, deeply, wildly I have loved you when that love seemed utterly hopeless, when we were so widely separated that I did not dare to hope that it could ever find expression. Oh! think how I have struggled against fate, tried to kill this affection that has enslaved my proud nature and forced me to express sentiments that once death could not have compelled me to speak. Think of this, and pardon my untimely confession. Think of this, and forget that my lips were the first to say, 'I love you.' True, if your heart had not first spoken out in that impulsive act, I should have been dumb. Oh! why should we regret the occasion for a correct understanding of each other? Let us speak freely, heart to heart."

He freed himself from her clinging arms, and was now walking the floor. Clara could not see his face, but in his rapid movements read his agitation.

"He is making an effort to conceal from me the depth of his love," she thought, "but he shall speak. I have gone too far to withdraw. When I leave this room it must

be as his promised bride. My last card is played: it must not, shall not be a failure."

While these thoughts were passing through her mind, Dr. Bradwell had called for lights, and after the servant who obeyed the summons, had left, he advanced and seated himself by Clara's side, and with a grave, expressive manner and a sad voice, he said:

"Miss Gordon, no one can more deeply regret what has just passed than myself. As I told you, I was dreaming of one who is very dear to me, and thought she had appeared in spirit form. I never intended to deceive you, or give you reason to suppose that the relation existing between us was anything more than friendship. Once I was glad to call you friend, but circumstances have occurred that convince me that you are unworthy of that name. Forgive me if I seem harsh, and remember that *I* did not seek this interview. You speak of your love for me. Miss Gordon, true love is always reciprocal. From what I know of you, I am forced to believe that this is but another attempt to accomplish what you have long contemplated. You do not love me; *love* never attempts to harm its object; love removes the thorns and scatters flowers along the way; love brightens, exalts, ennobles the possessor. Your presence in my family has been like the dark shadow from some lost soul. My path is strewn with hope's wrecks, broken dreams, which your hand has scattered there. Now my wish is that we part forever. Go, and pray that the good that I believe dwells in every soul may be called into action, and that it may overcome the deception that has made you a curse to all who have been thrown within the circle of your influence. Go!"

And he arose as he spoke, pointed towards the door, and turned to leave the room in an opposite direction.

Clara's face and lips had become colorless, and her great

eyes glared like burning coals. Springing to her feet, in a voice of command she exclaimed:

"Stop! If you are a gentleman of your word, you will hear the proof of my innocence. I ask no more."

He again seated himself, to listen to her words.

Clara then produced a paper from which she read the particulars of a plot that had been laid to take the life of Mrs. Bradwell and herself. She detailed it in full, giving many incidents with which the reader is acquainted, but so changed as to make them appear in a false light. This paper purported to be a confession written out and signed by Mrs. Loomis. She did not reveal the name of the writer until she had closed the reading. Mrs. Loomis claimed that she went to the Cure with the intention of completing her diabolical plot, but chance interfered and sent some one to do a part of the work for her.

The doctor listened attentively, and when she had finished, said:

"Is that all?"

"Is that all?" repeated Clara, her eyes flaming with anger. "Is it not enough to prove that I am innocent of the vile suspicion cast upon me?"

"No, it is not enough."

"What more would you have? Here is the confession of a dying woman, the last words she ever spoke on earth."

"It does not explain," said the doctor, speaking slowly and with great calmness, "how the poison you administered from time to time to my wife, came into your possession. It does not explain the mystery of that little box, which in your hasty departure you forgot to take with you."

For a moment Clara was thrown off her guard. Here was something she had not provided for. The hot blood rushed to her face; she reeled as though she had received

a sudden blow, but by a great effort she regained her composure, and rising to her full height she replied:

"I do not know to what you allude. I solemnly declare that I never had poison in my possession. The box you mention must have belonged to another. I can say nothing of it, for it was not mine. Here is a confession written and signed by Mrs. Loomis when her hand was growing stiff in death, acknowledging herself guilty of the crime with which you charge me."

"It is false!" spoke a loud, strong voice, heard in the air near Clara.

As they turned a startled look in the direction whence the sound proceeded, they were astounded to see Mrs. Loomis standing before them.

"It is false," she repeated, in a low tone of voice, which seemed to freeze the blood in the veins of Clara, who after the first glance of horror, sunk senseless to the floor.

Dr. Bradwell stepped forward to greet Mrs. Loomis, but before he reached her side she had vanished. He immediately left the room, giving no heed to Clara, who when she at length recovered consciousness, hurriedly left the house, muttering:

"The drama is not yet ended! there will be one more scene before the curtain drops."

CHAPTER LVI.

HEARTS WIN.

ASSUMING a composure which he did not feel, Dr. Bradwell entered the sick room. Daisy was sleeping, and Maggie, worn and weary by the loss of sleep sat by the bedside.

"Poor child!" said the doctor, addressing Maggie, "the anxiety of the past few weeks has been too much for your delicate constitution. Go now and rest; I will take your place, and will call you should there be any marked change in Daisy."

Maggie hesitated about leaving her charge even for a moment.

"It is a duty you owe to yourself. Go and gain strength for the duties of tomorrow. I have had a sweet and refreshing sleep and am well prepared to take charge of Daisy until morning."

"Promise to call me when she awakes, and I will go."

"I promise," he replied, opening the door for her to pass out."

Maggie was weary and very sad. She had exerted herself to the utmost to perform the duties devolving upon her. The visions that had from time to time been given to Daisy had cheered and strengthened her, but now they seemed to have lost their power, and weary and desponding she sunk upon her knees and poured forth the agony of her soul in prayer. It was not merely the fact that

Daisy was to be taken from her that so weighed upon her heart. There are moments in life when it seems that an impenetrable gloom surrounds us. Such a time had come to Maggie. She felt herself to be alone, all alone. The inspiration that had come to her in view of the great work she was to accomplish, was gone. Hope, that hitherto illuminated her pathway, was lost in darkness. She saw before her nothing but a life of toil and struggle. She had placed herself in opposition to preconceived opinions and established customs; she had said she was strong enough to live the truth, but now as she looked back and saw that all she loved were taken from her, that one by one her treasures were snatched away, until soon, apparently very soon, she would have but one fragrant blossom in her heart, but one star; and, oh! she shuddered to think how that one too must be resigned.

“Oh! inexorable fate! is there no way to turn aside thy hand, and yet live and work for truth? must I of necessity become a martyr, and carry in a living form a heart turned to dust and ashes?”

With such thoughts passing through her mind, Maggie closed her eyes and tried to forget herself in sleep. At last the sweet boon came; the weary body rested, but the mind, the active thinking mind, asserted its sovereignty, and partially disengaging itself from its thralldom of clay, floated out into space. She seemed to ascend a lofty mountain whose sides were white and glistening, unadorned by tree, shrub, or flower. On its summit stood the calm, noble spirit that had so often appeared to her. In his hand was the GOLDEN KEY, always the symbol of revelations. Maggie came near and stood by his side, undazzled by the golden glory with which he seemed surrounded, and undaunted by his stately bearing. She, for the time, was a spirit free from the trammels of flesh, and as thought meets

thought, truth answers to truth, did her spirit meet and blend with the great magnetic mind of him who stood at her side.

“You have been sad and desponding; the light that has come through the open portals of the life beyond has failed to raise you entirely above the effect of your surroundings. The fear of death has been removed, the glory and reality of the higher life revealed to you. This KEY with which you have so often unlocked the mysteries of the future, has not yet revealed to you the mysteries of your own nature. You marvel why it is that perfect goodness demands such sacrifices as you have had to make, and to-night, in turning over the pages of your past life, and gazing upon the mysterious lines that are traced on the hand of the future, you have cried out, ‘if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.’ Oh! thou art blessed above mortals, whose soul has been illuminated by rays of divine wisdom and whose heart has been baptized by the love of the infinite, yet another lesson remains for you. Learn that the GOLDEN KEY not only reveals mysteries in the objective world of spirits, but will roll back the curtain that veils the life of those who still live in material forms. Look! Behold the intelligent principles of nature seeking more perfect expression, as matter becomes more refined and perfected, until through an individualized soul the spirit of God speaks. See this intelligence expressing itself in justice, love, beauty, harmony, and wisdom, through the exalted spirits you have so often seen. Behold its imperfect expression through the lower, or more undeveloped children of God. Behold mind and matter ascending step by step in the eternal spiral of progression. Matter and spirit, eternally one, yet eternally distinct! Atomic matter must unfold, become more refined, else spirit can give no higher expression of itself. Now bearing this in

mind, turn your gaze to the vast multitude of human beings inhabiting your earth, and behold how the higher spiritual nature is made subservient to the lower. See the vindictive laws and penalties wrought into the codes of nations. Revenge and retaliation takes the place of the higher law. Might rules over right, and justice, love, and harmony, cannot fully express themselves because of the unrefined and inharmonious conditions which trammel their utterance. Maggie, thou art one blest in being a temple through which these higher attributes can speak, a nature in which the spiritual predominates. The unseen is the all of interest or worth to you; even in your regard for individuals, it is the high quality of the mind, the grandeur and nobility of spirit you worship, not the external form. You have thought it would be easy to dedicate yourself to the work for which you have been chosen, but when the trial came you felt your weakness, and prayed that another might do your work for you. Look again to the millions of earth, and see how few there are through whom the great spirit of love can give as high an expression of his attributes as through you. Behold the great need of the light that may be given through you, and see its power over the discordant elements of earth. Learn that love is all powerful; that before its pure light, injustice, bigotry and inharmony must pass away. Your life path has been marked out for you, now take this GOLDEN KEY and look within your own heart. What do you find?"

"That I am mortal," replied Maggie, "that the universal love of which you speak is grand and beautiful, but it cannot satisfy the yearnings of my heart. Great spirit, I have over-estimated my own strength; I cannot take from my soul the love of an individual even if it should prove the salvation of a world. You have said that the highest expression of the divine was through the human: then the

closer we can be united with an individual soul, the more closely we blend with the Infinite Spirit. You asked me to behold the imperfect expression of mind through the crude elements of matter, and bade me give my strength, my life, to aid the world in gaining a knowledge of the laws through which they may become better. I see the harvest field ripening, and the laborers are few. I am ready and willing to devote my life to the great work of doing good. But the GOLDEN KEY has unlocked the mysteries of my nature, and I find that I cannot resign all that makes life desirable and dedicate myself wholly to humanity. Without the inspiration that comes from this individual love, I should be useless in the great work you have presented; with it I go forth strong. Tell me, oh! wise, noble guardian! tell me, must I renounce all, in order to do the will of my angel guides?"

A smile, beautiful as the light of morning, illuminated the face of the spirit as he replied:

"See! the hills resting upon the rocky ribs of mother earth, shall in time pass away; the stars that seem to burn forever in the dim distance, will perform their mission and pass into other forms; but the love that inspires thy brain and pulses in thy heart, shall broaden, deepen, widen, as the cycles roll, and become the holy baptism through whose influence thou shalt bless the world. So long as spirit retains its individualized existence, so long will the great principle of love speak through thy soul and unite thee forever to him whose heart already beats responsive to thine own. And now return to me the GOLDEN KEY."

Maggie placed it in the spirit hand, and awoke with a flood of joy surging through her heart. She awoke to find Dr. Bradwell by her side, telling her that Daisy was awake and had inquired for her.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE DISCOVERY.

FOREST had been called by urgent business from the city. When he returned, his first thought was of Clara, and he proceeded at once to her residence. He was told she had been absent three days, and had left no directions as to where she might be found. Where could she be? He was not aware of her having friends in the city with whom she would be likely to remain for so long a time. In vain he tried to account for her absence and to banish his anxiety. To shorten the time he went out to his country home, where he spent the day in the inspection of the improvements being made. In the evening he again returned to the city, hoping to see Clara. She was still absent, and no tidings had been received from her.

"I must hear from her to night. It is possible she may have overcome her dislike to Maggie Wild and have gone to Dr. Bradwell's to take charge of Daisy. I will go there."

It was a dark, stormy night; snow and rain were drifting before a sharp, cold wind. Forest hurried along the streets, heeding naught around him. Had he been less absorbed, he might have noticed a figure, wrapped in a long dark cloak, closely pursuing him, taking care to keep within the shadows of the buildings. As it was, he hurried on unmindful, until he reached the gate opening to the residence of Dr. Bradwell. As he passed through he was

followed by the stealthy figure, while still another form, crouching in the shrubbery, arose and silently advanced along the walk leading to the house.

All around was silent as death, and the house was in perfect darkness, except a faint light gleaming from the chamber of the sick. Forest rang the bell, once, twice, thrice, but receiving no response, tried the door, which yielded to his hand, and he passed into the hall. The form that had tracked him through the city did not enter the house, but the other followed and hid in one of the dark corners of the hall. Forest, laying aside his hat and overcoat, proceeded to the room of Daisy, to whom he had, since her sickness, been a frequent visitor. As he opened the door a striking scene was presented. On the bed lay Daisy, her cheeks and lips a bright carnation and her large eyes more brilliant than they had ever been in health. Her brow was white as marble, and the profusion of golden brown curls formed a beautiful frame for the sweet, angelic face. He was startled by her supernatural beauty, and it was some moments before he could remove his gaze from her face. When he did so, he perceived that Dr. Bradwell was standing near the child, and by his side was Mrs. Loomis, her face thin and exceedingly pale, her eyes concealed by colored glasses, and the same black lace cap drawn closely over her head. She appeared calm and undisturbed. On the opposite side of the bed stood Maggie, her face beaming with faith and hope. Daisy had evidently been speaking when Forest entered. She greeted him with a smile and said:

"It is a dark stormy night, but the morning will be bright and beautiful: I shall not go until morning."

She then motioned to Forest to stand aside, and taking the hand of Mrs. Loomis, resumed the conversation with her.

"Yes, dear Mrs. Loomis, the angels took me in their arms, and spoke many kind words and told me a great many beautiful things. I do not remember all, but they promised me that I should see you before I went to my angel home, and should be the means of making you very happy. Then I waited for you to come, and I cried when papa told me he did not know where you had gone. I asked my pretty mamma to take me to you as she did once before, but she replied, 'be patient, Daisy, and Mrs. Loomis will come to you.' Then I waited a long, long time, but at last I was afraid I should die without seeing you, so I closed my eyes and called you with my spirit, and when I had called you two or three times, I found I was standing by your sick bed, and my spirit mamma was there. But you did not see us; so then I called again very loud; you heard me and said, 'Daisy I will come.' I have been waiting, for I could not die until I had told you this."

Daisy paused to rest, and Maggie asked Mrs. Loomis if she had indeed heard the child call her.

"Yes," she replied; "I was recovering from an attack of brain fever. It was about nine o'clock in the evening. As I lay with eyes closed, I heard Daisy call as distinctly as I heard her this evening, and I answered, 'I will come,' though how I was to elude the watchful jailers, or gain strength to reach here if released, was beyond my knowledge."

"Why did you go there?" asked Daisy.

Mrs. Loomis related what is already known to the reader, only making no mention of Clara Gordon's name. Daisy listened, and when the recital was ended, she said:

"Mrs. Loomis, I love you very much and I shall soon be where I cannot speak to you. Before I go away I have one request to make. You will not refuse me, will you?"

Daisy put up her little hands and untied the strings of the cap. "Mrs. Loomis, do you remember the night you fell down in the snow and your cap and spectacles fell off? The light shone on your face and you looked so beautiful! I want to see you again as you looked that night. Please do not refuse," pleaded the child, as Mrs. Loomis drew back and readjusted her cap. "Please do not refuse. Your little Lillie wants you to look as you did when she died in your arms."

Mrs. Loomis was deeply affected; she did not dare to speak, but shook her head in refusal.

"Please gratify the child; it can do you no harm to comply with her wishes," said the doctor.

Mrs. Loomis trembled violently, but with an effort to compose herself she turned to him and said:

"If you will leave me alone with the child I will cheerfully comply."

"Oh! no, no," said Daisy, "I want papa and Maggie and Forest to see that you are as beautiful as you are good. You have always been kind to me, and now you will not refuse."

"No, no, Daisy, I cannot, I will not. You know not what you ask; I would give my life for you, but I cannot do as you ask."

The tears fell from the eyes of Mrs. Loomis and a look of disappointment passed over the face of Daisy. She closed her eyes and folded her arms with a look of resignation. An oppressive silence followed, broken only by the sobs of Mrs. Loomis. Daisy spoke again.

"Dear Mrs. Loomis, my beautiful mamma is here, the one who has had the charge of your little Lillie. I thought she was papa's little girl, but mamma says she is yours and papa's. She says if you will do as I have asked you, she will not say any thing more."

"Her mind is wandering," said the doctor.

"No, papa. Now, Mrs. Loomis, decide quickly; I am getting faint."

Mrs. Loomis glanced nervously around the room; the lights were turned down; perhaps he would not recognize her. It would be better to comply than to run the risk of further revelations from Daisy. With trembling hands she removed her cap and shook down her long fine hair; a moment of hesitation, and the spectacles were removed. She had as far as possible attempted to conceal her face with her hair, and had drawn so close to Daisy, that her features were entirely concealed from Dr. Bradwell.

"Thank you, Mrs. Loomis! Oh! how beautiful you are!" said Daisy as she stroked the dark glossy locks, and placed the little hands, already growing cold in death, on the burning cheeks of Mrs. Loomis. "Papa, see how beautiful she is."

As Dr. Bradwell bent down to hear the words of Daisy, he caught a full view of Mrs. Loomis. Their eyes met, and for a moment he seemed paralyzed, while she uttered a low moan and sunk down in a state of unconsciousness.

He lifted her tenderly in his arms and laid her by the side of Daisy. When she awoke, it was to find her hand clasped in the firm grasp of him to whom she had plighted her early vows. She awoke to find the eyes whose glances she had so longed for, looking upon her with a wealth of deepest tenderness. She awoke to feel that she was no longer friendless and alone. She awoke to learn the significance of the symbol of the broken rainbow encircling her head—the rainbow whose broken arch of brilliant colors was reuniting and spanning the horizon of her life—the verified promise of tranquility and happiness. Dr. Bradwell looked upon the sweet patient face, and from the

depths of his soul prayed for forgiveness for the unjust suspicions he had once imputed to her. One glance assured him that love was not dead; that though he had been grievously in fault, his pardon was full and certain.

"Thalia, my Thalia," he cried.

He was responded to in words unheard by any save Daisy.

"Yes, yes! she is thine!" And joining their hands, Daisy continued: "This was the work I had to do; I can go now. I know that papa and Mrs. Loomis will always be happy."

"You lie!" screamed the sharp, shrill voice of Clara Gordon, as she bounded through the partly open door, where she had listened to all. "He shall never be happy with *her*."

And drawing a pistol, the frenzied woman pointed it at the heart of Thalia. Quick as thought, the doctor sprung forward, threw up her hand and attempted to force her from the room.

"Foiled, foiled!" she exclaimed. "Hands off, Dr. Bradwell! hands off! I can control myself a short time longer."

With a wild laugh she rushed from the room and fell in the darkened hall. Lights were procured, and Forest raised the motionless form of Clara from the floor to find her a corpse. Yes; Clara was dead. In her hand she still grasped the vial of deadly poison with which she had consummated the final act of the drama of her dark life.

When the doctor returned to Daisy, he found Maggie and Thalia making efforts to quiet her. She soon fell into a deep sleep, from which she did not awake until the light of morning dawned upon the earth. Then bidding them all farewell, her pure spirit took its departure for a happier clime.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THALIA'S HISTORY.

IN the large upper chamber of the home of Dr. Bradwell, snow-white hangings have taken the place of the dark curtains, the rich paintings are wreathed with buds of flowers. In the center of the room stands the little coffin in which reposes the body of little Daisy. She looks so natural that one would suppose her to be in a sweet sleep. Clara's beauty was all of earth, Daisy's seems all of heaven. Dr. Bradwell and Maggie are present. The doctor's face beams with an expression of happiness he makes no attempt to conceal.

"Did she consent to your request?" inquired Maggie.

"Yes; she will be here in a few moments."

The door at this moment opened, and Thalia entered, the Mrs. Loomis of yore, yet so changed that she could not have been recognized. The black dress had given place to a snow-white robe that fell in graceful folds to the floor, an opening rosebud fastened the collar, the fine black hair was braided in bands and twined around the shapely head. The old look of care and sadness had vanished from her face. Going to the coffin, she kissed the beautiful brow of Daisy.

"Sweet angel of purity, thou art free from the cares of earth, free--" she would have continued, but Maggie motioned her to silence.

"They are coming," she said, and the next moment music and a song of rejoicing was heard by all in the room.

PEARL advanced, and bidding Dr. Bradwell take the hand of Thalia, said:

“Over the form of the sacred dead,
I reunite the souls of those long wed,
To be disunited never more,
On earth's cold strand or the heavenly shore.”

She paused, and as Maggie looked intently, she saw her own dear sister advance, and with her, the sweet spirits of Lillie and Daisy. With a thrill of joy, Maggie sprung forward to clasp Daisy to her arms, when swift as light the shining ones vanished from sight.

“Oh! what can mar our perfect happiness,” spoke Thalia, as tears of joy glistened in her eyes.

“Only one cloud rests upon my life,” answered her husband. My wife, my beautiful Thalia, it is that I have not received from your lips the word of forgiveness.”

“Then take it now,” she replied, “and with it the explanation of the circumstances that separated us and caused us so much suffering. There can be no more fitting time or place than this. Maggie! stay and hear the revelations I am about to make. They may be of benefit to you in the future.”

Dr. Bradwell would rather have been left alone with Thalia when she referred to the past. He was proud, and although willing to confess a fault, he dreaded to appear unjust, and therefore would have preferred that Maggie should not be present. Thalia had no desire to humble her husband, but she had suffered so long and so intensely that she was determined that at least one other should hearken to her justification.

“That you may better comprehend the events that follow, I must commence with a history of my early life.

Never have I seen two persons so perfectly adapted to each other, intellectually, socially, and spiritually, as were my parents. From their presence radiated a sphere of love which made our home as delightful as the harmonious dwellings in the lands of elysium. I was an only child, and although not spoiled by indulgence, was treated with the greatest tenderness and love. My father made it a point to encourage me, and when I failed in performing a task assigned me, he was always ready with his unbounded sympathy to show me how and why I had failed, thus making my errors and mistakes act as guide-boards for the future. I cannot recall ever having heard a harsh or unkind word in my home. My mother was of a delicate and sensitive nature, seeming to exist almost wholly in the realm of sympathy and love. In all the events of life, she appeared to rely with perfect confidence upon that overruling Providence in which she had unbounded faith. There was but one direction in which she seemed to lose this trust; that was in regard to her child. I well remember how often she would call me to her room, and how she would pour out her soul in agonizing prayer. She seemed to feel the foreshadowing of the desolate life that awaited her child. When I was about twelve years of age, this shadow seemed to be lifted from her heart. She came to me with her face wearing a look of resignation I had never seen before.

“‘My child,’ she said, ‘for these long years, I have been praying for you, and at last God in his mercy has revealed to me what I have so longed to know.’ She paused, and I looked at her with a feeling of awe. To my childish fancy she appeared like one of the shining angels that I had been told surrounded the throne of God. In a few moments this look of devotion passed away, and sitting close to me, she drew my head upon her shoulder, and said: ‘My love,

you are not like others of your age; a mystery surrounds you which has cost me many years of anxiety and sadness, for I looked upon it as an omen of evil, and was afraid that some terrible fate awaited you. But now my sorrow has been turned to joy; my little snow-white dove has been set apart from the rest of the world for a grand mission. Child, to perform that work, to be true to the power with which you are blessed, you must walk alone through life, and never know another love save that which has blessed your infancy and youth.

“‘Dear mother, I want no other love than that I now have. Promise that I may always stay with you and I shall be content.’

“Tears came to her eyes, and taking my hand in hers, in a solemn voice she said:

“‘Child, remember, I have dedicated you, soul and body, to God. Promise me that you will never permit your affections to be absorbed by mortal love.’

“‘I promise,” I said solemnly.

“‘Some time I will tell you why I have exacted this promise. When you are older and can understand, I will explain.’

“My mother now seemed perfectly happy, and not a shadow rested upon my spirit. One evening as I entered the house, I heard my father say:

“‘It will not do for her to remain in ignorance much longer; it will be better for you to speak to her, than that she should hear it from another.’

“That evening, sitting in the shadowy room, my mother revealed to me the secret that has been the bane of my existence. I wept bitterly, and determined to keep my vow and never to enter society where my sensitive nature would be constantly shocked by the thoughtless, and where I would be shunned by the superstitious. Gradually I be-

came accustomed to the thought of the life I was to live, and no other shadow darkened my pathway until I was sixteen years of age. At this time an old friend of my father's came to spend a few days with us. He was accompanied by a young man, a stranger in the country, an American. Ah! Maggie, I see by your looks that you guess the result of that meeting. You are right; we loved. For weeks and months he lingered in the neighborhood, and I forgot the warning voice of my mother, the solemn promise I had made, and the mystery that surrounded me. I forgot all, save that I loved. I left my father's house by stealth, and went out into the great cold world, trusting the untried affection of a stranger. I wrote to my parents and received their forgiveness. My mother begged me not to conceal from my husband the mystery she had revealed to me. I fully intended to do so, but as often as I made the attempt the words died upon my lips. I feared lest the knowledge would make him cease to love me, and consoled myself with the hope that no necessity would arise for his knowing it. Months glided into years, and all was well. In the love and confidence of my noble husband, and the presence of my sweet child, I was as happy as mortal could be. But the evil day came. My husband had an intimate friend; a bachelor, who passed most of his time at our house. One evening my husband was out later than usual, and I had left the parlor and gone to our room, leaving his friend waiting for him in the library. Being very weary, I was soon lost in a profound slumber, from which I was awakened by my husband entering the room and demanding an explanation of my conduct. Bewildered by his harsh language and excited manner, I knew not how to reply.

“‘It is useless for you to feign sleep, or put on that innocent expression,’ he continued. ‘As I came up the

street, I looked through the parlor window—the curtains you had forgotten to close. I saw you standing by the sofa, bending down and toying with the curls of him whom I had called *friend*, but whom now I know to be a serpent that has poisoned my peace. I entered the room in time to see you glide from it. For some moments I stood and looked at the vile traitor who was feigning sleep. I felt like driving him my house at once, but on second thought concluded to see you first and ask the meaning of this scene.’

“He paused, but astonishment made me dumb.

“‘This is not the first time,’ he continued, ‘that I have had cause for suspicion. Only last week I saw you on the street with this man, and when I came home in the evening and inquired how you had spent the day, you said you had not been out of the house. Now explain this at once, or we part forever. If there is anything that I detest, it is falsehood and duplicity.’

“He was very angry, and I knew not how to begin what I had to say, for I felt that in his present state of mind he would regard it as a fabrication.

“‘Why do you sit there and stare like an idiot? Speak at once and explain.’

“‘Your friend is innocent,’ I faltered; ‘he was not even conscious of my presence.’

“‘Ah! your first thought is to prove *his* innocence, instead of saying a word to satisfy the one you have so deeply wronged.’

“‘I am innocent,’ I replied, ‘and will explain to your entire satisfaction if you will but wait until your anger subsides and reason returns.’

“‘I am not angry; I will not wait one moment. Prove yourself innocent at once, or you never look on my face again.’

“All the pride of my nature was aroused by these words

of insult, and with the one word 'go,' I sealed my doom. Left alone, I commenced making preparations for departure. I was determined that he should not say that I had driven him from home. His words burned like coals of fire. I would take my child and fly from his presence. I would go again to seek shelter beneath my father's roof. By the assistance of a servant I succeeded in leaving the house and taking with me all that could be of any value in my flight. Weary and heart-broken, I reached the home of my parents, where I devoted myself to the care of my little Lillie. But a greater trial awaited me. A few months later the *law* tore my child from the arms that sheltered it and gave it to the hands of him who had blasted my life. God only knows my sufferings."

"God forgive me!" exclaimed Dr. Bradwell.

"At last I could endure this no longer, and I determined to get possession of my child even at the hazard of my life. After many failures I at last found her in the care of a good, true woman, and from her learned that he who was my husband had gone to a distant land to remain two years. I made a confidant of this woman, gained her sympathy, and finally her consent to give me the child and to substitute another. But where could I find one to fill her place? Many obstacles had to be surmounted, but undaunted I pursued my purpose. At last fate or chance brought me in connection with one who was a stranger in that land. Her fate, her life had been something like my own. She had married against her father's wish, gone among strangers, where her husband died, leaving her to struggle alone. At the time of our meeting, she was supported by the charity of a benevolent woman who had taken her in and given her the attention her fast-failing health required. This woman had a child near the age of Lillie, and when she died she consigned her to my care.

Behold the child!" And Thalia placed her hand upon Daisy's brow.

"And her mother was my only sister," said Maggie. "Oh! I bless you for your kindness to her and your love for her child."

"Yes, I loved Daisy." And she gazed long and lovingly upon the sweet face in the coffin ere she continued her story.

"For a few months I was happy in the possession of my child, then a power above that of man's snatched her from my embrace forever. For weeks after, I was delirious, and it was long ere my mind recovered its full balance. Before I had gained possession of Lillie, I had caused a report of my death to be circulated, and as soon as reason returned, I had but one wish. The blow that took Lillie, killed my pride and resentment. I saw that I was more to blame than my husband, for I should have told him my secret at once. Now I longed to see him and explain to him that all through my childhood my spirit had the strange power of projecting itself and rendering itself visible; appearing and speaking to others while I was in profound sleep, having no knowledge of the occurrence, and that it sometimes even had been seen during my waking hours. To accomplish my purpose I again went from home, and after a long and weary search, found the one I sought. Too late! too late! He was the husband of another. At the first sight of him my soul went out with all its former love. I decided to disguise myself, seek a home in his family as a menial, and devote my life to Daisy, whom I loved with a tenderness that no words can express. You know how well my disguise served me. You know some of the scenes of trial through which I have passed since I came hither, but you can never know the anguish of my heart as day after day I was compelled to see the love that had once been mine lavished upon another. The peculiar

power of my spirit to partly disengage itself, and clothe itself in the material emanations surrounding the body so as to be seen and heard by mortal eyes and ears, occasioned me much trouble, and at one time came near disclosing my identity. Here, through Daisy, was first made known to me the power of spirits to return, and through her visions I have been told that my life would again be illumined by the sun of happiness, and the mystery of this dual appearance be more fully explained. Maggie, I shall look to you for that revelation."

Dr. Bradwell, during this recital, had been deeply affected, and at its close he said:

"I—I have been so unjust I can never forgive myself."

"Say no more; we will forget the past and live in the sunshine of the present. We will now go, as Maggie requests, and leave her alone, with the casket she claims as hers."

CHAPTER LIX.

REUNION.

LANGUAGE cannot portray the sufferings of Forest through the long hours of that dreary night passed alone with the corpse of one he had so devotedly loved. The fact that death had snatched away his treasure was enough to overwhelm him in grief, but when to this was added the consciousness that Clara had loved another, that her professions of affection for him were unreal, that his idol was clay, that the being he had worshiped was unworthy even of his respect, these thoughts smote his soul with a feeling of utter death. These were the darkest hours of his life.

"How could I have been so blinded!" he exclaimed. "She was unworthy; I will tear her memory from my heart; my lips shall never speak her name."

But as he glanced at the white face of the dead, a power that he could not resist bound him heart and brain to the love of the beautiful Clara. In vain did reason attempt to assert her sway.

"I love her, dead or alive, true or false. O Clara, beloved!

" 'I know not, I care not, if guilt's in thy heart;
I know that I love thee, whatever thou art.' "

At times, he seemed almost to lose his reason. He would cover the cold cheek with his warm kisses and implore her to speak to him, to unclothe the sealed lips and

let him hear but once more the voice of tenderness, to give him but one look from the eyes he loved so well.

Thus through the long hours of the night Forest continued to plead, trying to warm the hand that would never more return his pressure. At last, worn out by excitement, he sunk into a light slumber from which he was startled by a laugh in the air above him, followed by the words:

"Did I not tell you I would follow you with my curse? You broke your vow, you deserted my child—now receive your final reward; behold a life torture close with an unnatural death."

Forest sprung to his feet and looked around the room in which everything was visible in the light of the morning. Seeing that he was alone, he sunk into a chair, saying:

"It is the voice of my tormenter. It is useless to struggle longer against fate. I have now no object in life, and death will be a welcome relief."

He was not frightened from his post of watchfulness by his unearthly visitor, but remained by the side of the corpse until Dr. Bradwell entered and compelled him to go to another apartment.

"You must have rest, Forest; I did wrong to permit you to remain here all night."

"I shall never rest again," was the reply, as he followed the doctor from the room. "I have received the hardest blow that can be dealt! henceforth I am indifferent to all that life may bring me. Like a withered leaf, I may be cast hither and thither. Every day I shall pray God to take the life that has grown burdensome."

Forest was apparently very calm, and spoke with much deliberation. Dr. Bradwell not having been aware of the intimate relation of the two, could not understand his grief.

"Death is sad," said he, "but I speak truly, Forest, when I say that I have suffered more in being separated from the living, than I have in the loss of friends by death. You feel the blow, but will rise above it; you have many things to make life desirable."

"Say no more," said Forest; "you do not understand me; your sympathy cannot reach me."

Forest claimed the privilege of taking charge of Clara's body, alleging that she had no near relatives. Accordingly, he procured an elegant coffin, had Clara arrayed in the softest and finest garments, with snow-white buds twined amid her raven tresses. Then requesting all to leave the room, and bowing down before the beautiful casket, he poured out his soul's devotion.

"Clara, if your spirit can behold me from the other life, and see this last act of love—know that I have cared for the temple that once enshrined thee—if you can see this, your heart will be moved by emotions of love. Clara, look into my soul, see here in the presence of your body, and beneath the pure eyes of angels, I consecrate my life to your memory. No word of love shall henceforth pass my lips.

‘And the kiss thy lips have left,
Shall never part from mine,
Till happier days restore the bliss,
Untainted back to thine.’

I am thine, and shall live as though you were ever present with me. Oh! that I could preserve this beautiful body from decay. But it cannot be, and I will be content with the consciousness that thou art with me."

The body was removed and placed in the tomb, where it was to remain for a short time before being taken to its final resting place.

In vain did Forest call to his aid the philosophy that had served him heretofore, to extricate him from the depth of despair into which he was plunged. In the realm of cold reason alone, he found no consolation for the loss that seemed to blot out every object for which to live. He withdrew entirely from society, and in the seclusion of his home gave full vent to the sorrow that would not be controlled. Few natures were capable of his depth of affection, and few could sink into such unutterable woe. He wandered through the vacant rooms as if in search of her who had gone from him forever. He called her name in the silent hours of the night, and the wind seemed to mock at his misery. At last his grief became unbearable, and he determined to seek Maggie and, if possible, commune with the spirit of her he had so loved on earth. The afternoon was dark and cloudy when he left home for the residence of Dr. Bradwell. Thrice he turned back, overcome by his intense emotions; then summoning all his strength, he entered the house, but found that Maggie was absent.

"She may return any moment," said the doctor, glad of an opportunity to converse with Forest.

"I will wait," said Forest, and dropping into a proffered chair, he was soon lost in thoughts of the past.

In vain did Dr. Bradwell seek to amuse and interest him. There was a gulf between them. Late in the afternoon Maggie returned, and Forest made known the object of his visit.

"I will try," said Maggie, her feelings intensified by the sad countenance of her visitor.

Their sitting was long, and in vain did Maggie try to pierce the veil with her clairvoyant vision. Not a glimpse of Clara awarded her long and patient search, and not a sound of her voice came to answer the questions that went up from the agonized heart of Forest. They were about

to abandon their efforts, when PEARL, like an angel of mercy, appeared to them.

"You are seeking Clara, and your soul is sad because you find her not. Learn, therefore, this lesson: when a spirit goes uncalled into the higher life, it remains for a time unconscious, and when it first awakes to the realities of its new life, its first thoughts are of those it left on earth. Their sorrow and tears, their intense longings for its presence, greatly disturb it in its new surroundings. Forest, Clara has been, since her departure, as though she had no existence until to-day, and now, weak and listless as a child, she rests, guarded and cared for by those angels of mercy who delight to minister to spirits imprisoned, the prisons formed by the false conditions of earth life, whose effect darkens and saddens the soul in the life beyond. Your grief is calling her to earth: be careful; disturb not her rest."

"Shall I never hear from her?" asked Forest.

"Yes; sooner than you imagine. I came to-day not only to speak to you of Clara, but to warn you of one who has long followed you. Her hand is already upraised to strike you. Beware! beware!"

Forest thanked her for the warning, but his mind was too much absorbed in thoughts of Clara to give heed to it. He remained long conversing with Maggie of that world which now contained his greatest treasure. When about to depart, he said:

"Maggie, I have one question more: you will think it foolish. You know not what it is to be completely absorbed in the life of another. I would know if it is possible for one to so truly love another without receiving an answering love. Tell me, Maggie, will Clara ever return my devotion?"

In a moment Maggie passed from her normal condition, and replied:

"True love is ever reciprocated. While on earth Clara knew not her needs; her soul struggled in darkness. These experiences were necessary, but in time she will see what true love is.

"Some time in the future, when she has outgrown
The shadows and darkness that round her are thrown,
She will rise to a hight where her spirit can gaze
Beyond the conditions of earth's murky haze;
And with thy strong spirit, thy truth and thy right,
Her soul shall grow strong, and bask in the light.
The love that now dwells in the depths of thy heart,
To her its true worth and its light shall impart,
Till free from deception, from falsehood, from crime,
Her spirit shall mount truth's summit sublime.
For love is the power to save and unfold
From the depths of the soul its treasures untold.
Take courage, for soon o'er death's deep rolling tide,
You will meet with your Clara and claim her your bride,
And through the great cycles, as slowly they roll,
Step by step you advance, one spirit, one soul,
Drawing nearer to him who ruleth above,
Who has crowned you and blessed you with infinite love."

While this communication was being given, the soul of Forest was stirred with emotion. He had confidence in these prophetic words, and fully believed that in the future all would be well. Thanking Maggie, he bade her farewell, and went out into the darkness. But what was the gloom of the outer world to him? The star of hope was now lighting his pathway, and with elastic step he hastened on. When he left the house, he had entirely forgotten the warning received from PEARL, and was not aware that the same dark figure that had been on his track for weeks was

now silently walking behind him. He had nearly reached his home, but there was one place that had for him an irresistible attraction; it was the tomb of his plighted bride. It was not very late; the clouds were breaking, and thither he must go, if but for a few moments. He bore with him the key to the vault, and a lamp was within.

"I cannot resist; I must go," he exclaimed, as he turned from the main road, and hastened to the place where Clara's body had been deposited.

He had caused a glass to be placed in the case over the face of the beautiful corpse. Now as the rays of the lamp fell on the marble-like face, it seemed that the cold lips smiled upon him.

"Mine, all mine! mine through eternity!" he murmured.

There was a sound as of approaching steps, the light was dashed to the ground, and then the fall of a heavy body might have been heard. The next moment a dark figure emerged from the vault. Pausing for a moment in the door, she raised her voice to a loud, shrill scream, crying:

"I am the QUEEN OF DEATH! My hand is sure; my stroke is fatal." And with a wild laugh, she sped away into the darkness.

The next day two gentlemen, in passing through the city of the dead, were surprised to find the door of one of the private vaults standing open, and stepping within beheld a sight of horror. There stood the coffin of Clara Gordon, covered with flowers, and stretched upon it, his head resting on Clara's face and crimsoned with congealed blood, lay the body of Forest, a ghastly wound in the heart, another upon the head. His cold, stiff arms were convulsively clasped around the burial case of her to whom he was now reunited. He was faithful unto death. Their bodies repose together in the tomb. Of the reunion of their spirits, we shall learn elsewhere.

CHAPTER LX.

THE MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

"THROUGH how many changing scenes I have passed since I commenced the study of medicine with Dr. Bigelow, but through all the dark valleys and thorny paths over which I have traveled, I have ever been conscious of the watchful care of my angel friends. Never have they deceived or misled me; their counsel has ever been good, and now again I am directed to accept the kind invitation of Dr. Bigelow and make his house my home."

"I suppose," said Dr. Bradwell, in reply to Maggie, "you will not remain long in one place."

"Only long enough to regain strength to again enter upon my public labors."

"I wish you would consent to accompany us," said Thalia. The change of scene and the experiences gained would be of great value to you."

Were I to consult my own wishes I would not hesitate a moment to accept your invitation, but when I see the great work to be done, and hear the cry for the light that I have the power to give, I feel that it would not be right to remain longer inactive."

"Inactive!" exclaimed the doctor. "Why, Maggie! I have never known one to accomplish more than you have in the same length of time. Healing the sick, giving tests of spirit power, comforting the sorrowing, strengthening the weak, consoling the dying. Yes, more; snatching from the very jaws of death its victims, and restoring them

all radiant with life and beauty to the mourner. To-day a nurse in the sick room, to-morrow standing before assembled multitudes, giving to them the bread of life. Dear little Daisy well said, 'the angels might envy you your destiny.'"

"My work is but just begun; I feel that I am now only in the vestibule, preparing to enter the temple."

"You leave us in the morning: this is our last evening together," said Thalia. "Can you not tell us something of the mystery to which allusion has been made?"

"Yes; let us have an explanation, if possible," responded Dr. Bradwell, "but before you commence, I have a few words to say of my early life. I fear you may think me a harsh and unjust man, and that I was wrong in marrying a second time. I would therefore have you know how and why I came to do so. When Thalia ordered me from her room, I left the house and did not return until the following evening, when to my surprise I found she had gone, and taken our child with her. I believed she had fled with him upon whom my suspicions had fallen. But I found that he was in the city attending to his usual business. I watched him closely for several days, then went to him and frankly told him all. He was grieved, and declared that my wife had left the parlor two hours before my return on that eventful night. This I could not believe, for had I not seen her? Angry words followed, and we parted as enemies. I determined to obtain a divorce and get possession of my child. You know that I succeeded. Then came the news of Thalia's death. Until then I did not know how deeply and truly I had loved her. I sought to hide my sorrow from the world, to drown it by traveling from place to place. At last, accident threw me into the society of one who became devotedly attached to me."

Here Dr. Bradwell related the incidents with which the

reader is already familiar, adding: "She was a lovely woman, and I loved her as a sister. But Mrs. Loomis came, and her presence aroused memories that would not be silenced. I had no suspicion of her identity, yet vaguely felt that she could read my soul, and twice when her other self has been seen, a thought of the mystery of Thalia's life recurred, and I wondered if it could not have been a similar delusion. Tell us, Maggie, if you know anything of this, and save others from being wrecked on the same rock."

"He paused for a reply, and soon it came as follows:

"Spirit controls matter; mind is the power that rules; all force is in the unseen realm. Spirits use magnetism, electricity, and psychology, in acting upon other minds. The soul essence is the same in and out of the body. Spirits, under proper conditions, can materialize themselves so as to be seen by the physical eye, speak so as to be heard by the external ear, or, through the power of psychology, they can appear to be present when they are not. Under certain conditions, *spirits in the body have the same power.*"

"Do you wish us to understand," asked the doctor, "that a spirit yet in human form can materialize a hand that can handle material substances and become visible to mortals?"

"We mean to say that the spirit, through certain organizations, by a concentration of will, can control the forces that surround the physical form, and from those emanations form a hand that can give written communications, emanating always from the mind of the medium, or received intuitively or clairvoyantly from those present, and this too when the hands of the medium are in sight of all. The spirit of Thalia can, through her peculiar organization, thus project itself, and while her material senses are wrapped in sleep, her spirit is active; it gathers the mate-

rial emanations, clothes itself in a form the exact counterpart of the one from which these emanations proceed. This is a real and substantial though spirit body, but cannot be retained for a great length of time without causing death. At these times the spirit is not entirely separated from the body, and the same law that enables disembodied spirits to materialize themselves, also explains this law of the soul. When in this condition you could not only see Thalia but hear her voice, and when restored to her normal condition she was as unconscious of what had passed as yourself during the hours of dreamless sleep. The time is coming when this seeming mystery will be fully understood and time and space will be annihilated by the God-like power of mind."

"This may be true; in fact, appears reasonable," said the doctor; but how is it that we always saw Thalia with the same apparel that she wore at the time?"

"Have we not told you that all things have their emanations? This is one reason why sensitives are affected by certain colors or substances. The particles thrown off do not harmonize with the individual. It is these finer substances that are the real and most enduring, and from them the skillful fingers of the spirits can weave garments, coarse or fine, bright or dim, according to the material used."

"If this be so, then spirits in the body can through these forces produce these manifestations that you have taught us emanate from a higher source. How are we to distinguish the one from the other?"

"When a truth or a fact is given of which the medium is entirely ignorant, and that you are sure does not proceed from the mind of any who are present, then you may safely infer that it comes from an individualized disembodied spirit."

"But you have taught us that truth was accessible to all. Is it not probable that under certain conditions the spirit of the medium can reach beyond its ordinary powers, see and comprehend any truth in the universe, and partially withdrawn from the material form, may it not roam at will through the realm of mind, and for the time be almost like a God in knowledge and wisdom?"

"That is possible; but remember that pure spirit is always truthful. There is no contradiction in the realm of principles; and when in this condition, if the control is from the world of spirits, it will so declare. One condition is the illuminating and intensifying of the spiritual nature until it defies what has been supposed to be unchanging law, the other is the control of a positive mind over a negative. It is the clearing up of the avenues of the mind of the medium through which it is brought *in rapport* with the outer world. The medium in that condition is merely the reflection of another mind, and in this condition, incidents of a personal character, and facts in the history of another's life are given. In this way I am controlling the medium through whom I now speak, and though my control is perfect, yet I should fail to give you the name of any of your friends, or describe them to you, unless they were present, nor could I tell you what has occurred in this house to-day, for I have not been present. I can give you my own name and history while on earth, and anything I have since learned."

"One question more. You spoke of psychology: how is it used where the double is seen?"

"When the mind is intently fixed upon an individual, it sometimes almost forces itself from the strong hold of matter, and swifter than light, darts through space and affects the mind of the sensitive upon whom it is placed. Sometimes its influence is so strong that the individual is seen,

but it is only a psychological view. Its influence is sometimes felt in dreams and premonitions. The study of the effect of mind upon mind is the most difficult to comprehend, yet the most ennobling and grand, that man has ever attempted to solve. Future scientific developments will throw much light upon this theme."

The next morning, Dr. and Mrs. Bradwell started on their journey, from which they did not expect to return for two years, and Maggie bade them farewell and again went to the Cure.

CHAPTER LXI.

HARRY AND MAGGIE.

ANOTHER six months have passed. During that time Maggie had been going from place to place, proclaiming the gospel of truth, showing to the world, not the divinity of Christ alone, but of all humanity, giving to the people a higher conception of religion, teaching that God manifest in the human soul was the highest expression of Deity. The benevolence of the good Mrs. Spaulding had enabled Maggie to labor without money and without price, and being free from the control of sectarian societies, she gave full expression to the truth which famishing souls were waiting to receive. But as she journeyed from place to place, many times weary and disheartened, she often recalled the peaceful days passed with Mrs. Spaulding, and saw the glowing pictures of home so vividly portrayed by Harry—a home where wisdom should be king and love queen, where harmony and peace should forever abide. Would the visions of Harry ever be realized? Would the dream that had for a time brightened her life ever be actualized? Maggie had a severe struggle with her own spirit during the year's absence of Harry. But at last the victory was won, and at the close of the last six months she turned her steps toward the Cure, and looked with joyful anticipation to the time of meeting with one from whom she should never more be separated. She had received no letter from Harry, but felt sure he would meet

her at the time appointed. Maggie had told her friends of the anticipated meeting, therefore they were not surprised when she returned to spend a week with them. Two days she had rested, and on the morrow the long-deferred answer was to be given.

It was a beautiful May morning, the sky was cloudless and the earth looked as bright as though fresh from the hand of the Creator. The birds that danced from bough to bough were no happier than Maggie, as arrayed in a dress of purest white, her auburn ringlets hanging like a veil around her face and shoulders, a white moss rosebud, half concealed amid her curls, she walked down the broad avenue leading to the gateway. She paused to gather a few blue forget-me-nots, and as the sun shone through the parted leaves it seemed to transform her hair to gold, and to impart new brightness to her happy face. Maggie's thoughts were upon Harry as she gathered a boquet, all glistening with silver dew, as an offering of love. She was not expecting him until late in the day. Had she taken a closer survey, she might have seen a tall form standing beneath the shadow of one of the great trees near her. It was Harry; he had entered the grounds unobserved, and seeing Maggie leave the house, had stepped aside to await her coming. As Maggie raised her eyes from her flowers, he came forward, and the next moment Maggie forgot the long hours of absence in the joy of the reunion. Harry did not have to wait for his answer; he read it in the smiling lips, the love-lit eyes, and blushing cheek. Harry's year of travel had been of great benefit, but neither distance nor change of scene could weaken his love for Maggie. She was the star that ever shone pure and bright upon his pathway, and now great joy flooded his soul as he realized that she was his through time and eternity. As they stood in the morning sunshine, with hands clasped

and heart answered to heart, there came to them the clear, well-known voice of Mrs. Spaulding, saying:

"God bless you, my children; through perfect love you will overcome all trials, and henceforth live in eternal sunshine."

"Mr. Spaulding, we thank you," said Harry; we hope ever to be worthy of the company of the good and the true."

They waited for reply, but as none came, they remained upon the lawn until summoned by the the breakfast bell.

The evening of the same day, as Harry and Maggie conversed of old friends, Harry, referring to the death of Forest, said:

"He has been gone away many months. Have you had any message from him during that time?"

"No," answered Maggie, "but I have questioned my spirit friends concerning him many times."

"His sudden death may forbid his communicating, but your spirit friend of the GOLDEN KEY surely could give us information of him."

"I would like to hear directly from him," said Maggie. "I think he will come to us to-day. We will place our thoughts upon him and remain quiet."

Maggie had but just ceased to speak, when she was controlled, and the spirit of the GOLDEN KEY greeted Harry, saying:

"I am not the one you wished for, but come to tell you what your friend cannot say for himself. He has not returned to earth; he would have done so to-day, but Clara refused to accompany him."

"Is it possible," said Harry, "that the pure spirit of Forest is in the company of her who was in heart a murderer?"

"He sought her society while here."

"Yes: but you have taught us that the next step was

an advance; that the sinful, the criminal, were confined to a certain sphere and could not go beyond it."

"The law of attraction is unchangeable; the other life is but a continuation of this. True, there are different spheres, and the undeveloped cannot enter upon a plane to which he is not attracted, but the more highly unfolded can and do descend. Forest's first question was for Clara. He would have willingly left the highest heaven to have lingered near her."

"Is she happy in his love?"

"Not entirely so. Thoughts of the past make her unhappy, but when she comes to understand the effect of circumstances upon her when in earthly life, she will cease to be tormented by the results of this life."

"Can Forest be happy while conscious of her condition?"

"Yes, comparatively. It is happiness to him to be in her presence, and he is aware that by and by her soul will rise out of the shadows. He is happy in her love as she is to be. The divine possibilities of her nature have been revealed to him, and he is willing to wait for the fulfillment of his hopes."

"It has been said that true love must have its equal," said Harry. "If this be true, Clara can never be a companion for Forest."

"Forest may excel in one direction, Clara in another. In earth life, one part of his nature may have been well developed, another neglected; where she excels he may be deficient. Conditions that may have caused her to stumble on the road of life, would have had the same effect upon another of like organization. In order to secure perfect union, it is not necessary that each soul should have advanced in the same direction, but that each shall have come to the recognition of great principles. One may reach his destination through philosophy, another through poetry,

another through music. It is the object attained, and not the means employed, that is to be considered."

"I understand," replied Harry; "through science and reason, Forest has arrived at correct moral principles; through music, poetry and the love of the beautiful, Clara will finally reach the same. And yet a thousand may be brought to a recognition of the same truths and fail to reach the heart of Forest, for in Clara's nature he finds what is necessary for his perfect growth and happiness. The principles controlling unite them as one. Can you tell me whether our union will be eternal?"

"Long, long ago, your spirit called to the soul of Maggie, and her heart responded, though her lips were silent. Whatever is from the spirit is enduring. Take the GOLDEN KEY that Maggie has so often held, and look into the depths of your own nature; you will there find your answer. I shall often come to you, and continue to guide Maggie in her work. Be not troubled for Forest. There is an overruling power that doeth all things well."

As Maggie returned to her normal condition, she saw the one who had just held control standing by her side, and she said:

"He has the GOLDEN KEY; he will take it with him. Oh! I wish I could ever retain it! With it in my hand, my vision is clear. But now my work will be less with spirits and more with mortals. The great door is closing, the silver sea is vanishing, the veil has dropped.

"Let them go—visions of beauty, of glory, and light!

(I am happier here with my Harry to-night,)

Than in the bright spheres where angels have trod,

Or where seraphims sing their praises to God.

Oh! what is the grandeur and glory above,

Compared to the joy bestowed by thy love?

Farewell to the mansions of glory and bliss!
I am happy and tranquil, contented in this.
To work side by side with him that I love,
Is better for me than a mansion above.
Then farewell, bright angel, farewell to thee!
Much wisdom I've gained through the bright GOLDEN KEY;
But gladly I yield the bright key to your hand,
And wave my adieu to the radiant band,
Who, under your firm but gentle control,
Have given joy to my heart and peace to my soul.
Far better for mortal earth's thorns and her roses
Than all of the splendor that heaven discloses.
But my heart's deepest thanks rise ever to thee,
For the truth that has come with the bright GOLDEN KEY."

THE CELESTIAL CITY.

FAR beyond the cloudless splendor
Of the crescent queen of night;
Far beyond the crystal concave,
Blazing with its worlds of light;

Far beyond the pearly gateway,
Where the shining angels stand;
Far beyond the golden portals,
Leading to the spirit land;

Far away through realms of ether,
Where no mortal foot hath trod,
Where the voiceful air is hymning
Praises to the Father God;

Far away beyond the star-beams,
Basking in a golden light,
Stands the white Celestial City,
Veiled from mortal's longing sight.

Mortals have not pierced that brightness,
Have not seen that shining shore,
Yet there's but a veil between you,
But a veil and nothing more.

Gazing with clairvoyant vision,
As we sweep that veil aside,
You will see that shining city,
Standing on the other side.

Oh! how cold seems earthly language
When we would these scenes portray,
'T is only words of angel music
That their glory can convey.

As no *painting* can embody
All the meaning of this dream,
So no language can empower us
To do justice to our theme

'T is our object to convince you
That this is not all a dream,
That there is a world of beauty
Just across the silvery stream:

That our God hath many mansions
On yon brightly shining strand,
That each soul shall gain admittance
To the spirit's fatherland:

That man's spirit is immortal,
And its destiny sublime,
Rising by the law of progress,
To a fairer, purer clime;

Circling round in swift gyrations
Through the radiant spheres of love,
Pausing now on burning summits,
Or mounting blazing ones above.

Progression is the soul's true motto,
Onward for the truth and right,
Onward, to the golden city
That now dawns upon your sight.

There are temples built of jasper,
Over which there have been thrown
All the rainbow tints of glory
That surround the Father's throne.

There are domes of glowing rubies,
Burning with a crimson flame,
With their light and beauty praising
The great source from whence they came.

There are towers of blazing sapphire,
Purer than Italian skies,
Pagodas built of glowing emeralds
Dipped in spring-time's verdant dyes.

There are halls of matchless splendor,
Halls of glowing amethyst,
Whose empurpled rays of beauty
Tint Aurora's veil of mist.

There are many vast cathedrals,
Whiter than the untrodden snow,
Over them the royal arches,
Waves of rich vermilion throw.

And the domes of those cathedrals,
And each glittering minaret,
Glow and burn with the golden glory
Of the gems with which they're set.

There 's a temple built of topaz,
Called the temple of the sun,
And o'er all its glittering turrets,
Vines of glowing emerald run.

And around each lofty column,
Woven in many a quaint design,
Rubies, emeralds, sparkling diamonds,
All their glowing tints combine.

There are mansions of pure crystal
Which reflect the brilliant dyes
Of those great bejeweled temples
And the ever-changing skies.

There each rainbow tint of glory
Is repeated o'er and o'er,
Rolling in waves of matchless beauty
Over heaven's starry floor,

Lighting up the distant mountain,
Lingering in the valleys deep,
Resting on the tinted mosses,
Kissing flowerets in their sleep;

Dancing in the silvery fountains,
Shining on the golden strand,
Hanging like a veil of beauty
Over all the Summer-Land;

Over many bowers of beauty,
Over waving, nodding trees,
Over all the crystal billows
Of the clear, transparent seas;

Over groups of loving angels,
As they roam beneath the shade,
Or recline on downy couches
Of sweet flowers and mosses made.

Oh! the air is filled with music,
In that glorious world of ours,
Every ray of light seems whispering
To the blushing, smiling flowers.

Every dancing wave is singing,
As it meets the golden strand;
Every quivering leaf is murmuring,
The praises of our Summer-Land.

There, within that lovely grotto,
Godlike sages may be found,
Solving soul-absorbing problems,
With a wisdom most profound.

There are troops of rosy children,
Rambling 'mid the fadeless flowers;
There are groups of radiant maidens,
In those amaranthine bowers.

There are bands of shining seraphs,
Messengers in God's employ;
Ministering angels he is sending
To guide you to that world of joy.

See that countless host of angels!
Hark! the King gives his command:
"Go and bless my earthly children;
Guide them to the spirit-land."

Years ago the command was given
To those chosen ones in white,
Then the arch of heaven resounded
With their shouts of glad delight.

Glory, glory to God be given!
Spread the truth from shore to shore!
He hath ope'd the the golden portals;
Angels come to earth once more.

Hear the tidings, doubting Christian!
Slumbering nation, now awake!
Hark! the God of heaven is speaking,
Bidding you your idols break.

THE ANGEL OF HOPE.

THE angel of hope was standing
 Away on yon starry hight,
And her dewy eyes were gazing
 Out through the golden light.
Her face was a model of beauty,
 Her form was of perfect mold,
Her eyes were of starry splendor,
 And her hair of burnished gold.
Her robe was bright as the sunlight
 That falls on the mountain streams,
Bright as a vision of beauty
 That glides through your midnight dreams.
On her head was a crown of beauty
 That gleamed in the morning light,
As the stars that glow in splendor
 On the regal brow of night.
In her hand was a glittering scepter,
 Inlaid with many a gem
That flashed and flamed in the sunlight,
 Like a royal diadem.
Thus in silence the angel was standing
 Away on yon mountain peak,
Her lips breathed not a murmur,
 But her large eyes seemed to speak.

She seemed not to see the beauties
That around her were thickly spread,
The tinted flowers beneath her feet
And the sunlight o'er her head.
She seemed not to feel the breezes
That toyed with her shining hair,
That stole a kiss from her ruby lips
And fanned her forehead fair.
Her eyes seemed to pierce the brightness
Whose purple light was shed
In waves of mystic beauty
Over her angel head.
Swift gliding through the ether,
She hung her garlands bright
On one of the distant peaks
On yonder glistening height.
Then, with a graceful motion,
She raised her queenly head,
And to the great archangel,
This wondrous beauty said:
"O being of perfect goodness!
Archangel pure and bright,
I come to ask permission
To leave this realm of light.
Around me is light and beauty
And harmony and grace,
But my soul has had a vision
Of a sadly different place.
A place where God's beautiful children
By sorrow and toil are oppressed,
Where they are sighing in anguish,
Are groaning and praying for rest;
Where the heavy hand of misfortune
Hath been placed on each sorrowing head,

And joy, like the song-bird of summer,
Hath plumed its bright pinions and fled;
Where the soul hath been crushed by oppression,
Where the heart hath been saddened by scorn,
Where the shadows from night's sable pinions
Hath scattered the brightness of morn;
Where the breath of suspicion hath frozen
The warm, gushing tides of the soul,
Which now like grim glaciers are standing,
Defying the power of control;
Where true souls are toiling and toiling,
Are working and striving for good,
And yet by the cold world around them,
These toilers are not understood.
Then, angel, archangel of goodness,
Grant, oh! grant my request;
Let me take to that cold world of darkness
A light from this pure realm of rest."
"Go forth!" said the angel of goodness,
"Go forth on your mission of right;
Go, take to that cold world of darkness
A gleam of this radiant light.
Go, shed the pure light of thy beauty
Round hearts that are quivering with pain,
Revive the fair buds of affection
That by coldness and scorn have been slain;
Go, loosen the bonds of oppression,
Go, lighten the burdens of care,
Give strength to the faint and the faltering,
And peace to the bosom of care;
Go, sing to the faint and the weary
Till the hills shall re-echo the sound,
Till down in the cold world of darkness,
No sad, weary heart can be found."

Then from heaven the angel departed;
The beautiful angel of light
Came out of that region of glory
To dwell in that temple of night.
Not to dwell in the shadows and darkness,
But to fling such a glory around,
That wherever her bright footsteps lingered
No shadow or darkness was found.
The angel of hope is still standing,
Not away on yon bright starry hight,
But clad in a radiant 'splendor,
She's here in your presence to-night.

THE RAINBOW BRIDGE.

As I sat last night, in the soft moonlight,
Sweet slumber closed my eyes,
And my spirit free floated out to see
The beauties of dream-land skies.

I rose as air on the wings of prayer,
And my spirit broke the chain
That bound it here to this earthly sphere,
This world of toil and pain.

I thought I stood near a leafy wood,
On an old rock, worn and gray,
On its sides were seen the mosses green,
Kissed by the light of day.

And over me like a canopy,
Was the sky of cloudless blue,
And angels bright from the realms of light,
Seemed peering the azure through.

And from my feet to their deep retreat,
The wild waves leaped in glee;
Singing a song as they swept along,
Like the anthem of the free.

There were waves of light and creamy white,
And many tints of green,
And the brightest dyes caught from the skies,
That mortal eye had seen.

And pure and white in the golden light,
Rose the mist on the morning air,
Like a silvery screen it hung between
This world and yon orb so fair.

And in the mist by the sunbeams kissed,
Just over the fearful ridge,
An unseen hand had the wild waves spanned,
By a beautiful rainbow bridge.

From the rocky floor to the distant shore,
And far out on the banks of green,
Those brilliant dyes 'neath cloudless skies,
Were plainly to be seen

Where the wild waves leap from the rocky steep,
Where they sport on the fearful ridge,
I saw there stand an angel band,
On that beautiful rainbow bridge.

There was one in white whose face was bright,
With the glory of heavenly skies,
In each shining fold of her locks of gold,
Were the flowers of paradise.

Who could she be that from over death's sea,
Stood there in the morning ray?
From shore to shore above the waves' roar,
Came the name of "SILVER SPRAY."

Why came she here to this mortal sphere?

And why did she take her stand
On that bridge of air, so frail and fair,
Upheld by an unseen hand?

Oh! death's river is deep, but it cannot keep
Two loving souls apart,
For God's own hand has the wild waves spanned,
And brought them heart to heart.

And day by day will SILVER SPRAY,
On that beautiful bridge descend,
Bringing words of cheer to loved ones here,
From many a waiting friend.

And year by year, from yon star-paved sphere,
Will descend the angel-hearted,
Till those who wait this side death's gate,
Shall see the dear departed.

This is why I'm here from yon distant sphere,
To repeat the wondrous story,
That at God's commands, bright angel bands,
Are flooding this world with glory,

That pain and fear may disappear,
And every wrong be righted;
And every heart to its counterpart,
Forever be united.

STAR OF PROGRESSION.

THE star of progression! oh! see it arise,
Lighting with beauty the earth and the skies,
Scattering the phantoms of darkness and gloom
That for ages have haunted the way to the tomb.
The star of progression! oh! see it ascend,
While on it earth's children their wondering eyes bend,
It sparkles and flashes and flames on the sight,
As proudly it moves through the empire of night,
While up from the hillside, the valley, and glen
Come the glad shouts of millions of men,
Crying, "All honor to the being who gave
This star to dispel the gloom of the grave."
O star of progression! thy pure, silvery beams
Are lighting with beauty earth's turbulent streams;
Hypocrisy shrinks from thy pure diamond light,
And draws round her form the mantle of night;
And bigotry trembles and quivers with fear,
For she feels that thy light is approaching too near;
And old superstition cries out in great pain,
For she sees that her fetters are breaking in twain.
O star of progression! thou shalt cause man to be
From error and darkness eternally free;
Thou hast taken man's feet from the cold, barren sod,
And taught him to walk in the pathway of God.
Thou hast taught him to see that the infinite cause
Is greater than nature, more grand than her laws;
That in every atom that's moving through space,
May be found the wisdom, the beauty and grace
Of that Infinite Power who ruleth in love,
The children of earth and the angels above.

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freely from its storehouse back
the more.

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you feed it
And in giving love you build
it
Like an amulet of safety to
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