

BORN OF FLAME.

A ROSICRUCIAN STORY.

BY

MRS. MARGARET B. PEEKE.

"Angel of Light! who, from the time
Those heavens began their march sublime,
Hath first of all the starry choir
Trode in his Maker's steps of fire."



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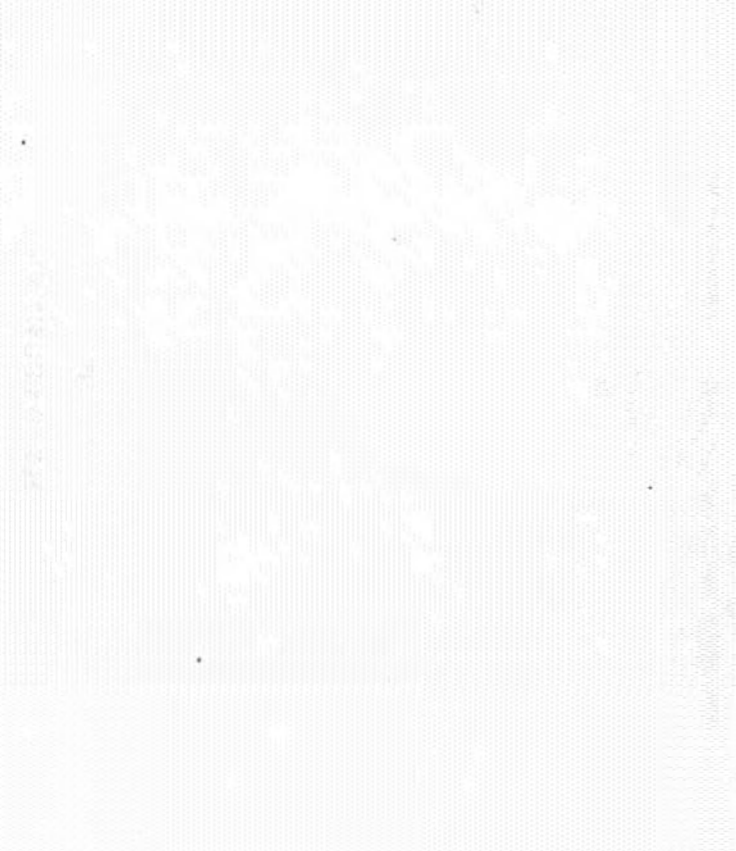
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TO
MY DAUGHTER,
BELOVED, IMMORTAL, AND INVISIBLE, WHOSE FEET HAVE WALKED
THE UPWARD PATH AND ENTERED THE GATES OF GOLD;
WHOSE COUNSEL NEVER FAILED, AND WHOSE
LOVE FOLLOWED EVERY PAGE,
THIS BOOK
IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED.



PREFACE.

MANY years ago, Truth came to me, and I loved her. She was fair and beautiful, yea, almost divine. Then she hid herself behind a mask of hideous shapes, and I wept, for I thought she had left me,—left me alone in a world of fleeting dreams. Shape succeeded shape, and as the years passed my soul cried out for the Unchangeable, the True. It would not be satisfied. Then came a blackness of darkness, and out of this, walking on a mysterious sea, came, radiant as the morning, she for whom I had wept and longed. Truth said to me,—

"Beneath all shapes thou hast seen, in all horrors as in all delights, in darkness as in the light, I, Truth, am everlasting, ever the same. In the brighter light of coming time thou shalt see grotesque and distorted images, that men have called truth, become transformed into living forms of beauty. Wait."

The following strange story is, in a weak way, an illustration of the fulfilment of this prediction. In offering it to the public, I can only say that each reader carries the test of his soul's development in his ability to see and understand what is here revealed. To some the facts may seem absurd, to others untrue, to all mysterious, but Truth eternal as the everlasting hills lies behind and beneath all.

No man has ever yet drawn the boundary-line between fact and fiction; no man will ever draw it; for, as the path to the heights is followed, the landmarks change their places, and what is fiction to-day is sure to become fact to-morrow. On the topmost height we may learn to know that *all is Truth*. The wildest dreams of the brains of former times are already established as scientific verities, and even ghosts, at one time disreputable visitors, are permitted in good society and criticised as citizens.

The locations mentioned in the following story are exact in description, and may be easily identified. The men and women are not ideal, and the part that seems most untrue is the truest of all.

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BORN OF FLAME.

CHAPTER I.

DOCTOR AND PATIENT.

"Who knows if life be not death and death life?"—EPICTE-
TUS.

"They say that the soul of man is immortal, and at one time has an end which is termed dying, and at another time is born again, but is never destroyed. Of all the things which a man has, next to the God, his soul is the most divine, and most truly his own."—PLATO.

It was the year of the great comet, and all the world seemed strangely out of gear. Whoever recalls the early autumn of 1857 will remember the consternation and apprehension perceptible among all classes as they watched the increase of the strange visitor. The feeling was not confined to the ignorant and superstitious, but wise men and thinkers, if the truth had been told, would have confessed to a strange interest in the train of light that at length swept the sky from zenith to horizon. Even though it might not be the harbinger of the world's destruction, it was something so far removed from the ordinary, as to warrant predictions of grave changes in magnetic and atmospheric currents, and who could tell the result? The myste-

rious is always connected with misfortune in the minds of the ignorant, and multitudes believed the day of destruction was at hand.

In the far South, yellow-fever had raged with unprecedented violence; rumors of a coming war filled the air on all sides; from across the sea came reports of dissensions and commotions, and for all these, and more, the comet was held responsible. Scientists observed, calculated, and wrote labored articles describing the formation and movements of comets in general and this particular comet in detail, until the masses that read and gazed and wondered began to question whether or not these men had lived upon a comet in some previous existence; and all classes had a vague presentiment of coming disasters that nothing would obliterate.

In one of the wards of the Rosedale Asylum for the Insane, a woman was dying. The room was small; the furnishings simple; the occupants three in number. In a farther corner a nurse was watching every movement of her charge, from whom approaching death had banished all unrest. The large eyes were luminous, with a light not born on sea or land, and rested, rather searched those of the doctor, who held her hand in his. It was near sunset, and from the west came floods of golden light that made radiant the dying face. The expression was one of searching inquiry, of earnest entreaty. She was saying,—

“Promise; promise; for my sake, promise.”

As she uttered the words, a single sunbeam crept through the window and rested on her hair. The

golden light was fading, and the eyes of the physician followed the movements of the beam of light until, for a moment, it took precedence of Death. How like a living thing it seemed, passing from hair to brow, from brow to hand, and there resting. It kindled into flame a magnificent solitaire, as if to seal what he might say. Again she repeated the words,—

"Promise;" and overborne by the intensity of her tones he mechanically uttered the words,—

"I promise, Clothilde." A tongue of fire leaped from the ring, and at the same moment, raising her eyes to heaven, the soul had gone. Still holding the now lifeless hand, the watcher laid it tenderly upon her breast and left the room.

Aubrey Grotius was familiar with death. He had seen it under many and various circumstances, but never before had he been affected as now. Link by link he was following the chain of events that had bound him to this woman. He had not loved her as men usually love women. Words of endearment or mere sentiment had never passed between them, yet she was more to him than woman had ever been or could ever be again. To have told her that he loved her would have been as absurd as if he should say to himself, "Aubrey, my good fellow, I am intensely interested in you," or, "Dr. Grotius, you are very dear to me." Men never make protestations to themselves. There is no part of their organism that is not conscious of the thought of the brain; is not responsive to its slightest volition; so this patient had been as a part of himself, until the two lives had been interwoven into

one. As the hand is the servant of the brain, so had she obeyed his will. With no interest in the active world without, with no occupations to engross her, she had centred every thought in him. She had been to him a musical instrument upon which he could play as he would; a problem that had occupied his days and nights and was still unsolved; a companion that was always delighted to welcome him, and who cared for no one else.

Clothilde Van Guilder was not young. Thirty years had passed since she was born, but in saying this we speak only of her shell. Who shall tell the age of the real self—the ego that had come into the shell thirty years ago, and fled from it now under the most watchful eyes of lover and physician? This is a child of the eternities, whose home is beyond the circling of planets, that mark our years by their revolutions. Soul ages only by knowledge and experiences. Our life here is of the outer, and as shell touches shell, we strive to catch a glimpse of the inhabitant within, and failing, we learn to doubt whether there be a soul or not. At rare times a something not of earth flashes forth, but it escapes, and eludes our grasp.

When Dr. Grotius again stood by the side of the dead, she was ready for burial. Like a child's face in its freshness, lay the upturned features he had known and loved. He was alone now, and his face had aged years in a single day.

"Gone, and forever," he exclaimed. "Oh, Clothilde, where art thou, and what does your soul know that mine does not? Come to me, darling, yet once more,

that I may tell thee how I have loved thee, how lonely and wretched I am. Henceforth there is naught left me but bitter though blessed memories of a past when our souls became as one; yet I never told you that you were dearer to me than life. Surely, you must know it all now. Know, too, the agony I suffered when I saw you go out into the Unknown alone. Do we part forever, Clothilde? or shall I find you when for me is done life's day? Farewell, my darling, my dual, my very self."

Dr. Grotius was no ordinary man, and as he left the room his step was the step of a prince, albeit his head was bowed. Generations had done their work well on this man, mentally and physically. Holland ancestry had endowed him with a grand physique, only equalled by an indomitable will. At forty he had achieved what many a scientist of threescore would have been proud to have done. From first to last his career had been phenomenal, and his success marked. If fame, fortune, and the ability to help his race is success, he had attained it. If love, home, and happiness are necessary to complete its fulness, he had failed.

Around a face of creamy whiteness and unfurrowed calmness was a halo of snowy hair as soft as silk. Eyes so intensely blue, that under excitement they became black, were shadowed by heavy, overhanging brows. When in the presence of great physical suffering they became fathomless. Women had offered him their fortunes and their love, until he shrank from social intercourse and confined himself to his profession. With his swinging gait, like a young athlete, and his marked appearance, it was not strange that his

enemies asserted that his success had been largely due to personal attractions.

Immediately after leaving college he went to Germany to study for a degree. To prepare his first dissertation, he gave himself to research and reading for an entire year, then chose for his theme, "The anatomical basis of certain mental phenomena," and produced a paper that made him famous. The libraries of Heidelberg had been carefully examined, and a wealth of historical, pathological, anatomical, and therapeutical knowledge been accumulated; to this had been added the results of careful experiments in vivisection, and facts relating to memory, cognition, and heredity, until the paper was a marvel of compiled knowledge. His name flew from city to city, and wherever learning had a place he was famous. His theory that the mental faculties could be injured or assisted by physical causes was clearly proven. This opened the way to his future as a pronounced authority on brain diseases, and a specialist of unquestioned ability. He also had the courage to assert positively that the materialistic notion of the identity of brain and mind was illogical and false, and this in a university of noted materialistic tendency. His argument was this: All matter undergoes constant change; the human brain is not exempt from this. There can be no atom in the adult's brain or body that belonged to the youth; yet in the man exists a consciousness of identity linking him to the boy. Time never destroys this. Where and what is this consciousness? He also advanced a theory of cell-growth which since has been largely accepted.

Five years later he returned to New York and assumed the position of chief of the staff of medical advisors in charge of the Rosedale Asylum for the Insane. Here his European fame followed him, and patients were brought from every part of the Union to be diagnosed by Dr. Grotius. Many that had long been thought incurable were restored, and sent home clothed and in their right mind.

A man who could master the speculative philosophies of Germany without being stranded on their hypotheses; who had devoted himself to anatomical and physiological studies with intense enthusiasm, yet had remained untouched by the poison of materialism that infests the dissecting-room, was no ordinary man. To him the earth was a mere point in space. In his thought the universe was one, and what was law here was law in the remotest corner of the cosmos. The unseen forces, whose results he saw on every side, were to him as palpable, though unknown facts, as the plainest truth before his eyes, with this difference—that they were the greater because causative. Holding himself in a tentative attitude to all thought, he became interested in psychic forces, and branched out far beyond the ordinary bounds of his profession. Perhaps he had inherited tendencies that led him hither; perhaps curiosity stimulated him; of one thing only are we certain, that he had attained a practical knowledge of soul-forces quite unknown to the ordinary mortal of this age. All this, however, was a secret, hidden in his own breast. To the world he had but one mission, viz., to heal its diseases.

It is left for the readers of the following strange story to harmonize the facts related with this strange personality, and draw the conclusion most logical to their own minds.

At the time of his entering upon his duties at Rosedale, he had made a tour of the wards unattended. In one of the lower rooms he came upon a picture that startled him. Against a back-ground of darkness crouched a figure that might have been mistaken for one of Bouguereau's creations. He paused as he unlocked the door, and, riveted to the spot, noted every detail. In a corner of the cell, with bare arms clasped about her knees, and a wealth of hair which in the shadow was a rich pomegranate color falling about her, she glared at him with eyes that fairly blazed. Her complexion was of that exquisite tint that is always found with suburn hair, and the curve of arm and neck and shoulder was faultlessly beautiful. Upon her hand blazed an immense solitaire. She was on the defensive, and there was not a keeper who would have willingly entered her cell alone. Dr. Grotius had never known fear. He thought only of her condition, and muttering to himself, "What a magnificent creature." "What a wreck." "Can I find the real woman amid that chaos?" he took a step forward. Instead of springing at him as she had done at others, she also began to move towards him. With a creeping motion she came forward, until, when within a yard of him, she gradually arose and stood upright. Both arms now hung by her side. No longer angry, defiant, terrible, but docile as a child. A sigh burst from the Doo-

tor's lips as he murmured, "Thank God, I can save her." She was at once removed to the convalescent's ward, and never again became unmanageable while near her physician. This had been ten years before the scene described in our opening pages. Twice in this time she had been pronounced cured, had been sent home, only to be brought back after a short time as violent as ever.

Her case baffled all science. Attacks of violent mania, without the slightest apparent cause, came upon her, and Dr. Grotius believed, if he could discover the cause, the cure might be permanent. His theory of cell-growth was here set aside, and the case of Clothilde Van Guilder was an exception to all rules. At the moment of seizure she might be reading, or talking, or sewing, and suddenly would be metamorphosed into a raving fiend. No life was safe within her reach at such times, but as soon as her physician arrived she became tractable and gentle.

Clothilde was an orphan and rich. Simeon Mascott, the banker, had been her guardian ever since her infancy. She had a pedigree running back into a past so ancient that it ended in myth and fable. She had never known father or mother, and her life for seventeen years was spent in a convent, under the care of devoted women, who had pledged themselves in no wise to influence her on religious matters. At eighteen she had taken her place in the social world as the ward of the great banker, and for two years had reigned the undisputed belle of New York's highest circles. Two years later her father died. She had

never known that he was alive until told of his death, and intrusted with a package of letters sent by him as a dying legacy. Almost immediately she was seized by an attack of madness, and from that time had passed most of her time at Rosedale.

The morning before our story opens, Dr. Grotius had driven out of the grounds to go down town, and, as was his custom, looked towards her window for a signal of recognition. It was never wanting, and this morning she looked radiantly beautiful, for, with faultless taste, her wardrobe was a marvel of richness and beauty.

"Glorious creature! Has the world another? Where can she be so safe and happy as under my eye and care?" were the thoughts flitting through his mind as he passed from sight. She was the only woman he had ever loved, and already he was planning to have a home where she should be his wife and queen. What did he care that the world might talk. She was ever gentle with him, and he could guard her always. He knew that she loved him; that in all the world she had no interest in another, and to him she was as a reflection of himself. With these dreams of coming happiness he drove down Broadway and visited his patients as usual. When he returned to the asylum he found her dying. She had gone into the dining-room for a glass of water, had stepped to the dumb-waiter, which, by some mischance, had been left below, had lost her balance and fallen to the bottom. The rest we know, and the story that follows we relate from the lips of witnesses.

CHAPTER II.

THE FATAL SECRET.

"No greater grief than to remember days
Of joy when misery is at hand."

DANTE.

"I have a room whereinto no one enters
Save I myself alone:
There sits a blessed memory on a throne,—
There my life centres."

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

From the diary of Dr. Grotius we make the following extracts. The date is a month after his patient's death.

"Only a month since she died. I have lived eternities in these thirty days. Ages have passed since I heard her speak or looked into her beautiful eyes. And years stretch before me. How shall I endure them? Life has nothing for me now, and even my profession is a burden. Why did I know and love her, if all was to end like this? At last I am come to believe there is no God. Surely, if there is an intelligent Ruler to the universe, he would care for his creatures; but he has not cared for me,—and who will say there is a God? The cruelty of her disease; her long years of imprisonment; her solitary life, without youth and freedom,—these might have been the work of a devil, but not of a God. And now, just when I had decided to take her from it all, and, in spite of the world's sneers, give her

home and happiness,—aye, prove that I had rather a thousand times be loved by Clothilde Van Guilder in an asylum than all the women in the world who have never been afflicted,—how can I bear the thought of this and live?

* * * * *

“I have lived over my life a thousand times since my darling left me. Every event since I first saw her has been experienced again and again. To see her die, and I could not help her; and the sunbeam, how it crept over her, as if it would bless her into life. Was she ever so beautiful as then? Was the sunbeam her soul that was taking leave of its old home? They took her away in a snowy casket, and I hid myself from sight, for I would not let the world see how I suffered. I have never been myself since that fatal day. I shall never be the same again. A week after her death they brought me the package, and when I read, I knew what I had promised. It was directed to me in her own hand-writing. I snatched it and took it to my room, and held it as a mother holds her dead child. Her fingers had held the pen that had written my name, and all her thoughts had been for me. This was many years ago, when she was at home and well. I am wearing her diamond ring that witnessed my promise. This, too, was sent me. I now know the cause of her madness, and since reading the letters, I, too, am losing my senses. I am following in her steps. Knowledge has lost its power to please me. Who can tell where it will end? I am now a slave. I, who have been unfettered all my life, am now bound hands

and feet. And to what? An idea—a whim, a ghost. I smile as I write the word, and know at last that old Berkeley was right when he said an idea is the most real thing in the world. Thus ends all my dreams of fame, my studies and aspirations. If occultism be true, everything is guided by higher powers. Have they led me on to this grand failure? Am I to see myself the laughing-stock of all wise men? Perhaps I am to discover this secret, whose mystery robbed Clothilde of her reason. If so, I shall not have lived in vain. Oh, Clothilde, come to me.

* * * * *

"I have lived forty years, as the world counts time. I have really lived but ten, for I have only loved my darling ten short years. Or, perhaps we knew and loved each other in some other world—before we came to earth? How like a dream it all seems. Our first meeting. The total surrender of her will to my own. The sweet smile that illumined her face when I took her by the hand and led her away. I now understand why I have never loved before. It needed just such a glorious creature to waken my heart from its sleep. I smile when I recall how many times I have said, 'I love freedom and shall never love a woman.' I would not smoke because I feared I should be a slave to a habit, and now I am the veriest slave in the world to a memory. When she was with me, a glance of my eye would control her slightest movement; now that she has gone, I have no will but hers. The tables are turned. My life is a ruin.

"I know she lives, and somewhere in the universe I

shall find her. Her thoughts come to me daily, and I feel the force of her will upon me as when I said, 'I promise.'

* * * * *

"Since I have read those letters I am haunted. Visions crowd upon me by day and night. I once longed for such things, and now that they come, I wish them away. I starved myself once, so that I might catch a glimpse of astral forms. They would not come then, but now they never leave me. Among the crowds of human faces that throng the world, I see other forms come and go. They beckon to me. They smile. Sometimes they say, 'You are one of us now, for she is here.' I come back to my room like one in a dream, and take down my books of long ago to beguile me, but they fail to hold my attention, and I lay them aside. How well I remember that time in Germany when I tried to demonstrate the truth of the existence of these things. It was a night in June. I had eaten no flesh for a twelvemonth. The simplest diet of cereals was all that I allowed myself, and my face had bleached like cream. It has never regained its old color, and to-day I bear with me the evidence of that night's experience. I had had a day of leisure, and devoted it all to Eliphaz Levi and his disciples. I sat for hours with palm pressed and feet crossed to acquire more perfect absorption, and at sunset I went out to the city of the dead that lay two miles from Heidelberg. There upon a new-made grave I waited. I never moved. My face was towards the east and my feet were upon the earth. I could feel the currents of

electric force pass from the heavens above to the earth beneath. They thrilled me with exquisite vibrations. I knew it was life, the life of the universe, on its mission to uphold and heal all living creatures. I knew that, if for a single instant these currents should cease, all nature would droop and die. While I meditated, I became a new being. I was only conscious of the delight of living. Mere existence was a blessed thing. I remember distinctly how I wondered if the rock upon which I sat felt this life-like force holding its atoms together. Suddenly I was startled by a peal of thunder. There had been no lightning, and as the reverberation passed me, I heard a voice saying,—*

“Wait; be patient. The soul must be tranquil be-

* “There were four continents on which lived the precursors of the Adamic race—four distinct races.”—“Secret Doctrine.”

We learn from the “*Timæus*” of Plato that the Egyptians believed the world to be subject to occasional conflagrations and deluges.

Plutarch speaks of this as one of the subjects of the hymns of Orpheus. Professor Winger admits, on botanical grounds, the former existence of an Atlantic continent during the Tertiary period. Mr. S. Gardiner writes, “We must believe that Asia and Africa, Madagascar and Africa, Europe and America have been united, and that seas one thousand fathoms have been bridged over.”

“For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.”—*Isaiah* lxx. 17.

“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—2 *Peter* iii. 13.

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.”—*Revelation* xxi. 1.—“Secret Doctrine,” by Blavatsky, vol. ii. p. 324.

fore it can see clearly ; but the time will come when you will see as plainly things now invisible as you hear the sound of thunder at this moment. Love, truth, and faith march slowly, but they never falter. Through sorrow comes divinest knowledge.'

"I turned my head to see who had spoken, and found myself alone. Far away among the tombs I saw a figure moving swiftly, but when I tried to rise my limbs refused to move, and I became unconscious. How long I remained thus I never knew. When I awoke, the first gray dawn was creeping over the earth, and over my head a nightingale was singing to its mate. Never heard I such a song before or since. Its music filled my soul with ecstasy as it broke upon the air in waves of pure harmony. The dew of the night rested upon my face in huge drops. I brushed them away and arose from my night's vigil. In the distance the beautiful Neckar flowed on towards the sea ; over my head towered the mountain that guarded the city of the sleepers. In my inner consciousness I felt that I was immortal, with power to control bird and beast, yea, to overcome all things ; and I walked to the city feeling that I was one with the gods, or—shall I say it?—a god myself. All this has passed away. The sorrow has fallen. I see as I then heard, but what matters anything if she I love is not here ? I am not the same man that sat upon that grave. My heart is dead, and I am going mad."

CHAPTER III.

HUGO DANA.

"True friendship between man and man is infinite and eternal."
—PLATO.

HUGO DANA and Aubrey Grotius had been friends from boyhood. Like all great friendships, it was founded on the law of opposites, with an undercurrent of harmony. Wherein one was deficient on a certain line, it was more than compensated for by the excess of this characteristic in the other. If Dr. Grotius inclined too much to the mysterious and occult, his friend refused to believe in anything supernatural, and held only to what was tangible and cognizable by his senses. He did not believe in an overruling Intelligence that set in motion and directed the laws of Nature. Law, evolution, and development he accepted, but no law-giver; and, while he had no patience with his friend's notions, they naturally agreed to respect each other's hobbies, and their friendship had strengthened with the passing years. If Grotius was what he called superstitious, he was at the same time the grandest man he had ever known; and, on the other hand, the Doctor was willing to let his friend think as he would as long as he was sincere and unchanging. There was one thing upon which they were agreed,—a love of scientific truth.

Hugo Dana was a hobbyist. He began to ride be-

fore he could read, and had never paused since. Like all such men he was eccentric, and his eccentricities were as well known as himself. He was devoted to the stone kingdom, and gave time and money unreservedly to the pursuit of his pet science. Fortunately, he had inherited from his Knickerbocker ancestors sufficient of this world's goods to enable him to travel where he would, live as he chose, and never ask himself, "Can I afford this?" He and Aubrey were boys at the same school; had kept up an interest in each other with the Atlantic between them, and since the latter's return from Germany had been inseparable, as men sometimes are. Dana's collection of minerals at this time was the finest in America owned by a private individual. Everything was estimated valuable by him as related to mineralogy, and beyond and outside of the realm of crystallization all was vanity. His days and nights were devoted to his favorite pursuit, and social life had for him no charms whatever. This had saved him many annoyances, and kept at a distance womankind, of whom he had a kind of fear. Once, during his college life, a pair of bright eyes had fascinated him, and had their owner been a woman of large, true nature, she might have held him and broken the tie between him and the senseless rocks; but proving instead a mere ordinary girl, with all the weakness of her class, she wearied him by her petty thoughts and exactions, and soon saw him leave her and go back to the old life with greater enthusiasm than ever. After this, if he chanced to meet a woman who interested him, he would go to his cabinet, unlock his

choicest collection, take in his hands beautiful gems, and, after gazing at their colors and forms for a time, would replace them, saying,—

“O ye sapphires, what eyes are as bright as you? and ye rubies are more beautiful than human lips that were ever kissed. Ye will not change. Ye will never grow old, or dull, or wrinkle, or ugly. Ye exact no attention; ye fetter me not. Women grow old; women demand time and service; women change; women die.”

In his dress he was as eccentric as in all else. Walking on the avenue, or travelling by boat or rail, he was everywhere a marked man. Just why, it was not easy to say, but after a closer observation, one could detect peculiarities in hat and coat that accounted for this. His hats never changed. They were somewhat military in shape, yet no soldier would have worn them, and the material of which they were composed was of the finest manufactured. Who was his hatter that could thus furnish, year after year, the same shape was a mystery; and some of his acquaintances said he owned a manufactory. If this was not true, he evidently owned the hatter.

His hat was nothing compared with his coat, which was really a collection of pockets with sleeves attached. There were pockets within, pockets without, pockets above, and pockets below. They were of all sizes and shapes, and so deftly placed that when not used they would not be observed. In these he carried all his implements and tools, his collars, cuffs, and handkerchiefs; and there were those who averred that these pockets took the place of valise and trunk.

Unlike his friend, he had a home and those who were devoted to his welfare. A more congenial trio than his mother, his sister, and himself it would have been impossible to find. His mother had guarded his collection from his boyhood; his sister was a fine musician and geologist, and the three when together were supremely happy. This was the only home that Dr. Grotius visited as a friend, and his presence was always a source of delight.

When the Doctor was overwhelmed by his misfortune, his first thought was of his friend, but, sending a messenger, he found he had gone to Nova Scotia for several weeks, and there was nothing to do but bear it as best he could.

When Dana returned, laden with rare specimens, he had barely removed his coat and exchanged greetings, when a messenger came for him to go to Rosedale at once. With a sigh of weariness, he arose from his chair, passed his fingers down the parting of his hair, which was one of his peculiar motions, and prepared to go with the boy.

"The Fates are against me, Adele, but something is the matter at the asylum. Don't wait for me;" he went out and closed the door behind him.

"If it was any one but Dr. Grotius," said his sister, laying down the note she had picked up and read, "I could not forgive him. But the Doctor has never sent for him before, and it must be something urgent. Read it."

She seated herself at her piano, and her mother took up the paper and read,—

"ROSEDALE, Thursday.

"DEAR DANA,—Come to me at once. If you are really my friend, prove it now, and for God's sake don't argue.

"Yours ever,

"A. GROTIUS."

"Surely that is strange. What can it mean?"

"It means some serious trouble, and that is all we can know till Hugo returns. We might guess all night, and never hit it. I hope it is something temporary. Of one thing we may be sure, it cannot be affliction, for the Doctor has no one in the world to grieve over. Sometimes I think such solitary characters are to be envied."

"Yes, love brings as much torment as joy; but who would not bear the one sooner than to lose the other?"

While they were talking thus, the carriage containing the messenger and Dana was moving rapidly through avenues and streets towards that part of the city where the Rosedale Asylum was situated. To say that he grew impatient, that the revolutions of the wheels were too slow, that the passers-by laughing and chatting annoyed him, would be but a faint expression of the state of mind of the occupant of the vehicle. At length, however, they turned into the grounds, and a moment later he sprang out at the Doctor's steps. He found his friend walking the floor, his left hand pressed to his head, his right behind his back, talking to himself. He entered, threw his coat on one chair, his hat on another, and his gloves on a third; then took his friend by the hand, and said,—

"What is it, Doc?"

The other stopped walking, and seizing both of his friend's hands, exclaimed,—

"I am going mad, Dana. Don't speak. I have not studied the brain for years, to be mistaken in the symptoms. I shall be as mad as a March hare, if I do not have help, and you are the only one I can trust. I cannot sleep. I cannot eat. I see visions by night and day. Look at my eyes. Watch the pupil and you will see I am right. Feel of my hand. It is cold as ice, yet I am burning with inward fever. You know my patient, Miss Van Guilder? You have heard me talk of Clothilde, and perhaps have guessed that I loved her. Hey! You did not? Well, I did, as I love my own soul. She is dead. Do you hear?—dead. I could not save her. Think of it! With all my skill and knowledge and fame, I had to stand by and see her die. It is all a sham. I shall never believe in medicine again. Yea, she is dead. I do not know where to find her. I have looked so long, and listened so hard for some sign of her, that I am almost wild. I went to the house for you, but you were gone. I came home, and have had no companions but demons. Do you hear?—demons. When she was dying I made her a promise. I did not know what it was, but I should have promised her anything. After she was buried they brought me a package. I opened and read it, and knew the cause of her insanity. There is something strange about it all. As soon as I read those letters, I began to feel strangely, as if in the power of some being or beings invisible. Since then I have not

slept. I must tell you, for you can help me. You must not sneer or argue. You must save me. You ask me what it is? Only a phantom, an idea. Oh, Dana, it is not what we see that we need fear; it is the unseen and intangible. I have always told you this."

"Sit down, Doc, and tell me all about it. Grief has overcome you and made you ill;" and his friend led him to a sofa and sat down by his side, watching him intently at the same time. Over and over he told him the story of her death, and at length put into his hand a packet, saying,—

"Read for yourself, and tell me what to do."

CHAPTER IV.

THE LETTERS.

"Who breathes must suffer, and who thinks must mourn;
And he alone is blessed who ne'er was born."

"Here are a few of the unpleasantest words that ever blotted paper."—SHAKESPEARE.

A PIECE of undressed leather, carefully tied with many strips of the same, covered the mystery that was placed in the hands of Hugo Dana. As he proceeded to remove this outer wrapping, an odor of musty dampness was perceptible. Within was a heavy brown paper, which, being removed, revealed, first, a small note, directed in a feminine hand to Dr. Grotius, and containing these words:

"NEW YORK, 1850.

"When you read this, my only true and devoted friend, I shall be—where? Who knows? Who can tell? One thing only do we know, that sooner or later all will follow, and then you will forgive me for what I am about to do. You have brought into my life whatever of sunshine it has known, and that I am well and at home is due to your care and skill. In return for all this, I must leave you a curse. The vow is upon me, and I dare not do otherwise. When this terrible secret was first intrusted to me, I was told that I must leave it to the best man or woman I knew. You are this, and the heritage must be yours. You will see, when you read the enclosed letters, why the curse of insanity has followed me, and, alas, it will, I fear, rest upon you also. I know your wisdom, and cannot but hope you may be the fortunate one to discover the treasure.

"I leave you, as some slight compensation, my entire fortune, which is large. Use it as you will, only neglect not the mission you owe my mother, whom, alas, I have never known. As soon as you receive these letters, you, in turn, must bequeath them to the best person you know, for so will the truth be discovered at last. There is a force in every word that clings to your mind, and will not be dismissed. God pity every one who must read them.

"They came to me at my father's death. I had not even known my father was alive until these dreadful papers were intrusted to me, and from that hour all the happiness of girlhood left me, and the rest you

know. You have given me courage to live, and brought my reason to its throne. How long I shall be well I know not, but something tells me the curse will follow me to the end. The blessing of the dead will rest upon you.

"CLOTHILDE VAN GUILDER."

When he had finished reading it, Hugo Dana refolded it and laid it upon the table. The next was a piece of coarse paper folded closely, and bearing these words, written in a cramped hand, as of one unused to writing:

"LONE LAKE, 1846.

"I, Tim Olecrafts, do solemnly swear that I saw the old man Gilroy Van Guilder sign this birch-bark the day before he died.

"TIM OLECRAFTS."

This, too, was refolded and laid by the other. He then took up a bundle of birch-bark, cut into uniform sizes and covered with fine writing. It had been prepared with great care. Each piece was numbered, and as Dana's eye ran over the contents, a growing interest was discernible on his face. He began to read:

"G. LAKE or LONE LAKE, 1846.

"I am going, for she has called me. I have waited long years for this hour to come, and now that it is at hand, I rejoice. Last night she came to me and said, 'Gilroy, write, for the time is at hand when you will come to me.' Then she smiled, and her smile made me young again. I shall never be old when I am with my

beloved again. Love is youth, and we shall love forever. I am feeble now, and I must write every day until the story of my life is finished. More than twenty years have passed since she left me, but she is more beautiful to-day than when I first called her wife. I am glad that I shall go to her,—glad to leave my lonely life, to be once more with her I love. When I am gone, my neighbor, Tim Olecrafts, will send this to my child, and she must guard the hidden treasure while she lives. She does not know of my existence. Will she think of me kindly when she reads, or will she say, 'I wish I could have seen him'? God knows.

"I was born in Amsterdam, Holland. In my veins runs the blood of sea-captains for many generations. My father also followed the sea, and when I was still a child, I remember being lifted into the air by his strong arms, and wishing I could play with the buttons of his uniform. As soon as I could walk he took me down to see his ship, and as I grew older, I learned to climb the rigging and haul the sails. My mother was a quiet woman, as are all of that nation. She was wise, and did not try to force me to obey. She never once said to me, 'Do this,' or 'Do not do that,' and the freedom that she gave me has been one of the happiest memories of my life. Like all the boys of Holland, I was sent regularly to school, and at sixteen could speak four languages easily. My mother hoped some day to see me a great teacher in Leyden, where I could be always near her, but I was too fond of roving to settle down to a quiet life; and beside, I was an enthusiast over minerals, and could never make a collection unless

I travelled. My father now made long voyages to India, and, against all the protestations and tears of my mother, I left home and went with him as a common sailor. Whether it was because he sympathized with my mother, and intended to punish me for my going, or whether he thought he must be more severe with me because I was his son, I never knew; I only knew that he was terribly stern with me, and when we stopped at a port in Africa, I deserted, and never saw him again. I had had enough of a sailor's life, but there was no way to escape except by trying it again. I found my way to Australia, and thence to America, where I landed in the year 1795, and was then eighteen years old. I had succeeded in collecting many rare stones, and my greatest anxiety at that time was to find a place of safety where I could deposit them.

"New York at this time was a small town. Canal Street was merely a crooked path up town, and everything was new and unsettled. I found my way up the Hudson River, being attracted by the singular formation just above the city, and then on and on, until I reached Schenectady, where I found the population made up of my own country-people. Indians still hung around the settlement, and I found it well to be on good terms with them. They taught me to trap, and frequently took me with them on long excursions to Canada. I never returned without having valuable additions to my cabinet. Years passed, and as we returned from one of these excursions, coming down to the St. Lawrence and striking through the mountainous regions of the north woods, we stopped to rest and

fish and hunt deer. A solitary mountain attracted us, and we climbed its side to make our camp at its summit. Here we found a beautiful lake, fed by mountain springs and full of trout. We built a shanty of bark, stowed away our load of furs, and started out to explore the region. It seems but as yesterday that a dozen red-skins and myself made a trail through that impenetrable forest. It was my first glimpse of what afterwards became the most precious spot on earth; where all my happy hours have been passed; where death robbed me of my wife, and where I have passed all the years of loneliness since. It is here that I have waited and longed for my summons to go, and here I shall leave my minerals, my worn-out body, and my home. The lake is as clear now as then; the sky as bright; the trout as plentiful. On this day of which I am speaking, we had gone but a few rods from our camp when a royal buck started up from the bushes, and I, being nearer than the rest, fired. We saw the blood spurt into the air, but he gave a bound and was lost from sight. The Indians madly followed the trail of blood, while I went more slowly, and finally became separated from them. As I was jumping over a fallen tree, I heard a strange noise, and, looking up, saw on the other side a black bear sitting on his haunches, watching my movements, and preparing to show fight. To load my gun was the work of an instant, but never had it seemed so long before. I fired and missed. The bear started, but not towards me; the noise had frightened him, and he ran in an opposite direction. I loaded again and followed. I saw him just before me, and

when I raised my gun to fire, he was nowhere to be seen. It was as if the earth had opened and swallowed him. I looked everywhere, but no bear,—nothing but a huge boulder rocking to and fro.* I knew what this meant, for I had heard of rocking-stones. I touched it, and saw an opening. It rocked as easily as a cradle, although it must have weighed tons. All was dark within. I dared not enter until I had lit a torch of pitch-pine, which was easily found. Then, with my gun in my right hand and the torch blazing above my head in my left, I entered the cave and found myself in a large room, high and very dark. Across the darkness I saw two stars. I knew what they were, and fired. I did not stay to see the result, but ran from the cave and rolled the rock back in its place. At that moment I resolved that I should some day own that cave, and bring to it my precious stones. I have told all these particulars because it is a part of the strange story I am going to tell. There was nothing to do

* In South America, at Buenos Ayres, there is one of these stones which weighs one hundred and forty tons, of snow-white color, and can be made to rock by a child's touch.

Rocking-stones bear various names. There are other remains called Logan, or Rocking-Stones. Cornwall is remarkable for them. Pliny tells of one near Harpasa which might be moved by a finger, but would not stir with a thrust of a whole body. They are surrounded by Druidical remains.

The Celts had their Clacha-brath, or Judgment Stone; the divining stone or stone of ordeal, and the oracle stone. Stonehenge, according to De Mirville and others, was built by the Druids for a temple, but was really the work of Atlanteana.

but to leave it as I had found it, and mark a tall tree near by as a land mark when I should come again.

"It so happened that a chief of the Onondagas owned the tract of country including the mountain, and, by my friendship, I hoped to make a trade for a piece of land that would give me my cave. I had brought from other countries blankets and beads, and for these and several hundred skins I at length bought the lake and a large tract of land. No king ever rejoiced over a new acquisition of territory as did I over my lake in the wild woods of the north. I dreamed of it continually. It was so secure, so inaccessible, so secret. North of it an hundred miles of dense forest stretched to the St. Lawrence; east, mountains and lakes that were almost impassable; to the south a few villages, and on the west a great lake as large as the ocean.

"It was the work of many months to carry my collection from Schenectady to this place, but I was young, and time was nothing in my eyes. As soon as it was safely stowed away in my cave, I prepared to go home and see my parents. I found the city much as I had left it, but my father had been dead many years and my mother was very feeble. I stayed with her as long as she lived, and then, with my property safely invested, and taking with me only enough money for my needs, I started for India. It was a long voyage in those days, and we stopped at several ports. When we reached Madagascar I determined to remain here for another vessel, and pursue my studies. When I sailed from there, it was on a British vessel, with a cargo and several passengers. I made no acquaintances, and avoided

all intercourse with my kind. I had lived so long among the Indians that I had become, like them, silent and unsocial. I scarcely looked at my fellow-passengers, and noticed only an old man who sat upon the deck, and was waited upon by his daughter. I could never tell why I observed them more than others, but once or twice I almost spoke to them as I passed by on my walk around the deck. One day, as we were nearing India, a terrific storm burst upon us with scarce a moment's warning. A single cloud, funnel-shaped, swooped down upon us like a gigantic bird, and turned our sunshine into night. A scene of horror that cannot be described followed. Our ship was drawn up, and the sea with it, into the air, and then dashed down again into the boiling waters. The darkness was so intense, it could be felt. Noises grim and terrible surrounded us, and the ocean hissed like serpents. It was frightful beyond description, and the seconds of time were ages, till we were thrown into the sea, where I found myself holding a woman in my arms. I could not see who it was, but I caught a piece of the wreck and, clinging to it, floated many hours. We were picked up by a passing vessel and saved. The woman was the daughter of the old man I had noticed. He was nowhere to be found. From that moment I knew I had met my fate, and Gabrielle Axtens was a part of my life. She had an older sister in Bombay, who had married an army officer, and she and her father were on their way thither, when separated by death. I had neither home nor friends, what mattered it where I stopped? I went with Gabrielle to her sister's house,

saw her safe with her friends, and found myself a place near by. I became a daily visitor at her home. She was a charming woman. I could never determine wherein her great fascination lay, but, as I look back at her character now, I think it was like the fire of the opal,—a something that came from her very soul. Added to this was a self-forgetfulness that was as rare as it was unstudied. She was wholly absorbed in the life of those around her. She had not a thought of self. I was completely in love, and gave myself up to the new sensation with all the intensity of my nature. I forgot minerals, everything, in the delight of being near such a character. Her serenity was perfect. Nothing troubled her, nothing moved her. She was never depressed, never exhilarated, but, like the sun, shone with a steady light. Such a nature was a revelation to me. Had she acquired it? Could I hope to attain it? There was a strength of repose in her that made me feel weak because of fitfulness.

“When I had known her three months I told her I loved her. We were sitting on the veranda waiting for the twilight to bring us coolness and a breeze. She was dressed as usual in white, with a flower at her throat. I can see her now as if she were before me. Her classic head, poised upon neck and shoulders that were like a cameo cut against a dark back-ground. She had an oval face; eyes soft and dark; hair drawn smoothly from her brow and coiled in a knot at the back of her head, and a mouth so delicate and sensitive that nothing but generations of refinement could have chiselled its arch so beautifully. I am an old man now,

but I have learned that nothing tells of good ancestry like a mouth. It is the organ of the soul, and just as it has overcome coarser things, will it lift the corners of the mouth. With Gabrielle, this had reached perfection. Whenever she spoke, her lips vibrated like a musical instrument. Never were the corners of her mouth seen to droop. Her skin was like cream, and her neck arched as a queen's when listening to her subjects. I had been talking to her of my love for minerals, telling her how it had absorbed my life until I met her, and now wondered that such lifeless, senseless things could so hold a man in bondage.

"I do not believe them to be lifeless," she replied. "Of conscious existence they may be deprived, but in that long march from first principles to perfect life they are on the way, and the life that holds their particles together is a part of the great life of the universe.* I can feel it throb against my forehead when I hold a bit of rock in my hand, and something of its history comes to my mind at such times. I love every individual of the rock kingdom; not so as to analyze, classify, and arrange, but as I love human beings—only not so personally. They tell me wonderful secrets, and I know what I dare not tell."

* "Between the molecules of things either solid or liquid exists a force that holds them in place—and this is life."

"Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Space, Mind, Understanding, and Egoism. This is the lower form of my nature, and higher than this, which is animate, O you of mighty arms by which the Universe is upheld. All this is woven upon me like pearls upon a thread."—"Bhagavadgita."

" Her eyes had kindled as she spoke, and in a moment I was telling her my love. I laid bare my entire heart; I held nothing back. Then I waited for her reply. She was not surprised, for she had known it long before. She laid her hand in mine and said, solemnly, 'Love is life; but all things have a shadow, and love's shadow is *self*. All the suffering of love comes from this. I have seen our future, very bright at first, but growing dark at length. I have known and loved you for many years. I have seen you in my dreams as plainly as I now see you in the flesh. I knew you were in the world and coming towards me, but when and where we would meet I could not imagine. When you came on board the ship, my heart gave a bound of recognition; but you never glanced at me, never saw me. I could wait. If through the years the guiding hand of Destiny had led you over oceans and worlds to my side, surely at the right time we should know each other, face to face and soul to soul. I watched you walk the deck to and fro, always thinking, but never seeing the one being in all the world that belonged to you. The storm did the work well. It cast me into your arms, and in that moment your inner eyes were opened. It is well to know and wait.'

" She had said all this as calmly as if it had naught to do with her life's happiness, and a moment later she leaned forward and said,—

" 'Look in my eyes, Gilroy, and tell me what you see there. Is there an uncanny light that shines there as it does not in others' eyes?'

"‘I see only the rarest, loveliest soul on earth,’ I replied, seizing her hand in mine and pressing it to my lips.

"‘But look again. I am not like others. There is a power there that you know not.’

"‘Whatever it may be, I am only sure that it is something good and beautiful. Of course you are unlike others. I have seen that from the first. There is no one in all the world like you, my darling.’

"‘Hush, Gilroy. You must not say these things. You must listen to what I am about to tell you, for upon it hangs the shadow that threatens our future. I have a gift of seeing things invisible to others. It pierces all places, distances, and times. I cannot explain it, nor is it under my control. There are visions to my sight, sounds to my ears, yet the physical senses do not respond to them. Sometimes, when seeing beautiful visions of some far-away place, I would desire to remain there, and almost as soon as I felt the longing I seemed to glide from my old moorings in the body and leave it behind. Later I would come to myself, with friends standing near anxiously waiting for me to revive. “She has fainted,” they said. Now, if at some future time the love you pledge me to-night should grow cool, I should know it at once; and with my sensitive nature I know what the result would be. Better would it be to part now than ever to let our love grow cold or change.’

"‘If that is all you would say, my angel, there is nothing to fear. I have not been starved for love all my life to throw it away when it is mine. If you

never leave me until my love changes, we shall never be parted; you will be with me forever——'

"'I shall be with you forever, in any case,' she said, interrupting me. 'I have been with you when you did not see me or know me, and I shall certainly never leave you again. I am not afraid of that; but I know what grief would come to you if I left my body and went out into the unseen.'

"'But why should you have such a strange gift when others have not?' I asked.

"'As well ask the crow that is white what makes her to differ from her kind. It is as much a part of me as my eyes or the color of my hair. I sometimes fancy that the soul of my great-grandmother is living in me, for she was a wonderful woman in this way. She came from the mountains of India, where the old Parsees dwelt, and could tell everything that would happen before it came to pass. My great-grandfather from England fell in love with her and took her to his home, where she drooped and died in a year, leaving a babe but a few hours old. Every one feared her as a witch, and she died with a broken heart. What matters it how it came?'

"She looked long and earnestly into my eyes as she spoke, and I took both of her hands in mine and said,—

"'I swear by all that is holy never to change, my beloved. I shall love but you forever and ever.'

"From that time until the day of our marriage the subject was never again spoken of. Happiness bathed us as the sunlight the world around. Immediately after the wedding we sailed for America. I had told

her of my treasures and my cave, and she was as anxious as I to see the new world.

"There was time to plan and arrange for our future during all the months of our voyage, and as soon as we landed we proceeded to Schenectady at once. We had no world but that bounded by our two lives, and to have a home in that wild forest was as sweet a dream as lovers ever had. We decided to take men and materials with us from the nearest town, and hasten the work while the summer gave us long days.

"The town of Utica was the nearest point of civilization before we entered the forest. We took men, wagons, nails, necessities, and a woman to cook for us. Utica, then, was only a village of fifteen hundred inhabitants. There was no Erie Canal, no railroad. Conveyances were primitive and uncomfortable, but what did we care? A rough road led from Utica due north an hundred miles, and thence a mere trail was our only guide for many miles, and when this was lost, there was nothing but our guide, a compass, and hard work, for the road must be made rod by rod.

"Gabrielle was a woman of great patience. She cared little for time or place, all were alike in her eyes. The novelty of the life charmed her. Our nearest neighbor was a fisherman on Piseco Lake, twenty miles away. As soon as we reached our destination the men began to work. Trees were cut down for a hut, where we could be safe until the house was built, for wild animals ranged the forest in multitudes. In front of this hut a huge fire was kept blazing all night and every night. Our house was to be built against the hill,

where the cave was carefully secreted by the rolling rock, now covered by matted vines. I dared not go near it lest the men might touch it, so I chose a place farther off, but still near enough to be against it, and here the foundations were laid. The hill was dug away for a short distance, so that the back of the house rested against it. The lower story was entered at the front, the second from the hill at the back. The roof was extended in such a way as to form a sort of piazza across the entire front. I must be very particular about these descriptions, for those that will seek it in the future must know it well. When the house was done and the men had gone back to Utica, Gabrielle and I prepared to go into our cave. We dared not risk discovery, and so must wait until the woman had locked herself in her hut for the night. Then we started around the hill, with pitch-pine torches, and holding each other by the hand. It was necessary to pull away the vines from the rock, and then a slight push rolled it back, and we stepped into the first room of the cave. My knowledge of what lay beyond was little more than guess-work, but together we would explore its recesses. I pointed out the corner where I had despatched the bear, and showed some of the bones that remained. We went around the room, peering into every corner. It was large, high, and the sides were of rock. We came to an opening, through which we could pass on our hands and knees. This led into a still higher room, not quite as large, but much more magnificent. Stalactites and stalagmites of dazzling whiteness decorated its walls and ceilings, and met in

the centre in the form of an altar. Gabrielle at once said,—

“‘This will be our holy place, and when I leave my body you shall bring it and lay it upon this snowy bier. You, too, will some day be brought here, and amid nature’s purest secrets our outer selves will be stored.’

“‘May that day be long coming,’ I replied, pressing tenderly the little hand resting in mine.

“‘All things move forward, and you and I cannot stand still, Gilroy. See, here is another opening.’

“It was so, and through it we passed to a smaller room beyond. It could be entirely shut off from the others, or its entrance concealed, by moving against it a large stalagmite, which, being put on rollers, would stand guard over anything placed within. I resolved to move all my treasures to this room in the near future, and Gabrielle and I left the cave as we had found it, until a connection was made between it and the house. This was the next thing to be done, and I sent to Montreal for a man to come, with Indian guides, as far as the group of islands at the head of the St. Lawrence. Here I met him, and took him by a circuitous route to my home. He was a master-workman, and blasted and bored an underground passage connected by secret stairs with our sitting-room. It was finished at length, and I sent him across to Piseco, and thence by the Big Carry and Long Lake to Blue Mountain and the eastern chain until they reached Champlain. There he was left, and I knew my secret was safe. From that time our life was a beautiful romance. Throughout the days we busied ourselves in and around our

home ; and at night we would bar our doors and go to the cave and arrange our treasures. Never miser feasted his eyes on hidden gold as I did on those beautiful minerals, from which I had been separated so long.

"My wife's room was on the second floor, opening on a kind of balcony, while mine was on the rear, opening on the hill. Gabrielle fitted her room up with exquisite taste. Hangings of rich goods from India covered the walls ; shells from the sea, rocks from the mines, and beautiful works of art from different parts of the East adorned her room. A work-table by the window, a book-case by the walls, pictures everywhere, showed the refined nature of the occupant. Her books were not such as women usually read. Some of them I could not understand, and a few volumes in a strange language she could not read herself. She said they had come from her great-grandmother, and she kept them for her sake.

"In this paradise we lived and loved and were happy. Every winter we would go to the South, and return again in the spring. Years passed. Villages grew into towns, public travel increased, and people began to find their way to the great forest for hunting and fishing. Then they found me, and first one and then another brought me valuables to keep for them, and almost before I was aware, my cave was being used as a store-house for men I knew nothing of. My wife objected from the first. 'These men are smugglers,' she said, 'and nothing but evil will come from them. For my sake, as well as your own, have nothing to do with them.' Had I yielded to her entreaties, I should never

have been the miserable man I have become. But they knew my weakness, and bribed me by rare gems, and I could not refuse. I compromised with my conscience by keeping them from the house, but my wife knew all I thought and did, and, though she ceased to argue and chide, she began to grow moody and silent. Her health began to fail, and from this time she was never the same as before. Fool that I was, to be so blinded by a whim! What would I give could I live over again the years since then? Misery and remorse have been my sole companions, and death will be my only release.

"Some strangers are coming to-morrow, and one is from the far East. I saw him in my dreams last night," she said, one morning in the early fall, as we rowed on the lake and fished. Now this lake had been known by the Indians as Lone Lake, but we had named it G Lake. Her name was Gabrielle and mine Gilroy; what better name could we give it than the letter G? In the cool of the summer days we passed much of our time on the water, and when autumn winds began to blow, we sat by the shore in the sunlight. Could the waters of that lake tell all they had heard, what beautiful things would they say to the world.

"On this particular day my wife had been more than usually quiet; her left hand floated in the water as I rowed, and her eyes had a far-away look that I had never seen in them before.

"What makes you so sure he is from the East?" I asked.

"Because he was dressed like the children of the East."

"And why does he come?"

"To bring me a message. Oh, Gilroy, the prophecy I uttered in India is soon to be fulfilled. I do not blame you. It was Fate."

"I rowed to the shore, and putting my arms around her, vowed never to receive another gift from those men,—vowed to return to the rightful owners all that belonged to them; but she shook her head sadly and replied, 'Too late; too late. You say this because you would not grieve me, but in your heart I have a rival, for you long for new minerals as you did before you knew me.'

"As she had said, the strangers came. Two brought bags to leave in my care; the third was of sallow complexion, and wore the loose robes and turban of India. He spoke our language as perfectly as ourselves, and his manners were those of an European. His age we could not guess. He was calm, silent, and remained after the others had gone several days. He went in and out of the forest as fearlessly as if he had lived there all his life, yet no stranger before could venture from the beaten tracks without being lost, so dense was the growth of underbrush. He was apparently unarmed, yet always returned uninjured. When I asked him if he did not fear losing his way, he merely replied,—

"I could not lose my way anywhere."

"But there are wild animals,' I suggested; 'and they are man's natural foes.'

"I have no foes,' was his reply. A day or two after this his words were proved true when a wild-cat

crossed our path and crouched for a spring. As quick as thought I aimed, and was about to pull the trigger, when he said,—

“‘Not so,’ and fixing upon the ferocious animal his soft eyes, the fire left its gaze and it crept into the woods.

“‘Tell me how you did that,’ I exclaimed, in astonishment, for wild-cats were the only animals of which I stood in deadly fear.

“‘Not by my glance, as you supposed, but by the thought back of the glance. If a man can master his own nature, he can surely master the inferior creatures. The mind is all-powerful and controls all things, and the stronger always governs the weaker.’

“‘I was greatly interested in this man, and watched him with a peculiar fascination. The last day of his stay he passed the entire day in the woods gathering plants and roots. Towards night he came home, and calling me to him, he said,—

“‘Do you know why I am here?’ I replied that I could never guess, but that he was very welcome.

“‘I have a sacred mission from the far East that has brought me over oceans and across continents. It concerns your wife, for she is endowed by nature with the peculiar gifts that are necessary. It is a secret for all mankind, and the time draws near, but is not yet. To her it is intrusted to guard and protect this wisdom of the ages. Unseen intelligences have ordered it thus, and their care will give her long life and many days if the conditions are fulfilled. Do you ask why one must be chosen in this new world instead of the old? It is

because the truth to be guarded was started here, and must be given to the world from the same place. I have prepared from the plants of the woods an elixir of life. It is in this bottle. When the time comes that she needs it give her a drop at a time. She will grow old and have no sickness, and her life will be blessed. It is for her, and her alone. It will be powerless to affect another; yea, it would bring evil rather than good. Be patient and wait. The cycle is passing that was born in error, and truth is coming with the new age.* It may be that we shall live to see the day-star arise, when all faces will be turned to its light. When the moon goes down to-night, stand by the window and witness for the *Truth*.'

"He said no more and left the room. It was late when the moon set that night, but at the appointed hour I took my place by the window, with Gabrielle by my side. We heard him step from the upper door into the darkness. We could see him moving, for he was dressed all in white. He went round and round

* "The sixth root race shall have appeared on the stage of our round. When shall this be? Who knows save the great Master of Wisdom. All we know is, that it will silently come into existence; so silently, indeed, that for long millenniums shall its pioneers—the peculiar children who shall grow into peculiar men and women—be regarded as abnormal oddities, physically and mentally. Then as they increase they will awake one day to find themselves in the majority. It is the present men who will be regarded as exceptional mongrels and gradually die out as the Aztecs have died out. The fifth will overlap the sixth race for many hundreds of millenniums."—"Secret Doctrine," vol. ii. p. 445.

very slowly, with head bowed low as if looking for something on the ground. At length he paused and seated himself, with knees drawn up, near the centre of the space. He remained motionless for several minutes. At last he rose, began again to go round and round, but this time he was stooping and touching the ground with his finger. A blue flame followed his touch and formed a complete circle, while he stood in the centre. Again he stooped and touched the ground. A blue flame leaped high in the air from the centre, also. Into this he looked long and earnestly, and when it had reached a certain height he flung with his left hand something into the blaze. It hissed and snapped, and the blaze burned red, and at length died away. The other flame also died, and we saw only a prostrate white figure lying upon the ground. It was long after that when we heard him enter the room above and retire.

"The next morning I could not believe my memory. It was all so strange and mysterious that it seemed like a dream. To convince myself that I had not been the victim of a nightmare, I arose at dawn and went out upon the hill. A scorched circle upon the grass told me that my memory had not deceived me.

"That morning our strange guest left us. At parting, he placed a box and a roll in my wife's hands with these words, which he uttered in a low, thrilling voice :

"Where the flame burned blue,
Where the flame burned red,
There shall come a tree ;
It shall guard the dead.

In the cave beneath lay this sacred roll,
And guard it well, with your very soul;
The box must be placed in a secret place,
For both hold the truth of the coming race.
I go my way to the rising sun,
But Sul-Mal will know that the right is done.
When he comes again, he will blessing bring,
And the world shall know that the
Truth is King.'

"He turned towards the forest, and as my wife's hands touched the box she fell as if dead. Terrified, I clasped her in my arms, and turned to look for the stranger. He was nowhere in sight, and there was no motion of twig or leaf to show where he had gone. Moments passed and my darling was still unconscious. I was frantic with grief. I called her by name. I rubbed her hands, and kissed her lips and cheeks and brow. At length her eyelids opened, not as if she were waking from a sound sleep, but radiant with new life.

"How lovely it was, Gilroy! I am so glad that I am alive. It is a beautiful thing to live, and there are wonderful things to see and know. I have been on a long journey, Gilroy. I have travelled fast and far. Oh, it was grand. I went to the mountains of India, where the Guebers worship and the fire purifies and enlightens. On the shores of a great sea I saw the worshippers assembled,* where flames burned from the

* "Bakoo, on the shores of the Caspian Sea, where for ages the flames have issued from the rocks without intermission."

rocks, as the stranger made them burn last night. And he was there also, he that called himself Sul-Mal, but he was not a worshipper; he was a prophet. They all bowed before him, and his words were precious. I could understand what he said, though I knew not the language. It was as if my soul knew what was in his mind before he uttered it. He told them of this far-off country, and the knowledge that was coming to the world here: that they, too, had a share in the glory, for to one of their descendants was committed the care of the secret; that the wisdom of the sun, moon, and stars, so long held sacred by them, would join with the occult wisdom of India, and once more be recognized as a power among men. Then he took me by the hand and led me around the circle, and they dipped their fingers in the fire and touched me on the head. "She is immortal and cannot die," they said. Then Sul-Mal led me away, and took me to the ancient groves where the Druids worshipped. The stones were not cast down, but formed a great circle, and a thousand people worshipped around a huge altar. I could see the blood flowing from this stone; I could see flames kindling in the midst of the blood, and signs of the sun, moon, and stars were everywhere. All around this temple there were beautiful groves and flowers of sweet odors, and white-robed priests sitting beneath the shadows of the oak, instructing young men in the truths of their religion. They told them they must live pure lives, must watch the stars, must remember ever that they were immortal, and, though blood must atone for sin, to eat flesh, or allow blood to enter the system, was not

well.* They did not see us, and as my guide pointed to the priest, he said, "The fire-worshippers of Persia and the Guebres of India are one and the same, and their blood runs in your veins. From these ancient Druids come gifts, also. What you are is the result of a union of strange natures; but it was all to be, and from you and yours will come honor and blessing." Again we crossed the ocean and I came to America, but not here. I was on a high mountain, looking down into a valley of sunlight and flowers. It was full of little people, no larger than babies, swinging from the trees by their long arms; running to and fro in the grass, and then suddenly darting into a cave in the side of the mountain. A moment later, and I saw why they fled, for coming from the east I saw great savages, with pointed heads, brandishing clubs and making horrid noises.

* Caesar says of these remarkable people, "They inculcate that souls do not perish, but after death pass into other bodies. They discuss, moreover, many points concerning the heavenly bodies and their motions, and the extent of the universe and the world, the nature of things, and the influence of the immortal gods. They consider the favor of the gods cannot be conciliated unless the life of one man be offered up for another. The life of criminals is more acceptable than the innocent.

"The chief deity is Mercury. They consider him the inventor of all arts, guide of all journeys, and having the greatest influence in the pursuit of wealth."

"The sun and moon regulated their festivals and formed part of their outward worship."—"Old England."

"Under the church of Notre Dame, at Paris, were found in the last century two bass-reliefs of Celtic deities—the one corresponding to the Roman Mars."

Then I awoke to find myself in your arms, Gilroy; yet I know that I have not been dreaming. I long to be out of my body and go where I please, as I did then.'

"I kissed her into silence, and begged her never to say those words again, and after a little time we went into the house to put away the roll and the box. The former we placed in the first cave, the latter we secreted in a hidden closet of our room.

"'I have one more thing to tell you, Gilroy,' and she looked into my face tenderly as she spoke. 'Sul-Mal told me that the inner harmony of my life had been jarred, and only the elixir of life would restore it; that a year from to-day a child would be born to us, and the charge of the secret must pass to her. She must be kept from the world from the time she is a year old.'

"It is natural to hope against odds. I believed that my love would hold her to me, and all would be well. The child was born and the mother died. I begged of her to take the drops from the vial, but she would not. To all my entreaties she would only say,—

"'I cannot, Gilroy. If you love me, do not ask me. My eyes have seen the Beyond, and all life is broader and freer and brighter there. Here the material veils, and hinders, and clogs, but there—I shall be like a bird set free. Do not fear that I shall be separated from you because I am unseen. I shall always know your thoughts as I do now. I shall always guard the home and treasures until the time of discovery comes. As we have met here so we shall meet there,—face to face and soul to soul. Fear not, but be brave and live as children of the forest, close to nature's heart. Fare-

well, Gilroy. Our love has been very precious and will be eternal. I must rest.'

"She never awoke, and I was left with a helpless infant, alone. I obeyed minutely every direction she had given me for herself and child. With my own hands I prepared the body for its last resting-place. I dressed it in her wedding-garments that she had carefully kept all these years. Could it have been for this? After all was done, I took the precious burden in my arms and carried it into the cave and laid it upon the altar. I had long ago enlarged the passage between the rooms, and when I laid my idol upon the snowy bier and turned to go away, I prayed to die as I had never prayed before. That spot has been a shrine to me from that hour. The body dried but did not decay. A few weeks later I locked my doors, and with my babe in my arms started for the nearest settlement, thirty miles away. From that point, by easy stages, I made my way to New York, where an old friend lived. My wife had planned it all, for our child must be reared in a convent or some place of seclusion until she was eighteen. I found New York a larger city than I had left. The streets were full of people, and a man with a young babe in his arms was a strange sight. Every one stared at me, and I was glad to find the house of my friend and escape the eyes. It was a large house, for Simeon Mascott was a prosperous banker. I rang the bell and asked the servant to see her master.

"'He is busy, sir; you must come again,' she replied. At that moment he crossed the hall, and I rushed past the girl and exclaimed,—

“‘Simeon!’

“He did not know either my face or voice until I said again,—

“‘Simeon, don't you know an old friend?’

“Then he knew me. He shook my hand over and over as if he would never let go, then he looked at the child in my arms. I told him what I wanted, and asked him to help me find the right place for my child. He was a grand man. Money and fashion and honor and fame could not spoil him. He cried with me as I told him my story, and said he would look after my little one as if it were his own. I left it in his care with a bank account at his command. I never saw him again, nor my child, although he wrote me of her welfare every year. She was placed in a convent when very young, and knew nothing of her history nor the world. When I am gone, and she reads my history, she will know all. When I went back to my home by the lake, I walked the entire distance. I knew how long life would be, and this would take some of the time. The first evening at home, I went into my wife's room and seated myself in her chair. I was starving for a glimpse of her sweet face. It grew dark. I cried to her to come to me. I listened and waited. I did not believe in supernatural appearances, but I felt that she was near me, and I longed to see her. Presently, from out the darkness of the room, a figure grew and came towards me. My eyes were open, and I was awake. She laid her hand on my head, and I *felt* rather than heard, ‘Well done. Be patient. I love you still.’ From that time until last night she has come to me

daily. The hours have been long waiting for her couch to thrill me, and hear with my inner consciousness the beautiful things she would tell me.

"A short time after her death I noticed a strange plant growing from the hill where the flame had burned so brightly. As it burst into leafage, it was unlike any in the forest, and I remembered the words of the stranger. It is now a tree with broad, spreading branches. Gabrielle is not dead. I shall not die. There is no death—but I shall go——"

Here the writing stopped. The long labor had ended suddenly, and the waiting had ceased.

Dana read it to the end and laid the last piece of bark with the others. The fact that he had found his prototype interested him, in spite of the nonsense and superstition that filled the pages.

"And what do you think, Hugo?" asked the Doctor, stopping his continual promenade in front of him.

"That it is a strange story, surely, of what may have been some fact, with a vast amount of rubbish that could by no possibility be true. It interests me strangely, for here was a man with tastes like my own, but his mind had been shattered by long solitude and grief, until he wrote as real what existed in his imagination only. Such men always are extremists. A man who could leave home and parents for a scientific pursuit, who could fall in love as did he, when he met affliction and disappointment, would be just the one to lose his mind in solitude. You, who have studied brains all your life, know this to be true. It is a strange, sad story, to say the least."

"But what if I tell you that since reading that paper, or account, if you choose, I have heard strange noises. I have seen ghostly faces. I am never alone. Sometimes I could fancy I had seen Clothilde herself."

"You do well to call it fancy, for it is just that and nothing more. You have become psychologized by your association with your patient until the thought of her mind is impressed on yours. I tell you half the world is thus dominated in one form or another."

The Doctor smiled, as he replied. "I knew what you would say when I sent for you. We never agree on these subjects. When you were born, the signs were all in league to make you a materialist, and mine the reverse. What you call real is to me delusion and a dream. To me there is nothing real but what will endure. That which causes is my reality,—its result yours. I know that mind is the controlling force of the universe, but you will never believe it until you have a scientific proof. I knew I should meet your ridicule; but I also knew I could trust your friendship. I must be saved, and you are the only one who can do it, Dana. This idea must be removed, or I am ruined. Do you hear?—ruined."

"You must travel. I will go with you, and we'll come back laughing over the whole thing."

"I must try to solve the mystery that has wrecked so many lives. I must go in pursuit of that house, of Gabrielle's mother, who guards it, and then perhaps I shall be myself again. I have studied occultism enough to believe there are astral shades. I knew a learned professor in Germany who asserted he had once seen

the spirit leave the body, and if this is true, why should we doubt that such things can be seen?"

"It is all humbug, Doc. You know better. The thing is absurd. How any one with your clear, logical mind can believe such stuff is incredible to me. Astrals, indeed! I should call them Jack-as-strals. It's all one with that fourth dimension business. What can you have more than length, breadth, and thickness; yet you hang to it as if it were gospel. Of course you'll go crazy, if you allow such notions to fill your mind. What you need is change: change and travel. Now, I'm just home from a long jaunt to Nova Scotia; came near being wrecked, and have not told the folks a word; but if you'll go with me, I'll start to-morrow."

"I knew you would do it, Dana. Nothing else will save me. We'll go to the north woods and find the truth of the thing. But I must put things in shape to leave, for we may be gone a long time."

"Well, well, anywhere. I'll even hunt ghosts if it will relieve your mind. You may have the ghost and I'll take the minerals."

"Agreed. It's a bargain."

They talked for hours, and when they separated, Dr. Grotius was more like himself.

CHAPTER V.

THE MOON AND EARTH.

"Time will bring to light whatsoever is hidden; it will cover up and conceal what is now shining in splendor."—HORACE.

"In nature's infinite book of secrecy a little I can read."—SHAKESPEARE.

It was June when they started, Dr. Grotius and his friend, on what the latter was pleased to call their ghost-hunt. The Doctor was almost himself again. He had given up his position and patients for an indefinite time, and already felt the relief from care.

Then, as now, a journey up the Hudson was a delight; a full moon, the balmy air of the season, and a cloudless night all combined to make the evening perfect. They left New York at six o'clock, and found seats on the deck of the *Mary Powell*, where, with the crowd of travellers on board, they could watch the spires of the city move past them and melt into the dim distance. The palisades, then as now, stood guard along the shore, and as twilight settled upon the world, and the moon rose from the hill-tops, a silence fell upon the groups, and the Doctor and his friend moved to a more retired niche, where they could talk more freely of their plans and proposed journey. To them the beauty of the night, of heavens above and earth around, were of little moment. Their minds were in-

tent upon one subject only. They could hear the murmur of voices on every side; of the bell calling to supper; of the whistle signalling to some vessel in the distance; but these sounds did not touch them as they sat on the guards with outspread sheet of paper before them, intent upon what seemed a chart or map. The same types of humanity were on board then that we find to-day on the *St. John*. The young people off for a vacation; the bridal party on their wedding journey; the clergyman in pursuit of rest and the salesman of business. Teachers, scholars, professional men, and politicians, with a large sprinkling of women, children, and babies, made up the passengers of the *Mary Powell* on that memorable night.

"I hope you have brought your hammers and chisels, Dana," said the Doctor, as he refolded the paper and laid it in his hand-bag.

"Trust me for that. Where I go, my tools go also. Like the vision of the prophet, 'Whither the wheels went, the eyes also went.' The moon is fine, to-night. I don't believe you have even seen it, Doc."

"That's where you are mistaken, then. I saw it when it first touched those tree-tops there, but I have not the interest in that body that I once had. I have theories of my own about it."

"Something new?"

"Perhaps not new, as there is nothing new under the sun; but I should call it an old theory revived. You know we were taught to believe that in the cooling of the earth, as she spun round in space, she threw off a morsel of herself, and set it revolving around her, and

this became a satellite. Then, after a while, this lesser earth became peopled, or, at least, it had mountains and seas, but somehow they died; the water-beds dried up, and the whole thing is dead. What senseless stuff! My belief is this. The moon, instead of being a child of earth, is its mother.* The fact of size has nothing whatever to do with it, but that it has a powerful influence on our world, no one doubts. It affects our tides as the rays of the sun cannot; it affects the mentality of earth's children as no other light can do; and even in the vegetable world there are plants that respond to its rays, and refuse to grow by any other light. Can we imagine for a moment that our world has any such influence upon the moon? Then in point of age it is absurd. The moon is dead. Her forests and mountains are no longer teeming with life, while our earth is in its childhood, its spring-time."

"The theory sounds all right, but where's the proof?"

"Where's the proof of the other theory? The one is as easily proved as the other, and common sense is on the side of my ideas."

"But will the world ever come to your way of thinking?"

"It has come around to Galileo's notions, why not to

* "The moon, it is said, has cooled six times as rapidly as the earth. The moon, if the earth is fourteen million years old since its incrustation, is only eleven million years old since that time."
—Professor Winchell, "World-life."

The Hebrews regulated all times by the moon. St. Paul enjoins, "Let no man judge you for your observance of the seventh day and the day of the new moon."

mine? If, from believing the sun moved round the earth, people now realize that the opposite is the truth, why may they not change their minds on a lesser point? It matters not what men believe. Facts are facts, and must be recognized soon or late. They are all worlds in that vast deep," and the speaker waved his hand towards the starry host, "and some day you and I will traverse those multitudinous paths far more rapidly than we are now sailing on this beautiful stream, far more safely, more intelligently and agreeably. If we then recall our surmises of this life, we shall smile to see how far they fell short of reality; how little our wise men knew."

"And you really believe this? You expect to find me there?"

"Why not? Have I not found you here? We have probably been together many times before, so why should we not again? Do you remember the lines,—

"I have lived before. Where? That I cannot tell,
Nor how, nor when. Of those forgotten years
Only vague echoes from the darkness swell,
Bringing familiar murmurs to my ears.

"This is my heritage of sorrow now,
That veiled and unknown form which once I wore
I cannot fathom when, nor where, nor how,
I only know that I have lived before."

For a moment all was still. Then his friend replied,—

"This world is all I know anything about, all I think about. Speculations are not a part of my make-

up. I am interested in the now and here. If I for a single moment could believe in pre-existence, I should be forced to believe in immortality. The one implies the other. Instead, I believe that our life began when we were born, and will end when we die. Immortality to me means the perpetuation of what is past. The thoughts of former ages are living in this; I am the enduring part of my ancestors, and our descendants will carry this immortality forward."

"Which is no immortality at all. If individual consciousness is not a part of it, how does it differ practically from annihilation? The soul demands more than this."

"Demands! But will it find it?"

"Does the bird's wing find the air? Yes; a thousand times, yes; and just as surely, whether you believe it or not. If I did not believe this with my whole heart, I should not be sitting on this deck to-night. I should long ago have launched my little spark of life out upon the greater sea and become a part of its resistless flow,—a part of the universal life. But to believe and *feel* and *know* that this is but an episode,—an interruption of the soul's real life; the burying in a body for a time (as we put our plants in the earth); that, by the conflict with material forces, it may grow stronger and wiser,—this gives us courage to endure and patience to wait; this is what leads to the reaping of what we have sown."

"You are a perfect wonder to me, Doc. I cannot account for the superstitious part of your nature, except by heredity. Perhaps in Cotton Mather's time you

had an ancestor so intense on religious lines that the impress of his or her character has struck through all intervening generations and left its stamp on you; and my lack in this direction is, no doubt, due to the same cause. I cannot see what you see, and never shall."

"I believe you will. Every soul must attain knowledge of the Truth. You will not be an exception. We are on the same road, and must pass through the same experiences to attain perfection. *When*, matters not. Time only exists where suns rise and set. The cycle of the soul is on and on. Where the lowest intelligence now is, we, too, have been, and where we have attained, they, too, will come; and still the goal stretches far beyond. To look upon one as inferior to another, is absurd. As well scorn the babe of a household because it does not know as its elder brother knows, as to feel a superiority to any of the human family. We are all at school, and the training pursues us, whether we will or not. You think you are choosing your own way, but in the end you will find your choosings were a part of the great plan, and all unconsciously you were learning the lessons assigned. We cannot run away from school, for the Teacher is everywhere. Whether jostled in the world's thoroughfares or sitting alone in a great forest, you are still at school. If at this moment the boiler of the *Mary Powell* should burst, and all on board be lost, would it end all? Could we be annihilated, it might; but this immortal soul within us could not be destroyed, and must still be under the Creator's discipline and care. Look away to the heavens and count its stars; add to

these the myriads of other worlds unseen by naked eye, but revealed by telescope, and remember my words, *We have something to do with each or all*,—some lesson to be learned in those distant worlds. If we fail to learn *earth's* lesson, we shall be sent back, for the child of Law must abide by law."

"That would be retrogression. I thought you believed in evolution."

"Always and everywhere. It is the one abiding law. All is progress; but the progress is for the soul. We must not confound body and soul, kernel and shell. When men talk of evolution, they speak of mere bodily development. Their senses deceive them, and they only realize what they can touch or see. They mistake the evolution of clothing for that of the man. To be poor when one has been rich, to be obscure where one has been famous, or ignorant where one has been learned, are the greatest evils to be conceived of, they think. If, however, through these changes come new vision to the soul, and increase of strength, and out-reach of desire and patience to endure, in other words, a manifestation of the Christ or divine, could you call it retrogression? To judge rightly, place yourself at the centre of things."

There was no reply. The Doctor glanced around and found the deck deserted, and rising from his chair proposed that they, too, retire. He had spoken from the innermost, and his soul was stirred. He could not sleep, and long after his friend had forgotten moon, stars, or earth, he was revolving the mysteries of life, of his own whence and whither.

CHAPTER VI.

IN NATURE'S ARMS.

"Life's burdens fall, its discords cease;
I lapse into the glad release
Of nature's own exceeding peace.

"So falls the weary years away;
A child again, my head I lay
Upon the lap of this sweet day."

WHITTIER.

THE sun was shining brightly when the passengers of the *Mary Powell* stepped ashore at Albany the following morning. Although the Doctor had slept but a few hours, he seemed more refreshed than his friend. In the silence and meditation of the night, Dr. Grotius had made a great stride towards health, and the two left the boat with something of the enthusiasm of boys.

Other passengers were bound for the Adirondacks, equipped with camping out-fit and all the paraphernalia of hunting and fishing, but they went north and entered the woods by Scroon, while these took train for Utica, and thence north to the little village of Prospect. From this point they must take a private conveyance. It was noon when they reached the terminus of railroad travel, and taking seats in a rickety old stage, they found themselves ascending a two-mile incline to the hotel. The air was fresh and invigorating; there was a constant variety of scenery to charm, and they

had the vehicle all to themselves. Once more they were boys, joking over the movements of the driver, over the flapping of the curtains, over the antics of a calf and a colt near by, and were at their destination before they were aware. It was an old vine-covered house, with no pretence of display, and upon its porch sat the proprietor in his shirt-sleeves, waiting for the arrival of the stage; and ushering the guests into a room that answered the purpose of bar-room, sitting-room, and post-office, he informed them that dinner was ready as soon as they were, and as there were only one or two boarders, they had better not stop to "fix up."

From this man, in the course of the afternoon, they learned where to find the very driver they needed, and had the good fortune to find him at home and unoccupied. This gave them ample time to make all their preparations, take a look at Trenton Falls, and scour the gorge for minerals, then back to supper and bed at an early hour..

At daybreak next morning they were up, and while dressing heard the rumbling of wheels that told them their wagon was on hand, and as soon as their breakfast of ham and eggs was despatched, they started. In the wagon were the box of provisions, their hand-bags and guns, the driver's gun also, food for the horses, and blankets and buffalo-ropes. The driver was a lank, wiry-looking man of thirty-five or forty, dressed in butternut-colored jeans that matched his hair and beard exactly. Such a man could not speak without a drawl, or the law of correspondence would be broken; but he was familiar with the road, and knew Tim Ole-

crafts as well as he knew his own brother. Besides this, he was a good guide, and had taken Horace Greeley into the woods every time he had been to Prospect. One point was already settled, viz., there was a man named Tim Olecrafts, and this man knew him. They could afford to await further developments, and enjoy the ride and novelty of their expedition. The roads, at first good, rapidly degenerated into corduroy and stones in alternation, until by noon they found it much easier to walk than ride, and abandoned the wagon altogether. By sundown they were glad to stop for the night and rest.

Unhitching the mules and fastening them to a tree, the driver prepared for the night. The wagon was to be the tent, and an immense log-fire to the leeward, but very near, would insure safety from wild beasts. Around them towered great mountains, and the sluggish waters of the Black Canada Creek rolled slowly over its rocky bed by the side of the road. Not a sign of the world's life intruded upon the silence save the sharp stroke of the axe bringing down another tree for the night.

"One thing is true, why not all the rest, Dana?" said the Doctor, as they watched their man make coffee over the fire.

"We may find everything true until we reach the limit of the natural, and I have a notion we shall; but at that point we shall find it all a gigantic humbug,—a cleverly designed story——"

"And you are so determined not to believe, that you are ready for once to deny the evidence of your own

senses. I say, if one thing is true, why not all the rest?"

"Don't you see, Doc, that if this is a contrived plot by a sane man, he would be realistic through and through; and, once convincing his readers of the genuineness of mere local detail, they will follow him to the end, and swallow ghosts and all?"

"But the object? You forget that every action needs a motive. You forget, also, that Clothilde died in an insane asylum because of those letters."

"I am not willing to agree with you there, either. If I am not going to believe, you are equally determined not to disbelieve. If Gilroy Van Guilder was made crazy by grief and loneliness, what is more probable than that in his daughter's mind lurked the seeds of the same disease? And I think you will find truth and falsehood so closely interwoven that you cannot tell where one leaves off and the other begins. Whether the writer was sane or not, the scenes and local points would be true to nature."

At this point the driver announced that supper was ready, and they moved towards a log whereon was a repast of coffee, bread, bacon, and potatoes, served on tin plates, to the music of the forest. No repast could be more enjoyable than was that simple meal to those hungry men. Suddenly they heard a rustling of bushes near them, and, looking up, they saw three magnificent deer emerge from the thick undergrowth at one side of the road, and, pausing a moment to sniff the air, bound into the brush at the opposite side.

"By George! I'm a first-class fool! What on airth

got into me to make me forgit to load my gun and hev it alongside o' me? Who'd a thought we'd a seen 'em so near a settlement? Thar in that wagon is a shooter that allers pints straight, an' allers hits whar it pints. Ef that had a been in my reach, we'd a had venison for breakfast. It never happened afore, and it sha'n't happen agin."

Saying which he jumped up and took his gun from the wagon, and began loading it with ramrod, and bullet, and powder. When it was all to his satisfaction, he set it against a tree at his side and finished his supper, keeping up a continual talking with himself at the same time.

"Ef I hadn't been born here and growed up, as you might say, in the woods, such a thing wouldn't a been so bad. But I knowed better, for I knowed the woods are mighty onexpected, and I've growed kerless. Dad was a great guide, an' he trained me, an' one of the last things he said to me was, 'Sol, never be an arm's length from yer gun, an' always hev her loaded.' When I was a boy things was different. Ef a party wanted to go to Blue Mountain, or Rackit, or Placid, they couldn't ride, and Dad had to take a boat from one lake to t'other. Many's the time I've helped him across the Big Carry, an' the city chaps would git all tuckered out jist a-walkin'; an' one time there was a little preacher along, an' he couldn't walk nohow, an' jist sot down an' began to kinder cry an' say, 'Let me rest, I'm so tired.' Dad felt sorry for him, but the rest didn't seem to care; they only laughed an' said, 'Come on.' Jist then we heerd the screech o' a wild-cat, an' it was

so loud it made us jump. 'Ther's a painter,' says Dad; 'look out fur yer shootin'-irons.' Then the little preacher screamed out like a child an' begged 'em to take care o' him. Dad got riled at last, an' said, 'What on airth made ye come, ef ye couldn't stan' nothing?'

"No matter what made me come; only save me from that wild-cat, an' I'll pray for ye as long as I live."

"Ye'd better a durn sight be a-prayin' for yerself," sez Dad, 'ef that ar wild-cat gits much nearer.' And it was a-gainin' on us all the time. Sure's I'm born, it came as near as those mules afore one o' us fired. Then we took good aim an' let her fly, an' the animal giv' one jump into the air an' fell down dead. The preacher was on his knees a-prayin'. It had three bullets in it—one for every gun but his. It was then Dad told me never to go in the woods without my gun bein' loaded, for ye never could tell what 'ud happen. Wild-cats ain't as plenty now as they used to be, but there's more 'n enough left yit. When that man Greeley fust came up here we took him up to Tim's to fish. Then thar wasn't many city chaps coming in here, but he wrote about it in the papers, and one arter another begun to come, till lately Tim's house has been too small to hold 'em. That's how there came to be these here roads, and all the way to Blue Mountain there's as good a trail as you could wish to see, with sometimes a piece of corduroy to boot."

"It must be lonely enough in the winter," suggested Dana, to keep him talking. "I should think it would freeze the moral faculties out of a man to live in these mountains."

"I don't b'lieve ther's many facilities up this way. Ef there is, I don't know 'em by that name. But it's not as cold as ye think, perhaps. We have big fire-places and as much wood as we're a mind to cut down, an' snow-shoes to go to Prospect on when the roads are bad, an' frolics with neighbors a few miles off, an' the winter goes by fast. Tim Olecrafts lives on the edge of a big forest where thar ain't a neighbor for e'en a most a hundred miles."

"How did the people find their way here in the first place?" asked Dr. Grotius.

"Mostly because old Squire Northrup went over to the old country an' brought 'em here. Ye see he bought thousands o' miles o' this mountain lan' fur almost nothing, an' then he went over thar and sold it fur three dollars an acre, an' promised to bring 'em over free beside. When they got here an' found it all woods, an' sometimes swamp, an' allers so cold they couldn't raise good crops, they made a fuss an' tried to git thar money back. But 'twarnt no use. Old Northrup had his grip on it, an' he never giv' up. Some on 'em went back; some on 'em starved to death; some on 'em cut down trees an' made the best of it, but they was allers called 'Northrup's fools.' Dad was one on 'em."

"What can they find to eat in winter?" again queried Dana.

"Oh, they're all right now, fur they've got land clared, an' can raise buckwheat an' wheat an' oats, an' then when they hev a little money they go to Prospect on snow-shoes for tea an' coffee. They all go to bed

with the chickens an' never hev a doctor or git sick. When you git settled at Tim's, you must start him a-talkin', an' he'll tell ye stories that'll make yer har stan' up. He's an ole man now, but ye'd never guess it. He's as spry as ever, an' is a masterful han' at catchin' trout. We'll be thar an hour by sun."

Our travellers were greatly entertained by this original fellow, and the night wore by pleasantly without further episode. Late in the afternoon of the day following, as the sun was nearing the top of the overhanging mountains, they made a sudden turn and emerged from the deep shadows of the forest into a well-cultivated farming region nestled between three mountains and the river.

"Thar he is now. Large as life, an' fishin' as usual. I never sêe' his equal, an' shouldn't wonder if he threw a life line last thing he did. I swow but I b'lieve he knows every trout by name, and when he calls 'em, they hev to cum."

Every roll of the great wheels brought them nearer their destination, and it was not long before they drove up at the barn and the travellers were told to jump down and go to the house.

The figure of the fisherman made a striking silhouette against the golden sky of the west, as he stood with pole in hand, throwing his fly skilfully out into the stream. Tall, erect, with a head well-set upon a fine pair of shoulders, he needed little to make him a model for Millet.

"Ye'd never b'lieve that thar man was seventy-five years old now, would ye?" said the driver, as they came in full view of the scene.

"And you say he has always lived here?" asked the Doctor.

"Hereabouts. He fust saw daylight in Hamilton County, but his folks moved over this way when he was a little chap, and he learned wood-craft from his dad, and now he can't be beat. There's a fight over him when the city folks is here, I can tell ye."

At this point the pole, with a sudden movement, swung a large trout above the water and landed it on the grass. For the first time the fisherman moved and looked at the approaching wagon.

"Jist like Tim Olecrafts. Ef he's catching a trout, he wouldn't stir for a cannon. Arter supper, if he feels chipper, he'll spin yarns that'll surprise ye,—bar stories, wild-cat stories, fish stories, till ye can't rest. I'll try to git him started."

He was as good as his word, and no sooner had they seated themselves on the porch after supper than the driver began to talk about the changes that had taken place in that region in his day. He had told the strangers that this was the surest way to loosen the old man's tongue. "Ef he thinks ye'r' crazy to hear his yarns, he won't speak at all," he said.

"I'd like to know what ye're talkin' about, Sol Pringle," interrupted their host, after he had listened a minute or two to what he was saying. "What ken a feller o' your age know about changes? When ye've lived here as long as I have, ye can speak and tell yer sperience. P'raps ye've seen a housen or two built in your day; but what o' that? Or mebbe a few new trails made; what o' that? Or some land clared or roads

made; but what o' that? Is that anythink to talk about? Not at all. They ain't changes wuth mentioning. When ye've seen Injuns an' squaws as thick as the leaves on that thar tree, an' never a white man's face for months an' months; when ye've taken more bars an' wild-cats than ye could drag their skins to the settlement; and when ye've been as chipper with the deer as ef they was sheep, and then when all these things has changed an' a time comes when a red face is a curosimy an' white folks as common as dirt; when a bar ain't caught once a month, an' deer are scared ef they see ye, that's what I call changes. Thar's nothink at all here now as it used to be, unless it mout be them mountains yonder, an' the creek, and the ghost. Sometimes I think the river's a-dryin' up, an' the ghost ain't so sociable as she was a spell ago."

"O pshaw! Tell us a bar story of ye're a-mind to, but there don't none o' us b'lieve in ghosts. I remember once my team came nigh runnin' away with me cause they saw somethin' white, but I don't b'lieve it was any ghost, just 'cause ye say it was."

"Tut, tut. Don't talk so fast, Sol. One par o' eyes don't see everythink. Just 'cause Sol Pringle ain't seen the ghost, he thinks it's all moonshine. I know what I've seen an' heerd with my own eyes an' ears, an' yer boun' to b'lieve it just as much as ef ye'd seen it yerself; fur the man doan't live that can say he ever heerd Tim Olecrafts tell a lie."

As he finished, he rose from his seat and gave the smudge a poke that sent a thousand sparks flying skyward. This was a habit he had when a little excited,

and Sol knew he was coming to the state of mind when he would talk.

"Oh, sho! In course I know ye b'lieve it all yerself. Nobody sets more store by Tim Olecrafts than I do. I'll leave it to the strangers here ef I hev'n't said so afore we got here."

"Certainly." "Yes, indeed," came at once from the guests. The old man continued:

"I can tell ye thin's as true as preachin' that 'ud keep ye from sleepin' a wink this blessed night, ef I was a mind to, but I'd ruther not. Somehow I can't sleep so well myself arter I talk about her."

"Her? Who is it?" asked the Doctor.

"I can't rightly give her name, but she's a pore lone woman who's been a-walkin' aroun' this neighborhood a monstrous long while, an' lots o' folks is a-feared o' her, and some want to move away on account o' her.* I know her better than most on 'em, but I'll own up I'd ruther meet flesh-an'-blood folks than her. Course, she can't hurt me none; but she makes cold shivers go up and down my back, an' it's nowise so comfor'ble as ye might wish. Once I got so riled at her fur fol-lerin' me that I drew my rifle on her an' fired; but sho! ye might as well 'ave shot a cloud or a piece o' moonshine fur all the good it did. The bullet went

* "Destiny is guided either by the heavenly voice of the invisible prototype outside of us, or by our more intimate astral or inner man, who is but too often the evil genius of the embodied entity called MAN. Both these lead on the outward man, but one of them must prevail."

right through her, an' I picked it out o' a tree, an' she moved off just the same. I swow it was kinder provokin' when a man is used to bringin' down his game, now isn't it?"

"I wish you could tell us all about it," said the Doctor, as he nudged his friend with his elbow. "How long has it been here?"

"Nigh onto thirty years, I reckon. Folks say it is Van Guilder's wife that died about that time. We did not live here then; but fur all that, I was the fust to see it except Van Guilder himself. Dad was a-gettin' ole, an' all the city folks was comin' up this way, so we moved over here, whar I could be guide and mammy could take boarders. We could serape together enough in the summer to buy flour and stuff for winter——"

"But the ghost. Tell us about the ghost," interrupted Dana. "This is my first chance to know a real, live ghost," and he smiled at his own words.

"Wall, I'll see. P'raps I mout as well amuse ye fur a spell, but ye mustn't blame me ef ye doan't sleep arterwards. I must fix up the smudge fust, anyway."

CHAPTER VII.

TIM OLECRAFT'S STORY.

"It is mysterious, it is awful, to consider that we not only carry each a future ghost within him, but are in very deed ghosts! . . . So has it been from the beginning, so will it be to the end. On the hardest adamant some footprint of us is stamped in; the last rear of the host will read traces of the earliest van. But whence? Whither? Sense knows not; Faith knows not; only that it is from mystery to mystery, from God to God."—SARTOR RESARTUS.

"Where there is eternal light, in the world where the sun is placed, in that immortal, imperishable world, place me, O Soma!

"Where life is free, where the worlds are radiant, there make me immortal."—*Rig Veda*, 1500 years B.C.

TIM OLECRAFTS never hurried. If a deer was to be hunted, a trout caught, a cow milked, or a bear killed, it was all the same. Whatever the sign that ruled his house of life, there was one thing that never varied, and that was his slow manner of working and accomplishing. He never failed and he never hurried. His tranquillity was never disturbed, his serenity was like a cloudless sky. This was largely natural, but, perhaps, in a degree had been increased by constant intercourse with nature and habitual solitude.

That there were times when this was extremely aggravating to his energetic spouse no one doubted, but she had long ago learned that nothing she would say improved matters, and she had gradually settled into his ways. There were times, also, when a party were

impatient to start on a hunt, and were compelled to wait until, in his methodical manner, he had filled the pack to his liking; and then, too, there were occasions when he had said just enough to whet the appetite to its sharpest edge, and then gone off to attend to some domestic duty which seemed interminable. This was one of these times, and the patience of his two guests was utterly consumed before he would consent to say a word.

"Ye see the smudge must be built new, or else right in the midst o' my talk I'd be obleeged to stop."

Then he poked the slow-burning fire with his hickory pole, and vanished into the darkness, coming back in five minutes with an armful of sods and chips. These he placed in his great pan on top of an immense iron kettle, kindled them into a flame by blowing, and when the blaze was thoroughly underway, he covered it with the sods to make it smoke.

"It's not so easy, as you city folks think, to build a smudge like that."

"Well, that seems to be all right now; sit down and let us hear about the ghost," said Dana.

"Ye doan't know much ef ye think that ar smudge is all right. It's got to be watched an' poked an' blowed a sight o' times, an' it 'ud be uncommon tiresome to stop talking arter I'd begun. Punkies are mighty thick this time a year. They doan't never bite me none, but they do go fur strangers uncommon sharp. Ef this 'ere smudge was allowed to go out, ye'd git up to-morrow mornin' an' both eyes 'ud be swollen shut, an' then ye'd say it was all the fault of the woods. An'

ef the gnats got at ye, yer heads 'ud be as big as two. Ye see city folks has mighty thin skins, an' it's a monstrous temptation to the leetle insects. It stan's to reason it's agin natur for 'em to resist. Arter all, punkies is nothin' alongside o' robbers an' burglars an' murderers, such as city folks hev to meet. Giv me the woods every time."

Here he gave the fire another poke, and seated himself close by its side as if about to begin. His listeners had already learned that the best way was to let him take his own time.

"I reckon that's good for an hour or two, so I'll begin. I've almost forgot what year we moved here; I b'lieve it was more'n thirty year ago, an' I was just married. We built a log cabin, an' all four on us lived thar nigh onto two years. Then folks started a-comin' up here to fish, an' the old folks began to put up this house. Ye see it sets close to the mountain, 'cause in winter it keeps all the wind off, an' in summer the shadders makes it cool, an' on the top o' the mountain lies a lake of as pretty water as ye ever set yer two eyes on, full of the nicest trout in all these woods. The lake an' some o' the mountain was owned by an ole chap named Van Guilder. He lived all alone, an' had nothin' to say to any one. Some folks said he was crazy, but he wasn't. His wife died the same year we moved here, an' in them days thar wasn't a neighbor short of ten miles. I seed him a sight o' times, but he dident speak till one day I went by his house, an' a fine house it was, an' he axed me in, an' giv me a seat by the fire, an' sez:

"' Young man, I'm goin' to tell ye somethin, an' when I'm dead an' gone, ye must remember it. I'm an old man now, but once I was as young as you, an' I had a wife that I loved better'n I did my own self, an' I could ha' kept her ef I hadn't been so selfish. Now I want to tell ye never to put self afore yer wife, an' ef she sez to ye, "Doan't do it," you let it alone.'

"Leetle by leetle he tole me a long story, an' he cried like a chile, an' arter that we was good friends. An' one o' the things he tole me was that his wife was a ghost, an' came to see him every night, an' was takin' care o' some great paper. I staid thar till arter sun-down, an' started for home, a-thinkin' what he had said, an' I looked up an' saw a new moon right over the big sycamore-tree. It was a-lyin' on its back, an' I remember sayin' to myself, 'that means a dry time,' an' just then I stepped on a roun' stone an' turned my ankle, an' it hurt so that I was obleeged to sit down on a log an' rest. I know I never shet my eyes, but all to oncet I felt a cold hand laid on my shoulder and a finger touched me on my cheek, an' as I turned my head, a woman all dressed in white was movin' off towards the hill back of Van Guilder's house. I got up, an' forgot all about my ankle, an' follered her as fast as I could, an' when I came close to her, she slid right into the groun' afore my two eyes. She didnt seem to have any more body to her than ef she was made o' steam from a tea-kettle.

"I looked roun' in every direction to be sure I was wide awake, and thar was everything I knew, and on the top of the old sycamore a screech-owl was a hol-

lerin' fur all he was wuth. I waited a spell fur the woman to come agin, but arter awhile I gave it up an' went home. She often came to me arter that. Sometimes, when I'd be standin' by the creek gettin' a mess o' trout fur breakfast, I'd feel kinder creepy an' cold, an' I'd look up an' that ghost 'ud be alongside o' me. It went on that way until the ole man died. He had been feelin' pretty miserable lately, an' I went up to see him every day, to keep him chipper an' bright; an' one arternoon, as I came nigh the house, I see that white woman a-beckoning me to come. She moved along as I came nearer, and went into the little place where his bed was, an' then I didnt see her, but I follered, and thar on that bed lay Van Guilder cold and dead. I stood a spell looking at the lonely ole man, and when I turned my head sudden, I found the ghost standin' right by my side. I couldn't see her face, but I knew she was young by the way she stood, an' as soon as I looked at her she was gone. On the table outside was a paper all sealed up that he had made me promise to send to New York when he died. He had been writin' an' writin' fur days an' days, an' only the day afore he died, he said, 'Tim, it is done; an' ye must sign this paper so as folks will know I wrote it.' I can't write very well, but I did as he tole me; an' arter we buried him under the old sycamore as he said, I took the bundle o' papers and sent 'em to New York. The woman kept a-comin' to me just the same, though he had gone away. I kinder hoped she'd be more contented when he come to her; but she stays about the house an' hill yet, an' sometimes comes to me when I'm sittin' alone in the evening a

watchin' the smudge. Oncet she came to me in broad daylight when I was plantin' potatoes, but she didnt stay long; it seemed as ef she melted in the sun. She allers pints to the back o' the house, an' seems to want me to do somethin', an' sure, if I knew what it was, I'd be glad to help her. I've grown fond o' her in a way, an' ef I could make things easy fur her, I'd be glad to do it. It must be awful tiresome to be a-movin' aroun' that way, an' never lyin' down quiet in the grave like or'nary folks."

"What does she want, do you think? Have you no idea about it?" As he spoke, the Doctor leaned forward in the darkness and looked the old guide full in the face.

"Idee? In course I hev an idee. Thar's riches hid in that ar hill, an' she's guardin' o' 'em fur their rightful owners. The Lord only knows when they'll come, or whar they are comin' from, but ef we could see all that's hid in that ar hill our eyes 'ud stan' out, I ken tell ye. Dad used to tell me, when he fust come here, how the woods was full o' smugglers comin' down from Canady, an' takin' ther thin's to the big cities to sell; an' sometimes, when they was afecered o' bein' caught, they was seen to carry 'em to Van Guilder's an' come out without 'em. I 'spose thar's a heap o' stuff thar that ain't got no lawful owner, nor never will have."

"And did you see the papers he was writing on? Van Guilder, I mean."

"Oh, yes! It was all bark. I used to get it fur him, arter he got so weak. He was a great book man, Van Guilder was, an' could write amazin' well. He never seemed to mind bein' alone ef he could read."

"How far is it to that house?"

"Why on earth have you not dug in the hill, if you believe that there's riches hid there?"

The two men spoke at once.

"One at a time ef ye pleze. If we could go as straight as a crow flies, we mout only have to walk about two miles. An' when ye talk of diggin' in that hill, ye doan't know what yer sayin'. Thar's bin more'n one man knocked down tryin' to dig in that hill."

"Who knocked them——"

"Her."

"Who is 'her'?" said Dana, in a tone half-sneering, half-incredulous.

"The same her we've bin talkin' about."

"The ghost?"

"That's what I mean."

"How on earth could a ghost, which according to your own story is no more than steam, how could she knock down strong men? It's absurd."

"Mebbe it seems so to you, but ef ye was a mind to try it, I guess ye'd believe it then. I've seen more'n one man laugh at it an' say he wasn't afeered, and the fust touch o' his spade in the airth 'ud make him lay his length on the groun'. Mebbe ye'll feel like tryin' it yerself?"

"I think I should like to give it a trial. If I could see this white lady you talk about, I should be willing to give quite a sum of money."

"P'raps ye can. I'll do my best for ye, an' not charge extra, either. Thar's no tellin' when she'll come. Ghosts is like trout, mighty unsartain, an' ther best frien's can't

promise 'em. P'raps ye doan't b'lieve in ghosts, anyhow? I didnt till I seed this one. Most folks think ther ain't any."

"I am one of that kind of people, and believe all such phenomena can be explained by natural laws. Now I believe this man was crazy, and had the power to make you believe just as he did."

"Crazy folks doan't live like him. I never heerd of crazy people readin' all the time, an' writin'. Course he lived a lonely kin' o' life, all by hisself an' no one to talk to,—nothin' to do but watch the squirrels in the trees an' the trout in the lake; but I never see any signs o' his bein' crazy. Aa to his makin' me b'lieve just as he did, I doan't see how that could be done."

"Sometimes a man is all right on everything but one subject, and this was no doubt such a case. He was fond of his wife: she died; he kept her in his mind night and day brooding over his loss, and by and by thought he saw her. Don't you see how easy it would be?"

"What, ye say may all be true, but that wouldn't make me see her, would it?"

"I was going to explain it. You see, one mind can affect another mind, and if a thing is in your mind, you think you see it. I think this man had a strong mind, and perhaps did not know he could throw a belief of his brain into yours; but all the same, he did it. Now, if we were in a light room, I could pin up a dog or horse, cut out of black paper, against the wall and tell you to look at it five minutes. At the end of that time I would take it away and ask you to look again, and

you would be sure you saw it. Why? Because it was stamped upon your brain and eye. Now, this man thought of nothing but his wife; looking at her mentally, is it strange that he could see her? And when he talked with you, he impressed his mind upon yours to such a degree that your brain responded to his mind, and saw what he imagined he saw."

"I can't quite foller all yer sayin', but I catch the idee that ye doan't think I knew what I was a-lookin' at. Now, ef any one aroun' here had said that same thin', I shou'd ha' bin consid'able riled; but yer a stranger, an' o' course ain't to blame. But if I ever seed a deer drinkin' by the lily-pads by the light o' a jack-lantern, I've seen that ar ghost a hundred times."

"If I can see it, I will believe it's there; and I hope you won't think I doubt your word. Not at all. Mental phenomena are seemingly as real as any other. It is only my way of accounting for your remarkable story."

"The simpler way is a better one," said Dr. Grotius. "If you will only believe there is an astral as well as a physical world, the whole thing is clear as crystal. A man does not need to accept all the nonsense of so-called spiritualists, all the abominations of seances; but if he will read the ancients, even our Bible, he must be convinced of a finer world interpenetrating this coarser one. We are made of something more than mere body; and you talk of mind as something that can impress others' minds, yet deny it a place apart from its body. We are dual natures—body and mind; or, better still, triple natures—body, soul, and spirit."

"Where do you find this second nature when body and brain have crumbled into dust, or when the life-principle has gone from it? Where is it?"

"Where is the electricity when the battery is out of order? Would you dare assert there is none because you cannot see its manifestation? You know this is not so. And if every machine or battery were destroyed, there would still be this wonderful force in the universe. You say, that if I remove the brain from a man he ceases to express himself, therefore he ceases to exist. I say it is as absurd as my illustration of electricity. Because I cannot follow his mind and locate it, and tell you just where it is, you say he is not. Look at that comet that has astonished the world with its sudden grandeur. It will pass away. Can you tell where it will go? Of course you cannot, but you know it exists. It has been here and gone, but you dare not say forever. If we take the physical theory alone, it disproves your statement. Every scientist knows that in the human body atoms give place to atoms, and the material body is ever being renewed. We know that no particle of our present make-up is identical with the body of childhood or youth, yet we know we are the same ego that awoke long ago to consciousness. Where is this knowledge located? Not in our brains, for they have been made over many times. Where is this something that sits back of all these changes, and says calmly, 'I am the same'? You, Hugo Dana, never doubt that you are the same entity that played with me as a boy, studied with me as a man, and assert the most illogical things at the present time."

"We'll let the discussion drop, Doc. What convinces you will not convince me. Of course, I believe in mind, but I do not believe it has a conscious existence without a body. It may pass to other brains, and thus be immortal, but not as an individual. How can it?"

"How can it live in a material form? The one is as easily answered as the other. I agree with you in saying the body must be the vehicle for the mind, but not necessarily this body or one like it. There may be many bodies ranging in grossness from the most material to the most spiritual. Paul was an adept of adepts, and he uttered the words, 'There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.' The one is just as real as the other in its own sphere. It is active in the world of spirit, as our bodies are now active here. In that world it is just as discernible as we are here. While you build the outer by food, you are building the inner by thought. When the life-principle leaves the body it carries with it this finer temple, and together they seek their place in the astral or spiritual world. I will not go farther and tell you what I believe about the spirit, the third part of our nature, but will merely tell you what I think of the astral when it finds itself free to seek its own place. Of course, it is freighted with all the thoughts and desires of this earth-life, and if, for any reason, they are still drawn to the old haunts, it will follow the lead of desire until it is worn out and gone. This woman's whole mind was filled with the thought that she must guard that roll and box. She cannot be free till they are removed from their hiding-place and have done their work. I am not sure that we shall see

her, for all have not that finer vision; but I no more doubt the truth of the guide's story, than I doubt the shining of the moon yonder."

"Great is thy faith, Doc. I want to see for myself, that's all. If there are ghosts all around us, it's strange we cannot feel them."

"You might say the same of steam or electricity, but it would not be true. A sudden draught of cold air would condense the steam, and you would know it was there right where you had not dreamed it. There are times, however, when these visitants seem to grow more substantial, and are perceived by the ordinary observer. Such, perhaps, is the case in question."

"If I could believe like you, I should build my life upon a different plan. Everything should be gauged by its relation to the other life. Of course, that which lasts longest is most important. But when you say there are three layers of our existence, why not make it a larger number, make it infinite? As fast as we outgrow one, we'll have the next."

"Though you ask this as a sceptic, let me tell you that you may have hit a great truth. The ancients believed there were seven, and prove it by the fact that all perfection is represented by this number. To them the fourth was the determining state, vibrating either to the lower and animal, or upper and spiritual, nature. We can generally tell by a man's life which is in the ascendency. Why talk longer? It is all idle. When your eyes are opened you will see."

He arose as he finished speaking. He regarded the stars for a time in silence, and then asked for his room,

and retired ; not, however, until he had asked his host to make arrangements for an early start for the house of Gilroy Van Guilder.

"Ef I hed the time to spare, I'd stay up a day or two an' go with ye on your ghost-hunt," said their driver, as he bade them good-night.

"We'll tell you all about it when we go home," laughed Mr. Dana, and in a short time the house was still. The two travellers found themselves ready for a good sleep, and the mountain air, blowing through the pines and hemlocks, was the last sound they heard. Once more primeval quiet rested over the world of woods and waters, and wild beasts roamed at pleasure, as if man had not been created.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GHOST-HUNT.

"The invisible world, whether it be called heaven or hell, or goes by some other name, is peopled with intelligences, hosts of whom have formerly inhabited this one, and whose influence may still be felt here."—LAURENCE OLIPHANT.

"HALLOO, Dana !"

"I'm awake. Isn't it glorious ? Did you ever breathe such air ?" came through the board partition that separated the rooms of the two travellers. It was, indeed, a glorious morning. The sun, already half an hour above the hills, was throwing a stream of golden light

into every chasm and cove and cranny of the mountains. A stillness born of nature's repose was over the world; odors of all delicious wood-plants, of pine and hemlock and sweet-fern and clover, came in at the open window, from which they could see a stretch of meadows in the distance, running off into mountain ranges, while close beneath ran the dark waters of the Black Canada Creek. It was dark and sullen, now, under the power of a June sun, but in the early spring it had a will of its own, and broke over all restraint like a spoiled child, and dashed and roared and foamed on its way to find the ocean. Then came the familiar sounds of their driver's voice, calling to their host as he drove off:

"Be sure and tell me how ye make out huntin' ghosts."

The answer they could not hear; but before the last sound of his wheels were lost in the distance, the two friends appeared on the porch.

"Of course you rested well, Doc; your eyes tell that; and so did I until after daylight, and then, as soon as I shut my eyes, I would have the strangest dream; and it came to me three times over. I'm not in the habit of noticing my dreams, but this was so vivid I cannot drive it from my mind. I suppose it was a nightmare manufactured out of all that ghost-stuff we listened to before retiring, but I never want another. Perhaps, if I tell it, I can forget it. We were at sea, you and I, Aubrey, all alone, and not a soul in sight. A stiff gale was blowing from the north-east, and our little boat tossed about like a leaf. We sat facing each other and

never spoke a word. We knew what was coming, and there was nothing to say. Then the wind went down and a fog began to settle around us. It was cold and white, and shut out light and hope. We could scarcely see each other's faces, and I reached for your hand, and when I found it, it was as cold as ice. We crouched lower and lower, until we were sitting in the bottom of the boat, and the waves were tossing us up and down, drenching us with foam. Just then, when our hearts were chilled by a grim despair, when hope had fled, and the world was as valueless as a paper bag, a woman stepped out of the fog. Although she was dressed in white, she stood apart from the mist, and made a shining figure against it. She was a magnificent creature,—tall, fair, and radiant with life. She did not look at us, did not see that we were near; but moving past us in that strange way that makes the most improbable things real, she seemed perfectly at home on the water. We seized her by her garments and stepped out of our boat, and walked with her on the waves; but she never noticed us; and when suddenly the fog lifted, we were standing upon the shore with the warm light of day upon us. Stepping from the sun was an old man clad in yellow garments, with a white beard blowing far beyond him. He held a mace in his hand, which he pointed ever to the east and west, and whichever way he pointed it, there fell from it showers of golden stars. He pointed it towards my eyes, and a new power came to them, but it came with pain. I awoke here with that sun shining in at my window."

Before his friend could reply, they heard a call of

"Breakfast! Breakfast!" and went into the house to enjoy a meal that can be found in its perfection only among the mountains. Steaming coffee with delicious cream, fried trout and potatoes, oatmeal and some berries, are in themselves an attractive menu, but add to this a mountain appetite, and the repast is surely fit for the gods. Tim had already made up his pack, and when the breakfast was despatched, they started for Lone Lake, or G. Lake as it was then called.

"The sun's a-goin' to be hot, an' the sooner we git off the better, ye know," were his words as they left the house. Then calling to his wife, he said, "We mout be home to-morrow, an' then agin we moutn't. Ye'll see us when we git here," and was soon out of sight in the dense forest that covered the mountain. The spirits of the party were at concert pitch, and they scrambled on and on up the steep ascent, now holding on to a shrub or tree, now bracing against a rock, and sometimes almost sitting down to gain a better foothold. They were boys again, these men of middle life. If they saw a toad, there was something humorous in his appearance, or he reminded them of some acquaintance, over which they would laugh long and loudly. Tim diverted them by accounts of local mishaps, which, though not enlivening, were certainly calculated to keep them awake. Here, a man had been attacked by a bear and scarcely escaped with his life; there, a neighbor who had gone out to get some venison for his wife and children had suddenly come upon a wild-cat's home, and after killing two, was himself killed, and found several days afterwards by his neighbors, literally torn

to pieces. Then he showed the very log where he himself had had a bit of experience that could not always be enjoyed. He had been camping out with some sporting-men over by Pine Lake, and was carrying an immense kreel of trout, packed in ferns to send to New York, and was going to bring back extra provisions for another week. He had gone over that trail so often that he had grown careless, and left his gun behind him. In his belt was a horse-pistol, but it was unloaded. Both hands were full, and just as he left G. Lake to go down the mountain, he found himself face to face with a black bear. "Now I hed allers sed I wished one o' them stealin' varmints 'ud give me a chance at him; an' I was really 'shamed to tell folks that I was a woodman an' hed never been 'tacked by a bar," said Tim, resting his pack a minute on a log; "but when I came to this 'ere log an' found that nigger on his hind legs a-waitin' fur me, I made up my min' that I'd just as lief say it as not. What could I do? He was one side o' the log an' I was t'other, an' he dident seem disposed to move. I hadent anything but that ar hoss-pistol, an' it warn't loaded, an' I knew enuff o' bar natur to know he'd never give me a chance. All to onet it came into my head that somebody had tole me bars was afeered o' noise; so I opened my mouth and yelled as hard as I could yell. He jist giv one look at me, as much as to say, 'You ain't what I thought ye was, an' then he turned tail an' run. I hedn't lost any bar, so I dident chase him any, an' went down the mountain the other way. All men are cowards, fust or last."

He took up his pack again, grasped his rifle and

started on. The ascent grew steeper, and in some places the trail passed from rock to rock. At length they reached the top of the mountain, where a lake as clear as crystal stretched before them. The eye could easily take in its entirety,—a fraction of a mile across, and three or four on either side. A dense forest surrounded it, and came down to the water's edge, giving no sign of human habitation. Fastened to an old tree was a rude dugout, that Tim proceeded to untie and dip from it the water of recent rains, evidently expecting to carry his guests across the lake in it.

"If you have any idea of taking me over in that thing, my friend, let me tell you that you are mistaken. As you said about the bear, 'All men are cowards sometimes;' this is my time to show the white feather. Here's my friend the Doctor, who knows where he's going when he dies, and of course it will not make any difference to him how he gets there, but I am not as certain of my quarters after I've once left this world, so I propose to stay as long as I can. I am not afraid of bears and panthers, but I do object to a bed in the bottom of that lake with nobody but trout for company. I guess we'll walk around, if it's all the same to you."

"It doan't make no difference to me, fur I ken walk all day; but one mile o' woods is as bad as a dozen on a road, an' it's a good eight miles to whar we're a-goin', ef we go roun', an' thar ain't much o' a trail, nuther. I guess you'd be pretty well tuckered out by night; but I doan't mind, fur I'm as used to it as a dog. This here dugout isn't much to look at, but ef ye sit still yer jist

as safe as ef ye was on land. I've carried a sight o' folks over in it, an' ain't drowned nary one yet."

Dana came nearer the craft and began to inspect it.

"P'raps ye'd ruther wait here till ye see me take him over safe?" suggested the guide.

"But did you not tell us it was two miles to the house we want?"

"So it is, as the crow flies. But we ain't crows, an' the nearest we ken come to it is to go over the lake an' down on t'other side."

"What shall we do, Doc?"

"Do? Get in the boat and go over. One of us can't wait to see the experiment tried on the other, as long as those wild animals abound. The man knows what he is about."

The two said no more. Dana, if not persuaded, had no desire to be left alone, and followed his friend into the boat, if boat it could be called. They seated themselves one in either end, and with a word of caution from Tim to sit still, they were pushed out into the water. It was now almost noon. The rays of the sun fell full upon the transparent water, revealing a fairy-land of finny life beneath. Such motion, such colors, such exuberance of life can be found nowhere else than where the speckled trout abound. Dr. Grotius, sitting with a hand on either edge of the boat, said, earnestly,—

"What would I give to be as receptive of life as are those creatures of a lower order.* Around us, as

* "The Platonic philosophy of vision is that it is the view of objects really existing in interior light. This interior light, if we

around them, flows an ocean of vital force, which, because we do not receive it, fails to do for us what it does for those mindless fish. While they are alive in every fibre, we are only alive as far as the outer senses exist. Could we be as passive as they, we would revel in mere existence as do they."

"Why do we not receive as they receive, if we were intended for that sort of thing?"

"We shall when the next race comes in, and the human has learned that it is the noblest thing in the world to have no will. Once passive, the rest will follow. This is the secret of the ages, the mystery of existence. There can be but one *Will*, one *Law*; given the conditions that it may work unimpeded, and the result must be the same everywhere. There cannot be one law for a part of the world and another for the rest. If humanity could become as passive as the lower orders of creation, we should see as uniform results, and the secret of all is, *passivity*. Already there are those here who see a glimmer of light. The present race is giving place to the next foot-race of the round, and to these will be given power to slay the finite will.* Intuition, the new sense, is already here

understand Plato, unites with exterior light in the eye, and is thus drawn into a sensual or imaginative activity; but when the outward light is separated, it reposes in its own serene atmosphere. It is in this state of interior repose that inspirations and visions occur. Böhmen writes of it in his 'Divine Vision,' and Molinos in his 'Spiritual Guide.'"—"Rosicrucians."

* "The Light of the world is within you, the only light that can be shed upon the Path. If you are unable to perceive it

in a more than germinal degree, and with the sixth race will be a fuller development of this sixth sense. Perhaps, too, some of those keener senses that belonged to man in a lower estate will be reclaimed from the wreck of time and again be his. We have but a fragment of the five senses that are our birthright. Even intuition—the interlacing of the inner and outer, the illuminator and foreteller—cannot fully atone for all we have lost in the evolutionary march."

"Such as——?"

"The power of sight as we see it in the animal kingdom, when the night is as the day; or of sound, as we see it in all animals; or of touch, as we know it to be enjoyed by the blind, who can tell the color of a thing by its touch; or of smell, so that we can follow a friend through a crowd by the odor of his path, and as a dog will go to the ends of the world for his master. All these are ours in a partial way, and may again be our heritage with patient care."

"I never thought of these things before. It surely is a fact that, as we have advanced along the line of evolution, we have left some of the best things behind,—that is, if we ever had them."

"You cannot doubt it, if you believe in evolution."

"But when and how did we lose them or dwarf them?"

"When instinct gave place to intellect.* You will

within you, it is useless to look for it elsewhere. It is beyond you, because when you reach it you have lost yourself. You will enter the light, but never touch the flame."—"Light on Path"

* The true thing is Inspiration, or God in us, excluding reason,

see the same thing going on at the present time among the North American Indians. The race-movements are always slow, and sometimes a generation can see no perceptible progression, but we know that in our own century the red man could lay his ear to the earth and tell who were coming, and how far away, and how many there were, while the educated Indian of to-day can do nothing of the kind."

"Then man loses as he ascends? Civilization is not an unmixed good?"

"Of course it is not. But, as I said before, matter has done its worst to deaden and minify man's nature, and now the race is on the upward road. All that has been lost may be regained, and the two senses added that make the perfect number. Imagine at this moment what it would mean to us could we hear as a squirrel hears. What exquisite harmonies would fill our ears from the breath of breezes now unheard. What meanings would nature tell us, if we could hear aright."

"But why is there no way to develop these gifts? Why must it be left to the far-off future?"

which is built up of matter. Paracelsus says that when human reason becomes our master, it leads us from God and becomes a Devil. Our own Scriptures express this in many texts.

"Men of intelligence and power are led away by reason. Its results turn to dust and ashes in the mouth; it shows a man at last that to work for self, works for disappointment.

"Learn from sensation and observe it, because only so can you commence the science of self-knowledge. Grow as the flower grows,—unconsciously."

"It is not. I can tell you how, by patiently waiting, you can so develop powers that are latent, and of which you do not dream, that you can *prove* their existence as you prove a mathematical problem. You can educate your eye until invisible stars are plainly seen; your ears to the sensitiveness of the Indian, or the dog, and, better still, your soul-forces, so that they will guide you unerringly. We have been caught in the rush of the outer senses, but the reaction is here, and in waiting we shall be set right again. But here we are at the shore, and another tramp lies before us."

The boat touched the ground and all three jumped on terra firma. Their guide, who had sat silent through the discussion, now took his pack upon his back (after tying the boat to a tree) and started on a zigzag trail leading down the almost perpendicular mountain.

It was not easy to follow him, as he strode along the narrow foot-path, where each must follow close upon the heel of the other, over a trail so rough and obstructed by under-brush that they could barely make their way. Rocks of enormous size were in many places piled upon each other, so that at times it became necessary to leap from one to another.

It was long past noon when they suddenly emerged into an open space, through which ran a stream of sparkling water. A high wall rose before them, built of stones carefully laid and cemented. The wall shut out the river or creek below, and all approach from north and south, but on the west joined an almost perpendicular hill or mountain. A gate-way, long disused, but showing evidence of having at some time

long past been used to shut out even a glimpse of the interior, now was open, and through it the eye could see a house setting close against the hill. Around it was a stretch of meadow containing perhaps fifteen or twenty acres. A few neglected fruit-trees, that must have been merely for ornament; some native forest trees of girth unusual; a carpet of knotted grass growing in wild profusion, and behind the house a tree of broad leaves and low-spreading branches, growing out of the spur of the hill that ran out to meet the house, were the environments of the building upon which all their thoughts were centred.

It was old and weather-beaten. Storms had swept down from the north year after year, beating against the deserted house in a merciless way. Summer suns had dried and parched its sinews; winter snows had soaked and weakened it, leaving it a prey to the winds and rains of summer and fall. Some of its shingles were loosened, and the roof drooped in the middle as if worn out with the effort to keep up. It was, in all respect, the house of their dreams, made familiar by the description they had studied. The entrance in front was from the ground, and from the rear also from the ground, but at least twelve feet higher, and entering the house at the second instead of the first story.

Throwing himself upon the ground, completely overcome with surprise, the Doctor gazed long and earnestly before him.

"You can no longer doubt, Dana, with the proof before you. It is far beyond my greatest hopes," he said at length to his friend, who had thrown himself

on the ground at his side. "There is the very tree planted by the oriental, who must have been an adept, of course."

"If he was here at all, perhaps he was an adept. But you forget that I said we should probably find all the local points quite perfect. I did not doubt but that we should find house and tree, but I did and do doubt the supernatural part of it, though we may find it difficult to tell where the natural leaves off and the so-called ghostly begins. A new idea came to me last night. This whole thing may have been a scheme invented by a nest of smugglers, and the place, instead of being a home, may have been a rendezvous of robbers. A ghost could easily have been called into existence to terrify the entire region; and if there is anything in the story of Tim, about men dropping dead who dug in the hill, it is of course due to some mechanical arrangement that would give them a sudden shock. Van Guilder may have been an honest man, half crazy with grief and loneliness, whom these men used as a tool. You remember that he spoke of them in his paper."

At this point, Tim, who had gone up to the porch to remove his pack, returned, saying,—

"Wall, ye see the spook-house at last. Ye'd best rest a spell till I've cooked ye some dinner afore we go inside. That ar tramp down the mountain was kinder hard on ye, I reckon."

Then he was off again, axe in hand, towards the mountain for wood for a fire. The two men were not loath to sit still and rest. The wall was a protection from danger on three sides, and on the fourth was their

guide. The two watched him as he moved from tree to tree before deciding to cut, and then they noticed the regular strokes descend with rhythmic motion, first on this side then on that, until the great tree swayed and fell. It was an arcadian scene, and Tim Olecrafts, with his threescore years, was still an athlete of muscle and brawn, and here, where he was at his best, where he was at one with the scene, where nature harmonized perfectly with his every motion, he was almost a hero and a god. It was an inspiration to watch his movements, and see him cut the branches from the fallen monarch, then drag them down near the house, then lay them one upon the other, and by a skilful arrangement of their twigs, a few bits of fatty pine, to see a blaze creep from one to another, until it burst forth in power crackling with delight. Neither spoke. The delight of watching the man became a fascination. They saw him take a pail and run up the hill, returning with it dripping in transparent drops. He brought them a cup to drink, and still they watched him, until somehow, between the June brightness, the weariness and content, they laid their heads upon the ground and slept. Tim paused to look at them, then smiled, and seated himself near the fire to wait for the kettle to boil. He muttered to himself,—

“Pore chaps. Them city folks can't stand nothink. They ar' e'en a-most tuckered out, an' I'll let 'em sleep a spell, an' not hurry up dinner. An' that man with the square-set jaw doan't b'lieve in ghosts! Ef he doan't git a-shakin' up afore mornin', I miss my guess. He's awfully sot in his way, he is. City folks can't

know much. It stan's to reason. What chance has they? All they hev is a little book larnin', an' what good is that alongside Natur'. Books teaches 'em the names o' thin's, but wood craft gives us a knowledge o' the thin' itself. My two eyes is wuth more to me than a hundred books. Books doan't hev eyes. Ef I've seen a ghost I know it, ef all the books in the world sez thar ain't any. I know *one* thin'; ghosts is ghosts."

At the end of an hour he called them to dinner, and finding they did not awaken easily, he took a couple of tin plates, and went towards the sleepers, rattling them together, so as to make as much noise as possible. Rubbing their eyes, they sat up; then jumped to their feet, exclaiming at once:

"We must have dropped asleep."

"I guess so. Look at that sun, an' see whar he is now. We'll hev a cup o' coffee an' some bacon fust, an' it's all ready an' waitin'. A full stomach's good fur the narves, an' ye'll need narves to-night."

"Delnonico never served a better cup of coffee," said the Doctor, as he sipped it from a bright tin cup.

"And I never tasted anything better than this bacon and roasted potatoes," echoed his friend. "Who taught you to cook, Tim?"

"It was born in me. My mother was a French woman an' a masterful good cook. She learned it across the water, an' came over with the ole folks along o' Northrup's folks. When they got here, he had the money an' they hed a lot o' poor lan'. It was work or starve. Her dad's lan' lay over by the Big Carry, an'

most on it was rocks an' woods, an' what warn't rocks an' woods was swamp. But thar was plenty o' game an' fish, an' cornmeal dident cost much; an' onst in a while a city chap 'ud come up to hunt, an' leave some money behin' him fur board an' guidin', an' so they managed to git along. Bym-bye, one tole another what a good place it was, an' what nice cookin' they'd fin' thar, an' they had a houseful all summer. These here north woods warn't o' no account till then. My mother's name was Madeleine Raux, an' I've heerd that she was an uncommon smart gal. More'n one city chap axed her to marry him, but she know'd too much for that. She tole 'em all alike, that, though they might like her in the woods, she wouldn't be so smart in the city, whar ladies of edication lived. Ye see her father had been in Paris, an' was door-keeper in a palace, an' knowed how city folks were, an' he tole Madeleine not to think o' such thin's. It 'ud be like folks takin' down ferns an' mosses from the woods 'cause they look'd so pretty, an' then throwin' 'em away as soon as they got thar. So she married a young guide, an' they went to Hamilton County to settle down, an' then they moved up here. I was born in Hamilton, an' not bein' a gal as mother expected, I was taught to do a gal's work in summer-time, an' in winter could hunt an' trap, an' spin an' knit an' cook as well as any gal. When I got so as I could make deer-meat sausage and biscuit as well as mother, I was jist as proud as ef I hed killed a deer. It has been a sight o' help to me sence, an' I've got my wife so as she can do most as well as I ken. But, sho! A man shouldent talk about himself. When ye eat yer

fried trout to-night, I'll leave ye to judge if I am correc'."

"Trout! Where will we get them? Shall we have time for fishing?"

"It doan't take long to catch enough fur three folks. As soon as we're done dinner, we'll go fishin'."

"But we want to see the inside of that house more than we want trout, Tim."

"Jist as ye say. We'll go inside, an' p'raps can get a mess arter that."

In five minutes, this man, who never hurried, had put everything in order and led the way to the house. The latch was rusty, but a push of the door made it yield, and they stood in a hall-way, four feet square, opening by doors on the right and left. They entered the one at the right, and found themselves in a room sixteen or eighteen feet square, that had been made octagonal by having its corners cut off and converted into closets. One of these was an open cupboard, with glasses and decanters still upon the shelves; another was evidently a place for hanging clothing; a third was filled with shells and beautiful stones; and the fourth was closed by a door. A fireplace on the side of the room towards the north still held ashes and embers that had long ago been light and heat, and upon the brass was the green of dampness and desolation. On the western side of the room towards the hill a curtained recess contained a bed. The curtain was faded and dingy, fast falling to pieces, and showed that the bed was a part of the house,—a kind of box built of boards, and filled with something that made it a bed.

A few chairs, a table, a bookcase, some pictures of oriental scenes were all the furniture the room contained. A second door opened into a square hall like the first, except that this was in the rear, and from this went a pair of stairs to the second story.

They ascended the stairs and came to an upper hall running across the house nearly its length. From this opened two large and two small rooms. The large room on the front was fitted up with careful design and by refined taste. Long windows opening to the floor gave a view of far-off mountains and bending river. Within were soft hangings of hand-wrought goods, dainty devices for use and ornament, and a bookcase filled with many volumes. Nothing had been touched since the owner had departed, and upon the work-table by her window were the implements for sewing as she had last used them. It gave a reality to the history that had seemed so unreal, and the visitors felt they might almost expect to see the owner step out from behind some Indian curtain and do the honors of the place. Soft cushions were piled high upon broad divans, and an inlaid table of lacquer-wood held a lamp that must have burned unusual oil, for it contained but a few drops. The bookcase had five shelves, with wires across them upon which embroidered curtains hung. Everything was touched by age and decay.

"It is easy to see that the lady was very refined," said Dana, with enthusiasm.

"A single look at those books tells that," replied his friend. "What a strange collection: there are all the

authorities on astrology, alchemy, and the like, with the world's poets and philosophers. I wonder how Plato feels at finding himself by the side of Eliphaz Levi?"

"She seemed to know the cream of literature, and her books are not the books of a day, but of all time. Some of them look like ancient tomes of long-forgotten nations."

As he spoke he reached forth his hand to take from the shelf one of those unusual volumes, but his hand was caught by Tim, who said, hastily,—

"Ef ye should touch a thin' on these 'ere shelves, ye would drop as ef yer were dead. Arter ye've gone through to-night, it mout be ye'll feel different 'bout thim. Ef ye want to do it then, I won't say a word agin it, but ye mustn't do it now."

They said nothing, and he led the way from this to the other large room across the hall, giving no view from its windows, except a glimpse of sky above a precipitous mountain, and a sloping hill reaching a few rods from the door to the foot of this ascent. Twenty or thirty feet from the door grew the strange tree, surrounded by sloping greensward. The room itself was comfortably furnished for a gentleman's study, with a bed heavily curtained in the farther corner. Its walls were almost covered by pictures, mostly of women, but *one* face predominated. It was a face upon which one might gaze for hours, and still turn and look again. The smaller rooms had been long unused, and might have been sometimes occupied by transient guests who needed only a bed.

"How did that tree come there?" asked the Doctor of Tim, as he pointed out of the window. He thought he would test how much he knew of past events.

"It's a fire-tree, but more'n that I guess I couldn't say. I've seen and heerd queer thin's under that ar' tree, but o' course folks who won't b'lieve in ghosts wouldn't b'lieve ary thin' I'd tell about the tree. I onst heerd Van Guilder say as how the tree 'ud go away sometime mighty suddent, as soon as its work was all done. It mout, an' then agin it moutent. Its roots run down into solid rock."

There was another room below that they had not investigated, so they retraced their steps and opened the door at the left of the entrance. It was plainly a general sitting-room, with chairs, table, a couch, and writing-materials still there. The fireplace had been swept, and the books arranged in order, as if prepared to leave. There was one closet for clothing, and that was all. No other doors of ingress or egress but the one by which they had entered.

"The secret passage does not lead from that room, anyway," exclaimed the Doctor.

"Not unless it is by a secret panel in the wall," said Dana. "And now let us get out of this stuffy den into the blessed sunshine of outer air. Trout are more attractive to me than ghosts, any day. Come along, guide; but what about rods? We can't catch these shy beauties by magic."

"No more we can, an' the fishin'-poles is the only thin' I dare lay a finger onto. Ye see Van Guilder tole me, a few days afore he died, allers to use his fishin'

tackle. It was a great honor, fur he set a heap o' store by it. Every pole he made hisself, an' as sure as I'm a-standin' here, I've known him work three months on a single pole. I don't count in the windin' an' finishin' up, either."

He reached his hand high above his head as he spoke, and from the wall of the house took down three poles. There were many more left upon the hooks. They were of lancewood and iron-wood, slender as a wand, polished like glass and beautifully wound by bright-colored silks. The tips would vibrate by a thought, and were as sensitive as a woman's heart. An exclamation of surprise and delight burst from both guests at once at sight of these works of art.

"Yes, they're reg'lar beauties, an' no mistake. They bring the fish every time. Ye'd be surprised to see how soon ye'll hev a mess."

He led the way out through the entrance that had admitted them, and went towards the water's edge. Waving his hand to the north, he said,—

"Ef it wasn't so late we'd try a brook, but we must be ready fer night, so we'll fish here. There's a place jist above where the creek is ninety feet deep, an' thar's allers some big trout in the hole. Get on board."

They looked aghast. It was not even a boat—just some logs and boards held together by pegs; but, remembering their experience on the lake, they concluded to obey orders, and took their places on the rude craft.

Tim took the paddles in his hands and they moved up stream. A sudden bend in the river and all signs of human habitation were lost.

"This ere's a cove. Ye'll fin' as good trout here as there is in the north woods. I ain't axed 'em what they want fur supper to-night. P'raps a white miller 'ill suit 'em. Ef they doan't like it, we'll try somethin' else. At this season o' the year, trout is all whims. Sometimes it's nothin' but worms they want; sometimes it's hoppers, and then agin they won't touch either on 'em. Here's your line all baited ready. Stan' still an' doan't say a word. Trout has sharp ears an' doan't like strangers none too well. They know my voice an' doan't min' me a speck, but ef they heerd you, we'd not get a bite. I hed a chap up here, last year, an' I tole him just what I'm a-tellin' you; an' he said he knew all about fishin', an' wasn't afeered o' ther hearin' him talk; an' arter awhile he got discouraged, an' sed he guessed he didnt want to get any more, an' I'm blessed if he'd caught ary one. He didnt hev a nibble."

Dana was an ardent disciple of Isaak Walton, and had it not been for the fact that just beneath his feet was a hole ninety feet deep and he could not swim, his bliss had been complete. Just as he was throwing out his line, he heard his friend exclaim,—

"I've got him. What a beauty!" and knew the Doctor had landed the first trout, and had probably frightened all the rest away. He caught the next and the next, however, and in half an hour they had more than they wanted and turned towards the shore. The sun was nearing the horizon as they stepped upon the grass, and long shadows of the mountain fell athwart water and meadow. Already the night-birds were be-

ginning to call, and from the distance the cry of the loon was borne on the air like the wail of a lost child. The spirit of the time and place was upon them, and light-hearted as boys, sensitive as poets, they walked along the path towards the gateway. Suddenly they stopped. They heard something strangely like human voices, and as they listened, they raised their eyes and saw five horses tied within the enclosure, and by the horses two men stood waiting for them. The voices came from the house, however, and, though Tim was as much perplexed as the others, he could not help saying,—

"It ain't the ghost, fur she never talks."

"It's a woman, as I live," rejoined Hugo Dana, now thoroughly amazed.

"There they be, humans like ourselves," said the Doctor, as a party of three emerged from the house, and moved off towards the tree upon the hill. A woman's voice, distinct, bell-like, and sweet, was heard to say:

"It is all as it was promised. Wall, house, hill, tree; but where are they who should meet us here? Have they failed to follow the guiding of the stars——"

She did not finish. Her eye caught sight of the strangers, and raising her hands towards heaven, she said devoutly, "All are here. Heaven and earth are ready. The time is at hand."

Before any one could speak, Dana had seized the Doctor's hand, and in an almost audible whisper exclaimed:

"The face of my dream, by Jove! What can it mean? Are we all going mad together? Tell me, Doc."

But the Doctor could not reply. Astonishment had made him speechless. The other party had come towards them, and were now near. The lady who had spoken, bowed as if greeting old friends, and the others looked into each other's faces for explanation of the mysterious meeting. Again the lady spoke.

"Had I not found you here, I should have been greatly disappointed, for thus far all has been fulfilled. I was told that you would meet me. I have come from far, and the time has been long."

"We'd best go in-doors now. The dew is fallin', an' it's better to be inside. Ye can talk while I get the supper."

Tim led the way, and they followed him into the room they had first entered, and soon a blazing fire crackled upon the hearth, as if to give a greeting to the visitors.

CHAPTER IX.

A NECESSARY LINK.

"The faithful helm commands the keel,
From port to port fair breezes blow;
But the ship must sail the convex sea,
Nor may she straighter go.

"From soul to soul, the shortest line
At best will bended be;
The ship that holds the straightest course,
Still sails the convex sea.'

THERE was a morning in the early spring of 1857 when every avenue leading to Benares was crowded

with a mixed multitude, all going in one direction, and that towards the city of Temples.

From Sarnath, eight miles distant, the plain was literally swarming with pedestrians pressing on in the early morning before the sun's rays should make the heat more intense. Whoever passed the great Sarnath Tower, aged by centuries and crumbling slowly to its fall, must pause and throw upon it wreaths and garlands of flowers ere they go on their way to the great festival at Benares.

This tower is and must remain a mystery in a land where mysteries become almost commonplace by their frequency. Its history is a myth and its purpose a superstition. Both belong to a forgotten Past. There has no better description been given of this building than that of Mr. Seward, whose words we will quote.

"The tower rises from the centre of a well-defined area, two-thirds of a mile in circuit. It is conical in shape, has a circumference of ninety-two feet at the base, and rises to a height of one hundred and ten feet. What is most extraordinary is that it is solid, without chambers or internal passages, except a low subterranean one. It has a basement story of brick twenty feet high, ten of which are below the level of the plain. Upon this basement is a story, forty feet high, of chiselled Chunar stone. With the exception of the five upper layers, this story is a solid mass, each individual block being fastened to the one adjoining it by iron clamps. The part of the tower above the stone story is built entirely of large brick. Originally it had an outer covering, but it is difficult to ascertain whether

of stone, cement, or stucco. The apex bears some resemblance to a statue surmounted by an umbrella. The large stone story has eight projecting faces, divided from each other by a panel fifteen feet wide. Each of these faces has a large deep niche, from which some life-size statue has long since disappeared. Imagination replaces these with the figure of Buddha and his disciples, as we have seen them elsewhere in China and Japan. Several of these faces are finely ornamented with wreaths of lotus, sometimes the plant winds as a vine, with birds and diminutive human beings resting on its tendrils. In some places it shows leaf and bud, in others the flower in full bloom."

Within this tower the human voice is never heard. Whoever speaks must leave its walls and step into the open air; and in the underground passage above alluded to none may enter but priests of the sacred temples, who retire thither for prayer and meditation. On this day of which we write there were others than pedestrians going to Sarnath to leave an offering. Those of the better class came on ponies, donkeys, camels, and even in carriages, some of which, drawn by four horses, indicated wealth and rank. Among the latter was one that made no devious bend, but went straight to the old tower. It contained, beside its driver, two ladies and a gentleman; the latter dressed in the loose robes of the orientals, but bearing unmistakable signs of Western civilization. The vehicle stopped a short distance from the tower, and the gentleman assisted the younger of the two ladies to alight, escorted her to the entrance of the building, then left her and returned

to his seat in the carriage, and began talking in a low tone with its remaining occupant. He never lost sight, however, of the tower and the lady he had left there. She was soon joined by a temple priest, who came from within, and stood just outside the door of entrance. It was impossible to tell what his age may have been, for there were no lines upon his face; yet in his eyes could be seen an expression only found in the very wise and aged. He stood face to face with his visitor, and his eyes never for a moment wandered from her face. The sounds of his voice were low and musical, but the words he uttered could only be heard by the one to whom they were addressed, who stood motionless before him, with hands clasped and head bowed.

Elfreeda Cathmor had passed all the mile-stones of youth, gaining an added charm with every year. Here and there time had left its impress on her head, not in the ordinary mingling of black and gray, but in occasional strips of snowy hair, that gave the effect of white ribbons passing round her head. One of these, starting at the middle of her forehead, was drawn back so as to divide the head in two divisions, and was then caught up with the rest and fastened in a coil. If ever there were human eyes that had the color of the violet, they were those of Miss Cathmor, and from within scintillated a light that shone like a star, illumining the entire face. Looking at her as she stood passively that morning at Sarnath, she suggested by her pose one of Raphael's Madonnas; but the first attempt at motion swept this impression from the mind, and nothing remained but the figures of ancient Greece,—the nymphs

and goddesses that walked with her human beings and were a part of the race. Religion was forgotten in the presence of perfect Nature. Art was forgotten also. A living, breathing woman filled the eye and mind. What can express the real spirit as do the curves of a faultless physique, moved by the mind within? This woman had never known restraint. Her muscles and her will had been as free as air. Sickness had never tainted her blood nor paled her cheek; hardship had never wearied or listlessness weakened the tissues. She owed these traits to an ancestry largely English, that entailed on her a love of exercise and fresh air. Her environment had tended to increase these tendencies, and both together had produced the woman we find.

Thirty-two years before, in the city of Bombay, Gabrielle Axten's sister gave birth to a baby girl and called it Elfreeda. The happy couple, newly married, were already in America, and many months passed before they heard the news; but in that lovely home in India the child grew under the sunlight of love, and at eight years of age was already started on the course of development that years of after-training perfected. At this time the mother died, and dying said to her husband, "Some day I hope you will take my boy and girl to my only sister, and let them know her." The father was completely crushed by the loss of his wife, and moved away from all the associations of former happiness to Benares, where he buried himself in his books and children and never again entered society. He was a man of thought, fond of philosophy, and devoted himself entirely to his children,—a boy of ten and the

little Elfreeda. Surrounded by all the luxuries that wealth could procure, he denied them nothing; and to Elfreeda he made all defer. A smaller nature than hers would have become selfish and spoiled, but she only became more lovely. She caught her father's zeal in science and philosophy; she watched her brother in athletic sports and games; she could ride any horse; she was a bold shot and a fearless racer; and, added to all these accomplishments, she had inherited from her mother an intuitional nature like that of her Aunt Gabrielle, lying latent in her early years, waiting to be awaked at the right time.

These things filled her time, and separated her from girls of her own age. Her father desired this. He feared some day she might marry and leave him, and his only hope of preventing such a catastrophe lay in such a training that she would not feel attracted to the stronger sex. Although her dresses were ordered from Paris, her form had never been compressed by foreign abominations, and this gave suppleness to her movements that was grace itself. Beauty, intellect, grace, all united in her, and the result was envy from her own sex and adoration from the other. Society girls in Benares called her "peculiar," and this was as great condemnation as if they had said she was wicked. Gradually the walls widened, and when she grew to womanhood she was scarcely conscious that she had no friend of her own kind.

In her father's house she met men of learning, and these, always ready to bow to a beautiful woman, found they had here an instance of rare intellect. She had

no idea that she differed from others, and kindled her own fires of martyrdom by a wit and cleverness that made her hated by all women, who heard their husbands and brothers rave over the marvellous Miss Cathmore. She, however, thought as she would, spoke as she thought, and acted as she spoke. True pride rests on an immovable centre, and Elfrieda was ever calm. Accustomed only to conversation of the learned, she had no small talk, and at eighteen was as much out of place in the world as would have been Plato or Moses.

An officer in the English army chanced to meet her at this time, and, like all men, fell desperately in love with the remarkable girl,—the modern Aspasia. He offered himself at the end of six months to her father; was rejected; persevered, and finally won his consent, not because he was willing to see her married, but because he saw her heart was given to the stranger. Preparations were commenced for the wedding, and four weeks before the day arrived he was seized by fever, became unconscious, and died with her name upon his lips, but with no glance of recognition or word of farewell. A week later and her father was thrown from his horse and killed.

In this brief space of time the world suddenly changed front. The light-hearted, brilliant beauty became a mature, heart-broken woman. Her sun had gone down in total eclipse.

Where had they gone, these loved ones, here yesterday and gone to-day? She strained her eyes to see into the Beyond, and called aloud, but received no

reply. "Father, where are you?" "Robert, come to me." "Tell me what your eyes see that I have not, cannot, see, or know that I do not know." Only silence for an answer to her cry. Sometimes her heart was full of bitterness, and she said there was no God—no heaven. Her old life was swept away, and the days dragged their dull length along without zest. Hitherto she had lived as the birds lived, or the wild creatures of the forest, or the snowy cow of the temple, weaving into her life all love and sunshine and gladness, but giving no thought. Now the heavens became brass; the world ashes. Love was dead. In one single night her hair turned white in narrow ribbons, and the color went out of her cheek. From this time she refused all human companionship except her brother, and an old friend now a widow, and the three became inseparable.

"What is religion for, Carul?" she asked one day as her brother and herself were sitting under a low-branched tree, and her friend Mona had gone to write letters.

"Why, to solve the problem of life and teach us of God and the next world," he replied.

"Yes, so I've been told all my life; but now, when I want to know something of where they have gone, I can find no clue. Something is wrong. Either our religion is false or there must be more for us in the Bible than our chaplain knows. What do you and I know of God? Scarcely more than our pet monkey. Of course we have a mass of material in our minds, put there by our teachers and parents, but of what use is it? It does us no good. To really know it must

come from here," tapping her breast with her fan. "I have been reading the Bible and Prayer-book, but I find nothing. Where is God? What is he? Has he a heart, and does he know when his children cry? My father never let me ask him twice, but I have called to God a thousand times and received no answer. Where are my dear ones now? Is it all a blank, and have we been taught to believe a falsehood? I had loved ones by my side, and in a moment they are gone. Ah, why can I not find them? I shall look everywhere for light, even in heathen temples, for surely some one must know what life and death mean, and be able to tell me where I can find God."

"Oh, Freeda, what would I give to comfort you; but I, too, am in the dark. Why can we not have faith to believe as our parents believed, and patience to wait until we, too, shall go where they have gone? I will go wherever you go, but I know you will not find the truth amid heathen religions."

As he spoke he passed his hand caressingly over her head, and tried to soothe her into content. It was of no avail; and from this time the wearisome round of investigation began, taking them into the great temples of other religions where, heretofore, they had gone from idle curiosity. Benares is a city of temples. They rise on every side, and pierce the sky with their spires, while priests mingle with the throng of worshippers, and sacred cows crop the grass in the enclosures. No city in all India has better preserved the traditions and truths of the Buddhist faith than this city of the Ganges. But the hungry heart of Elfreeda Cathmore found

nothing here that satisfied her desires. The murmurings of priests and adorations of the people said nothing to her, and she was about to give up the quest and settle into unbelief, when, one day, passing out of the great Temple of Shalom, she heard her name called. It startled her. Who should know her name? She moved under the trees where the snowy cows were feeding, decked in wreaths of flowers by devotees, and again she heard the word:

"Elfreeda!"

Looking about her, she saw a priest coming towards her. He stopped when he reached her, and she saw he would speak. In her heart she felt that the hour had come for her to know the truth. With a movement of his hand he motioned her friend aside, and in a low voice, said:

"Wouldst thou have light and peace?"

The lips moved quickly as they said,—

"Oh, yes, give me something that is sure, or I shall die." The speaker scarce knew that she had spoken, or given voice to the longing within.

"I am sent to thee, sorrowing one, sent from those who would comfort thee and lead thee upward. Thou art already on the path, but the night is dark around thee. I can give aid, but the onward marching must be done by thee alone. Remember, I promise not happiness; that belongs not to the present time, but is a flower of another world. I can show thee where peace abides, and truth and love. These will fill the soul of the earnest seeker until the fuller light dawns. To find this light, you must seek it not alone in the way of

worship, but along every avenue of sense and knowledge. It is everywhere, and enters the heart through a thousand doors; but lions guard the way, and only by struggle and conflict can it be gained. Sorrow is the open door; doubt and dismay are the lions of the first entrance. To overcome these and silence them forever, is now your work. Are you equal to the task? Are you willing to drain the cup whose contents you have so bitterly tasted? If not, pause, and meet me here a week hence."

"I am ready now, oh, Priest——"

"Call me Sul-Mal, daughter. It is well; and I know how the heart has suffered that can so readily say, 'I am willing to suffer more, if only I gain truth.' You have sought it in your own religion, but in vain. It was there, but you knew not how to see it. It breathes and palpitates, like a living heart, beneath your sacred book; but, alas! your people have lost the key and cannot discern it. Your wise men seek it in the written word, while, lo, it dwells only in the spirit that lies within the word. The Christ of your later revelation has brought the light to men, which is to all former light as the noonday sun is to your candle in the temple. But the world was not ready for it. It saw not nor knew not; and, like the wise men of old, the first followers of this great Light will be from the East. Can you follow where I lead? Can you cease repinings and bitter regrets, and be brave for truth's sake?"

She looked up eagerly, for already his words had given her courage, and replied,—

"Anything, if only I may *know*."

"It is well. Knowledge is power. You have chosen wisely. The soul that hungers and thirsts *shall be filled*.* Go home to thine house and meditate. Not on grief, not on disappointment, not on anything that disquiets the soul, but forget all things of time, and think steadfastly on immensity. One week from to-day meet me here and tell me what you have seen. Meditate at eventide, as did the good men of your sacred book, and think only on immensity."

She was turning away as he ended, but again he spoke.

"Nay, then, I had almost forgotten. When you meditate, sit thus, and ever alone."†

He seated himself with both feet placed upon the ground, his hands upon either knee, his chin drawn in upon his breast, and his eyes looking downward. He was motionless as the dead. The inspirations were long-drawn, and, without moving his lungs, seemed to come from his lower self. He could easily have been mistaken for one of those Egyptian figures found along the Nile. A moment of this silence, and he arose to depart, merely saying,—

"The heart never grows old, and the body never

* "Listen only to the voice that is soundless.

Hold fast to that which has neither substance nor existence.

Look only on that which is invisible alike to the inner and outer sense."

† This must be studied among the Mystics, and from ancient Egyptian tombs. It is all according to natural law.

grows feeble, that can throw itself on the great mother heart, and receive her life."

He was gone. Her friend came towards her, and they walked home in silence. This was the beginning of an initiate into occult mysteries that led Elfreeda Cathmore far out on the lines of truth. It was not the work of a day or many days, of a week or many weeks; but days and weeks grew into months and years. Persistent contemplation, a life devoted to good deeds, a large nature brought to spiritual flowering, had made her a truly grand woman. Grief and longing had been banished, and their places filled with an intense desire to know the Highest, and be at one with Him. She was no longer a mere woman of this present world, but a creature, a hint, of what the coming race may be when intuition will show to the world the secrets long hidden, and the interlaced triangle be the sign of the times.

In this development of inner gifts, her brother had vainly tried to follow her. His nature was not like hers, and at length he gave up the pursuit, and merely saw the results of her advancement, without knowing the methods.

Carul Cathmore represented the heroic qualities of his progenitors, as did his sister those finer sensibilities that grow in the same soil among Celtic people. Intuitive, superstitious, religious, sweet in song, strong in battle, indomitable in will, they present a remarkable combination of strong opposites. When, added to this stock, a vein of oriental mysticism comes in, we can imagine how intense might be the nature. Carul had

no dreamy tendency in his make-up. He was fond of sports and out-of-door activities, and enjoyed hardship where it came on the lines of pleasure. In their earlier days, brother and sister had been inseparable, but now he found her enjoying something he could not comprehend. At first it made him unhappy, until, seeing how it quieted and tranquillized her, he was glad to let her live as she would.

On this beautiful morning, when we find him awaiting his sister's return to the carriage at the Sarnath Tower, he had spoken to her friend, Mona Clifton, of his sister's strange absorption in the life she had entered.

"I cannot bear it longer. I feel that something terrible will come to us if we do not break it up. What can that priest teach her that is better than our own Bible? I wish we were a thousand miles away from here."

"So do I, Mr. Cathmore, but I doubt if we could move Elfreeda. We must remember how much it has done for her happiness. She is as tranquil as a summer sea, and shines like an eastern sun. It is something to see her so contented."

"True, Mona. She is a magnificent creature, and we cannot say she has not been aided by the priest. She is as dear to me as my own soul though, and I wish she were like other women."

He had barely finished the sentence as he saw his sister turn from the temple, and he sprang from the carriage to meet her. Never had she looked more beautiful. An air of determination had taken the place

of her usually passive expression, and, with eyes brilliant and cheeks aglow, she took her seat and they drove homeward.

At first they were all silent. Each was occupied with his or her thoughts, until the young man broke the spell by saying,—

"I would give the world, Freeda, to have you as you were ten years ago,—blithe as a bird, free as the air, and always and everywhere my companion." He reached for her hand and took it in his, to hear what she would say.

"Ten years ago, Carul. What was I then? I remember well. I was indeed like a bird or a beast, for my soul had not awakened. I lived as the dumb things live, and basked in the sunlight as if there would never come a night. But it came and struck me dumb. Music and laughter were swept away by that terrible darkness, and life was a blank. How gladly would I have died then, no one knows. Would you have me go back that long way and be where I could suffer again as I did then? Would you see me without hope, without God? Would you wish me to be as I then was? After the agony of grief came the greater agony of doubt and despair. Words cannot tell what I endured, and I shudder to think how I wanted to cease, that I might no longer think or remember. To-day—what am I? A pilgrim on the road that stretches on and on to spiritual perfection.* With me journey the race,

* "It is through the breaking asunder of the arbitrary bond which holds him to his personal centre that man comes of age and becomes the ruler of his kingdom. As he widens out he discovers

some willingly and gladly, some blindly and unconsciously. I have learned to overcome mere cravings of the lower nature, if so I may help the higher and more enduring. I have learned that to seek the good and love the good, wherever it can be found, is a joy in itself, and strengthens the soul that does it. I have learned that God is not a God outside of the soul, reigning in a world apart from this, but that everywhere he is waiting to be seen and known, and most of all in our own souls. That to find one's higher self is to find the Divine, and we can only attain this by the crucifixion of our lower nature, by the at-one-ment of our souls to the *Universal Will*. Here I have found peace, aye, and joy. Would you take these from me, when I have never known them before? Would you tear me away from this centre and see me again tossing like a leaf on the sea of unrest? It cannot be. You love me too well for that. You would fear to see me giving thought and love to mere personalities again. Remember the words of Sul-Mal, 'The soul is like the flowers of the Lotus. Rooted in the mud it at length ascends in a stalk, and bathed in sunlight and air comes to the glory of a full flower. The soul must be rooted in material form, must escape this and live for intellect a time, that at last it may give all its strength to the

that he has touch with all life, that he contains in himself the whole. Then he has but to yield himself to the great force which we call good, and he is carried swiftly on to the waters of real living. What we need is an earth that will bear living fruit, a sky always full of light. Needing this, we shall surely find it."—"Through the Gates of Gold."

grand flowering.' You would have me cast aside the flower and sink once more into the mud? No! No! There is no retrogression. The path is ever upward; and you too, my brother, show by your discontent that you are struggling from lower conditions."

"Perhaps you are right, Freeda. I would not wish to see you unhappy again, even though I could not follow you in all your transcendental beliefs. Taking Sul-Mal's own illustration, it would not be wise for the beautiful Lotus to disdain the support of a stalk, or throw aside the root whose home is in the mud. The material is a part of the order of things, and cannot be ignored or cast wholly aside. I believe that you should respect material things that hold your soul in place. It is all a part of the grand whole. What do you gain by living altogether for the spirit? The Intelligence that has given us a world of matter, and an environment like this world, surely knew best. With bodily senses and material things to enjoy, is it not evidently designed that we use both as long as we are here?"

"I eat, drink, sleep, and clothe my body. What more would you have? It passes away, and we leave this world as one awakes from a dream of the night. We find it was illusion, and cease to think of it."

He said nothing in reply, and in silence they drove homeward. He had been annoyed at the evident earnestness of the priest; and his sister, seeing his annoyance, fell back upon her own musings. Her friend had said nothing.

This woman was a wise friend. She had been a playmate of Elfreda's in childhood, had had the same

teachers, and then for a time had been separated by an army-officer's life. She was early left a widow, and urged by Carul to take the place of sister in their home at a time when they were desolate. Here she had remained, joining the two in literary pursuits and home duties, but having no part in Elfreeda's peculiar religious views. She remained true to the mother church of her English homeland, and refused allegiance to any other creed.

That evening, as the long twilight of the east settled over upland and city, Elfreeda Cathmore watched its shadows as she slowly rocked to and fro in her hammock. Around her were the scenes long familiar to her eye,—towers, temples, and in the distance a glimmer of marble steps and ghauts rising from the sacred Ganges. Fires from all quarters sent their smoke upward, and each fire was a funeral pyre.

"So must we all go, soon or late," she said, talking to herself. "What matters it when or how? In every one of those bodies now burning upon those ghauts dwelt a human soul. Whence came they? Whither went they? Who called them hither or sent them thither? All these questions puzzled me once, but now I understand; now I know that we are all bulbs, planted for growing. If the soil and environment be well, the growing will be as it should; if not? Yes, if not? What then? Must it be planted again for a better trial? Surely we can think nothing else. What matters it? A few years hence we shall all be gone, and those I love, and I that love, will be forgotten here. But we shall carry in our souls the knowledge

of this life, and these memories will be our only inheritance. Sul-Mal told me that I was sent to the earth with a work to do that none else could do for me. That I have been fitted for this work by peculiar traits and gifts, handed down from father to child through long generations. He told me of my mother's sister crossing the ocean to a new world, and there taking up this same work, and if I refuse to do it, the coming of truth to the world must be delayed,—perhaps until I can again come in the body to perform the neglected task. Joy lies in work. Peace lies in conscience. What more can I have? Desire must be sacrificed, love turned into higher channels, and ambition be slain. I will arise and go——”

“Where are you going, Freeda? Wherever it is, I go, too.”

It was Carul's voice coming from a thick screen of vines at her right hand.

“Did you hear me, Carul? I was thinking aloud, and since you heard a part, I will tell you all. This was Sul-Mal's message to-day, as it has been many times before. When you saw him stoop to the sand and write those strange figures with his fingers, he was showing me by circle and spiral that I could wait no longer. The signs are right, and there is work for me to do for the race before the stars set. I dare not refuse. He told me of the prophet of our Scriptures, whom God had raised up to send a message to a certain city, but disobeying it, he was cast into the darkness of the sea, swallowed by the fish for three days, and then placed once more on dry land to do his work. He said,

if I refused to do my work, I should be sent back again after being swallowed by death and the grave, and this would delay the work upon earth many centuries. This work will take me far from here. It lies in America, and must be done there. I must go. Do not start and say '*not so.*' I *dare* not refuse. Could you see and know as I see and know, you would not chide or hinder."

"But, Freeda, think——"

"I have thought; I have tried to put it aside, but in vain. There are times when, by my inner vision, I see that lovely sister of our mother's, begging me to free her from the bondage that binds her to earth. She longs to seek that higher state for which she is so well prepared, but she cannot go until her charge is taken from her and given to the world. She gave her life for this, and died in a strange land, and can I say I will not take up the burden and do my part? What does it matter where we are? The mind makes its own heaven. All else changes, all else passes away. The Mind of the One is alone eternal, and to live forever we must become a part of this One Mind. Dear Carul, you have been very patient with me in things that seemed to you foolish, but the day will come that you will awake from this dream, and then you will stand amid thought-forces and know them to be abiding. But in cycles yet to come these must give place to the things of the spirit—for God is spirit. To behold the light that shines from the holiest, as veil after veil is withdrawn, is the soul's greatest desire. Old beliefs are passing away. Mankind is learning that there is

something higher than intellect.* The light is come into the world, and I must be a torch-bearer to the people across the sea. I am no longer a mere woman. I am a living soul, a *seer*, a *PROPHET*."

A radiance illuminated her face as she spoke, and through her brother's veins coals of fire seemed coursing. He knew that she spoke what in her inmost soul she felt to be true, and could his love desert her now? Never had brother loved sister as Carul Cathmore had loved this magnificent being. It bordered on adoration; it was something of a lover's fascination, and it had in it the element of guardianship that made it akin to the parental. For her sake he had put womankind out of his life, and for her sake he would go to the ends of the earth. He laid his hand caressingly upon her head, and remained silent a moment. When he spoke it was to say,—

"In the language of the Good Book, Freeda, 'Whither thou goest I will go; where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.' We three, you and Mona and I, will go to America if need be, but we will never be separated."

"How grandly you do anything for me, Carul. If ever human love is like the great source, yours to me

* The possession of a third eye, we are told, was enjoyed by the men of the Third Root Race down to nearly the middle period of the Third Sub-Race of the Fourth Root-Race, when the consolidation of the perfection of the human frame made it disappear from the outward anatomy. Psychically and spiritually its mental visions lasted till near the end of the Fourth Race, and died out when the Atlantean continent became submerged.

is and has ever been divine. For my sake, you should never make such sacrifice, but for the sake of truth you may. The days here are few. We must arise and go hence very soon."

CHAPTER X.

THE INVISIBLE POWERS.

"There is a shadow on the sunny wall,
Dark and foreboding like a bode of ill:
Go, drive it thence. Alas, such shadows fall
From real things, nor may be moved at will."

"Let him walk in the gloom, whose will. Peace be with him;
but whence is his right
To assert that the world is in darkness because he has turned from
the light?"

We left the strangers standing by the fireplace of the deserted house, watching Tim Olecrafts make ready for the night. Dr. Grotius, true to the habit of many years, at once assumed the responsible position of host, and, with a charming cordiality of manner, he said,—

"Although we are all strangers, and have met here from distant places, I feel that I must bid you welcome to such comfort as we can furnish you to-night. It is already too late to go to our guide's house, and if you will try to endure the discomforts of this deserted house, we will pledge ourselves to do all in our power to make it agreeable. There is little to offer in the way

of entertainment, and I dare not promise you a quiet night's rest, but a warm fire, a good supper, and our society is at your service. The men can take your horses around to Tim's, and in the morning we will join them."

"We are not in pursuit of rest," replied the young man, whom we know to be Carul Cathmore, as he laughingly looked from one to the other; "unrest would be more appropriate, I think. Thanks for your invitation. We were in pursuit of this place, I believe, and, as you say, the men can move on and wait for us. Allow me to introduce my party. My name is Cathmore, Carul Cathmore, at your service, sir. This is my sister, and this her friend, Mrs. Clifton."

"And I am a physician, Dr. Grotius, and this is a companion, Mr. Dana. Our guide is Tim Olecrafts, monarch of the entire trout community."

After this little preliminary of social life had been attended to, Tim left the room, followed by Hugo Dana, and a few moments later the two were joined by the Doctor. The guides and horses were just starting on their way to Tim's by a circuitous trail around the mountain. Dana was the first to speak.

"The plot thickens, Doc. Are we all going crazy together? Who and what are they, and why have they come, do you suppose? I dreamed of that woman as I have never dreamed before; and while it is all fresh in my mind, here she comes, walking into my presence as if she was playing a part. Gad! but she's a magnificent woman. I could die for her without a pang

Hang me, if I couldn't. In all my life she is the only woman I've given a second look at, and I can't keep my eyes off from her. It's a judgment on me for all I have said to you. I am as crazy as you are at this moment."

"I am not crazy, neither are you. We are figures acting out the decrees of fate, and these others are in the same play. That is all. All my previous life has been a mere preparation for the final act. It was scaffolding with which I have nothing more to do; useless rubbish to be cleared away when its use is over. I, too, shall pass away. I shall never resume my old life. It would be impossible. A chicken cannot cramp itself into the egg again, when once it has been out in the free air. I am glad; for I could never take up the weary round of duties. Clothilde gone, my profession proved useless in man's greatest need, without home or ties, my place is not here. Great God, what a blessing to die when the zest has gone from life!"

He spoke so solemnly that Dana could not meet his words with ridicule; so, passing his arm in that of his friend, he led the way to the house, and up the hill where the branches of the flame-tree overshadowed the ground. A new feeling sprang into life as their feet touched the ground. With the one it was a sublime enthusiasm; with the other, a mixture of awe and fear.

"A new life has awakened. An ecstasy fills me, Hugo, that to you must seem absurd, but to me is exquisite. I have never known it before. Vague imaginings of all sorts of beautiful possibilities flit continually before my mind. I pant for something that I

am sure is waiting for me, yet cannot define. Henceforth I am a new man. Under this tree I feel that I, too, am immortal. This life throbs within. Clothilde is near and knows all, and life is delicious."

"I should like to believe what you so enjoy, but I cannot."

"Because you have never loved. Love is the elixir of life. Love alone gives us the sure knowledge of immortality. You can never believe, never know, never feel, until the flame of love is kindled upon your heart. Then you will realize that there is no death."

"And you believe we shall live on and on? How wearisome."

"How delightful, when all is perfect life! You judge of that state by this lower existence. 'Believe it?' I know it. There are facts of mathematics; there are also facts of knowledge by experience. You believe two and two make four; you believe, also, in a human experience that makes one grieve over the loss of a loved one; yet this enters not into the sphere of mathematics, and, according to *your* own assertion, does not exist, because not proven by sensible demonstration. Take my illustration once more. What does the bird imprisoned in its shell know of the warmth and glory of such a day as this? Its world is bounded by its shell. Or the chrysalis, cold and stiff in its cocoon, what does it dream of a world of flowers, where it shall revel on gorgeous wing? Let us try to imagine the first bird leaving the shell, while its brothers are still imprisoned, but are cognizant of its flight. What horror! What dismay! What conster-

nation! It was with them and is gone. And then if they could see it in its new life, moving here and there, surrounded with a light never known before, how would they strive to bring it back to safety and shelter. And with what result? Would it consent? Would it hear or heed the cries of its fellows? Would it ever again cramp itself into egg and nest? Something of this sense of freedom and glorious expansion comes to me here. I cannot see, but I can *feel* the atmosphere of a larger life from which I cannot draw back."

His companion, with a feeling of awe, remained silent, and they stood arm in arm beneath the branches of that tree whose very presence was a mystery. Then they turned towards the house, and with the movement came thoughts of those they should find within.

"Jove! It is unaccountable about that woman and my dream. If I had not told you of it this morning, I should say it was a trick of my imagination," said Hugo Dana, as he paused at the door. "What can it mean, Doc? We were in such distress, you and I, with death facing us, and below the waves multitudes of crawling things waiting for us to give them a feast. There was no hope, absolutely none. I am not a coward, but fear seized me. You, too, were aghast at the prospect. At this crisis she came to us. Glorious in form and feature, full of light and power to rescue us, but as if she knew it not. She had no look or word for us. Did not seem to know we were touching her. I vow it is a puzzle to me, now that I have seen her in flesh and blood. Did you ever see such *grace of motion*, such perfection of

physique? Can she be really a woman of this life?"

"Without doubt. She is also a woman of another life, for she can project herself where she will. She has been under long training, and is an adept of rare power. Her few sentences were cabalistic, and I long to know more of her life and work. Something tells me she holds the key to the mystery we are trying to solve."

"If she would only look at me once, I would swear allegiance to her forever, whether human, or adept, or astral. What a problem life is. A man lives till forty, and cares for nothing but his hobby, then dreams of a woman and loses his head. It only proves that fate will have its way."

As they entered the room, now lit by the ruddy blaze of a log-fire, that served the double purpose of giving light and warmth, for the evening was chill, they found the woman of whom they had spoken bending over a paper by the light of the fire, intently studying the lines upon it. It was an outline map, with diagram below, and a sketch of a house, mountain, and surroundings. Minute directions were written at the bottom, which was found to be the most direct route from the St. Lawrence to the spot in question.

"Would you care to see this map?" she inquired, as she looked up and saw the two gentlemen watching her with interest.

"Most certainly. I see it is a pen picture of this locality. Where did you find it?" asked Mr. Dana. "It is true to nature, lacking the wall. Here the

forest almost touches the house and comes to the river's edge."

"Where is the tree?" asked the Doctor, with surprise discernible in every tone.

"Sure enough. It is missing, and in its place are jets of flame coming from the earth like tongues of fire. How strange. But you have not told us yet where and how you came by it, Miss Cathmore?"

"How long ago was it, Mona?"

"Almost a year, dear."

"Supper is ready," sang out Tim, as he took the coffee-pot from the fire and placed it on the table, where an appetizing spread of fried trout, roast potatoes, bread and butter, and coffee was arranged in bountiful profusion. With appetites that can only be found in the mountains, and the environment of new faces and scenes, the guests sat down to a supper that would never be forgotten. All was quaint, unique, and exciting. A far might be a world of bustle and confusion, but not a sound or sign of its existence crept into this spot.

Twilight had deepened into night before they rose from the table and proceeded to the porch, where Tim had advised them to spend a couple of hours before the night's vigils began.

"It's better'n chamomile tea for the narves," he had said, by way of explanation; "an' ye may need all yer narves afore daybreak."

The loons were calling from the lake above, a single screech-owl cried out from beyond the river, but nothing else broke upon the stillness as they arranged them-

selves around the smudge. It chanced that Miss Cathmore seated herself between her brother and Mr. Dana. Her face made a clear-cut profile against the dark background. Her hands were crossed upon her lap, and her attitude was one of perfect tranquillity, almost passivity. Next her brother sat Mrs. Clifton, and Dr. Grotius finished the semicircle.

"Those loons cry like lost souls. They make the solitude dismal. Did you ever hear them before, Miss Cathmore?"

"Only in my dreams, Mr. Dana. You will scarcely believe me when I tell you that, though I have lived many thousands of miles from here, I feel perfectly at home amid these scenes; and more than that, I have often been here before."

"In your sleep?"

"You would call it that, though I prefer to think of myself as more than usually awake at such times. One could not find a safer place wherein to guard a great secret——"

"You refer to——"

"I refer to the subject that has brought us to this spot at this time,—you from the new, I from the old, world. You have come, unthinkingly, to act your part in one of the greatest acts of earth's drama; but generations to come will not stop to consider this, and your reward will be as great as if you loved and believed. Life is so generous to her children. I have come more intelligently because I have been better taught. The result will be the same to both. The world will only care for the knowledge she will gain. The Adepts of

the Himalayas have guarded the secret well, and ages hence all mankind will know and believe."

The words were spoken positively, and Dana could not but observe the contrast between them and the listless attitude of the speaker.

"And you have crossed seas for this purpose?" he asked. "You have never feared that you would find your mission fruitless? It was a great risk to take."

"I have tried to make her see this," interrupted her brother, "but nothing would convince her."

"Because I *know*. When we *know*, there is no room for conjecture, none for belief. You would not say you believed you had two hands; you know it."

"And so does every one else," rejoined the young man.

"So one day will every one know what they now refuse to believe. The race must advance; and as the law of evolution proceeds, new races will take the place of the men and women of to-day, and they will bring with them an added sense by which they will discern facts belonging to a world beyond the five senses. The sixth race will have a sixth sense, as you might have, if you would develop it."

"What do you mean, Miss Cathmore?" Hugo Dana leaned forward as he spoke and looked intently into the face of the speaker, but she did not turn her head or give him a glance in return. Thus far she had never looked towards him. The woman of his dream and the woman by his side were identical.

"I mean that in every soul lies latent the powers that in the near future will reveal a world about us

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"I mean that in every soul lies latent the powers that in the near future will reveal a world about us

now unknown. You and Carul, every one, may catch a glimpse now, if he will."

"But I am one of those men who must *see* to believe, and weigh and touch before I can know a thing. A fact is to me a fact when it belongs to the three dimensions of space and matter."

"To such as you there must come great changes before you can have light. You are now at sea in a fog, and when it will lift who can tell?"

As she uttered the last words, her listener started. "Fog," "sea,"—did she know of his dream? Perhaps it was a chance utterance, and he replied, absently,—

"I am one of the inferior races, no doubt——"

"There are no inferior races. The same life flows through all forms. It is not a difference of kind, only of degree. You are still with those who, having eyes, do not see. Can you tell me what was meant by that expression?"

No one answered. At last the sweet voice of Mrs Clifton said,—

"Our church teaches us that this referred to the will."

"And what is the will?" again asked Miss Cathmore. "Can you see, or handle, or weigh this will power? If not, these gentlemen will have none of it. They will say it does not exist."

"Pray, do not include me, Miss Cathmore," interrupted Dr. Grotius. "I may not believe as you, but I have something of the true eyesight, I am sure."

"Will you define it for these who are incredulous of its very existence?"

"I am not sure that I can. To me all things belong

to two worlds,—the one causative, and the other resultant. The one is lasting, the other transient. There is within every son of man a something that responds to the higher, that is in full accord with it, that knows and feels its throbbings. When this is recognized, we have a sight that transcends mere sight of eye and brain, as the stars outreach the earth. It is the germ of the god within asserting itself, and none will believe until they feel it within themselves."

"You speak truly, Dr. Grotius. We cannot say when the inner eyes will open, but we know they will, and that they do not see is no more to their dishonor than it is to our glory that we perceive. It is all the working of a law that belongs only to the Highest."

"I would give a kingdom to have this vision you speak of——"

"That is just the price of it, Carul. If you will give up the outer and lower, this higher gift will be with you forever. No sincere desire is ever destined to remain unanswered or ungratified."

"I have desired many things and received none. How is that? I have longed for you to give up all these ideas, Freeda, and yet you see I have not a single hope of your doing it. Explain yourself."

Before she could reply, Tim came to the door and said,—

"It is better in here by the fire, I reckon; the air is gettin' damp outside," and as he spoke he began to move the chairs from the porch. The group rose and followed, and Dr. Grotius, finding himself by Miss Cathmore, said in a low tone,—

"I hope you will tell us where you found that map. I have not forgotten it, you see."

"I will tell you all when we are quiet," was her reply.

Tim had made the room as attractive as possible. He had hung some blankets at the windows to shut out the night. He had placed upon the table a candlestick and candle, and piled by the side of the fireplace a huge pile of wood. A bright blaze was illuminating every corner of the room, and the effect was quite homelike. They seated themselves on either side of the fireplace; this time the ladies were together and the gentlemen opposite them.

"Are you equal to a night's watch, Miss Cathmore?" asked Mr. Dana.

"It is for this that I have come. Think you I should have crossed oceans, if I had not given myself to the work?"

"You have not told us how you chanced to come at all," rejoined the other.

"It was not by chance, but by a plan reaching back to my remote ancestors; aye, back to the origin of things. Neither did I come; I was sent. I am only a servant, and whither the Master sends I go."

"And who is your Master?"

"The Highest, the Creator, the *One*, the Unchangeable. He only is worthy of love. All else passes. All else changes. Can we love a wave of the sea, that is gone while we look upon it? Can we love the skies, that vary with every cloud? Is that bat that came in at the door and flew past us into the night worthy of love? Such are human ties."

Her hands clasped each other more firmly as she spoke, and when the question was asked by Mr. Dana, "Do you love nothing human?" she started, as if stung into sudden remembrance.

"Yes, I love, for I am weak. Love has been my greatest teacher. Through love I have suffered, through suffering have seen the light. My brother is the one idol that stands in my way of advancement. I cannot give him up."

"And me, Elfreeda; what would you do with me?"

"Love you, Mona, but not so blindly. Let us talk of other matters ere the night wears into silence. I have said I would tell these new friends something of my purpose in coming, and if they care to hear it now, I will keep my word."

From every side came eager entreaties to proceed, and they adjusted themselves to listen.

"I have come from strange lines of ancestry, and Karmic laws have made me what I am. Do you know what Karma is? It is the law of cause and effect; it is the law of harmony. It tells us that we could not be what we are at this moment if a single act of any of our ancestors had been different. In other words, we are what we have been made by the past, and what we now are decides our future and the lives that follow us. To speak more correctly, I would say that we live in a present that will always be a present. The past and the future belong to the earth, not to the soul.

"*'Never the spirit was born; the spirit shall cease to be never;
Never was time it was not; end and beginning are dreams.*

Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the spirit forever,

Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems.'

As one of the modern writers has expressed it, 'Karma is a rope of many strands, which represent our thoughts, actions, and aspirations, and where the rope passes is our country and environment.' I belong to countries far apart and to nations diverse; yet my soul has been helped by these opposites on the way to its goal. From the fastnesses of Wales, modified by English blood, came a race of men bold and brave. There was a time when they were Druids, and worshipped in nature's groves with priest,* and sacrifice, and cromlech. These were my people. Among them were seers and prophets, as history will prove. One of these men, in whose veins ran the love of the mystic and the love of the stars, married a daughter of India, in a time when men crossed the seas for wealth. She was a child of Parsee faith. To her the sun was sacred and the source of life was flame. From these ancestors I came. The builders marked my path and prepared

* Caesar said, "They inculcate that souls do not perish, but pass into other bodies. They discuss many points concerning the heavenly bodies and their motion, the extent of the universe, the nature of things, and the influence and ability of the immortal gods."

Marcellinus says, "They held the future of the soul was in another world. The sun and moon regulated their worship and formed a part of their service."

Abury has a wonderful temple of them, of which Aubrey writes, "These antiquities are so old that no books do reach them."

my place, and all the occult gifts of generations descended to me. They remained undeveloped and unknown for many years,—years in which I was striking my roots, like a plant, deep in the earth, as you are now doing. I never thought of things beyond my sight and touch. I was a child of the outer senses. My mother had gone to India as the wife of an army officer, and I was born amid the heat and gorgeousness of that country. To me life was a delight. To rock in my hammock, to mount my horse, to love and be loved,—this was life. Then came sorrow, and desolation fell on my life. I saw the world swept away, and Carul and I alone were left. Out of this ruin, this desolation and darkness, I awoke to consciousness and cried for light. There must be order and design somewhere. There must be something enduring. From this hungering and thirsting came a ray of light. Another and another, until I saw a new world. Had I been born under other circumstances, had my Karmic rope not fallen on fastening environments, I should never have been ripened for the work that is at hand. So some day must each of you feel the great forces stir within when the call comes to awake; so some day will all creatures turn towards the light. When I tell you that the inner eyes can be trusted better than the outer, you will smile; but Carul and my friend here can tell you that I have long been able to go in the dark and find what I wished, as easily as they can do it in the light. I can hear sounds that never come to your ears, for the world of sense has deadened your soul. But this was not reached in a week, or month,

or year. It was not attained easily, but it came through patient trial. When I could see, hear, touch, smell with this finer nature, I was told that I must come here. The work was waiting, and there was no one else to do it. I was told when and how to come, and whom I should meet in this very spot. A year ago the map you saw was given to me, drawn by my teacher's hand. You know the history of the hidden roll, of the sad fate of my aunt, of my cousin's death. You have read the papers left by my aunt's husband, and it now remains but to be wise and discover the sacred roll. Sul-Mal brought it hither. Sul-Mal was my teacher. He will guide us aright. When I shrank from the mission, he spoke thus,—

“‘Oh, woman, would you bring the Karmic curse upon your soul? Would you sink into an abyss, when you might mount to the stars? Gifts like yours demand use. Go, and fear not.’

“And do you know what this roll contains?” asked Dana.

“Yes, in a slight degree; or, rather, I know the character of the knowledge it contains. In it is the key to the problem of man's origin. The world to-day peers into the past, and questions when was man first created. Some assert he has developed from the lower orders, some that he was created perfect, and all are united in but *one* idea,—that he is here. The Bible is set aside by many, and believed in by a few, but all seek proof. In this roll is the only key; and if this is not found, there can never be a perfect harmony established between science and revelation. This knowledge has

been received by intuition, guarded by Adepts, preserved in caves, and handed down from century to century, until the time came to make it known. That time is here. The cycle is passing, and the next root-race are at hand. Some of its children are already here, with souls open to truth, and eyes looking into the future. They are entering into that fourth dimension of space, over which critics have laughed so long. By-and-by, the world will smile at the fact that there was ever a time when but three dimensions were known."

"Will that time ever come, and what can be added to length, breadth, and thickness?" questioned Hugo Dana, in a tone half incredulous, half earnest.

"Had you been living when there were but two dimensions, could I have made clear to you by any language that there might be a third somewhere in the universe? Without thickness, how could you have conceived of a possible globe or cube? A circle or a square, you might have known from their outline; but to have these multiplied into many squares or circles, all of one size, how could the mind have grasped it? So, to-day, you ask a description of the new order of things, and after I have told you that it is an interlacing of angles, a going out from the within, and a coming in from the without, you understand it no better than before. Like the sayings of Christ and Paul, they are meaningless when taken literally; they are revelations truly wonderful, when read by the spirit."

"But who can teach us these things? Whence comes this knowledge?" pursued her listener.

"First must come the desire to know, and then the path must be travelled that leads to the Light."

"Can you not tell us more of this life?" suggested the Doctor.

"Gladly would I lead where I have been led, but not to-night. It requires undivided attention, and at this time I must give every thought to my mission. To talk quietly upon these subjects as the hours pass till midnight is well, but not to become absorbed. The Truth shall make us free. By talking of this Truth, we become receptive, and it enters in and grows strong. Watch the flame as it burns and crackles. Watch, also, the fire that burns and makes no noise. The fire is the spirit—it is life. You see it not, but it consumes. The flame is its manifestation, its body. In the universe, this life-spirit is always unseen. In silence it enters the soul and does its work, and when it is seen and heard, it is only its results that are made manifest. One of the great secrets of this philosophy is the observance of the law of silence. Do this, and you shall *know*. If Christ needed silence and meditation to keep the spiritual forces at their best, think you the ordinary mortal can hope to see their power while absorbed with things of the world?"

"But who will prove that such forces exist?" persisted the unbelieving Dana.

"It will prove itself. I can give you a few simple rules, which, if you follow, will enable you to know beyond a peradventure that you have a self higher than the self you know; powers belonging to a higher life, a germ that has divinity in its grasp. The age is bring-

ing this knowledge to us, and the world must know, for it will see the revelation. On stone it is written, in mounds it is buried. From Karnak and the Nile come the voices that call to the graves of the New World, and say, 'Give up your truth. Give up your treasures. Dead bones live again.' Oh, sing to the fire! Oh, sing to the sun! for they tell of the Life that is guiding the race. One Life, one breath——"

Here she stopped suddenly; her head dropped upon her breast, and across her beautiful face passed a change of expression. Her features seemed to change form. They became stronger and more powerful. A light from within lit them into activity, and Carul Cathmore rose from his seat and went towards his sister, as if he would take her by the hand. Before he had touched her, she waved him from her imperiously, and arose and began walking too and fro across the room, her eyes open and fixed upon the fire.

"She is in a trance," said the Doctor. "We must try to awaken her."

"It is not the first, nor will it be the last," replied her brother, in a tone of bitterness. "Ever since she has fooled with this stuff she has been subject to these attacks, and when she comes out of them, quietly tells me she has been away. I hope, when she finds the whole thing a humbug, she will give it up and come back to ordinary life. If we could read aloud to her she will gradually come out of it. After long fasting, or days of going to the temple, she was apt to have these attacks. I have known them to last hours."

"I will go for a book, and the spell shall be broken,"

and, seizing the candle, Mr. Dana left the room, muttering something about "deuced nonsense," "enough to craze any one," "magnificent creature," and more of the same sort.

"You'd better not touch a book, sir, on no account," said Tim, who had followed him up-stairs. "In course ye mout be allowed to, seein' yer a frien', but I wouldn't take no chances ef I was you."

"What do you take me for, Tim? A coward? And that woman out of her mind down-stairs. You don't know your man."

Reaching his hand out for a volume of Coleridge's poems, he no sooner touched it than he fell to the floor as if dead. He fell so heavily that a quiver ran through the house, and the vibration accomplished what might have taken many hours. With a dazed, bewildered look, Miss Cathmore glanced around her, and moved towards the door, as if to go up-stairs. The rest followed. Tim was already coming for them with the light, and met them at the head of the stairs in a state of great excitement, repeating over and over,—

"I gave him warnin'. I tole him not to do it. It wasn't my fault. He said he warn't a coward, an' thar he lies," pointing as he spoke to the form of Hugo Dana lying motionless upon the floor. The light of the moon fell full upon his face, which now looked pallid and ghastly. He breathed, but the breath came slowly and fitfully. His friend knelt by his side and took his hand in his own. It was still warm, but limp and lifeless. He called him by name, but no response came from the closed lips. He shook him, but with no better

result. Around them stood Tim and the others, intently watching every move, and the only sound that broke the stillness was Tim's voice, as he repeated,—

"I tole him it was death to touch ary book, but he would do it;" and the Doctor calling aloud, "Hugo, wake up!"

"Let me try," came softly from the lips of Miss Cathmore, as she approached more closely and kneeled by the side of the prostrate man.

"What is his name?" she asked, looking into the Doctor's face.

"Dana, Hugo Dana."

Bending still lower, as if to infuse her breath into his ear, she said, in a deep, full whisper, as she placed one hand upon his head and with the other took his hand in hers, while the Doctor moved away and watched intently every motion, "Hugo, come."

The tone was imperative. She spoke but once, and immediately the lips moved, the breast heaved with a long-drawn sigh, the eyelids began to open, and with a glance around, a look of surprise, followed by one of recollection, he smiled. As yet he had not seen the face nearest his own, but, as the glance wandered and returned, it fell upon the beautiful face bending over him, and, as if by magic, he arose to his feet, still holding her hand in his. A strange light shone from his eye as he relinquished it and took his place with the rest.

"Well, old boy, I'm glad you're not dead. When I saw you lying there, I thought it was too big a price to pay for a little knowledge. Tell us what happened, and how it came about."

"Easily told, but not so easily understood. I reached my hand for a volume of poems, and as my fingers touched it, I felt an electric shock, and knew nothing more. I think I know, now, how it would seem to be struck by lightning. Of course, I don't understand it, and can't explain it except on the principle of hidden wires that might form a natural current. It's deuced strange, for I can stand five times as much electricity as most men. But, as Miss Cathmore is herself again, we'll let the books alone, and go down-stairs."

"Yer know I tole ye not to do it, an' now ye see why men can't dig in that ar hill, don't ye?"

"If I don't see, I have felt, and will own up that there's something strange in the whole affair. Of course, it is all explainable by natural law, if we can get at the bottom of it, which I doubt. If we keep our senses till to-morrow morning, we shall do remarkably well. I believe more and more in living in the world as we find it; if we find another, there will be time enough then to puzzle our heads over its laws. Can I assist you, Miss Cathmore, in finding our way down-stairs?"

When they re-entered the room below, there was a slight flutter, and a sense of presences they had not observed before,—as if there were others than themselves hidden somewhere. The curtains in front of the alcove moved perceptibly, and were slightly parted. They crossed the room, and looked behind. Nothing there but the bed where Gilroy Van Guilder died.

"The curtain must have been stirred by us as we entered," suggested young Cathmore. "Let us go out and come in again, and see if it has the same effect."

This time all was still, and they seated themselves once more around the fire, on which Tim had placed the coffee-pot. Again was heard the rustling as before, and each felt that some one had passed near them. The fire was low now, and the candle gave but a feeble light. It flickered as if gusts of air blew over it. They were all silent, and watched, expectant to see what might come. Softly the door of the corner cupboard moved on its hinges and stood wide open. A minute later, shadowy hands could be seen among the glasses and decanters, and as they looked more steadily, the glasses moved from their places, passed through the air, and were set down upon the table. Decanters followed them. Then came a sound of voices, very dim and distant. The decanters were raised, the glasses held in air, and touched as if in toasts; then took their places on the table. Again and again was this repeated before the astonished spectators, and at length all were replaced in their cupboard, as at first. They had risen to their feet to see better the strange sight, and as they turned again to their seats, they observed a figure sitting in the chair that had been occupied by Miss Cathmore. It was that of a woman dressed in white, her head bowed upon her hands, and the body swaying to and fro as if in great distress. The motion was a rhythmic one, keeping time to some unknown music. They all saw it. There was no possibility of mistake; yet how could they account for it? As they stood huddled together, the voices before heard became plainer. They were loud, now, and coarse, as of men that were lawless. They stopped just outside the window, and

the figure rocked faster as they came nearer; the fire sent out blue jets of flame, a cold air swept through the room, and glasses were dashed upon the floor and broken into atoms. Then the voices passed on; the woman bowed her head lower as if weeping, then rose from her chair, and beckoning to Miss Cathmore passed between Dana and the Doctor and went up-stairs. El-freeda followed her, and the rest joined her. Reaching the upper room, the spectre moved through the wall towards the tree, still beckoning the young lady to follow. Tim opened the door, and as they passed through it, they saw a flame burning in a circle around the tree, while in the centre, her left arm clasping the trunk, and her right moving slowly above her head, stood the woman in white.* The fire burned higher, it caught

* "What is it that ever was? The germ in the root. What is it that is ever coming and going? The Great Breath. What is it that ever is? Space. Then there are three eternal. No, there are three in one. That which ever is and ever was, ever being and ever becoming, is one, and this is—Space.

"One is an unbroken circle. The One is the indivisible point found nowhere, perceived everywhere. Light in darkness, and darkness in light."—"Upanishad."

"God is a consuming Fire."—"Bible."

"Elijah called down the 'fire of God.'"

"The Spirit beyond Manifested Nature is the fiery Breath in its absolute unity. In the Manifested World it is the Sun, and in, on, and around the earth the fiery spirit thereof—air, fluidic fire-water, liquid fire—earth—solid fire. The primitive names of all the gods are all connected with Fire, from Agni the Aryan to the Jewish God, who is a consuming Fire.

"Can the Flame be called the essence of Fire? This Essence

her in its flame, and then flame and woman disappeared from sight. The beautiful light, at first blue, then ruddy, and lastly golden, left naught but the moonlight of a perfect night upon the silent grandeur of a primitive world.

"She will come again, but where?" were the first words spoken by Miss Cathmore.

"I am satisfied and willing to excuse the rest of the performance," said young Cathmore to Mr. Dana.

"And so am I. Whatever the cause, I can see no profit in such things. Like all magic, it is evil."

They talked together in a low voice as they all returned to the house, and it was quite evident they were in full sympathy. As they entered the room, the former was heard to say,—

is the light and life of the universe. The visible flame is destruction itself—death, evil. Fire and flame will destroy the body of an Arhat, their essence make him immortal."

Lights and flames of fire may be considered as lancets of another world, the last world. This is the teaching of the ancient Fire-philosophers, who claimed to have discovered the Eternal Fire, or to have found out "God" in the Immortal Light.

Whence comes that trail of fire from the cold bosom of the hard flint? Who and what science-philosopher can explain this wondrous darting forth of the hidden something which, like a spirit, escapes him?

Now we shall find that this transcendental, beyond-limit-of-knowledge belief of the Fire God is to be laid hands upon in all countries and continents and worlds. As in the East so in the West; as in the old so in the new; as in the pre-Adamite so in the modern world; in rites spoken, in hieroglyphics, in symbols, we descry the mysterious sacredness of Fire.—"The Rosicrucians."

"Let them do as they will. I am tired out, and shall sleep till daylight. I think this night will satisfy even Freeda. Hey, Mona, what do you think?"

"I do not know what to think. I am dazed at this *diablerie*, and almost regret coming at all."

"Well, it will soon end. I'm in for a nap." So saying, he drew aside the curtains and threw himself upon the bed.

"There's a horrid smell of mould and dead wood here; but it can't kill; so here goes."

He was a fearless man. A life in India, familiarity with danger in all forms, had deadened nervous sensibility, and he had never felt a tremor of fear in his life. In a few moments he was sleeping like a child, blissfully unconscious alike of danger or ghosts. The night wore on. Conversation was no longer continuous as at an earlier hour, but spasmodic and more familiar. Mrs. Clifton for the first time allowed herself to be drawn into the web of talk, and as the subjects drifted from theme to theme, and rested at length on evolution, she grew animated and brilliant, until Elfreeda exclaimed,—

"Many years have we lived together, Mona, but never have I heard you talk like this. What inspires you to-night?"

Her friend laughed, and said, "Nothing; unless it is sheer desperation at seeing you so fascinated with this useless, senseless pursuit of what you will never find. If not imposture, it is worse; and why should we permit ourselves to be the tools of evil?"

"But, Mona, there can no evil harm us if we are

good, and surely you have seen enough to convince you that what we seek is here."

"We have had no proof of that, Freeda. When you find the roll you seek and show it to me, I will believe anything and everything; if you will also promise to give up your belief, if you fail to find it."

"I shall not fail. I cannot; but I promise."

"Will you give me your hand on that promise, Miss Cathmore?" said Mr. Dana, rising and coming towards her. She laid her hand in his in reply, and, as he felt its touch, a perceptible quiver passed over him.

"You are more than magnetic; you are positively electric. The current was as strong as when I touched that book a while ago. You could hypnotize me into perfect subjection to your will. Perhaps you did this by the touch that brought me out of that stupor, and if so, it would account for my seeing glasses and women and all the rest. It would account for everything. I am a believer in that sort of thing, for I have seen it tried."

"Can you touch it or test it by your senses, Hugo? If not, you must not believe. That is your theory, is it not?"

Before he could be answered, a crash interrupted him. It was followed by a reverberating roll, as of distant thunder. It came nearer, and, with face livid with terror, Carul Cathmore bounded into the midst of the circle. His eyes were staring wildly towards the bed he had just left, and as the rest cried out, "What is it?" "What is the matter?" "Speak, Carul," and the like, he seemed to recover himself and be able to speak.

"She's after me."

"Who?" "What?" "Where?" came at one time from every tongue.

"Hush! Listen!"

It was only the rustling sound they had heard before, as of a bat flying to and fro behind the curtain.

"Don't you hear it? Listen."

"I'm not afraid. I'll go and see for myself," and Dana started to go towards the alcove.

"For God's sake, stop: Let it alone. I'm not given to nerves, but I plead guilty to-night. I'd rather face a tiger unarmed than to meet that woman again."

"You were dreaming, that is all. Your brain was full of ghosts and hobgoblins when you went to sleep, and they followed you into the land of dreams. Sit down, and let Tim give you a cup of coffee, and you'll be all right," said Dana, trying to reassure him.

"Not I. I wish I were not so sure I was awake. I went to sleep as soon as I touched the bed, and slept soundly, for I don't know how long. Then I awoke suddenly, with a strange feeling of oppression and chilliness. I could hear you talking to Elfreeda, and, looking out, I saw you take her hand and wondered what it meant, for she never does that sort of thing, when, suddenly, I felt myself turning to ice and moving towards the ceiling. I tried to scream, but my tongue refused to move, neither could I jump from the bed to save myself. On I went, up and up, until I touched the ceiling, and knew that I was doomed to a horrible death. Then a pair of arms clasped my neck, and a hand passed over my forehead several times. At this

point I began to descend as slowly as I went up, and as soon as I reached the bottom I gathered up my will, and by a tremendous effort sprang to the floor. Feel of my head; it is wet with perspiration, and I am drenched with moisture, like a drowning man. Up above me all the time was a woman's face, and, though it had no eyes, it seemed to look right into mine, as if reading my very thoughts. That infernal bed is some contrivance to murder, and all the money in the world would not tempt me to lie on it again. Then came the crash. The rest you know."

"But, Carul, all this may be a part of the discovery for which we have come."

"Nonsense, Freeda. Would you sacrifice all you love, and yourself, too, for the sake of some priest's idle tale? I am losing all my patience, much as I love you."

"But you promised me, Carul, not to desert me——"

"And I shall keep my word, though I know it to be worse than folly."

"It is almost done, my brother. The end is at hand. The patience of many years will not forsake you now," and, as she spoke, she caressed the hand she had taken in her own. He bent over her and kissed her forehead, as if to atone for the words he had uttered, and, smiling, she resumed her chair just as a knock was heard at the door. It was repeated at the window towards the north before Tim could open it, and then the glass shivered by a blow and fell to the floor. The moon had gone down, and darkness made the place more desolate. Tim went to the door, but, save a gust of wind, nothing entered.

He went to the window and tried to nail a bag over the broken pane, but before he had accomplished it, a hammering under the fireplace began, and continued as if determined to force a way through the floor. Then came a shrill whistle beneath the window, answered by one from the alcove, and voices loud and strong were heard distinctly.

Around the fire sat the watchers, intent, expectant, their faces a curious study to an observer. Satisfaction on Elfrieda's and pleasure upon Dr. Grotius's countenances were counterbalanced by the vexation, surprise, and incredulity upon the rest. Not a word was spoken. They were listening to the noises about them, now multiplying into a din of sounds, where whistles, voices, knocks, hammerings were blended into a discord fit for pandemonium.

"Hush. See her come," and as Elfrieda spoke, the spectre glided towards her again, paused in front of the alcove, and, pointing to the floor, disappeared instantly.

"She would tell us that in that alcove is the passage we would find," said Miss Cathmore, quietly, turning towards Dr. Grotius. When she had spoken the last word, silence again reigned. All sounds were hushed as by magic.

"Give us your light, Tim. We'll soon see what there is to be seen," said Hugo Dana, going towards the place in question, and beginning to remove the blankets that were now falling to decay. Under these were a couple of thin beds, and beneath these the box was filled with dried ferns and hemlock twigs. It was the work of but few moments to clear all this out, exposing a board

wilderness seemed like a new creation. The night-birds were quiet, and all nature listened for the coming of the king. As one that walks in their sleep, so moved Elfreeda Cathmore until she came to the flame-tree, where she stood motionless, facing the east, holding the parchment to her forehead. Her lips moved, as if talking to some one at her side, and in a slow, recitative she chanted the following words:

"From the land of the East;
From the banks of the Nile;
From the land of the sun,
Come the rays of the morn.
They shoot to the zenith;
They fly to the pole;
They warm earth's dark corners
With light that is life.
Hark! hear ye the tidings,
Look! see ye the tokens,
Of life that is coming to you and to me?
The light has now risen
To illumine the path.
The time is at hand
For the world to be saved.
Oh, ye dead! ye are coming
From tombs and from graves;
Ye have guarded the truth
Through the ages of time.
The daydawn is nearing,
And earth nevermore
Will your power bind and fetter.
The flames will soon crown you;
The sun will receive you,
And the race of mankind
Praise the work ye have done."

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floor that showed no sign of door or opening. Dana took from his pocket a small hammer, and, gently tapping the floor in all directions, he paused at length, and said,—

"Here is a different sound, and must be the place, if there is any." No one spoke. The interest was intense, as he slowly manipulated every board to see if there was sign of spring or opening.

"Here it is, but rust has fastened it to the wood. We must break the board——"

"She has never let any person touch the bed afore," ejaculated Tim in dismay, as he saw Mr. Dana take the axe to force an entrance. "It must be she's glad to have her kinfolks here, or ye could never do it."

Two blows and the deed was done. They gathered around the opening and peered within. The dust of half a century had lain undisturbed there, and in the middle was a box. The space had been walled in stone, and a square stone formed the bottom. Dana stooped and lifted from it the box. It was of iron, and its shape rectangular, measuring five inches in width by four in depth and nine in length. Upon the lid were strange figures and devices, representing the sun, moon, constellations of the Zodiac, and a few stars above; and beneath them, lying upon the ground, was a human skeleton. Its hands clasped its shoulders, its legs were bent at the knee, and the feet doubled back. Its brain was not human, for the forehead failed to rise above the eyes, but went straight back, and the jaws were massive and heavy.

"What can the creature mean?" asked Carul, looking at it carefully.

"Oh, some sort of hieroglyphics, no doubt," replied Dana. "Perhaps the key will be given when we open the box."

It was passed from hand to hand and closely examined. Not a trace could be found of lock or hinge; yet its weight proved that it could not be solid. At last Miss Cathmore took it in her hands, and, holding it against her forehead for a moment or two, she laid it upon the table and placed her thumb firmly upon the sun. As she pressed, the figure raised itself from the lid and rested upon one edge, revealing beneath a circular spring. Touching this in the same manner, the cover slowly rose from the edges and stood upright the entire length of the box, being held by fine hinges in the centre. Within lay a roll of parchment and a key.

"And this is all," exclaimed Carul, in a tone of mingled disappointment and disgust. "Where is the treasure? Where is all the knowledge we were to find?"

"Wait, Carul." The voice vibrated with a sympathetic tenderness truly pathetic, as she took the parchment from its place and unrolled it upon the table. It was covered by strange characters, cuneiform in shape, and at the head was a fac-simile of the design upon the lid of the box. She held it to her forehead, as she had done the box, and stood motionless five minutes. Then she turned towards the door, and still carrying it, she moved slowly, as one in a dream, towards the hill, and, as she moved forward, her body swayed like a willow to and fro. The rest followed silently, wondering what she would do. It was now early morning, and the

wilderness seemed like a new creation. The night-birds were quiet, and all nature listened for the coming of the king. As one that walks in their sleep, so moved Elfrieda Cathmore until she came to the flame-tree, where she stood motionless, facing the east, holding the parchment to her forehead. Her lips moved, as if talking to some one at her side, and in a slow, recitative she chanted the following words:

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With light that is life.
Hark! hear ye the tidings,
Look! see ye the tokens,
Of life that is coming to you and to me?
The light has now risen
To illumine the path.
The time is at hand
For the world to be saved.
Oh, ye dead! ye are coming
From tombs and from graves;
Ye have guarded the truth
Through the ages of time.
The daydawn is nearing,
And earth nevermore
Will your power bind and fetter.
The flames will soon crown you;
The sun will receive you,
And the race of mankind
Praise the work ye have done.”

As the first rays of the morning sun touched the mountain, she flung her arms into the air and bowed three times towards the sun. Holding the roll high in her right hand, she again sang with eyes fixed on the sun,—

“Sul-Mal have I seen,
Sul-Mal he has spoken,
From the land of the East,
From the land of the sun.
To the south; to the mountains,
He tells me to journey,
Ere yet from the past,
The secret is won.
There are bones bleaching there,
That are links in the chain
Of the truth of the worlds.
There are graves that must open,
Of primeval races, and caverns,
That hide the lost secrets of man.
When these are all found,
And the cave here is opened,
The drama has ended,
The flame-tree has gone.”

As she uttered the last words, a flood of sunlight fell upon the singer, and, letting her arms fall to her side, she prostrated herself to the ground. When, a few moments later, she joined the silent circle, it was as if she had returned from a distance.

“I have been to India, Carul. I have seen Sul-Mal. He has seen our work here, and says it is well. But there are other hiding-places to be found, and we must travel farther before we can enter the cave of the altar and the dead. He says he will guide me, and we must

go southward. He also says that the forces that have guarded this spot are now broken, and we must not leave it without putting some one in charge to watch till we return. We can do no more until then."

"Leave me here. I will see that nothing happens." It was the Doctor that spoke, and in his tones could be detected a nervous anxiety, as if afraid his wish would not be granted. "Tim and I can pass the time here, fishing and hunting; can't we, Tim?"

"Sure. It's a good enough place to camp out, ef ye doan't mind the ghosts, and ye doan't seem to be afeerd on it."

"But I would rather pay Tim to guard it, and have you go with us, Doc. I would offer to stay with you, but my curiosity is aroused, and I feel inclined to see the thing out." Dana might have added that he would have followed Elfreeda Cathmore to the ends of the earth, but he was scarcely conscious of this motive dominating him, and only knew that in a sort of blind way he was her slave.

"I much prefer a rest, and I feel a desire to stay, if you will agree to let me," continued the Doctor, trying to appear indifferent.

"If he feels so, I say give him his wish. It will not be more than a week, probably, will it, Freeda?" and Carol turned towards his sister as he spoke.

So it was settled that they should all go back to Tim's and make arrangements to be carried out of the woods, leaving the Doctor and Tim in charge of Gilroy Van Guilder's old house.

CHAPTER XI.

AN INTERLUDE.

"As with man, so with the planet. For small and great there is one law; though one star differs from another star in glory. From star to star, from sun to sun, from galaxy to galaxy, the cosmic souls migrate and interchange."

"The opening of the shrine will always find it empty, the God is gone."

"These are the four excellent things,—the rod, the wings, the sword, the hat; the spirit of holy boldness, which cometh by faith in God; Knowledge, which thou must gain by labor; a mighty will, and a complete discretion."—"Hymn to Hermes."

It is not possible that four people could ride all day amid the solitudes of vast forests, in a mountain wagon, over corduroy roads and up steep hills, without becoming like old friends. Twenty-four hours of such intercourse will offset years of conventional society. Add to this a night passed in a so-called haunted house, where every mind is alert on the same subject, and a certain degree of harmony must be attained that under ordinary circumstances would be impossible.

The walk to the lake, the passage across two at a time, the morning tramp down the mountain, had all been a greater delight, because of the long tension of nerves during the vigil of the night.

From the moment they left the house, Elfreeda Cathmore was a new creature. Once more she was

her old self, as she had not been for many years, and Carul and her friend beheld with delight the change. There was no shadow on her day now. Sorrow, grief, were all forgotten in the delight of living, and if she had been attractive before, what words could describe her now, animated, brilliant, and light-hearted, yet thoughtful and earnest. It was as if the soul had suddenly acquired a new force, and could reveal itself more plainly; or as if some layer of outer environment had been removed and given it freedom. The cause of this change could only be conjectured. Perhaps a reaction from long tension on one line; perhaps the delight of proving true what all had said was false; perhaps the new air and scenes of her surroundings; or it may have been all commingled. The result was, however, a surprise and a benediction, and her brother forgot the years of sorrow and darkness, and was a boy again. He whistled, and sang, and jumped, and said funny things, until they reached the house of their guide. They started for Prospect next day, and through all the long ride he was the life of the party.

There were many rough places where it was better to walk than ride, and somehow it happened that he strolled by the side of the young widow, leaving Mr. Dana to act as escort to his sister. Since the death of her lover, Elfreeda had never talked with a gentleman until now. If he had been a believer in the phenomena they had witnessed, Carul would have understood it; but this man was a thorough materialist, not willing to accept the fact of personal immortality, much less all that his sister held sacred.

Many years ago, when Carul Cathmore was in college, he had met and loved Mona Hastings. A misunderstanding separated them; she married an officer in the army, and within a year was a widow. Her intimacy with the Cathmores had never been interrupted, and when her friend was left broken-hearted and alone, she took her place as a sister and became one of the family. No allusion was ever made to former relations, and she sometimes wondered whether Carul remembered the old infatuation. He gave no sign. By look or word he never showed that she was, or had been, more to him than his sister's friend. After a time she ceased to think of it, and the beautiful friendship of the three became stronger than any mere passion, and was cemented into an affection that could not be moved.

Mona Clifton never dreamed that this devoted brother had vowed never to marry until his sister was happy. Had she known this, Carul Cathmore had been a hero in his self-abnegation and unselfish love.

"Do you hear what they are saying, Mona?" he asked, as they picked their way over the bed of a stream. "What can it mean? Have you ever heard her talk to any one like that?"

"Not since her father died. What a fortunate thing that we consented to come, if by so doing she will give up her transcendental life and be like the rest of the world."

"Perhaps that is the secret we are to find. What a joke!" and he laughed until Elfreeda turned and looked back to see what was the matter. She then continued her conversation, and they overheard Mr. Dana saying,—

"Twice you have spoken of being in a fog at sea. Tell me why you used that figure?"

He was walking by her side, and turned his head to watch the expression of her face. His question had startled her, and in a confused manner, strangely at variance with her usual composure, she replied,—

"Do not ask me now. The time may come that I can tell you."

"But I have a reason for asking. Won't you tell me now?"

"Impossible." She raised her eyes as she uttered the word, and a stream of purple light shone into his as their glances met.

"Have you ever seen me before we met two days ago? Tell me this."

"Many, many times. We are old friends. If I should tell you where and when we have met, you would not believe. What if I say that, when Aspasia held sway in Greece, I was in Persia, and you were there also?"

"You don't believe it? You don't believe you have existed before?"

"More than that: I know it. If we have not lived before we came upon this stage of being, we cannot hope to live after; but, remember, I do not say the former or the after lives are all lived on this little planet. Far from it.

"That is what my friend, the Doctor, believes. You should know him better, Miss Cathmore; you would find him a man after your own heart."

She said nothing in reply, and he continued,—

"I felt worse about leaving him behind than anything I ever did in my life. If he had not seemed so determined about it, I should never have consented. He is a grand man; but that woman's death has shaken him all up, and he's never been quite himself since. Perhaps the quiet will be just what he needs. I wish I could shake off the feeling I have about it."

Still she did not answer, and he continued,—

"When you talk of mental forces that have power to work without a body, I do not understand you; but if you say you believe one human mind affects another, I am with you. Dr. Grotius has been injured by contact with diseased minds, and I was really afraid he would lose his reason for a while. He was more like his old self this morning when we said 'Good-by,' than I have seen him in many a day."

"Can this acorn become an oak?" As she spoke she laid in his hand an acorn she had found in her path.

"If conditions are right; yes."

"What if conditions are not right? What if I crush it with a stone?"

"Of course it will never be a tree."

"But what becomes of the life-principle that lies folded in the germ? I can destroy the germ; but can I destroy the life itself?"

"I cannot separate them. To me the germ is the life."

"And to me the life is something independent of all else, acting through organisms, but not dependent on them for its existence. It is only dependent on them for its manifestation."

"What are you two so interested in?" called out

Carul. "We are to stop here for lunch, and I'll own I'm ready for tiffin."

"What's that?" asked Dana.

"An Indian name for lunch, that's all."

Tim unharnessed the horses, tied them to trees, and gave them their dinner; then he built a fire and made preparations for cooking. He had chosen a spot near a spring, where the jewel-weed nodded in the sunlight, and the scarlet eye-bright gleamed like a banner amid the varied greens. While the dinner was being cooked, the weary travellers spread blankets upon the ground and rested. Elfreeda asked for a paper and pencil, and began a sketch. As it grew under her hand the others watched it, until they saw a small town, surrounded by high, wooded mountains, and at one side a field, a stream, a house, and a group of people.

"This is our destination," she said, "and this our route. Here is Utica, there is Cincinnati, this is our last railroad stop, and here is Sparta. It will take us two days, if we have no detention. June is passing. The bones must be found before the sign changes. Can we not ride this evening, and so perhaps save time by taking an earlier train?"

"How is it, Tim? Can we do it?"

"I s'pose we can. I've taken many a load in by the light o' a full moon. There's a shanty ten miles beyond the ole mill that is a good place to camp in."

"But what are we to find when we reach Sparta?" asked Carul of his sister.

"Bones, just bones. But if we find them, the proof will be obtained of all that has been so carefully pre-

served. Mankind will then know something of its creation and evolution and history. It may be nothing to any of us; the subject does not interest us; but all scientific men of the future must build upon new foundations, and religious systems must be revised or perish. Truth cannot cross itself. It is *truth* for all time, for all countries, for all worlds. The truth of the Bible is, or should be, but a reflection of all we see in nature; of all science has or ever will discover. The race has now reached the fourth round, and everything begins to take on spiritual truth. This is why the revelation must come that proves an inspired message, when as yet there was neither printed page, nor papyrus, nor any method of presenting the truth except by transmission from father to son. Do you see how this will meet the unbelief of coming ages? Do you see how it will draw all men into line? As Christ said, 'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.' His second coming is at hand, and none may resist him."

"Can you not tell us more of the hidden roll, Miss Cathmore?" asked Dana.

"In a way, yes; but not all. This evening, perhaps, by the log-fire of the camp, I can give you an idea of what has been told me. But the great truth I shall only know when I read the roll within the cave."

Dinner was now ready, and as soon as it was over they prepared for a start, hoping to reach their destination at an early hour.

Would they ever forget that ride? Who that has been in that great wilderness has ever forgotten the delight of its simple pleasures? To move slowly amid

whispering trees, by singing brooks and flowing river, untouched by the baser motives that call to man from every side in civilized life; to forget, for a time, that men have piled up gigantic fortunes on the one hand, and others are starving for life's necessities on the other; to recognize in companions, intellect, soul, and worth, regardless of externalities; to feel the great mother heart of nature beating in sympathy with all best aspirations; who that has experienced this can ever forget? So went the day with our little party. Sometimes silent, often singing, and very often uttering exclamations of delight at song of bird or glint of sunbeam, until the horses stopped near a log-cabin, and they were told to make themselves at home for the night. The full moon shone through a clear atmosphere, and it was almost possible to read by her light, as they gathered around the fire, built before the cabin, and waited for Tim to make his preparations for the night. There were no loons calling to-night, for the lakes were too distant. Only an occasional owl could be heard amid the impressive silence. The cabin was not very secure. On one side it was open, and could only be protected by blazing logs. It needed no vivid imagination to picture wild beasts prowling near in the still hours, and Mrs. Clifton had already asked Carol to keep awake all night and watch.

"Now is our time to listen, Miss Cathmore," said Hugo Dana, settling himself as comfortably as possible upon a couch made of hemlock branches and a buffalo robe.

"And all things are favorable. I am not sure that I can tell you in such a way as to be understood. It may not be quite clear in my own mind, but such as I have

I gladly give. Yon moon, that rides high in heaven to-night, has a power that may help me to tell and you to hear. Have you ever thought that she has greater control over earth's children than the sun with his powerful light and magnetic rays? Have you ever seen a plant respond to the sunlight as do many to the moonlight? And no human brain is touched by the former as we know it to be affected by the latter. And all these facts point to one thing,—our relationship to the moon. Can we prove it? and what is it? are the questions to be answered. Assertions are easily made. Proofs are not easily given. If I tell you what I have been taught, you will call it absurd, and reject it. Generations of wrong teaching have not been lost upon the race. It believes, without proof, what it was taught to believe, and yet will not accept with proof a new creed. What I give is but the outline of the science that must prevail. Let me give you a sentence from Hermes Trismegistus. 'The Father of that one only thing (man) is the sun, its mother is the moon; the wind carries it in his bosom, and its nurse is the spirit.' The moon is now a dead world; but the time was when she was the fruitful mother, and earth itself was without an inhabitant. It was then that the moon's rulers, the Pitris, said, 'Bring forth men. Give them inner forms, and mother earth will build coverings or bodies.'*

* "The Pitris were moon fathers, sometimes called Dyhan-Chohans. They descend from the material worlds, and at each new Manvantara fashion physical man."—"Occult Catechism."

There are seven classes of Pitris. Each class endows man with what it has to give. "The Pitris cast no shadows."

Now, these Pitris were of seven classes, and each could give to man from his own resources. One could give form, another the germ of the ego, and so on, until the seven principles in man to-day were all foreshadowed by these latent gifts. This man was fluidic, a transparent complexity, almost spirit, and affected by all spiritual surroundings. He must be protected when put upon earth, and this protection would be a covering or body. Now this was as yet unformed, and nature failed to attain perfection for many ages. We shall, therefore, expect to find in any trace of the first race, a crude, imperfect body, scarcely comparable to our higher animals. Can we find such traces? can we prove this theory? The wiser ancients caught a glimpse of this truth, for they were nearer the original source than are we. Josephus says, 'Souls are pre-existent in the world of emanations. They descend from the pure air to be chained to bodies.' And Philo says, 'The air is full of souls; they descend to be tied to mortal bodies, because through the human form, and in it, they will become progressive beings. Angels cannot progress. 'Know ye not that ye shall judge angels?' (1 Cor. vii. 3.)

"The souls, while as yet unclothed by a body, were still with the moon mother, and only the germs of what they would become by future development in material forms. The Pitris never came to earth, but took charge of the spiritual embryo until it was sufficiently matured to descend to earth and build about itself a body. The fact of other words being inhabited is believed by many of our greatest scientists. Sir

Isaac Newton, Lavater, Diderot, Kant, Goethe, Laplace, all held this truth, but never reached so far as to know that the moon was the great cradle of our race. Thus our earth is subject to the breath of its mother, for the palpitating tides that breathe inward and outward. Everything upon it is made perfect by the number seven, whereby the Devas or Pitris have stamped their own number upon all that is human. There are seven classes of Pitris,—three formless, four corporeal. Everywhere, among all religions, this number is held as the sacred perfection. Among the ancient Americans, the Archaic Aryans, and the Egyptians, it is the same. Pythagoras calls it the vehicle of life, containing body and soul, embracing a cube and a triangle, formed of a quaternary that is wisdom and intellect, and crowned by a trinity, that of action, form, and matter. In the Zenda-vesta, the Puranas, the Book of the Dead, and our own Bible, this number is constantly recurring as the perfect number. From the seven days of creation to the seven plagues of Egypt, all the way to the vision of John in Revelation, it is meeting us continually. Within man we find the central force, the heart showing forth this same regard for the sacred number. The heart has four lower cavities and three higher; a reflection of the hebdomadic and triangle. He has seven plexuses, and some teach seven skins. He has five senses now, but is destined to have seven when perfect man."

"Hist! Be still! I hear a wild-cat in the west. Get your guns ready," and Tim crawled along the side of the shanty, while the rest were as still as death.

Although there was no danger as long as the fire blazed as high as it was then doing, a thrill of fear vibrated through the little party that must trust to this poor covering till morning.

"Nothing will hurt us, Mona; never fear," said Elfreeda, softly, as she took in her own the hand of her friend.

"There's safety in numbers," added Carul, holding a gun in his hand.

"Say, rather in tranquillity and boldness," replied his sister.

The screams of the wild beast were now only heard occasionally, but each time a little plainer, and always as if coming towards their cabin.

"Keep close in the corner, girls, and trust us to make mince-meat of the varmint, as Tim calls it," said Carul, as he crowded them into the most remote corner. On three sides were logs, over their heads a roof of bark, and in front the blazing fire. The creature was coming on. Hugo Dana came close to Miss Cathmore and spoke in a whisper, but not so low that Mrs. Clifton did not hear, "For God's sake, don't come forward. There is no danger here, but don't venture towards the front." Then they waited. The next cry was near at hand. There would be a desperate effort made, and Tim lay flat upon the ground, holding his gun ready to shoot. The other two were just behind him, where the light of the fire served as protection.

"Jehosaphat! There's two on 'em, as sure as I'm alive," muttered Tim. "I see four stars in the woods, and that means eyes." Again all was still. "Don't

fire till I tell ye to. We can't waste time just now," was the next order. "The varmints are lyin' close to us in the shadow o' the cabin. They're e'en a-most starved, or they'd never venture so near humans. An' they'll be as savage as lions. We must be wise as sarpints, I ken tell ye."

"Carul, Carul; come here, quick!" It was Mona Clifton who called, and, as the young man went towards her, she pointed to a place in the back of the cabin where were chinks wide enough to admit a hand. Through this could be seen four balls of fire that seemingly were not five feet distant.

"Ob, Carul! what a horrible death, to be torn to pieces by those savage beasts. I cannot help being afraid."

"Trust me, and be calm, Mona. Life is not going to be taken from us when it is sweetest. I'll ask Tim what he thinks is best to do."

Then he crept back and soon returned with Tim, who said, "Come, boys, we'll give them a dose all at once through that crack. Be sure of your aim, and don't pull the trigger till I say '*now*.' I'll aim at the left eye, one o' ye take the next, an' one the *right*. I think we stan' a good chance o' hittin' somethin'."

"Now." They all fired. A terrific howl burst upon the night, and the animals fled through the bushes in dismay.

"They won't trouble us again to-night. We will find blood in the morning, and all we've got to do is to keep our eyes open till daylight."

"And you will not find that an easy matter, Mr.

Cathmore," said Dana, "after a long day's ride and tramp. We'll let the ladies have the blankets and keep to the corner, and we will take turns watching, so the fire does not go down."

"That's a sensible plan, for I must say I am sleepy now. Let me have the first nap; then you can have a chance till morning, for I'll watch alone and let you and Tim both sleep."

In a short time all was silent, and only Tim and Hugo Dana could be discerned by the light of the fire. They were sitting at the edge of the open side, one on either side of the fire, with their gun upon the ground by their side. After he was sure the rest were asleep, Tim began talking to his comrade.

"I swon but I was scared when I see those two animiles so near us. I thought our time mout a-come. Ye can't trust wild-cats. They're the only thing I'm afeered on. It was mighty onsertain what 'ud happen arter we fired, but there warn't nuthin' else to do, fur they was a-comin' right up to that crack, an' ef they'd smelt us they'd a-tore that bark off the roof in no time. We wus lucky to git off as well as we did, I ken tell ye."

"But is there really no danger of their coming back again?"

"I reckon not. P'haps ef the fire went down they'd try it, ef they are alive."

"We could protect ourselves, but the two ladies make one timid."

"Yes. Women are allers a care. It doesn't make no difference whar they be, a man must allers be takin'

care of 'em. But, law, they take care o' us in other ways, and life 'ud be mighty lonesome without 'em. Hev ye a wife, stranger?"

"No. I've been a busy man all my life. No time for that sort of thing."

"Ye must ha' been powerful busy, fur it doan't take any time to love a woman. It takes a sight more to forget her, onst ye've seen the right one. I've never seen many on 'em, but I kin tell the difference atween those I hev seen and that tall one that came to the spook-house. It doan't seem to me as ef ther could be any more like her. When she looks at me an' smiles, it makes me warm all over, and in mid-winter I couldn't feel the cold ef she was near. I wonder ef she makes ye feel that way, too?"

"Well, no. I believe she affects me quite the opposite. Who built this shanty?"

"Horace Greeley and some men from New York, or ruther I might say they had it built. They felt a leetle shaky about sleepin' in the woods all night without ary thing over their heads. Ye see they once had a big scare, an' they said it was enuff."

"Tell me about it."

"It ain't much to tell. They wuz all tired out a-trampin' over from Pine Lake, and when night came they wuz in the loneliest part of the north woods. Arter supper was over they curled up close to the fire and went dead asleep. The guide sat up to watch, but guides is human, too, an' he was tired, and by-and-by he fell asleep, too. The fire burned all right fur quite a spell, an' then it kinder died down, an' sure's ye born,

a sneakin' wild-cat crep' up to Greeley and squatted down, all ready to jump, when the guide woke up, an', as he had no time to shoot, he yelled like an Injun an' scared the creetur away. They killed it the next night, an' it was monstrous big."

"You don't think those that we shot at will come again to-night?"

"Can't noways say. They mout an' then agin they moutent."

"Two of us must watch all night."

"So I thought. We'll have to change off, I guess. Ef I can sleep an hour or two, I'll be all right. Ye see I've got to hurry back home an' look arter things."

"And don't let my friend get lonesome. He has not been quite like himself lately, and I hated to leave him behind. I have a feeling that something will happen to him, and, remember, he is in your care. Keep an eye on him all the time, but don't let him know it."

"You don't think he's out of his head?"

"Not exactly that, but nervous, and needs rest. Keep him quiet and watch him."

"Was he any kin to the ghost?"

"Not at all. Her daughter was his patient, that's all. She was cousin to Miss Cathmore."

"Hark!"

"What is it?"

"Hist! Somethin's scratchin' at the bark again. I swon I b'lieve thar's more o' them varmints."

As he spoke, he crept towards the place where the

rest were sleeping, and pretty soon came back to his old place.

"It warn't anythin' more'n porcupines. I foun' one o' thar quills. Curus how a body gits stirred up in the night. I guess we'll wake up the t'other chap an' let you sleep a spell now. He an' I can keep the logs blazin'."

"We'll waken him, and he and I will keep watch while you take a nap, Tim. I am as wide awake as a catfish."

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT IS TRUTH?

"It is quite a mistake to imagine that credulity is the quality of an ignorant mind; it is rather incredulity that is."

"And one word speak the bird and the beast, and the hyssop that springs in the wall,
And the cedar that lifts its proud head upon Lebanon, stately and tall,
And the rocks, and the sea, and the stars; and 'Know' is the message of all."

THE night was at its height when Carol Cathmore rubbed his eyes and took his place by the side of the fire. It was a perfect night; not a cloud flecked the sky. The moon sailed serenely through the starry heavens, and between their heads and the firmament was a canopy of lace that no art of man could rival. The branches of the hemlocks interlaced in beautiful figures, and the fine leaves quivered and whispered in

soft, low tones. To one who loves Nature, these leaf-sounds are as exquisite as one of Beethoven's harmonies. But the two men sitting the night out beneath the stars had no eyes for Nature's triumphs, and, as Tim threw himself on the ground, with his gun by his side, the elder of the two said,—

“What is such a life worth? I can understand a man's enjoying solitude with knowledge and books, but without it seems little better than a vegetable existence.”

“That is the fault of our wrong education. I have lived all my life among the orientals, and the wisest men among them assert that all activity is waste; that knowledge must come from within a man, and the only thing to help him to its attainment is silence and meditation. What is put into the mind is not knowledge. To attain silence and passivity is their highest aim, and when you talk with them, you cannot but feel their superiority. This is how they managed to influence my sister. While I do not believe all they teach, I have found to my perfect satisfaction that there are powers in man of which the world does not dream, and when these are better understood, there will be no mystery in all this ghostly stuff. Now, if one of those Hindu mystics were here to-night, he would not fear all the animals of the forest. A glance of his eye would send every wild-cat to its den. I have seen a tiger crouch like a whipped dog before an unarmed priest of that heathen religion.”

“How do you account for this power? Is it something that may be acquired by those of other nations, our own, for example?”

"My opinion is that it is a power latent in all mankind; but, owing to their manner of living and their meditative habits, they have retained this power in a higher degree of perfection than the western races. Of one thing I am assured, viz., the curse of the race is meat-eating.* You smile. You remember how I despatched that ham at supper. You do not separate between theory and practice. Now I am not going to make myself peculiar and live unlike my fellows. What would I gain? Perhaps a few years more of life; perhaps a certain immunity from disease; perhaps a greater power over the brute creation, and perhaps the power of knowing the secret thoughts of the minds about me. But would these compensate for the lack of harmony and understanding I should meet on every hand?"

"You are not like me. If I was convinced of the truth of anything, I should shape my cause by my belief. Doc calls me a materialist; but he is wrong, for I believe in certain laws that govern matter, and these I cannot touch by the senses. Beyond all this, I simply say, I do not know. Tell me what you base your theory of diet on?"

* In Gen. i. 29 we are told of man's first food. After the fall, with shortened life came meat-eating. To-day we find the most vigorous burden-bearers of South Africa, South America, and India living upon fruit, and enduring what no meat-eating man could do. Aside from all occult reasons and belief in astral influences, the pendulum will soon swing to the opposite extreme, not because it is wrong to take life, or that meat-eating builds up the animal and pulls down the spiritual, but because the diseases of the animals will be transferred to the human.

"Partly on observation, mostly that. In a slight degree on the teachings of the Bible. Those heathen, as you call them, set me thinking, and gave me ideas that though I cannot prove them, neither can I throw them aside. I am not at all religious, but such things interest me. I would not own it to Freeda for the world, but I went far enough in the practice of Yoga to see things that I would not tell you of, that I do not care to think of."

"And did you at that time eat no meat?"

"Not an atom. Nor did I smoke a cigar, nor drink coffee. You see the nerves and system must be in the best possible natural condition. You observe I smoke now; I also drink coffee. I wish to heaven I could prevail on Freeda to eat meat and drink coffee; she would soon be free from this cursed bondage."

"Yet I heard her tell you that she was miserable before and is happy now."

"Sure. It's just like being on a swell toot. Did you ever see a man miserable while he was drunk? It's when he is getting sober that his misery begins. If you had known Freeda before, you would understand better why I feel as I do. Why, man, there was never a girl lived like my sister. Even now she has not her equal on the globe. Physically, mentally, every way, she is like a goddess of old; but all her brilliancy, all her wit, all her charms are under a cloud, because of her fanaticism on this thing——"

"But I want to hear more of your meat theory," interrupted his listener, wishing to keep the subject away from the woman of his dreams. He might think

of her, might dream of her, but it was a sort of sacrilege to hear her spoken of by a third person, even though it were her brother.

"Well, in the first place, I don't want you to think I believe in all they say about astral emanations. You know the orientals hold that everything has its counterpart in the astral world, and that when we eat the flesh of an animal we assimilate not only their blood and nature, but the astral forces are drawn to their coarser antitypes, and take possession of our spiritual forces, to dominate and depreciate them. Now I can't say anything about that. Perhaps I believe more than I am willing to own up to, but there is some reason why God, when he first made man, gave him only fruits and cereals to eat, and after the so-called fall permitted him to eat meat. There was some natural law why Daniel and his companions refused to eat meat, and were able to withstand fire, to control lions, to tell dreams and their interpretations. Then, in the New Testament, we see John the Baptist doing the same thing, while all the world beside went on in the old way. Now in India these priests are learned men. They have not studied vast libraries, nor been honored by the degrees of colleges; they have mostly lived quiet lives, apart from men; they eat simple rice and fresh fruits; they care nothing for the honors of the world, and yet they know everything. Go to one of them with a scientific question, and if you can make him understand it, he will go apart for a time, will seat himself like all mystics, and then will bring you an answer. This I know, for I have seen it. How it is done I cannot say. I

once asked a priest with whom I was on friendly terms, and he said he made himself perfectly passive and asked the Unconscious Mind of the Universe for light, and the answer came. I have heard them tell of the earliest races, how they were fluidic beings, so spiritual that they were in a state of rapport with the finest elements in the cosmos. Then they fell into matter, by the desire to know as animals know of lower things, and this was the wall of separation between them and Deity. At first it was a slight remove, and then, by lapse of time and desire to enjoy the outer or shell-life like the animals, the inner man was more and more imprisoned, until, like Samson, he was blind and enslaved. In the Bible we read of man talking with God in the garden of Eden, which, of course, is an allegory, but the meaning is plain. The garden is his higher nature, from which he was separated by his material desires, and the coming of the Second Adam, the Christos of the New Testament, was to open the way back to his highest estate,—that of a perfect spiritual being. Now while I believe all this, I do not live it. I began the life with Freeda, and I will confess here, by the light of moon and stars, that while I was true to the principles of it, I was happier than I have ever been in my life. It was in a negative way, perhaps, but I never felt so tranquil before, and never expect to again. If my sister had not been such a devotee, I believe I should have kept it up; but I was vexed at her absorption, and went back to the world, the flesh, and the devil full tilt. I am fully convinced that to overcome the power of the senses, and give the spiritual man

freedom, one must give up meat. You see its tendency is to build up the animal part of us, and we have too much of that already."

"But how can you prove to me that we have these wonderful powers?"*

"Any man can prove it to his satisfaction if he is willing to make the experiment. I can give you the first steps of an initiate, and then, if you will give up meat, in three months' time you will *know*."

"It is worth trying. I am a thorough agnostic; and for me to say I know means a great deal."

"I can understand you. I am built on that plan myself, but I have proved many things to be true which I formerly disbelieved. If my sister had not become so infatuated with mysticism, there is no knowing how far I should have gone myself. It is our inheritance. As Freeda told you, we have come from long lines of mystic ancestors. An old writer has said, 'There is no genealogy to mysticism. The first mystic was as perfect a mystic as the last.' I do not quite agree with him, except to say there are no new truths reached by later adepts; but I believe a descendant of the Magi comes earlier into full illumination than those that preceded him."

"I am surprised to find you on your sister's ground. I thought, from your words and actions, that you had no faith whatever in her ideas."

* Whoever doubts the latent occult powers that belong to his higher and less known self can prove them, by undergoing a few months' training, as easily as he can prove he has a muscle in the arm that he has never seen.

"Faith? Perhaps not. I know there is truth there. Shut your eyes."

His companion did as he was told.

"What do you see?"

"Nothing."

"Look again."

"It is all dark. What can a man see in the dark? A few specks fly here and there."

"How can you see them, if all is dark?"

"It is strange, I admit. I never thought of that before."

"Of course not. If I hold my hand close to your closed eyes you will not see it, how then can you discern these specks?"

"Tell me, if you know. I never thought a man could see in the dark."

"If I should tell you that by a little discipline those specks would increase in size and numbers, and would become beautiful colors and living flames, you would not believe me."

"Not until I had demonstrated it to my own satisfaction."

"Yet it is the truth, as much as the fact that you now see me. Our bodies are mere machines, and if we know the laws that regulate them, these higher forces can direct and use them. The fact that you can see *anything* with your eyes tightly closed proves that you have means of seeing independent of physical organs, and hence there must be a hidden world that you never see at all. When your eyes are open you see no specks. Do you remember what Freeda said of fire? The

Mahatmas or Adepts teach that the spirit of life is the spirit of fire. That the body of fire is the flame, and is destructive, but the unseen, unknown force that kindles it is life itself. To them man is a product of three fires, viz., that which is produced by friction, forming the body; solar fire, enkindling the soul; and electric fire, creating the immortal spirit. Fire represents to them the One, the All. And from the beginning to the end of our Sacred Book there is a hidden cabalistic meaning teaching the same truth. The presence of Deity is always recognized by the appearance of fire. From the sacrifice of Abel to the vision of John, we have a continual illustration of this. Moses, Elijah, the day of Pentecost, are some of the most familiar instances. Fire is the first and last, the lowest and highest, the mysterious All. As the Rosicrucians say, 'Buy a sixpenny lamp, keep it supplied with oil, and from it you can light every fire in the world and not lessen its flame.' "

"But if you know and believe these things, why not do so as your sister has done, and give all your time and attention to the things belonging to the unseen world? I must say she is the more consistent of the two."

"Of course she is. No one doubts that. I am content to live on the lower plane for a while longer. To be a healthy, happy animal is good enough for me. Nothing is forced. The desire guides the soul; and when my desires reach out towards the unseen, you will find me as intense as my sister. Just now I am content as I am. I could not hunt and fish if I gave

myself up to truth, for all life is sacred. Now I enjoy a tiger hunt wonderfully. When you see a man enjoy prowling around jungles, lying in wait for something to kill, you may be sure there is a large amount of animal nature to be dropped before the balances swing towards spiritual life. It will come at some distant day, but not yet."

"You believe then in a continued existence?"

"Rather. I am not idiot enough to suppose I shall ever cease being. Who can stop us? Nothing ends. It is all the continued revolution of an upward spiral. A past and a future lie enwrapped in everything from the tiniest seed to the grandest soul. What is your idea of immortality?"

"Not that. We live in those who follow us. Our knowledge is perpetuated in the brains that succeed us. But I want to hear more of your theories of fire. I have always had a strange fascination for it. When I was a child they called me a salamander, because I loved to watch the coals."

"Your immortality is no immortality at all. My ancestors have no chance as long as my individuality asserts itself. You will see things differently after a time. I cannot believe as much as Freeda, but I am a long distance ahead of you. She believes that she is among those who, having left our mundane sphere, still continue to be interested in all its questions, and guide her in all she does. I believe that those who were once here still live, but where I cannot say; and you believe that they do not exist at all. We have but one more step to take, and there are those ready to fill the

vacancy, viz., those who believe their own existence is a dream. As I said before, I am still in the lower realm. Now that sister of mine has reached the knowledge of vibrations, that assure her of things I do not understand. She can throw herself out of this into a world where our electrical forces seem as slow as travelling by ox-team, and she and her teachers tell me that the entire earth is about to enter on a spiritual state that is a leap forward beyond all former things, and yet is a sequence of what has gone before. The law of evolution cannot be broken, and from physical it must go on to spiritual perfection."

"You surely do not mean that it has attained its ultimatum in physical and mental conditions?"

"There is surely little that is new intellectually, and I cannot believe the race has improved physically since the days of Plato and the Greek gods. We find traces of a telegraph in Cleopatra's time, and something like the telephone was known to the ancients——"

"Hark! What was that?"

The fire had burned lower as they talked, and they had not observed that the embers had fallen apart until a strange sound arrested their attention.

"It may be a rabbit. Hist!"

It was clawing at the bark roof, whatever it was, and young Cathmore seized his gun and crept to the extreme end of the shed, stepping over the sleepers to get a better shot. Mr. Dana poked the embers together, the sparks flew skyward, a few logs added were soon in a blaze, and the animal was heard scrambling off among the bushes. Throwing his hat upon the

ground, and laying his gun beside it, the young man pointed to the sparks and the blaze, both intermingling in a column of many tints, and said, with a genuine earnestness unmistakable,—

“Behold the fire. Who can fathom it? Is it any wonder that men like Fludd, and Bohmen, and Von Boden, and the wonderful Paracelsus, devoted their lives to this great principle? It is the light of eternity; the light that we see in darkness; the light revealed after long fastings to Zoroaster and Pimander and the sages of the East. Let me, in the silence of the night, under the light of the stars, watching the flames ascend towards their central sun, watching also the sparks that rival the host of heaven, let me recite to you a passage I learned long ago from a book on the Rosicrucians.”

“Most gladly. I am intensely interested, though I do not believe. The effect is heightened by our surroundings. Go on.”

“Note the goings of the fire as he creepeth, serpentineth, riseth, shrinketh, broadeneth. Note him reddening, glowing, whitening. Tremble at his face dilating; at the meaning that is growing into it to you. One, two, three sparks come; dozens come; faster and faster the fiery squadrons follow, until, in a short while, a whole possible army of that hungry thing for battle. Think that it is outside of all things, and deep inside of all things, and that thou and thy world are only the thing between. Reverence fire, and tremble at its meaning, though in the earth it is chained, and the foot of the Archangel Michael be upon it. Observe

the multiform shapes of fire, the flame-wreaths, the spires, the stars, the spots, the cascades, and the mighty falls that roar like Niagara. Think what it is; what it can do. It is as a letter of the great alphabet. In each stone, flinty and chilling as the outside is, is a heart of fire. Wonder, then, no longer that the ancient Parsees saw in fire the All.'"

Silence reigned as he finished, and each sat gazing into the fire before them for several moments. Then Dana asked,—

"What a magnificent tribute to fire. Where did you find it?"

"That and much more equally wonderful in an old book upon the subject.* I cannot give you its author's name, but in some old library you may come across it. It will well repay the time you spend in reading it. The dawn is already at hand. Let us waken Tim, and have a nap."

* The Rosierucians.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DAWNING OF THE MORNING.

"Their souls are enlarged forevermore by that union, and they bear one another about in their thoughts continually as it were a new strength."—GEORGE ELIOT.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion flower at the gate;
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate.
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near;"
And the white rose weeps, "She is late;"
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear,"
And the lily whispers, "Wait."

TENNYSON.

Two days have passed. Tim has started for home, and our party is passing rapidly from the scenes of the north woods towards the border-land of the south. They have been and are still guided by Elfrieda, who is once more silent and absorbed. It has been a circuitous journey, pausing here, going there, sometimes by rail, sometimes by stage, until now they have reached an obscure town of Tennessee known as Tullahoma. They have risen early to take a stroll before breakfast, and, as they walk, the spirit of peace resting on mountain, and field, and landscape enters their breasts, and the possibility of an approaching war could not be imagined.

Since the conversation that had been so unfortunately interrupted, there had been no resuming of the subject between Hugo Dana and Miss Cathmore, but a kindly, gentle manner had grown up between them without their thought or knowledge. In car or stage it generally happened that they were neighbors, but no attempt had been made to resume the topic. It was as if either were willing to wait a more fitting time. Now, for the first time, he recurs to it as they walk forward into the light of a new day.

"I wonder when the time will come that you will tell me more of what we were discussing in the Adirondacks," he is saying. "I cannot drive it from my thoughts, and some things told me by your brother have increased my curiosity. You have such new, such startling theories. They are altogether beyond me. Even the moon has taken on a new interest since I look upon her as a deceased relation."

"You are inclined to ridicule the idea, I see. I cannot help that. It is never wise to argue. It seems as foolish as to force sunlight into a room. When the windows are open it will enter, and no amount of forcing will increase the amount."

"You mistake me entirely. If you could know the life I have lived, you would be less severe. Since my earliest childhood I have cared for but one thing,—stones. Every thought has centred in these hard and insensate things, and beyond my mother and sister there has not been a being in the world to whom I sent loving thoughts until——"

Here he stopped, conscious that he had said too

much. His companion apparently did not notice his remark, and said,—

"When we have found the skeletons we seek, I will tell you all. I am now where every thought belonging to outside matters must be put aside. I must be calm, tranquil, passive, or I cannot receive the impressions sent to me,—the telegraph communications that come from across the seas."

"And then will you talk to me freely? Will you let me tell you how lonely has been my life, though I was not aware of it till now? I am like the rock itself,—cold and hard, but at the centre there is a living fire that only needs the touch of the right kind to evoke——"

"I don't think much of the place you have brought us to, Freeda," interrupted Carul, at this point. "There is not much to enjoy that I can see; let us go back and have some breakfast. What time does the stage leave for Sparta?"

"In a couple of hours. We'll have some coffee and eggs first, for it is a long ride, I am told."

They retraced their steps, and, as her brother and Mrs. Clifton walked rapidly, they were soon out of hearing.

"That brother of mine is the one idol that still has possession of my heart," remarked Miss Cathmore, as her eye followed the movements of the couple ahead. "He has been the rock upon which I have been nearly shipwrecked. There have been times when I have been willing to give up my future rather than be separated from him. If he would only live according to

his knowledge, it would be so different. To hear him talk, you would never think he had once entered the same path with myself. Yet he did, and he tested and proved, yet gave it up."

"Are you sure that he has given it up?"

He could not refrain from giving her a bit of comfort.

"Does he not eat meat? Does he not kill? Does he not ridicule the teachings of the adepts? How could he drag his soul down to lower planes? how could he kill the beautiful tiger, or eat the mild-eyed cow, if he had any desire for better things? He knows it is all wrong; yet he does it. Yes, he has eaten the flesh of swine; you have seen him do it, though he knows that by so doing he takes into his system that which by assimilation will give him the desires and nature of the animal he has eaten. I cannot tell you how all this has grieved me, Mr. Dana."

"Your brother told me a few nights ago that he believed all this, and that if you had not become such an enthusiast, he himself would have been more devout. So do not let the thought of his shortcomings worry you again. He told me this was all that kept him from laying aside animal food."

"Did he, really? You delight my heart. I will try to be more like the old-time Freeda, and perhaps he will yet become a follower of truth." Her face glowed with the intensity of her feeling, and she looked into her companion's face fearlessly. Then her countenance changed; her eyes fell; her hand dropped at her side, and in a plaintive voice she said, "But I must first do

the work for which I came. No soul must turn from its duty. A man must not put his hand to the plough and look back."

"Come on, Freeda. A breakfast for a king. Protoplasm calls aloud for nourishment, and we will rebuild the waste places," sang out Carul from the porch of the hotel, a small, unpainted building, ornamented with a few vines and some restless pigs. As she seated herself by her brother's side, she glanced into his face and saw that it was luminous with a light she had never seen there before. Then she looked across the table towards her friend Mona, and observed a pensive air quite unnatural to her. Her conclusions were formed. She ate her simple meal of milk, eggs, and corn bread in silence; but she knew without being told that her brother had found a great happiness. Just as they finished their breakfast, the stage for Sparta drove up, and all was confusion until they started.

That stage was an institution peculiar to Tennessee at that time. It was not even covered, and consisted of a rickety wagon with three seats, over two of which a buffalo robe was thrown. It was drawn by two mules,—a large black one, and a small brown one with a white nose. The "persuader" was a hickory stick, held constantly in the right hand of the driver, while he guided the reins with his left. After they were comfortably seated, and there were no other passengers to interfere with them, Carul swung his feet over the side of the wagon, and, turning around towards the middle seat, upon which sat the two ladies, he said,—

"Really, this is not so bad. I am happier than I

have been for ages. The scenery is fine, air superb, and 'every prospect pleases.'"

His spirits were contagious. A long day's ride was before them, and the Cumberlands, abloom with rhododendrons, were decked like a bride for her wedding. The spirits of the party rose with every passing hour, and the day was nearly gone when the driver announced that the end of their trip was nearly reached. He was a genuine Southerner of the lower class,—keen, observing, and using their vernacular. As they came in sight of a turbid river, he said,—

"Right smart of rain fell over your way last week, an' the Caney-fork ain't done settled down yet. She's mighty peart fer June. In the March days we allers look fur the bridges to be down an' the banks overflowed; but it ain't right for this yer time o' year. Last trip I made we couldn't cross at Sparty, but I reckon we'll fin' it all right by now. We've got quite a spell afore dark, any how."

"But what did you do about crossing?" asked Mrs. Clifton.

"Went roun' yonder. Thar's more ways than one o' killin' a calf. We-uns are used to fordin' streams an' all sorts o' make-shifts. I s'pose whar you-uns come from you hev bridges everywhere?"

"And what may be the name of that single mountain before us?"

"That ere's called Milk-sick, an' right behin' it is Sparty. Sparty is a real peart toun. Thar's eight stores, an' a bank, an' three hotels, an' a plump lot o' people. You must take a walk when we git thar an'

see fur yerself. Funny name fur a mounting, ye say? Wall, p'raps; but this away all the names mean suthin', an' Milk-sick was given it years an' years ago, when I wasn't knee-high to a grasshopper."

"How came they to call it Milk-sick?"

"Wall, ye see it got it's name one time when horned critters ran loose on it, an' they all tuk sick an' died; an', what was worse, everybody that tasted the milk got sick, an' some on 'em died. It was a terrible time, an' folks turned out an' built a fence roun' the mounting, an' every one called it Milk-sick from that time on. Arter a time the government heern about it, an' sent men here from Washington to fin' out the reason o' all the trouble; but they never could, an' so they went back no wiser than they came. Then the government said they'd give twenty-five thousand dollars to ary man who'd fin' out the reason. Doves on 'em came here year arter year, an' all on 'em went away agin. One man thought he'd git the money sure, an' tole the men in Washington that it was cause there was lead in the ground. But when they sent here to see, it warn't no such thin', an' that thar money has never been claimed by ary man yet."

"I think I shall take a look at it myself," said Dana to Carol Cathmore.

"Nothing to hinder that I knows on. P'raps ye'll fin' the secret. Ef ye doan't, ye'll fin' sights o' other thin's to amuse ye. White County, Tennessee (accent on fust syllable) can't be beat in the world for strangeness. Talk about Californy an' her big trees; she hain't got no such curosities as ye'll fin' here. In course she's got

gold, an' I expect thar's lots o' gold in these 'ere Cumberland mountings; but has she got cliff-houses, and lost creeks, an' buried little folks, an' drippin' springs, an' all such things?"

"What do you mean by buried little folks?" asked Carul.

"It's surprisin' that ye hain't heern of the little creetures that's been buried here ever since the time of Adam and Eve. Why, man, they was just like babies, an' thar was sights on 'em. I've put one o' their jaws on my own face an' it was too big fur me. Ef ye'll ax any one in Sparty ye'll hear all about 'em. D'ye see that 'ere risin' o' groun' over that away? Wall, it was bought by Jedge Fable; an' he began to dig fur a cellar, an', would ye b'lieve it, it was full o' bones o' big people an' all sorts o' copper tools, an' even little weights like oun, only square. He sent 'em off to Washington to some instute, an' they sent him a sight o' books an' sich. I tell yer thar's no State like *Tennessee*."

"But the little folks, are they near here?" asked Dana.

"I should reckon they wuz. Down to Yankeetown thar's whole fields full o' graves, an' over yon-way thar's been some on 'em foun'. Only a week or two ago I see a cup that was dug up in one o' thar graves. It was like a bowl, only black, and had some pointed heads standin' up around the edge. Mighty curus how they could make 'em."

During all this time Elfrieda had said nothing. It is not to be supposed, however, that she was not keenly alive to the subject upon which she had put all her thoughts for so long a time.

"I s'pose yere goin' to stop at the best hotel in toun? Ye'll fin' it lively, I reckon. Thar's goin' to be a dance thar to-night. Ye'll see all the folks in toun, an' a right smart o' folks from the mountings."

"I think we shall be glad to rest after this long ride," said Miss Cathmore, speaking for the first time.

"Oh, ye'll forgit all that once ye hear the fiddles begin. Thar's a young lawyer, brother to Jedge Fable, who boards at the Ryan House. He knows more about those little folks than ary one o' us. He's a smart chap. They're talking o' sendin' him to the Legislatur, an' some sez he'll be President afore he dies. Least-ways he's bound to be State Governor. He sez he b'lieves those little folks is a missin' link, though he hain't any chain, as I knows on. Here's the bridge all right. Now for Sparty in ten minutes."

With that he cracked his whip at the mules, and went dashing over a bridge made of logs, and so poorly made that every log seemed to rise from its place in response to the feet of the mules. Once acrosses they turned into a pleasant street, and were soon rattling along with much noise and clatter through the main street of a truly typical Southern town. It might at that time have mustered a thousand or fifteen hundred people, mostly of the African complexion. The houses were all built along this street; were all of one style, and indicated a certain uniformity of material success. If one or two were honored with a coat of paint, perhaps partially washed off by rains and storms, the driver pointed them out with as much pride as if they had been the palaces of kings, by saying,—

"That thar han'some house b'longs to Jedge Fable I was tellin' ye 'bout. His wife's got the rocks, an' lives in fine shape. That ar' house sorter like pale cream is whar the head man o' the bank lives. Oh, Sparty's got rich folks in it. All White County could be bought by Sparty, I reckon, if she'd try."

One of the most amusing sights, however, was the general rush to door, window, garden, or porch to see the stage go by. And when it was discovered that it held strangers, the entire population seemed to turn out and form a procession towards the hotel.

"I s'pose they want a good sight of my passengers. Those toun folks are mighty curus 'bout strangers."

They had now reached the hotel, a very antiquated, unattractive-looking building, with the long porch or gallery that marks every Southern house, running from one end to the other across the front, and filled with chairs and lounges. The procession of followers was still in the rear, and did not reach the hotel until the strangers had entered and disappeared. There was nothing to do but huddle in groups and conjecture who these arrivals might be, and what was their business in a quiet town like Sparta.

"I reckon they've come to buy lan'a," said a man who sat smoking a corn-cob pipe. He was a thin, yellow individual, whose clothes were literally falling off in rags. "Ef they be, give me the first chance. Ye know I need money, an' my lan's powerful good."

"I reckon we-uns all need money, an' I'm sure your lan' ain't anythin' for minerals," spoke up another.

"Now I've got lan' as is lan'. Coal, iron, everythin' is at your han'."

"Everythin' but lan'," replied the other. "In course, ef they're arter stones, you can suit 'em; but if they want to raise a little corn or a few potatoes or sich, they must have some arth."

Within, the ladies had a room whose windows opened on the gallery, and it was impossible to avoid hearing what was said, as the voices grew louder and louder. Mona looked at Elfreda, and smiled.

"What will they say when they learn we are here to dig up a few old bones, if we can find them, Freda?"

"They will lose their interest, I fear. Oh, Mona, I shall be glad when it is over. In India I enjoyed this life, but the atmosphere of this busy western world has taken hold of me, and when my work is done I shall want to travel. Yes, I shall go to Europe, perhaps to Egypt; but I must travel. I shall nevermore meditate as of old. Hark! Hear that woman talk. What is she saying?"

A sharp voice came from below.

"Yer doan't any of ye know anythin'. It's as plain as the nose on my face; it's a weddin' party. Two men an' two women,—what else could it be? Jist watch 'em, an' ye'll fin' 'em a-pairin' off like birds. Thar's no use talkin' o' sellin' lan' to sich folks. Tain't to be did."

Elfreda laughed a merry little laugh, and looked in her friend's face, as she added,—

"Which belongs to which, Mona? I thought my-

self once to-day that I saw a new light in Carul's eyes."

"I am not going to deny or affirm until we have finished this bone hunt; but if Carul's eyes told a story, how about Mr. Dana's?"

"I did not look in them."

"Oh, Freeda! and you a disciple of truth."

At this moment a tap on their door, and a voice saying "Supper." A few moments later the gentlemen had joined them, and together they found their way to the dining-room. At every window were the curious eyes watching them, and, after they were seated at the table, the voice of their host was heard in the hall, saying,—

"Whar's yer manners? Heven't you ever seen quality afore? G'long an' set on the piazzy ef ye want to, but doan't stan' an' stare as ef ye'd never seen a rale lady afore."

When he finished this little oration he turned towards the table occupied by his distinguished guests, and stationed himself at the side of the table, with a brush made of peacock's feathers in his hand, which he proceeded to wave deliberately over their heads as they ate their supper. Pride was written all over him as he stood guard over his guests. Other boarders strolled in and took their seats at the other tables, but not a word or look did this man bestow upon them. At length one entered that attracted the attention of Carul at once. When he heard him addressed as "Mr. Fable," he knew he was right. Turning to his host he said in a low tone,—

"When we are in the parlor after supper, I wish you would introduce that young man called Fable to us, will you?"

"With the greatest of pleasure, sir. He's our best lawyer, an' what he says ye may b'lieve. An' ef ye want a lawsuit settled, he's the one to do it."

"Thanks. I shall be glad to meet him. I've heard of him before."

They left the dining-room not wholly unconscious of the interest manifested by the towns-people in their appearance, but utterly oblivious to the cause or causes of the attention received. They were in excellent spirits, and an old-fashioned piano attracted Mrs. Clifton towards it.

"Come, Freeda, sing us one of the songs of the East," she said, coaxingly.

"Don't ask me to sing to-night, Mona. I am too happy to sing. I must be a trifle sad to sing, you know. I feel as if I were a child again, and from my shoulders a load like a mountain had been suddenly lifted. No, no; you sing, Mona, and we'll listen. How long is it since we last saw a piano?"

"Yes, Mona, sing," urged Carul. "Who knows what is in store for us when Freeda says she is a child again? It is worth the trip a thousand times over to hear her say that."

"And I cannot understand it myself," replied his sister. "If I had slept for all these years of darkness and suddenly awaked, they would not seem more unreal to me than they do at this moment. What does it mean?"

"Let us not talk of meanings, but if Mrs. Clifton will sing for us, we will live in the senses for a time," said Hugo Dana, now speaking for the first time, yet watching earnestly Miss Cathmore's face at the same time.

She was strikingly beautiful, as she stood by her friend, in the flowing robes of her peculiar dress, flushed with a feeling of new joy and radiant with health.

"The world has few such women. I have never seen one before," thought Dana to himself. Just then Mrs. Clifton began to sing. It was a weird Scotch ballad that she had chosen, and fitted well the low, rich tones that bore it far out upon the evening air. Silence fell upon those around her, and silence fell upon the motley crowd upon the piazza. They moved under the spell of that voice nearer to the window, until old and young, black and white, were listening to the song. When she had finished and refused to sing again, a door opened, and their host advanced with a young gentleman at his side.

"This," he said to Carol Cathmore, "is our townsman, Mr. Fable. Sparty is proud of him, stranger, and I know ye won't trust him in vain ef ye want to ax his counsel."

"Of course not; we heard all about him before we reached Sparta. Be seated, Mr. Fable. Our business may not seem important to you, but I am told that you can give us just the assistance we need. Allow me to introduce my friends. This is a scientific gentleman by the name of Dana. These ladies are my sister and

her friend, Mrs. Clifton. Now we are old friends and can talk."

"I am happy to meet you and your friends, and if you will tell me what I can do for you, you have but to command me."

The words were spoken quietly, almost lazily, but with a dignity that showed the young man held himself well in his own esteem. He seated himself upon a chair near the sofa upon which Miss Cathmore was sitting, and waited to hear what the other might say.

"It is not in the legal line; and I am afraid you may think the matter very trivial, but, when I tell you that we have crossed oceans and seas to accomplish a purpose with which this has much to do; that if we fail in this our journey will be fruitless, you will see how anxious we are to find the objects of our search, which, in a word, is neither more nor less than a skeleton of the pygmy race said to have existed here long ago. We heard that you knew more about them than any one else, so made bold to ask you to direct us how to go to work."

The face of his listener, singularly intense at first, gradually relaxed as he proceeded, and when he had finished, had once more assumed its expression of pleasant friendliness, as he replied, promptly,—

"I am at your service in the cause, and think I can promise you success. A friend of mine has just returned from a trip to Yankeetown, where he has unearthed a part of a skeleton and a fine bit of pottery. He is quite a man for such things, and will be here after awhile to see the gathering in the ballroom. If

you and the ladies are not too tired, you will find it a pleasant way to spend the evening. Waldron will be on hand to tell you all he knows, and he knows more than I do about those little folks. You can see the young people dance Southern fashion, and we can make a plan for grave-digging."

"You are surely very kind to strangers, and have already placed us under great obligations to you," said Carul, extending his hand cordially. "Now tell us how far we must go, and all about it."

"There have been at different times a number of graves of little people found at Doyle, about seven miles distant. My friend will know better than I what are the prospects of finding any bones there now, so it is best to leave it till later. We people of the South are fond of music; will not your ladies sing for me?"

He turned as he spoke and looked at Miss Cathmore. His soul was in his eyes, for he was carried captive by her unconscious loveliness of face and form.

"I have already refused to sing for my friends: but, since you are so good to us, I cannot say 'No.' Mona, you play my accompaniment. I will sing a song of India."

Her friend seated herself at the piano, and with eyes fixed upon the ceiling, with no apparent thought of her listeners, with perfect absorption in some unseen realm, she began to croon a low recitative. Then she paused a moment, and from afar, as it seemed, came sounds of wondrous sweetness, growing stronger and louder, until they swelled into a volume of song that

could only be likened to a spring morning in a forest. Voice answered voice. On the one side there was love, longing, entreaty; on the other a higher love, a spiritual leading, a command to rise higher. Then it was as if two voices joined in harmony, and a chorus of smaller voices echoed their gladness. Then, suddenly, a silence fell. The singer sank upon the seat nearest her, and every heart could be distinctly heard in the stillness of that moment.

Carul was the first to speak.

"What made you choose that, Freeda? It always overcomes you. You should have sung a song of words, not feeling." He was too fond of her to bear a moment's anxiety.

"I am sure Miss Cathmore will not regret giving us a pleasure unlike any we have ever had, or shall have again. What a conception! What execution! What cruelty never to have sung to us before," said Mr. Dana, quite vehemently.

"I am dumb. I did not know a human voice could have such power. It seemed as if there were many voices singing together," added Mr. Fable. "I shall never forget your kindness, Miss Cathmore; and now I will bid you good-evening, hoping to meet you all later in the evening."

He bowed himself from the room, and the rest drew closer together to talk over the situation. Hugo Dana, it was evident, had not recovered from the effect of the song. He was silent, absorbed, depressed. It was as though it had revealed to him a new world in the woman he adored, and showed him a kingdom to which

he did not belong ; a barrier all the more insurmountable because invisible and intangible. For the first time he was conscious of a longing to know more of the world in which this beautiful woman lived ; a world that must exist, or it could not have such force.

"Wake up, Dana. Where are you?"

"I am not sure myself, but at this moment I am here."

"You were a long way off, for we spoke to you twice," said Mrs. Clifton.

He smiled, and answered,—

"I will not sin again in that way. Of what are you talking?"

"Of that young gentleman, Mr. Fable. He is a typical Southerner,—affable, courteous, and hospitable, willing to incommode himself for us as if we were old friends ; and I think we must take in the dance for a while, just to gratify him."

"By all means, I say. What are your views, ladies?"

"I suppose it is the polite thing to do, though I doubt if it will be very entertaining," replied Miss Cathmore.

"I am not sure about that. I have read descriptions of these dances that were vastly amusing. I suggest that we gentlemen leave you to rest a couple of hours, and then we will return here for you," said Hugo Dana, rising to leave the room.

"Sensible man," were the words that followed him into the hall as Carul rose and went out to join him.

"I think Mr. Dana an awfully sensible man ; don't you, Elfrieda?"

"In some ways, yes ; others, no. He is such a

thorough materialist that I have no patience with him. Now, when he was absorbed there, and finally roused up, he must have known that there was something more than mere flesh and blood, for that was all here; yet he was absent. He is a grand man if he would only give the higher man a *chance*."

She spoke quietly, as if she had no interest beyond this, and her companion said to herself, "Was there ever such a sphinx as Elfreeda Cathmore?"

The two then went to their room and gave themselves up to the delight of a nap.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PYGMY-HUNT.

"The sign expresses the thing; the thing is the virtue or meaning of the sign.

"To pronounce a word is to evoke a thought, and make it present. The word or speech of every man is quite unconsciously to himself a blessing or a curse."

"The Breath needed a form; the Fathers gave it. The Breath needed a gross body; the Earth moulded it. The Breath needed the Spirit of Life; the Solar Shas breathed it into its form. The Breath needed a mirror of its Body; 'We gave it our own,' said the Dyhans. The Breath needed a Mind to embrace the Universe; 'We cannot give that,' said the Fathers. 'I never had it,' said the spirit of the Earth. 'The form would be consumed were I to give it mine,' said the Great Fire. Thus have the Boneless given life to those who became men with bones in the third."

EARLY morning among the mountains of Tennessee. Early morning in the time when the flowers bloom and the birds sing. When from lowland and height all nature is decked in beauty, all voices musical with life. Such was the day that dawned on the four travellers, that summer morning, as they sprang from their beds to be ready for an early breakfast and a trip among the graves of the long-buried pygmies.

Notwithstanding their long ride the day previously, and the night's dissipation at the dance, every one was radiant with health and happiness. They had scarcely

finished breakfast, when a handsome span of grays and a three-seated carriage drove up to the porch. In it were two gentlemen, one of whom was the young lawyer we have already known; the other his friend, Senator Waldron. The latter was a noble-looking man; would have been called handsome by some, and might have been forty years of age. Mr. Fable could have laid no claims to physical perfection. He was rather stooped from incessant riding on horseback; had a way of settling down in a chair as if his backbone had lost its power; was not graceful or handsome, but in place of these mere accidental outward gifts, he had the soul of a king, the generosity of a hero, and a kindly, good nature that beamed from a pair of blue eyes as expressive as any that ever shone from a human face.

Ephraim Fable was a rarely lovable man, who had reached the age of thirty-three without losing his heart to any woman. The evening before, as he bowed himself out of the hotel-parlor, he went directly to his friend's office. Throwing himself in a chair, he exclaimed,—

"Waldron, I'm in love."

"Have you been drinking, Eph?"

"Not a drop. I shall, though, if I stay in this frame of mind. I've seen the most glorious creature God ever made. Talk of Venus, of Juno, and all those creatures. Why, this woman is all of these combined, and with a voice that is a miracle. You must see for yourself."

"Who? Are you crazy? Explain yourself."

"Some strangers at the Ryan House. Four. From

a distance. She's the sister of one of them. Magnificent is no word for her. Heavenly is better."

"Sit still a minute, and tell me all about them. You are certainly upset. If it's not drink, it's lunacy."

"Neither, on my word. I never was more in earnest in my life. I was asked by Ryan to go in and be introduced, and I found four people, strangers, two gentlemen and two ladies, who had come clear here for some of those pygmy-bones you are always talking of. I promised to assist them, told them about you and your last find of pottery, and invited them to the dance to-night, where you were to be introduced. Don't you dare talk to the goddess. By Jove, even our friendship would not stand that. And you know what Southern fire is. I'd give worlds to hear her sing again. I didn't tell you about that, did I? Well, I can't, for it's as indescribable as a summer evening. Who can tell the colors that turn to gray, or the sounds that come to the ear from above, below, on every side; or the path of the forked lightning that flashes and is gone, or the clouds piled high against a back-ground of blood changing to amber. Her voice was all this, and more; so how could I describe it? Wait till you see her."

"How long will they stay?"

"Don't know. Probably a day or two. Think of seeing such a beauty, and then living in darkness forever. She is not like people of this world. If there are angels, she is one."

"Have you an idea what you are saying? You are a raving maniac, Eph Fable. All plans for your future

greatness are nipped in the bud. Lose your head, and you'll never be Governor."

"I've not lost my head; and if I could be near that woman, I'd be willing to live all my life in a cabin. Wait till you see for yourself."

"Forewarned is forearmed," replied the other.

"You know me well, Manson Waldron. You know I have never cared for women; but if you tell me that I am crazy or foolish after you have seen her, I'll give in."

The Senator looked at him inquiringly. It was true that they had known each other many years. In fact, ever since the two Fable brothers had come to White County, from some obscure place among the hills of Tennessee, they had risen steadily in their profession; the older had been judge three years, and the younger was already looked upon as a coming politician of no mean rank. They had brains, goodness, integrity to keep them, while Manson Waldron had behind him a long genealogy of blue-blood, indolence, and literary tastes. They would never conflict, and the younger Fable became one of his most devoted friends. At ten o'clock that evening the two stood looking over the gathering in the ballroom of the hotel. They were watching faces closely. At length a murmur of voices, a hush, a general expression of interest was seen in the crowd, and at an opposite door there entered the four strangers. As usual, Mr. Dana was Miss Cathmore's escort, and Mrs. Clifton was by the side of Carul.

"There she is. Look." And young Fable pulled the sleeve of his friend.

"Don't be a fool, Eph. You'll have every eye in the

room on you if you act like this, and you'll find yourself in the papers. Besides, don't you see that woman has her lover by her side?"

"I don't believe it. I don't believe she could love any man. No; he may be in love with her. Who can help it? but that's not her fault."

"If she can't love a man, what in thunder is the use of wasting time raving over her? For my part, I rather take to her friend there, talking with the brother. She is more like ordinary flesh and blood."

"You've no sense, Manson. They are no more to be compared than canvas-back duck and fried pork. Come along and be presented."

The two crossed the room, where quite a crowd had already assembled preparatory to the dance; where a row of fiddles was already beginning to "tune up;" where the rustic from the mountain stood awkwardly waiting for himself and girl to have a chance, and the more refined towns-people chatted quietly around the room; among all these the two well-known young men passed, and at length stood face to face with the strangers. The introductions were soon over, and they were escorted to comfortable seats and all formality was at an end. From this time until a late hour they watched the movements of the dancers, and then parted to meet at an early hour for a day's digging of the pygmies' graves.

Once more in the room of young Waldron, the two continued the topic they had started before going to the dance. They lighted fresh cigars and showed no signs of weariness. Waldron was saying,—

"I don't blame you for losing your head, Eph, or should not if I thought it would do you an atom of good. She is certainly a magnificent—woman, shall I say? I like your term better,—goddess. I studied her all the evening to see if I could discover the irresistible fascination she wields. But I give it up. It is something in her mind, I think,—that is, as far as I can go."

"And, remember, you have not heard her sing. All else is as nothing to her voice. I'd sell myself body and soul to her, and be her slave forever, if she'd let me. Just to look at her, to hear her speak, to see her move, would make it paradise."

"There's no use. She has no thought for men. There's that scientist, Dana; any one can see with half an eye that he is perfectly absorbed in her, and yet she seems to be utterly unconscious of it all. I was wondering, to-night, if women were all that way, you know, really indifferent to us, not any make-believe, but actually did not care whether we married them or not, whether they would not be more charming."

"Of course they would, little fools. I am sick of their silly ways. Do they think we do not read what is in their minds? All they think of is how to get a Mrs. before their names and have some one to pay their bills. When the millennium comes, there will be a State law that provides an income for unmarried women, and then they will not be obliged to resort to all their silly ways to catch a man."

"Isn't this a new strain? I never heard you object to their invitations, and slippers, and smoking-caps before."

"No more have I. But, as I saw that goddess sitting among them to-night, it came into my mind that, if they could be less anxious for our attentions, they would receive more. She looked like a sun among tallow candles."

"Why do you suppose they are so anxious to find one of those skeletons?"

"Can't imagine. Perhaps curiosity, perhaps science. Dana is a mineralogist, and may have a point to gain."

"We shall find out during the day if we keep our ears open. I must get a few hours' sleep, and leave orders to be called in time to see to the horses, and be at the door in season."

"And I shall go home and meditate. My eyes will not close to-night. My brain is whirling with visions of beauty. Great heavens! What shall I do when she has gone?"

"Practise law. Settle down. Marry a wife, and be sensible. Good-night."

So they separated, and, when they met in the morning, it was evident that Eph Fable had not slept. Mr. Waldron was as fresh as ever, and brimming over with life. It is thus men and women damage their cause by excessive devotion. Had Elfrieda Cathmore had a place in her heart for a new interest, it would not have been the devoted, kind, gifted young Fable that would have been most attractive, but the friend who carried his heart where few could find it. The selfish man often has the best of it.

"I hope you have not been waiting for us," said Mr. Waldron, as they assisted the ladies to the carriage,

placing the two ladies on the middle seat, Mr. Dana on the back, young Cathmore and his friend, Fable, on the front, and himself with Mr. Dana. There was not in all White County a better horseman than Ephraim Fable, and, as he took up the reins and started off, the horses struck a fast trot that sent them through the town at a most exciting rate of speed. The perfumed air, the glory of the mountains, the splendor of the heavens, all united to key the senses and the soul to the highest pitch.

Crowds had collected on all the porches and along the streets to see the strangers who had come to Sparta with no idea of settling, or mining, or dealing in real estate, but merely to dig up some of those graves that must have been there ever since Adam walked the earth.

"Your towns-people have plenty of leisure," observed Carul to the gentleman at his side.

"A lazy set, most of them. They have neither ambition to be, nor to know, nor to do. We need new blood injected in the South to rouse it up."

"But life here must be beautiful," suggested Mrs. Clifton. "It always seems to me that it is easier to be good where the climate is warm."

"I do not think it is true here. Indeed, I do not know that warm climates have produced much of value. Our people here might read if they would, but slavery has ruined them. They much prefer lounging on door-steps, and hanging over fences, and dipping snuff, and talking scandal. Slavery is a curse to us; yet who will give up the evil? I was born here, but I

can see imperfections where I should most desire to see culture and progress. The world here is stationary."

"I know little of slavery. It cannot be worse than caste," said Miss Cathmore.

"I should be sorry to think so. I hope you will not undeceive yourself by investigating the subject, Miss Cathmore. I fancy you might change your mind."

"It has always seemed to me that the fetters forged by caste were the worst possible. In India this is carried to its greatest extreme. It would have been even more extended had not Buddha broken its power."

"India? Did you come from India? It is a long way from here. We in this new world have but dim ideas of life there. In my mind is a confused jumbling of monstrous idols, heathen rites, jungles, serpents, blazing suns, and elephants, and this is my conception of the land of the Ganges," said Mr. Waldron, leaning over and joining in the conversation, now becoming animated. "I can never imagine a Christian living in India."

"You are quite right, Mr. Waldron. We are all heathen, and my sister is the quintessence of heathenism."

"Carul, how can you say such things? There are no heathen. All are religious according to their light. It is a mere matter of circumstance. We are what we are, because of our surroundings and education. Who is responsible?"

"Don't be sensitive, Freeda. You are the most adorable heathen that ever entered temple, and if

Christians knew how good you were, they would call you St. Elfreeda. You are genuine and sincere, and we find but few such. There are not many who would have come so far for conscience' sake."

"For conscience' sake? I do not understand you," said Mr. Fable.

"Duty, he should have said. But the duty has become a pleasure. While we are talking, we are forgetting to enjoy this lovely scenery and perfect day. I am anxious to know the result of our exploration."

"And if you succeed?" He turned and looked into her face, as if fearing to hear what she might answer.

"We shall leave at once. I could enjoy remaining here, if the same orders that brought me here did not take me elsewhere when my work here is done."

"Will you take the skeleton with you?"

"Most certainly. It must be laid in a certain place, and then I am free." She was talking to her questioner when she began, but before she finished she was communing with her own thoughts.

"Where did you first hear of these little folks?" asked Mr. Waldron, from the back seat.

"In India."

"India?"

"Yes, strange as it may seem, and from the lips of a priest of a Buddhist temple. But let us not lose the beauty about us. We can talk later."

By this time they had neared Doyle and turned into a lane leading to a large brick house lying on a slope, with a background of woods and hills.

"That is our destination. Pray that the gods and the old woman may smile on us."

"Never fear. I have brought her some snuff and a package of coffee. The gods of old lived on nectar and ambrosia; ours are won to favor by snuff, tobacco, and coffee. A come-down, I call it," said the young lawyer to Carul.

As they approached the house, they had time to observe it more closely. It had been well built and spacious, but now showed unmistakable signs of neglect and decay. A long veranda stretched across the entire front, and on this was an old woman churning with one hand and holding to her mouth with the other a corn-cob pipe. Walking to and fro was a younger woman spinning yarn. A red-haired boy lay upon the floor playing with a dog, and the rest of the space was devoted to household and farming utensils, a loom, some rickety chairs, a pail of water with a gourd dipper, some skins that had been dried, and a cat and kittens. The inventory of that piazza would have been long enough to furnish a house. The woman at the churn stared at the vehicle driving up to her door, but neither moved nor took the pipe from her lips. When a voice called out from the wagon, "Halloo!" she slowly rose from her seat and approached the gate.

Mr. Waldron was whispering in Miss Cathmore's ear, "These are what we call poor white trash."

"And are there castes here, too?"

Before he could reply, they were already stopped, and the old woman was repeating over and over,—

"Light an' rest yerselves a spell. When the butter

comes, I ken give ye a drink o' buttermilk. Here, you Jake, stir yerself, an' tie the gentlemen's horses. Come in and take a cheer."

"I guess you know me, don't you?" asked Mr. Fable, placing in her hand a couple of packages, which she placed at her nose, and, after taking a long whiff of their odors, said, "I tell ye that's the genuine stuff, an' no mistake. The Lord allers provides. I was saying to Addey here that my snuff had all gin out, an' I wondered whar I'd git any more. You see we kin raise our own tobaccy, but snuff is snuff. It takes money to buy snuff. I'm powerful sorry the ole man is off. But we was out o' meat, an' so he tuk his gun an' went to git some, an' said he mout fin' a rabbit or suthin'. Come an' ha' a drink."

All this was said in a quiet way that belongs to all the people of the South, whom neither poverty nor ignorance can make other than royally hospitable.

"Not now, auntie; we are after something, and we know you will help us. We want to find some of those graves where the pygmies were buried. These friends have come across the ocean just to see if it's true, and I want to prove what we have said. Where's Jake? Won't he help us? You know he helped me once."

"Sartin. Here, Jake, whar you run to? Come here this minnit, an' git your spade an' g'long o' these gentlemen and ladies to yonder corn-fiel' an' dig 'em some graves. No foolin', now, but hunt aroun' till ye find 'em." Then, turning to her guests, she motioned them to enter the porch and be seated.

"The sun is getting higher and hotter; wait till we

are through, then we'll come back and rest," answered Mr. Fable. "And if you can make us some hoe-cake, and hunt up some bacon, we'll all stop to dinner, and then you'll have money enough to buy snuff for a long time."

"Law sakes, ye sho' enuff know for sartin that we-uns is never so pore we can't git a dinner ready. Ef ye doan't fin' any bones, I'll give ye some my ole man dug up last week; they'd be better'n none at all; but they're 'bout used up with rain an' chickens an' sich thin's. Ye see he was plowin' the corn with a little bull-tongue plough o' hissen, an' all to onst he felt it knock agin a stump, an' he says he know'd all in a minnit it was a grave. So he stopped the little mule, Beck,—an' she's a pizen-mean mule to git a-goin' agin when onst she's come to a stan'-still,—an' sho's yer born, thar was a grave with a little creetur in it no bigger'n a baby, jist bones, an' a dish or two. Dad says he could hear voices all aroun' him as he was a-takin' up those bones, an' he heerd 'em a-follerin' him all the way to the house. We put 'em away in the pantry, but Sal and the ole man said as how they couldn't sleep all night a-hearin' 'em a-callin'. So, next mornin', Sal took 'em all out-doors. There came up a rain, an' those bones jist melted away, all but a few on 'em; an' the chickens picked out all the teeth cause they looked yaller like corn."

"Where are those that are left?" inquired Miss Cathmore.

"In the corn-crib, a-waitin' fur Dad to put 'em back agin. I doan't put much belief in ther carin' 'bout bein'

dug up; an' I tells Dad an' Sal that what they hear a-callin' is jist ornary screech-owls; an' I b'lieve it, least no wise I doan't never hear 'em."

At this point Jake appeared, with a spade on his shoulder, and they started through the garden towards the corn-field. Jake was a dull-looking, heavy-eyed boy of about fourteen, with a freckled face and a head of bushy red hair. Every movement was awkward, as if all his joints were loosely knit. He swung along with a shuffling gait, and the rest followed him,—Mr. Dana on one side of Miss Cathmore and Mr. Fable on the other. It was not a pleasant walk, for the rough ground and the blazing sun took away all the pleasure of conversation or scene. When about half-way across the corn-field, Jake stopped, and, striking his spade into the earth, listened, shook his head, and tried again. This time he gave a nod of satisfaction, and began to shovel the dirt away. In a few moments a flat stone appeared in sight, which, as soon as he saw it, caused another ominous shake of his head.

"No bones thar."

"How do you know, Jake?" asked Dana.

"'Cause it's crooked. They're allers lay east and west, an' ef they've bin moved, the bones is done gone."

He lifted it, however, and dug the earth out of the square grave. The stones at the end, sides, and bottom were all the same size,—fifteen inches square. There was no sign of bone. Nothing but mould and dirt. He tried again, and this time with better result. When he came to the top stone, he nodded his head many times. When he had lifted it carefully away, instead

of using his spade, as he had done before, he knelt down and began removing the earth with his hands. Soon he lifted from the dust of ages a black bowl with three heads around the edge, then another, lighter colored and shaped like a gourd, with the neck turned backward and the opening at the end of it.

"We'll fin' bones here," was the first utterance that broke the silence. The group drew nearer and watched him work. Elfrieda Cathmore's eyes were fixed on the grave with an immovable stare. A strange, weird look passed over her face as she gazed, and, when he uncovered a skeleton embedded in the dirt, she leaned forward, and those who looked saw a tiny jet of flame leap up from the place where the skull lay.

Every one stood motionless, almost breathless, as Jake moved as if to lay the pieces of bone upon the ground. Elfrieda fell upon her knees, and, with upturned face and hands clasped, she cried,—

"Behold the proof!"

She laid her hand upon the boy's arm and motioned to him to stop, and reverently, as if in the presence of the being who had once lived and used that body, she thus spoke. Her face grew illuminated with intense feeling.

"Behold the proof," she again repeated, "in those crumbling bones that, long ere the Adamic race were born, didst revel in a life as free as a bird. Aye, and as innocent of thought or soul. Behold the hands! How fixed with grasp upon the shoulder, as on the box we found before. All, all is true. The race of man will bless the day that tarried not until the last remaining bone had crumbled back to earth again.

From out the speechless* race the voices came that since have filled the world with music and with speech. This little one, that ran and leaped, and swung from bough of tree, no word of love could utter, nor voice of grief, nor sound of happiness. Yet, we, to-day, with powers of speech perfected, are linked by bonds indissoluble to all these speechless ones of yore."

* "This Breath, Voice, Self, or Pneuma is the synthesis of the seven senses; all are minor deities of the army of the voice."—"Secret Doctrine," vol. i. p. 96.

In the *Anugita* (considered by Max Muller the continuation of the *Bhagavatgita*), a conversation between a Brahmana and his wife on the origin of speech and its occult properties is given, which concludes thus: "It is always noisy or noiseless. Of these two the noiseless is superior to the noisy. So speech formerly spoke. Hence the mind is distinguishable by reason of its being immovable, and the goddess Speech by reason of her being movable."—"Secret Doctrine," vol. i. p. 95.

Horatio Hall, in a speech before the Association for Science, in 1886, gives many facts in support of a speechless race, as well as great antiquity of pre-Adamite man.

"We learn from the discoveries of geologists and physiologists that, while a being entitled to the name of man has occupied some portions of the earth during a vast space of time, the acquisition of the power of speech by this being is in all probability an event of recent occurrence."

Professor Whitney says, "The speechless man is a being of undeveloped capacities, having within him the seeds of everything great and good, which only language can fertilize and bring to fruit."

M. de Mortellet believes the same. He says, "When did the speaking race begin? Less than ten thousand years ago. The speechless many thousands earlier."

Here she arose, and, turning towards the east, became wrapped in silence, that at length burst forth in a rhythmic chant of an ancient Vedic hymn. And as she sang, the light upon her face kindled into wondrous illumination, that transfigured her as none had ever seen it before. As she uttered the following words, her voice grew softer and softer, until one could almost imagine it a part of the summer air :

“How fleeting all things that have together come;
Their nature's to be born and die;
Coming they go, and then is best
When each has ceased and all is rest.

How didst thou depart this life, thou Holy One, from the decaying world into the undecaying one? How didst thou find thy way to the Lord of Righteousness, who is the Father of all souls? He maketh the path for the sun and stars; He causeth the moon to wax and wane; He giveth the waters feet to run; and hath traced the vein in every leaf. The garment He wearoth is like a robe inlaid with stars of a heavenly substance.”

Her voice died away as she finished, and then, turning slowly, she knelt down and began to take tenderly from their place the remains of what had once been a living human being. Some of it vanished as the air touched it, and many of the larger bones were honey-combed and soft, and crumbled at the touch.

She had carried in her arms a box, which she now opened, and upon the snowy cotton within she laid these relics of a long-forgotten past,—a past but lately

dreamed of, and to whose shores the mind can only voyage in skiffs of wildest fable. A part of the skull, with sightless sockets staring out upon the light of newer sun; some vertebræ; some longer bones of leg, with here and there a finger; some shells that lay around the neck,—shells whose home had been in the sea's great bosom; a jawbone filled with teeth, and here and there a fragment more, were all that she could save from out the wreck of ages.

"We shall never do better. Time is dissolving the last picture of extinct races. Let us go; it is enough."

They now found their voices, and a buzz of human tones filled the air. Mr. Fable and his friend, however, said nothing. It was to them an incomprehensible scene that needed explanation. Carul *felt* their thoughts, and said,—

"Do not be surprised, gentlemen, at anything you may hear or see to-day. My sister is a mystic. There are times when this material world is as utterly unseen by her as is the invisible world by us at this moment. There is not time to say more at present. We must follow her bidding and let her have her way. As he spoke, his sister turned one moment towards the grave, and, with outstretched hands, seemed to implore a benediction upon it. The words of a famous Parsee prayer* fell from her lips, and then she turned to leave

* "Teach thou me, Lord Omniscient, from out thyself, from heaven through thy word, whereby the world first arose. We offer up our sacrifice unto the undying, shining, swift-horsed sun,

the spot. Her brother and Mr. Dana each carried a piece of pottery, and she herself the box of relics; Mr. Fable walked by her side, silent, surprised, but delighted to be near her and permitted to shield her from the sun.

"Thar's a cave down yonder that Dad says the little folks lived in. P'raps you'd like to see it," said the boy, Jake, in a mumbling tone, without looking at any one in particular.

"See it? I should say so. Boy, wake up. Tell us all you know about these graves," thundered the Senator, in tones that might have jarred the sensibilities of any one but Jake. He merely turned and looked at the speaker a moment, then said, "Come on arter me," and began a hasty march towards a giant oak a few rods away. When he came to the tree, he stood still a moment for the rest to come up, then pointed to a nest swinging at the end of a low bough. A couple of birds were flying around it, and, bending down the branch, they found four little mocking-birds calling for food. By this time the boy had vanished. In a moment his red head reappeared a few yards beyond, as if he had dropped in a well. It proved to be a steep ravine opening in a most unexpected way, and revealing at the bottom, among bushes and vines, a rocky wall. The path leading to it zigzagged to and fro along the

to withstand darkness, to withstand the demons born of darkness, and Death that creepeth in unseen. We sacrifice to the bright and glorious star, that washeth away all things of fear, him whom the Lord hath established lord and overseer of all stars."

side of the ravine, and ever and again the red head of Jake would disappear and come to view, encouraging them to go on. The gentlemen went first, each holding the hand of a lady, to steady the steep descent. Mr. Dana begged for the box of bones, but Miss Cathmore was firm. No hand but her own might touch them, so, with one arm holding the precious treasure, she allowed herself to be partly led, partly guided, partly upheld by her friend, until at length they all reached the bottom in safety. Here they found a new world. No longer the broiling sun followed to smite them; but, instead, cool, moist, delicious airs fanned their cheeks, and odors born of sweet grasses made the place a delight. Vines had grown in such profusion that from bush to bush they had woven canopies of verdure; and trees, growing along the edge of the ravine, gave a dense shade to the spot. The wall of stone referred to before extended around the end of the chasm, which here came to a sudden termination, and formed a concave, overhanging wall of stratified rock. Beneath this roof of stone at least fifty persons might stand comfortably protected from all harm from above. From the edge of this singular amphitheatre dripped water continually, forming a veil of moisture between the outer world and those beneath the roof. At times the sun illuminated this living veil into rainbow colors of indescribable beauty. Like a gem upon the ground lay a spring of purest water.

"Are we dreaming?" asked Mrs. Clifton. "Surely this is fairy-land."

"This is the ice spring, marm. It is cold; allers the

same. Hyar's a cup marm keeps yer for to drink with, an' p'raps you-uns might be dry."

"I never tasted a draught so delicious in my life," said Carul, handing the cup to the ladies. "I thought it my duty to drink first, and see that all was right. What noise is that?"

They all listened. It was like the roar of a cataract, or the Mississippi when roused in the early spring.

"I reckon yer hearin' the big river undergroun'. We-uns calls it the 'Lost River,' for nobody knows whar it goes to or comes from," said Jake, proudly. "Ef you-uns 'ill put yer heads nigh the groun', ye'll hear a sight better."

They did as he told them, and heard the roar and rush magnified many times, until it seemed as if a second Niagara were just beneath their feet. The effect was overpowering. Mr. Fable was the first to speak.

"This State of Tennessee is a wonderful State. Its future is assured, and among its mineral attractions I believe it will be proven that ores of all kinds are to be found. Above mere riches, it has a climate unsurpassed, perhaps only equalled in one or two places of the world; a scenery bold and beautiful, and such features as we now see to attract those who love the marvellous. Lost rivers; cliff-dwellings; extinct races; what has not this State?"

"You may well say so, Mr. Fable," replied Miss Cathmore; "but you have failed to mention the greatest attraction of all, viz., that of the proof of man's origin, which will be established by these bits of bone that I

carry in my arms. This is the great wonder of the ages,—that not on Asia's ancient soil, not in Eden, not in the East, but here in America,* the world that is

* In a lecture, Professor Pengelly, F.R.S., says, "At some period of the Tertiary epoch, northeast Asia was united to north-west America, perhaps by the line where the Aleutian chain of islands now extends."

Haeckel, in his "Pedigree of Man," considers the Australians of to-day as the lineal descendants, almost unchanged, of that *second* branch of the primitive human race that spread northwards, chiefly in Asia, and seems to have been the parent of all the straight-haired races of men.

The following from Andrew S. Fuller, in the *New York Sun* of March, 1891:

"THE CRADLE OF THE RACE: WHY NOT IN AMERICA INSTEAD OF EUROPE OR ASIA?—*Abundant Relics Indicating that Man First Appeared on the Western Hemisphere of this Planet—The Designs of Pottery Significant of the Relationship.*—On what part of this planet man first made his appearance may be a question of little practical importance to us at the present time. Still, it is one which most persons would be pleased to have answered. The aborigines, or first inhabitants, of nearly all countries have some traditions touching their origin, and, while all are more or less vague and uncertain, some are far more reasonable than others; but as no two agree as to time, place, or manner of appearance, we may well consider them all as mythical and untrustworthy. In seeking to locate the cradle of the human race, we find the way smooth and easy as long as we keep in the one over which traditions have rolled down to us from prehistoric times, but the moment we strike out into new paths, or those not familiar to historians, we meet obstacles and provoke hostilities from those whose personal interests demand that we should keep in the old road on which our guides and teachers have been collecting toll for these many centuries. We cannot, however, limit history to written

called new, was man first placed. It will upset all former systems ; it will cause bitter opposition among scientists ; but the truth once revealed and proved must prevail. It will be the old story of Galileo over again."

"You are sure of this?"

It was Mr. Waldron who spoke, and the rest drew nearer to hear her answer.

"Many years have I been taught by wise men, and every word has been fulfilled. Shall this fail? There was a time when where we now stand was covered by the sea itself; then came upheavals; new continents were thrown up, old ones were sunk, and with every cataclysm some of the race, working up towards man, were left upon the earth. The new world that we call America is really the oldest of all existing lands, unless we include Africa, which at one time was connected with it. The glacial age swept over this world, and

records, for they are all comparatively modern, and even traditions fall far short of finding primal man in the dim past; consequently, if we would go farther back, we are forced to seek information among the imperishable relics left by prehistoric races and so widely scattered over the entire habitable globe. In no other country are relics found in greater abundance or of higher antiquity than in this, and while our explorations have been few in number and rather hastily made, yet the relics of ancient races brought to light point strongly, if they do not absolutely prove, that man first appeared on this planet in America. The great number and variety of these relics and the conditions under which they are found show that man must have existed here as early if not long anterior to those who have left their marks in the caves of Europe as well as on the most ancient ruins of Egypt and Arabia."

these mountain ranges were its southern boundaries. The ocean-shells that we have found to-day upon this little skeleton were then found everywhere in this locality, for old Ocean was near at hand. When the giant forces took the world and tore it asunder, as a beast tears its food, then Niagara began to thunder down its steep path, and new watercourses made their way to the sea. The Moon-fathers were watching and waiting for the time to come that the evolution of the body could join hands with the evolution of the Monad, and together they would form MAN. Animals had increased in size until the now extinct mastodons made earth tremble beneath their tread. Then the animal form grew finer, the different species grew less cumbersome, the convulsions of the world swept off the coarser beasts, new earths took the place of the old or of a greater part of it, as it will soon do again,* and when the animal form was perfect, and the monad given the use of it, the race of man began its march. These little creatures were the first, and no man dare compute the time that has passed since they lived. The Moon-fathers said, 'they shall have two homes,' and America and Africa were the places chosen.†

* Stanley's Pygmy races.

† REMAINS OF A DWARF RACE.—*Interesting Discovery recently made in British Columbia.*—Captain J. S. Prescott, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, who recently returned here from Victoria, B. C., describes an interesting experience which he had while north. He was in Victoria at a time when considerable excitement had been caused by the discovery of ancient human remains in some mounds. The little hillocks were dug into and skeletons were brought to sight by the shovel and pickaxes. The discovery

"The glacial age had long since passed away. The tropics had taken the place of the frigid zone, and nature gave a warm and pleasant country to her first children. With a coat of hair, as the Bible says,* they needed nothing but fruits and herbs for life to be sustained.† All things work by law. A mindless body was waiting the germinal man, and when it came, the evolution of the body continued and mind began to develop. As mind acted on body, there were no new organs, no new functions, but the body was lifted up and carried forward into all the ages since; until about

was made at a place called Macauley's Point. A workman, clearing away what he thought was a natural rise in the ground, touched a hard, metallic substance with his pick. On digging farther the object came to view. It was an iron war weapon shaped like a harpoon, only much shorter and stouter. Curious characters were etched in it, and their lines had survived through centuries.

One of the mounds was excavated and a flat stone was exposed. It had been designed as a door to a sepulchre, for, on being raised, a grave walled on all sides with tightly cemented stones was seen. In it was a dwarfed body doubled up in a sitting posture, a custom followed by the ancient Indian tribes along the entire Pacific coast. The formation of the skull was like that of a Chinese. The body, though small, was that of an adult dwarf. Several other graves were opened, and the occupants of all of them were similar in anatomical construction and size. In many of the graves rough hewn utensils, evidently used for cooking, were found, together with arrow-heads known to have been used by coast tribes extinct for centuries.

At Cadboro Bay similar mounds were excavated with like results.

* Gen. iii. 21.

† Ibid. i. 29.

the time of Christ's coming, it attained its perfection. It was complete ages before, but not perfect. There is a wide difference between the two. But we must not talk more. Where is the cave?"

The boy climbed a small tree and thrust apart a clump of bushes growing from the side of the wall. There was a hole about twenty inches long by as many in breadth.

"Thar it be. Dad put me in thar when I was little, but no one has bin thar sence. It was all dark, an' a hole went somewhar else."

"What is to hinder blasting a little, and seeing for ourselves?" suggested Dana.

"Nothing at all. I'll send a man off on horseback for powder, and if we can find a crow-bar we can be boring a hole. Boy, is there a crow-bar at the house?"

"I reckon."

"Run and see; and if there is bring it. Tell your mother we'll have dinner in an hour. In the meantime we can find a cool place to sit down and talk. I must hear more about Miss Cathmore's ideas of evolution."

"Not mine, Mr. Fable. They are the ideas that belong to the races. They have been handed down through many centuries, and have never before been given to the world. They are simple *truth*."

A shout overhead, and the old woman could be seen at the edge of the gorge, gesticulating furiously. Jake reappeared, running down the path like a deer, saying,—

"Come to dinner. Chicken's ready, marm sez."

It was much easier to go up the steep path than it

had been to come down, and they were soon on the porch, fanning themselves and laughing like children. From within was a savory odor of corn-bread, coffee, and fried chicken, to which their ride and exercise had fitted them to do ample justice. After they were seated at the table, the old woman stationed herself behind Carul Cathmore with a long brush made of turkey feathers, and began to wave it over the entire table, at the same time giving orders to the younger ones.

"Hyar, Sal. Pass that thar coffee. Set the chicken down anear the young leddies. We-uns know how to fry a chicken, ef we don't know book larnin'. An' you, Jane, whar's the honey? Folks mus' have honey with biscuits, I reckon."

The girl addressd as Sal was a second edition of Jake—the same carrotty-colored hair, freckled face, awkward movement. But she had what Jake had not, a timid, appealing, frightened manner that touched the stranger with sympathy. Carul Cathmore, observing this, glanced at her as she poured out a glass of buttermilk opposite to him, and, as their eyes met, she dropped the pitcher and fled from the room.

Every one looked up astonished. The mother merely said,—

"Don't mind Sal. She's goin' to have a fit. She's allers afeerd o' strangers, an' when the bones o' the little people is teched, she's allers right smart bad arter it. She'll call the birds a-spell, an' then she'll come back all right. Lizy help the hoe-cake. Whar's yer manners?"

"But how does she call birds?" asked Dana.

"Goodness knows. She's been so from a leetle youngster. I first cotched her at it when she wasn't fur from four year old. I 'spect she was born so. I've done 'lowed she's got a queer spirit in her, an' sometimes it lets her have her own way, an' more times it doesn't. When she was a baby we lived down by the Caney-fork in a place called Buzzard's Glory. It was a mighty wild place. Rattlesnakes was as thick as blackberries, an' when Sal got so as she could walk, I hed to min' her mighty close, to keep her from bein' snake-bit, or lost in the bushes, an' one day I was clar skerirt to death about her. I couldn't see her nowhere, an' I called myself deaf and dumb a-tryin' to fin' the little critter. Bym-bye I went out to the wood-pile, an' thar she sot hid away behin' the logs a-callin' birds. I kin tell you I was mighty glad, an' I went out an' jerked her in the house, an' all the birds flew off in no time. Ever sence, ef she doesn't feel right peart, an' thin's goes wrong, an' the graves are meddled with, she goes off by herself a spell an' calls the birds, an' then she gits better."

"But tell us what you mean. How does she do it?"

"How can I tell what I 'doan't know. I 'spect no one knows but *him* (looking upward), an' he woan't tell. It's a queer trick fur a chile to hev, sure enuff. Sal's a strange gal, an' no mistake."

"I have read of these things, but should like immensely to see with my own eyes," said Elfreda.

"So should I," added her friend.

"And I, and I," came from each of the rest.

"Sartain sure, I don' know 'zactly how to manage it. Ef Sal sees any one when she's in these ere spells, she goes into jerkin' fits, tho' it mout be that ye might keep still an' see her bring the birds. Onst Jake skaired her when she had the birds on her head, an' she fell over as if she'd been shot. Ef yer a min' to go roun' the tother way, an' keep as still as dead folks, ye kin do it."

They all promised, and she led the way through the house and out into an old orchard. With her lips tightly closed and held by her finger she pointed to the right. There was Sal. No longer dull, heavy, timid. No longer awkward and unattractive, but a new creature, abounding in life, radiant with happiness, and positively beautiful. Her hair fell in masses around her, and the sun, lighting its threads, turned them into golden flame. She stood beneath a large tree, superbly regnant, mistress of a realm unrivalled. She poised for a moment on one foot, slightly leaning forward, and listening to something that gave her pleasure, for, as she listened, she smiled. Not a sound broke the stillness. Not a bird was within sight. Her eyes brightened with pleasure, and she began to croon a soft song, as one might sing a lullaby. She began to move, weaving herself to and fro, with arms above her head making circles in the air. More and more rapidly she swayed, until she seemed whirling, but still singing the lullaby. Then she bent her head and listened, only to move round and round with the speed of a dervish. From east, west, north, and south the birds came, and the whirring of their wings filled the air. Her face

grew radiant. She moved more slowly. She paused and waited. They came in twos and threes, and rested on her arms, her head, her shoulders. They covered her, until the motion of their wings made her seem like a bird herself. They were still coming through the air, and fell upon the backs of the rest. Birds of all sizes and colors; birds that were enemies elsewhere, and beautiful birds that were never seen there before. For several moments she stood like a living statue, and then, uttering a sharp cry, she threw her arms in the air and fell to the ground. The birds flew away, and the prostrate girl alone remained of the strange scene they had witnessed.

The mother motioned them to go to the house, and as silently as they had come so did they return.

"Sal will be all right again an' as peart as ever," remarked the mother, observing the eyes turned towards the prostrate figure they had left upon the ground.

"But snakes——"

"Law sakes. Ef I hed known ez much years ago ez I know now, I'd a-saved myself a heap o' frettin'. Nuthin' hurts Sal. Bees doan't sting her, snakes doan't bite her, an' if they did, I reckon she'd pizen 'em. She's a queer one, sure enuff. P'raps ef we-uns was all like Sal, it 'ud be better fur us. She doan't never worry 'bout enythin'."

"You say the truth," came from Elfreeda. "Your daughter is gifted with something of the same power our ancestors once had, and our descendants must again possess. It has come to her without teaching or development, and with it she is guarded by unseen forces,

far better than she could be through your love and care. How soon will she come home?"

"I reckon afore long. She's peart enuff, Sal is, but she isn't a bit like t'other chillen."

"Does she remember what she has seen or done after it is over?" she again asked.

"Sometimes she mout. More times she moutent. I've heern her say she'd bin with the little folks, an' seen 'em a-swingin' in the trees an' flyin' through the air. You ax her when she comes back."

"We must first see to the boring and blasting; it may take longer than we think. On second thought, why would it not be best for the ladies to wait here and rest, safe from all possibilities of danger? We men could get everything ready, and if, after blasting, there is anything to see, we pledge our word to come and tell them."

"I appreciate your kindness, Mr. Dana, but I think you will see us there before you blast. I feel that I must note the veriest trifle, the smallest detail," was the prompt reply given by Elfrieda.

A few moments later, and Sal, walking slowly, like one in a sleep, came towards the house, and when she had seated herself on the gallery, Elfrieda came near, sat down by her, and, taking her hand in her own, said,—

"Where have you been? What did you hear? What did you see? Tell me."

For a moment there was no reply. Then the answer came, at first hesitatingly, then boldly.

"I was over thar, an' thar, an' thar," pointing each time in a different direction; at first to the east, then

west, and, lastly, overhead, where the dim figure of the moon could be discerned, although the sun was still shining.

"Tell me what you saw." Another pause.

"I seen the place whar gold is made. I seen the place whar the little folks lived. I seen old men bringin' light to put in the little folks, an' then I seen beautiful folks comin' an' goin' up an' down."

"Tell me what you heard."

Miss Cathmore's tone was now commanding, but gentle. The answer came more quickly than before.

"I heerd music. Music like birds a-singin' an' birds a-flyin', and arter that I heerd voices; an' when I listened, I could hear 'em say, 'It is done.'"

"Toll me more. What did you do?"

"I didn't do nuthin'. I jist heerd the music an' watched the little folks. They climb all over me just like the birds, an' I heerd 'em say, 'Ye must take care on us.'"

"Did you ever see these little people before?"

"I allers seen 'em when the birds come. It mout be the birds is the little folks, an' the little folks is birds. Ef ye listen, powerful still, down by the cave thar, ye can heer them dead-uns a-yellin' like all possessed."

"I think we'll go home by moonlight, Mona. It is time to go to the cave. Come."

Carul and Mrs. Clifton started down the path, their arms locked together and their voices suppressed, as they talked of what they had seen and heard. For the first time, Mona seemed thoroughly interested in her friend's hobby—if hobby it might be called.

As they approached the gorge, a shout from below made them halt, and, at that moment, a blast of rock and earth filled the air with dust and smoke. Elfreda ran down the path, holding herself up by trees and bushes, and her friend followed her example. A large opening had been made into the cave, revealing a room that might extend far back underground, and was filled with the remains of human bodies, all of them small. A door or opening leading into a second room was also seen, and when they looked within they found the same remnants of a lost race. Pieces of pottery, many of them perfect, were found among the bones. Against this inner door a flat stone had been placed, and by excluding the air had preserved the finer parts of the skeletons in a comparatively good condition. As soon, however, as the air touched them they crumbled into dust, and nothing remained but the little vases and the atoms that had once made the framework of living creatures. Looking through this little door-way, the darkness continued a long distance, and suddenly became illuminated with a bluish light, revealing, farther on, a great river, moving majestically from hidden source to deepest night. By placing the eye close to this opening and shutting out the light of day, objects became more plainly seen. Steps leading down walls of rock almost perpendicular showed that in some long-forgotten past there were those who found their way from out this cavern by floating on the river that flowed under the earth to a far-off haven of safety. How the final scene had been enacted; how the truly energetic creatures had found a grave where they had

always found a shelter, none could tell. Elfreeda, holding to her forehead a bit of a skull she had picked up, stood silent in the light of the setting sun, and, turning her face to the west, she said,—

“I see enemies to this race, beings of coarser frame and mindless bodies, left from some previous continent, who found their way to this home of the moon-children, and sought to sweep them from the earth. Their heads were sharp, and from them have come down the races known as Mound-builders. They frightened these children of the light; they drove them into caverns; they shut the doors and left them there to die. Ah, yes. I see the river. It had been their friend, but now it swelled and roared in torrents, and they dare not trust themselves to its power. I see a struggling band of those that have escaped this fate fleeing to the South, and ages passed till from them came a race who built great temples and worshipped the sun. Some of this small, but rapidly evolving, race went northward. They built houses on the lofty cliffs; they followed mountain ranges, and came at last to where this continent joined to another. Over this path they wandered, and when the waters came and made two worlds, they were at home, where now the Chinese dwell. The world of men has ever moved from east to west, and those we know as oriental now, once had their starting-point upon our world.”

She finished, as if she had been reciting something she had learned, and turned towards the opening of the cave. The blue light could still be plainly seen in the dim distance shimmering upon the mysterious river.

Her words had been uttered with oracular force, and the minds of all the group had been carried far away to those times when man was in no sense human, and only that his form was like our race could he be called a man. Beyond that time lay æons of vegetable growth and earth-formation, and back to fire-mist and the first beginnings of things.

"We must make another attempt and try to find that river," said Dana.

"You will never find it. It belongs not to here and now," replied Freeda.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that when we have found and secured the proofs we need, all else must be relinquished. We have seen the river; is it not enough?"

"Because we have seen what we have, we must see and know more. It will be one of the most gigantic finds in all the realm of science."

"There is no science, if science means knowledge; for all that is now accepted must be thrown aside," said Miss Cathmore, positively.

"Well, be that as it may, I shall bore again near this inner door and see what the result may be."

He fell to work with a will, and the others relieved him, for the night was coming on and time was precious. At last it was ready; the blast was lighted, and when they came from their places of safety to see the result, nothing could be found but a mass of *débris* where the spot was that had been marked by the inner door.

"As usual, you are right, Freeda," said Carul, when

they had looked and looked, and all in vain. Even the hill seemed to have vanished, and the spring was dried up, and the overhanging wall had crumbled, and the entire formation of the ground had changed, making a slope where there had before been a steep ascent.

"What does it mean?" asked Dana. "Surely no one blast could ever produce such results as that."

"It was to be. I told you the river did not belong to us. The hollow space that formed the cave has been filled with rock and dirt, and henceforth there will be no trace of the homes of the little people, save what is left among the houses of the cliff——"

"Jehoshaphat! What have I found?"

As Carul spoke, he held up a round stone, twelve inches through, and perhaps twenty long, covered with singular figures. Its color was like jasper and its surface smooth. He held it up, and, as the others pressed around him to see the strange object, he looked at his sister, as if for explanation. She was silent. A moment later, and she fell upon the ground, her face covered by her hands. No one spoke. The moon was plainly seen directly overhead; the sun had gone behind the hills; nature was quiet. One, two, three minutes passed thus, and no one spoke. Suddenly there appeared by her side the well-known figure of Sul-Mal; well known at least to Carul and Mrs. Clifton. He was dressed as they had last seen him at the Sarnath Tower, but his face now glowed with a delight that made it younger than any of those to whom he spoke. His voice was soft and low; his words were in their own language.

"Daughter, well done. Thine eye was steadfast. Never hast thou faltered, and the goal is near. Through woman has ever come the keys of life, and thou, El-freeda, shalt be rewarded. Not beyond, but here, where shadows like birds of ill omen have brooded over thee. Once more wilt thou see me in the forests of the north, and then a long farewell. Our paths will never cross again. Outward and upward must I go, while thou wilt move in happy human life, love-crowned, because thou freely gavest thyself to the work. This stone that thou wilt carry north is but a culmination of all the signs and proofs of what has long been kept for man. I feared it might not be secured. I listened; I waited; I watched. If once, but once, thy thought had turned from duty back to self, it would not have been found. But all is well, and soon thou shalt be free for love, and life, and happiness. A secret now I will reveal of that great tower in Sarnath's plain, whose building never has been known, by whom or for what purpose. Within those solid walls, and for its safety built, there lies concealed a stone like this now found. It fell one day on Sarnath's plain, covered with figures like the one you hold, but none were wise enough to read its story. At last a wise man came from mountains many miles away, and, putting close his forehead to the rock, he said,—

"Oh, fathers, know the history here writ. It came from off the moon, and tells the story of man's birth. These carvings were by Pitris made, long ages since, when on the moon life reigned and joy. A second piece has fallen where the first children of the moon

were placed, across the sea in forests and in mountains hid.'

"This is the story of the stone now found. A few days more and all the tale will then be told. Daughter of light, well done."

When he had finished speaking, he took Elfrieda by the hand and raised her to her feet. He lifted up his hands upon her head, and a strange light encircled both head and hands. After a moment's silence he again spoke, but this time the words were only for her ears; the language was unknown to all beside. It was a curious group that watched, beneath the full-orbed moon, this man and his disciple. None who were there will ever forget the scene. Sul-Mal with strangely spiritual face intent only on Elfrieda; his loose robes falling gracefully about his slender form, and on his head the snowy turban of his order. Before him stood his pupil, the woman who from very love of truth had given up all else to know the truth. For years no ties or bonds had bound her, and in the truth alone she had been fully recompensed. This praise and commendation had not been needed to make her glad that she had entered on the quest; yet all the more was it refreshing. Surroundings were all forgotten by her at this supreme moment, and of one thing only was she conscious,—that face to face she once more stood with him who had led her from darkness.

Around these two central figures circled the rest of the party, with Jake behind a tree, losing nothing of the drama. Above his head, on one of the lower branches, sat Sal, silent, staring, but intensely inter-

ested. When she saw the light about Elfreeda's head, she dropped upon the ground and buried her face in her hands. Sul-Mal turned, and, pointing towards her, said: "She is one of the sixth-race children, but, all untaught and walking, stumbling towards the light. She sees and knows a world of beauty that some day every earnest soul shall know."

A flash of light shot across the sky, and for a second every eye was closed. When they were again opened, Sul-Mal had gone. It was in vain that they looked up or down, or here or there; the ground must have opened at his feet.

"Am I dreaming? Have I been drinking, or taking opium, or are there witches still among men?" ejaculated Mr. Waldron, in a dazed and puzzled manner.

"I have read of people who rode through the air; of ghosts and hobgoblins, and fairies and gnomes, but this is a piece of hocus-pocus beyond all such imagination. Will some one kindly tell me if I have lost my senses? Eph, what did you see?"

"More than I can explain or understand, that is certain. Unless Miss Cathmore explains all this, we shall be only fit for a lunatic asylum."

"Yes, do, Miss Cathmore. Tell us what it all means. Who was this man?"

"Carul, can we spend an hour here? or must we go at once?"

"Just as you say, Freeda. The night is fine, and a drive by moonlight will not be bad. We'll all sit here for sixty minutes by my watch."

He took out his watch ; it was already eight o'clock.

"At nine we leave. Freeda has the floor."

He threw himself on the grass by Mona Clifton, and the circled narrowed down. Jake had raised Sal from the ground and was dragging her home.

"What shall I tell?" asked the woman, upon whom every eye was centred.

"Tell us what you began before. Tell us about the past and future of mankind."

"Yes, that's it. Waldron's head's level," echoed his friend.

"To say the words is easy, but to make you think, day after day, until life means nothing seen, this is not easy. It seems folly to attempt it, but Sul-Mal said some seed might drop that would expand and grow. Where shall I begin?"

"You said there was a mindless race," said Dana, who sat at her right; "tell us what you mean. Even the animals have minds."

"True. It is rare to find a mindless animal, yet, to-day, I can show you men who are far below the creatures we call brutes. Not only will they never think, but they fail in the foresight of the ant or bee. What little will has grown with centuries of growth is only used to frustrate all the law of God. They fail to see that there is but one *Will*, and to win life this *Will* must guide us. Could we to-night obey the laws of God, and let the little human will be passive, what could we not do? Did not the Master say, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you?' And John, by

vision, saw the conflict rage, and then gave voice to all those 'Overcomeths' that make glad the heart. He said, at last, 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things.' Who can have more? To know the truth, we must know the meaning of words, and this is why the legend of creation has always been misunderstood. It is all in that Book; but men have eyes and see not."

"But the Bible says there was a creation, and a garden, and a man Adam, and a woman Eve. Where do these little folks come in if the Bible is true?"

"You reason as all those reason who have not asked, 'Who gave the written word, and why?' Was it to guide a race who could not comprehend its teachings?"

"But surely, Miss Cathmore, you believe that all human-kind are given an equal chance. Why should one race have a Bible, and not all races?"

"The Word was given many times, and to many nations. Sometimes in Vedas dark with hidden wisdom, sometimes in lore of other lands, and, last of all, in fuller, clearer light it came to all the world, as from the Lord Omniscient, in what we call the Holy Scriptures; but never yet was sacred book ere given to mindless men. From first to last they teach of immortality; of man's real life beyond the world of sense; of nothing in the lower life, except the wisdom that will guide in using rightly all the things of time. Therefore they all begin with the Adamic man,* he in whom the

* In our own Bible are many books referred to which now are not called sacred books; and also in other religions, and from scientific sources, came proofs of Truth that yet are not called sacred.—Book of Dyzan, etc., Yathas-Puranas etc.

higher self had first shown signs of life. Before this time the race were only men in form."

"Who knows this?" asked Waldron.

"The ancients of the east. They have lived in caves,* and spent their lives in handing down from age to age the wisdom that must teach the world of man of his primeval state. These little creatures, who once lived here where now we sit, were the progenitors of the Adamic man. Amid the throes of nature, in this region, the land was hurled asunder, but the continent was not destroyed. The climate shielded well the race who lived and died here, and no one dare compute the ages that have passed since then. It was decreed that some remains should be preserved against the time when proof was needed of the truth, and hence, to-day, I carry with me fragments of their dead, and after this not one shall ever be found."

"But Adam began the race by the Euphrates, and these were never there."

"When the Mound-builders of larger stature drove these little people hence, they fled across to Asia. Where now the straits separate, a succession of islands then joined the two worlds, and over these the little people fled. Some glimmerings of truth remain in the Celestial Empire, and in the binding of the women's feet we see their loyalty to old traditions. They cannot make themselves as small, but if they bind their

* "Beyond the western Traydain, in the solitary passes of Western Thibet, there are many such hiding-places. Pilgrims thither state that the number of volumes is so great that the British Museum would not contain them."

feet when young, one trace is left of first beginnings. As men became more perfect in the human form, more wise in worldly knowledge, they moved through India and on to the Euphrates. Here it was that light from spirit source first burned in human breast. Here man became Adamic—son of God—a living, never-dying creature. All men before were to this man what grub and worm are to the butterfly. From this time on forever he must march, conquering the mere material world, binding his senses to do his will, till once again he reigns a perfect spiritual being, only now with god-like knowledge crowned. The process of his growth is all mapped out along the pathway of the stars. There are planets seven in our system, and just as soon as we have passed from earth we enter on a phase of life where nothing that annoys us now shall come. Our Bible calls it heaven. The name is naught, but in the fact that there we reap as we have sown, and joy or sorrow is our lot, according to our life on earth; this stirs us all to greater work. The length of time we spend in this condition depends upon our will. The time is sure to come when we shall long for greater life and higher knowledge. Then the law must be obeyed, that unto dust we must return. There is no growth or step of progress taken, except as we are bound to some material world. When this time comes the soul returns to take a body upon the planet next in order, and after that will come another time of resting. So, through all the seven planets man goes, and then again, and yet again, until the seven great rounds are run."

She paused; her listeners were silent. After a

moment Senator Waldron asked, "Why is this necessary? If all is fixed, why should man care to know? Of course it is all new to me, but it seems like folly to try to change what cannot be altered a hair's-breadth. And all this knowledge of the long forgotten past. What will it do?"

"It will kill out unbelief. It is one of the plans that was to be, to meet this present time. Men laugh at all those early teachings of God's leading, and the world joins in the laugh. They say there was no chosen race, and all we read is fable. How can truth be proven? Only by what men call science, or by some long-preserved teaching. The great Pyramids revealed, after ages of silence, enough to overthrow the sneers of those who said there was no God. And now that man's beginning, in that distant time, is also found at variance with holy writ, the world must know the truth. Adam has held his place so long as primal man, that many think it sacrilege to say there was no Adam, almost as if we were dethroning Deity. Yet scholars know that it means '*red*,'—a race of red men; and any one who reads the first and second chapters of Genesis can see that there is given, not one, but two accounts of his creation. Why have they never asked the meaning of this fact? Why have they never studied deep the language of the ancients? They would then have found the one described the fluidic man; the other the man fallen into matter. All the various discussions of science over man's origin will never be settled until proof appears that shows he came from no pithecoïd ancestor. Such men as Dar-

win try to prove that man descended from the ape, and because he utters it boldly men believe; and yet there is not a grain of evidence to uphold his theory. It is all because the mind has been crippled by the old belief that Adam was the first man. In Genesis it says that all the animals were made first, and after them the man. Again it says that Adam was made first, and all the animals created after him, and brought to him to be named. How can these two statements be reconciled? Only by referring the first account to the astral or spiritual prototypes, when the signs of the Zodiac in the heavens foreshadowed what the animals on earth would be; and the second was when man was put upon the earth an intelligent being, who gave names to all the lower creatures. If men were not so blinded by their prejudices, they would see that the Adam is not one and the same. The first was in God's image. 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.' There was no Eve at this time, yet man was created in God's image with both natures. When was this? Long ages before the appearance of that man into whom God breathed the breath of life.* Now, if it can be found that there are traces of a race existing many thousand years before the time ascribed to Adam, and that this was a lower order of mankind working upward to perfection, you will see at once that all the old Darwinian theory must be abandoned.

* Read second volume of Madame Blavatsky's "Secret Doctrine," page 683, etc.

For why should man descend from apes (a thing he cannot do to-day) when there is found an ancestor more worthy of the child? Once make this clear, it matters not if to the moon is given all honor. The fact will ever have its place, and all things rightly will adjust themselves in science and religion. Slowly the human mind will clear itself of fogs of old beliefs, and with the coming of the race that draweth near will come a clearer light. Men will cease to do evil because they know the Karmic laws will hold them fast; because they see the inner light that guides to higher things; because they love the good and are at one with the Eternal One."

"I have read Arnold's 'Light of Asia,' but I could not understand the meaning of that Karma. Can you make it plain to me?"

"I think, if I should tell you that it runs throughout the Holy Bible, and show you where, you will understand me better than if I tried to make you see it as the Eastern adepts teach. When Adam fell from his high state into the world of matter he began to feel the Karmic law. It was not arbitrary from the great Jehovah, but just the sequence of his act. He was a spiritual being, free as air, until he longed to know a world of sense and matter. From that hour he was banished from the lovely garden, and forced to work for daily bread. It was his Karma. Once having longed for lower things, he fell; and being from that time a creature of sense as well as of spirit, the conflict then began which has lasted till to-day. A warfare ever going on between the man of spirit and the man

of sense, and only to be ended when the higher nature shall have won again its rightful place. And this fluidic, spiritual man was in such perfect unison with the great Cause that every vibration of the Infinite was felt by him. In other words, there was a perfect one-ness between God and man. This is the foundation of the universal belief in the fall of man from his high estate, and the same of that great truth of final restoration to a spiritual condition, and harmony with God. So with the tale of Cain and Abel.* The former slew the latter; the flesh killed spirit, and by no fiat of Jehovah, but by Karmic law the curse that followed could not be averted. The sign must evermore be worn. It goes through all the Bible; you will find it clearest in the sayings of our Lord.

“‘For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall receive the just reward.’ ‘Such measure as ye mete to others, shall be measured to you again.’ ‘Ye shall reap as ye have sown.’ When we were taught that God’s great Angel stood with book of Record ever open to note down our deeds of good or ill, it gave us hope that somehow he might overlook a single act or two; but when we know that Karma works, a living rope from every heart, responding to the soul’s en-

* Cain, the first-born child of the being who chose to give up his communion with the world of Cause for transient pleasures of the senses, represents the gross, material life of fallen human nature. It was the first-fruit of the *fall* into matter. Then came bitter penitence, and longings for the pure and blessed life of *spirit*, and Abel—child of God—was born.

deavor by telegraphic touch, how can we hope to escape one jot or tittle of our deserts?"

"You make it a natural law?"

"What is there supernatural? God hath no bounds. His works are always nature, so where can we find aught above? As you have seen upon a polished glass pure silver thrown that gave back every object that it met, so is there fixed upon the unseen ether, of which men know so little, a something that reflects and holds the acts, and even thoughts, of those it encircles round. All these are printed fast, and through the ages of eternal march each soul that runs may read. This, too, is part of Karma's law."*

"You have really led us out into another world, Miss Cathmore," said young Fable, who had not lost a syllable of what she had said. "And I shall at once begin to read and study along these lines. It is, at any rate, intensely interesting to go back into a past as remote

* "Karma is the great picture-gallery of eternity,—a faithful record of every act and thought and word of man. The Lipe-kas are the recorders, the divine amanuensis, or, as Plato calls it, the divine Thought." This record is no idle dream. Dr. Draper says, "The portraits of our friends may be hidden on the stone, by which they have passed and thrown a shadow, but are ready to make their appearance as soon as the development begins. On the walls of our most private apartments there are silhouettes of all our acts."

"The Present is the child of the Past; the Future the begotten of the Present. The Past, the Present, and the Future, the ever-living Trinity in one, the absolute *Is*."—S. D., vol. ii., page 446.

Read Mabel Collins's "Light on the Path," with closing chapter on Karma.

as the fire-mist, and on into a future so inconceivably grand. You must, of course, believe that man has a divinity within?"

"How else could he know God? Only like can know like. Besides, the Bible teaches this positively. It says, 'Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect;' and Paul says, 'We have come to the spirits of just men made perfect.' We are still babes; a long training for development awaits us."

"Time's up, Freeda. We must start in five minutes." It was Carul, heard now for the first time, and rising to his feet, as he spoke, to assist the ladies. He was not quick enough, however. Mr. Dana and young Fable had both extended a hand to his sister, and, as she laughingly took one of each, she said,—

"It would never do to show a preference, so I'll claim both; for I am sure they are both friends."

"Yours till death," replied the lawyer, but Dana merely gave the hand he held a pressure and said nothing. As they walked towards the house, in the stillness of the summer's night, every mind was softened by the thoughts they had listened to, and all the way back to Sparta the conversation was on a higher key. When they parted at the door of the hotel, the travellers to retire and the two friends to chat awhile over a cigar, it was like a parting of old friends.

"She's a wonderful woman, Eph, and no mistake. What a mind. What beauty. What grace. I don't blame you for falling in love at first sight. But, pshaw! What's the use. We have not a ghost of a chance. I don't believe she cares for any man on

earth. One might as well think of loving the Venus de Milo."

"All the same, how's a feller to help it? If they were only to be here awhile, I'd try my luck. But they are going to-morrow night. Deuced shame. I'd be content to just be in the same town, or where I could see her once in a while. As you say, she ain't the kind to marry. That man Dana's hit as hard as I am. There's some comfort in that. Much good will it do him."

"I could see a mutual understanding between the brother and the widow, couldn't you?"

"So I thought."

"Well, they're a bright party. I cannot feel that we shall never see them again. What did you think of all Miss Cathmore said in that sweet way of hers?"

"Think? I don't think. I just allowed the music of her voice to sift through my brain, and took the knowledge she imparted by absorption. I shall certainly send for books and read up on those lines, and see what ground I find for her belief. I think I could believe that moon was a golden calf if she told me it was. Can it be that in the universe there is another woman like that?"

"I should hope not many. Aside from turning all hearts, they would upset all traditional beliefs, and we should be minus churches, minus ministers, and minus religion."

"It might be that a better article would be brought in to take the place of the old. At any rate, that is not a question that troubles me. If only we could per-

suade them to stay over and visit the cliff-dwellings, it would prolong the happiness a little."

"But it can't be done. She is too anxious to get back with those bones. What was that man that appeared so suddenly and disappeared as miraculously? Do you think she can be a spiritual medium?"

"A spiritual medium? It is well we are sworn friends, or I should knock you down for the mere suggestion. What is there about her to suggest such a thing? Is she the kind of woman mediums are made of?"

"Well, no, I should say not; but I don't know enough about this kind of thing to be able to pigeon-hole it exactly. They believe in unseen people; so does she; and that is all I know about it."

"Which is deuced little. Perhaps it's the wisest thing not to talk of what we don't understand. I'm free to say, though, that I was a trifle surprised when that fellow with a turban came on the scene. Where he came from and where he went to will always be a mystery. Let's go to bed and dream about it."

He said good-night and went off to the hotel, while his friend remained with his cigar by the window. His thoughts were busy with new ideas, new faces, and problems. Chief among the latter was his friend's infatuation for the stranger, who until a few hours before was utterly unknown. Knocking the ashes from his cigar, he muttered audibly,—

I know Eph Fable well enough to dread a woman's charms. It is only a few years since he has learned to forget that little mountain girl that won his love, and

proved a silly, heartless flirt. I thought he would never look at a woman again. I could not understand how he could be so cut up over such a girl; but he is all heart, and no sooner is he cured of one affair than he goes into another; and, by the powers! this is something serious."

While he was meditating, his friend was walking slowly towards the hotel; not in a disturbed or excited frame of mind, but as if pondering over something he had resolved upon. As he closed the door of the room he entered, he said aloud,—

"If what she said was true, she shall not escape me. A few years more or less is nothing. There will come a time when I shall call her mine."

And all this time the unsuspecting object of this discussion was sleeping as quietly as a child.

CHAPTER XV.

LOVE AND LIFE.

"Whence came life? In the rocks is it writ, and no Finger hath
graven it there?

Whence came light? Did its motions arise without bidding?
Will Science declare

That the law ruling all hath upsprung from Nomind, that abideth
Nowhere?"

"You always astonish me, Freeda;" it was Carul, turning to look at his sister as he spoke. "You seem so gentle, so passive, so indifferent, and then one wakes up to the fact that you are as immovable as yonder mountain, and if you did not do it in such a lovely way, they'd call you stubborn."

"What do you mean, Carul? I am sure I had no idea I was anything so dreadful."

"I mean this. There, that clever lawyer, Mr. Fable, devoted himself to us heart and soul; could not have done more for us if he had been our own flesh and blood, and then when he begged us to stay a day or two longer, and you could see how much he wanted it, you would not yield an inch. I could not have done it to save my life."

"That is just the difference. I am indifferent on most things. I am utterly passive, but when I know I am under orders I move. I like this Mr. Fable, and I was sorry not to please him; but what is that when a higher than he commands? We shall meet again

somewhere. The light has kindled in his soul, and, like every flame that ever burned, it turns towards the heavens. Without the bones, it was worth a trip here to have helped another on the path."

"And have you no interest in my future?" asked Dana, in an injured tone. "Perhaps I am so far behind that you think me hopeless."

She turned to look at him, as she replied, "I knew of you before I left India, but this young man was a surprise."

"Oh."

It was all he said, and settled back upon his seat, while Carul and Mrs. Clifton began to talk of other things. They were on their way back to the north, having left Sparta in the early morning. Miss Cathmore carried the box in her hand, and would trust it to no one. They had found their new friends waiting to see them off, and the urgent entreaties of the young lawyer had provoked Carul's remark and the conversation which followed. At noon that day, when they stopped for dinner, Mr. Dana said to Carul,—

"I enjoy talking with your sister; you seem to have a great deal to say to her friend; suppose we make a new arrangement, and each of us sit with one of the ladies."

"I was going to suggest that very thing," said Carul. "I am sure Freeda will not object. I'll do you the honor of saying I have not seen my sister talk to a gentleman before in ten years, with the single exception of Sul-Mal; and you would hardly call him a gentleman, in the ordinary sense of the word."

"I am more than honored by what you say. Perhaps, with her keen insight, she saw that I too had never cared for women, and, therefore, had sympathy for me."

"Perhaps. You can never tell why Freeda does a thing."

So it came to pass that, when they again started, Mr. Dana and Miss Cathmore sat on the middle seat, and Mrs. Clifton and Carul behind. There was no such exuberance of spirits as when they rode through the wilderness of the far north. The drowsy languor of the summer's day bathed them in its sleepy atmosphere, and for an hour or two an occasional allusion to some varied scene was all that broke the stillness. A content had settled upon the travellers, as if, in being near each other, the thought currents could flow back and forth without the effort of words. At last Dana spoke:

"I wonder what you are thinking of, Miss Cathmore."

"I am merely floating. To think is to exercise an effort which I am not equal to this warm day. My mental state may well be likened to that bit of white cloud floating overhead. It is really a delightful state, if one could always attain to it. All of life's best things will come to the soul that is thus restful, with face uplifted to the eternal light."

"And what is the best thing that can come to us?"

"Fuller life. This means love and knowledge in a greater degree. Love, that purifies, that elevates, that is a benediction, is the greatest boon of mortals. Does not the Book say it is God? Can you have more than Deity?"

"But I thought you regarded love as an evil. Did you not say that the love you had for your brother had kept you from higher attainments?"

"You do not see that the love which centres itself on a personality is not that love that is of God. The one minifies, the other enlarges. To love as God loves, irrespective of personality, as is shown in the saying, 'He giveth rain to the just and the unjust,' is man's ultimate goal. So long as we allow our thoughts and affections to centre on the human entity, we are creating for ourselves sorrow and delay on the path; for this entity is ever changing as a wave of the sea."

"How can we help loving the personality? How can we love what is so vague as immensity?"

"The good is everywhere. It lies in waiting upon the drop of rain, the flash of sunlight, or the impalpable ether. It always gives and never takes. So must we be, if we can ever hope to reach the height of our just heritage. The moment that we love, we lose ourselves, and all our thought is for the object loved. To love to benefit our race; to look upon the meanest creature of this earth as one of those who sometime hence may climb to heights divine, and gladly help them out of darkness into light; to give no thought to life or death, or changes of this mortal life,—this is the way to love as God has ever loved. He cannot think of future good to be attained, or can he hope that aught will ever make him greater or more blessed. The thought of God must, from the force of law and necessity, be ever sent to lower creatures, to aid and bless. Man climbs and reaches for some higher goal. He always thinks

how what he does will somehow help himself. He cannot work unselfishly, because this shadow always follows. The highest love will never let us think of self."

"And can we get there? It is not human nature. If men were designed to be perfect here, we would not have a something in the future to attain. I, too, believe in love. I once began to tell you how lonely my life has been, without a single thing to love but stones, and not a person in the world to care for but my mother and sister. I did not know that I could love as other men love until——"

"See there! What a snake! I wish I could kill it!" cried Carul, pointing to an immense rattlesnake coiled up by the roadside. The horses had refused to move, and, upon looking for the cause, they saw this reptile, disposed to hold its ground.

"For shame, Carul. Why should not the snake live as well as you or I. There, crawl off, snake, and find your own, and live the best you can."

As his sister spoke she moved her hands back and forth, and the snake crawled off a little space.

"Are you a snake-charmer, Miss Cathmore?"

"Not at all. I wish I were. It is a truly wonderful gift. But all life comes from one source, and is therefore sacred. That crawling thing lives better far than we. He does to-day what calleth to be done; he takes no anxious thought of what may come to-morrow, and when he casts his skin, it is a thing of former life. He does not cling to it as do we to all that ties us to the past. Our homes and hearts are full of relics that we hate to leave behind. But if we gave them up forever,

our life would be stronger and more beautiful, like the crawling thing that met our eyes just now. See this." She pointed to a belt that hung around her waist. It was a mottled skin that once had crept along the ground, and then been cast aside. She took it loose and threw it down upon the ground. The living snake came back and laid his head upon it, while his eyes glistened like beads. Coil after coil he made upon it, thrusting his head beneath his body, until the lookers-on could scarcely tell if both were dead. Minutes passed thus. Suddenly his snakeship started off, and just behind the other went, till both were lost behind a rock.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the man who sat beside her. "What next will happen? Is the law of magic to be revived again? Did you know what would happen when you threw that skin away?"

"No. I could not surely tell. Sometimes there is enough of astral force at this young season of the year to warm and magnetize the sheath of many layers into something like the life it had before. Could you and I follow that couple, we should find the one refuse to move, and then the other would attempt to throw the force into its coils. It did not live. It only seemed to live. But when I tell you that its astral form lives and moves unseen with many other forms, around and near us, you will shudder at the thought. This world is but a mirror, where the shadows move of things that live in finer form. We look upon the glass and call it all a world of stern reality, when nothing that we see has permanence nor life."

"And all this talk has thrown us off from what we

were talking of—love. You must let me speak of what has been on my mind since that first day when you stood by the flame-tree and said, ‘Where are they who were to meet me here?’ ”

“But, Mr. Dana, you can tell me nothing that I do not know already. This is no time to talk of petty human lives. The world’s great work is not yet done, and till it is I must not think of aught beside.”

“You need not think. You may not even listen, but I must tell my story. I had a dream, one night——” he turned and looked into her face. It showed no sign of interest. He continued: “I am not a man given to dreaming, and still less to remembering my dreams. But this was so vivid, so horrible, so different, that it printed itself upon my mind. I told it to my friend. It would not leave me, and when I tell you that in that dream I saw you for the first time, you may be interested.”

Still no word or sign. He continued: “In my dream we were doomed to death; you stepped in and saved us. Do you wonder that I have felt to you as I never felt to woman before? Are you so devoted to the cause of humanity, as a whole, that you have no thought for one of its children? Are you so absorbed in the great love that you cannot feel an atom of the same for one of earth’s hungry children? Such belief is wrong. The greater must include the less. I demand as my share a crumb of love.”

As he paused, overcome with his own vehemence and audacity, he saw her face turn slowly towards him, and looking at him with her violet eyes, that seemed afire with repressed feeling, she replied,—

"I have known all this before you ever spoke a word. You know my mission and my vow. Until the work is done I shall not, dare not, think of self, or even of the good of those I hold the dearest. The dream you tell me of was not a dream. It was a glimpse of what existed at the time, and still, perhaps, is not entirely passed. I came to you that night upon the astral light, and when you felt the calm of nature's silences I knew your soul would see and know the Truth. The waves, the fog, the horrid creeping things, and death that waited near, were all the real conditions of the inner, truer nature, so long denied and prisoned. You woke into the light of day and feared no evil; so you will at length rise from your former unbelief and walk forth in the light of day a new and happy man. Let this suffice. Seek not to know a single word until we reach our destination, and I have laid at Sul-Mal's feet the work he gave into my hands."

He took her hand a moment in his own and pressed it gently, and was content to wait. That evening, as the stars came out, she said to him,—

"Seest yon star?"

"I see that star above the tree-tops; yes."

"It is Aleyone, the central sun around which move the sun and solar systems of the sky. They do not fall, or fade, or lose their place. The law that holds them there will keep them true and safe. Can mortal fear to trust the hand that leads the stars? Be patient. Love is never lost. It maketh rich by giving out, and *only* comes to beggary by withholding of its fire. If I have been led thus far in safety, surely we may lay all fear aside."

From that time on until their journey was done, the subject of love was never mentioned. But in the glances that wandered from the violet eyes to the earnest face of Hugo Dana there was an inspiration that set all the birds in his heart singing.

Carul Cathmore and Mrs. Clifton made no attempt at concealing their happiness, and Elfrieda rejoiced that her brother should at last know the joy which he so richly deserved.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONSUMMATION.

"Man is his own star, and the soul that can
Render an honest and a perfect man,
Commands all life, all influence, all fate;
Nothing to him comes early or too late,
Our acts, our angels are, for good or ill,
Our fatal shadows that walk by us still."

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

"O Fire-god, supreme on high, the first-born, the mighty;
The Fire-god enthroneth with himself the friend that he loveth.

"O Fire-god, how were those seven begotten? how were they
nurtured?

Those seven in the mountain of sunset were born."

AKKADIAN PSALM.

EVENTS that are fully ripe need but a brief time for their transpiring. Two weeks from the time they had met at Van Guilder's deserted house they were once more together in the same place, having lived much, seen strange sights, and become old friends.

Tim had been waiting at his house two days for their arrival, and now he had led them back through forest and across the lake to the Doctor.

As Dana sprang forward to greet his old and valued friend, he seized his hand in both of his and shook it long and heartily.

"By Jove, Doc! You look as fresh as a new man. You are certainly ten years younger than when we left. I hope you have not spent all your days and nights here since then."

"But all the same I have, and the result you see in my renewed youth. What success?"

"Splendid. Could not be better. Bones, caves, everything that heart could desire. You should have been with us, Doc. It came near spoiling all our pleasure to think of you up here all alone, while we were having such a grand outing. Really, though, you have not been alone here?"

"Never alone," replied the other, with a singular look upon his face that did not wholly escape his friend's eye. "I doubt if I should have enjoyed myself as well there as here. Tell us all about it."

"After supper. Just now it will be enough to know that we found what we went after, and something more. I must have a quiet talk with you sometime this evening. I suppose we are to see the grand finale to-night, and in the morning go back to Tim's for a good rest."

"I believe so; but I must see you first alone. After supper we will leave the others for a little while. There are some things I must say to you."

"Same here. What have you done to pass the days?"

"Thought some; written some; and watched the stars."

"Good. It has made you all over new. Nothing like it. Nature is the best antidote to human ills. Tim calls us to supper; after that, remember."

It was an hour or more after that the two friends, with arms locked, strolled outside the walled enclosure, and, when they had found a spot where the solitude of the forest surrounded them, they threw themselves upon a rock.

"Well?"

Dana waited after he had uttered the word.

"Tell me first all you have seen and enjoyed," replied the other.

"There are not letters enough in the language of all the world to spell the words that could give an outline of what I have felt and enjoyed. Can you imagine what it must be to sit day after day with the voice and the presence near you of the woman that is above all the women who have ever lived? I dare not say that I hope, yet I do. Think of it, Doc. A man like me even knowing such a woman."

"But how about her belief in what you hold as mere idle dreaming? How can you hope for harmony where the planes of life are not identical?"

"I am almost convinced, Doc. I am not a fool. I see now that I would take material things on a certain kind of proof, but would not accept other facts in the same way. Mind, I do not say that I can see things

as both of you do; but I begin to believe that there is nothing worth anything that is merely physical. How could I weigh or measure my adoration for that creature; yet it is the most real of anything in my existence."

"Just as I told you, you remember. The rest will come. Your life will take on new meaning from this time. Love is such a vivifying power. I have always believed you must see the light, and I rejoice that the time has come. Whatever else may be the outcome of all this experience, it were worth it all to see you looking away from matter to spirit. We have been old and true friends for many a year, Hugo, and we shall always find each other, I believe. I have something to say to you, which must be buried in your bosom until the night has passed that proves it true. When you met me, to-day, you spoke of my looking younger than when you left. Do you know why? It is the same cause that has changed you, my friend—love. The days and nights that I have been alone here I look upon as the most delightful of my life. Here have I seen and talked with Clothilde, until it has seemed that we are no more separated, but united. She has promised that we shall always be together, and when this trial shall have ended, I feel that I shall be rewarded by being called to join her. Say nothing of this. I want you to understand, that you may not grieve. I shall leave in my valise my watch, which you will wear for old friendship's sake, and this diamond that she gave me you will keep until I call for it."

"But, Doc——"

"Do not argue. I am happier now than ever in my life. I did not shrink from doing what she asked, and this will be my reward. Earth holds no joy that can be reckoned great, beyond the bliss of being with those you love. You will have a home and love, and a belief that will keep the heart ever young, and in a few short years we all shall be together, for our Karma will not take us far."

"What? How? I do not fully understand what you are saying, Doc. For heaven's sake, don't spoil all by doing some asinine thing that will spoil my life."

"I shall do nothing. Whatever comes, you will see that it is not carried forward by human design or plot. I have only told you that it may be a comfort to you later on to know that I rejoiced to go. Be sensible, Dana. What would twenty years of life in these conditions have to give me? Loneliness, grief, ennui? There is no interest left in what I once was pleased to call my life-work. It is false. When a man needs most the skill of all the ages, he finds the wisdom that has gathered up its facts from Hippocrates till now avails him naught. He cannot hold the life within the form an hour; and men are worse than fools to be the dupes of doctors. I have no home, no friends but you, my good Dana, and so I say again, what gift has life for me? But out—beyond—the life of love and joy awaits, and knowledge will lead on and on to those things that I long to find. All, all is there—naught here."

"But, Doc, just think. If the tables were reversed

how badly you would feel. Have you no thought of me and of my misery. Think what a life we can enjoy together—we three—you and Miss Cathmore and I, provided she will let me count her in. My home would be your home. Our tastes would henceforth be alike, and life would be delightful."

"To you, yes. Your cup would be full to overflowing, and I should rejoice in your happiness. But now we both can win the best, so, in your thought, you must not hold me back."

"You do not think that all this change has come since the death of your patient? You surely have seen too many broken hearts and blighted lives to creep away and give up all that men enjoy. After a little time has passed, you will find the old interest returning, and then you will wonder that you have let this thing take such a hold of you. Come, come; rouse up, and shake it off."

"We will talk no more about it. You are my best and dearest friend. I only wished to make you understand, that if for a time we were separated, it would not be for long, and that I am rejoiced to think I may go hence and be with her, who is dearer to me than myself. I shall never be far from you. It may be that the time will come you can see me as I walk in finer air, untrammelled by the flesh."

A silence fell. What more could Dana say? He looked into his friend's face. No sign of lunacy that first had made him tremble for his fate. But now the eye was firm and quiet, the hand cool, the voice steady. Had not so many things come true as they had been

foretold, he would not have given the Doctor's words a second thought. He knew that argument was useless, so he rose from the rock and said,—

"Well, Doc, whatever comes, we'll be brave men, and nothing can take from us the years of friendship we have enjoyed."

"Just so. That's spoken like my old friend. What a glorious evening for our reunion. Who can tell what we shall see ere that setting sun has risen again? I am sure you are not sorry that I brought you here?"

"Sorry? No; I should say not. It is the event of my life, and you have placed me under obligations that will take a lifetime to repay. How can a man's sky change so quickly from leaden to the brightest azure? If only this had come, I should have blessed you and the trip forever; but more than this, is a science of a new sort,—something that leads out and on when all the so-called wisdom of the world is done."

"I was sure you would say this. God bless you, Hugo. There are papers in my desk at home, and here's the key."

"What nonsense. I'll not touch it. You'll unlock it yourself in a few days or weeks."

"You must take it to-night just to please me. Now let us go into the house and hear about the trip, and all you saw and heard."

When they entered the sitting-room, there was no one to be seen but Carol and Mrs. Clifton. They were so intent on what they were saying, that they had not heard the door open. They were standing near the fireplace, and he was holding her hand and bending

so closely over her that his head almost touched hers. As they moved, a flush deepened upon her cheeks, which neither the Doctor nor his friend noticed, but asked, "Where is Miss Cathmore?"

"She has gone to the tree back of the house," answered Carul. "She seemed to wish to go alone, so we waited for her here."

The two gentlemen left the room and took the path to the flame-tree. Beneath it Elfreeda stood, facing the east, motionless, as if she were a statue. How long she had been thus they did not know, but, after a few moments, she went towards the tree, and throwing her arms around it fell upon her knees, as if in supplication. A dry stick breaking beneath their feet startled her, and, with a sudden gesture of disappointment and impatience, she uttered the one word,—

"Failed."

"What has failed, Miss Cathmore?" asked Mr. Dana, as he gave her his hand to lead her down the hill.

"My desire. I had hoped to avert the hand of fate. Where are the others?"

"Waiting for us."

"Yes, the night cometh. The stars are already coming out, and in a few hours the moon will rise. There is much to be done ere the morning dawns."

A little later and the group was gathered before the fire, upon which the coffee-pot simmered, and Carul gave a minute description of their journey and the finding of the bones. Then his sister untied the box she had carried from the Cumberlands, and from the cotton she took the bits of bones and laid them upon

the table. When the frontal skull-bone was seen, Dr. Grotius turned it over, and said,—

“I have for many years had a theory which I should like to test, if we can find in this bit of crumbling bone a single speck of what might once have been a brain. It seems as if, in the sutures of the skull, we might find this. Surely a thing so closely shut from air and light for many thousand years, might still retain a spark of what was once electric fire. Miss Cathmore, may I touch the skull with this small knife?”

He scraped from out the interstices of the bones some powdered dust. This he took and laid upon a bit of paper, and, after carefully folding it, he gave it to his friend, and said,—

“Give this to Dr. Blake, and tell him whence it came. He knows why I have sent it. I have talked often with him of my idea of inoculation, and here is a chance to give it a fair trial. Tell him to moisten that dust according to the directions I have often given him, and insert with a hypodermic syringe at the base of a baby's brain. If it acts as I believe it will, as the child grows and develops it will act, talk, and show forth the life that these creatures of an unknown race did. It is worth the experiment; it cannot more than fail. Heretofore we could find nothing distinct enough from our present life to make it a sure thing. Whatever the child showed of peculiarities, a sceptical mind might say was a freak of nature, reverting to some remote ancestor. Here is a case that would be unmistakable. There could be nothing in common between the movements of its brain and ours.”

Only Dana seemed to notice that he never spoke as if he would have any share in the investigation. He watched him closely, and saw nothing to alarm him. The rest went on discussing the law of cell-growth, and blood, inoculation, and, finally, drifted back to the bones and little folks. Just before midnight each drank a cup of coffee, and a spirit of expectant waiting seemed to take possession of them all. Elfreeda was now completely absorbed in her own thoughts. She never glanced towards her brother, her friend, or Mr. Dana. Sometimes her eyes would turn towards the Doctor, but, generally, they remained fixed upon the fire. As the midnight hour drew nearer, she took a piece of the skull-bone from the box, where it lay, and held it to her forehead. At the moment when exact time would strike the twelve, she arose, and, motioning them to follow her, led the way to the alcove and pointed to the iron box that had been found there. It had never been touched since that memorable night. She opened it now as she had opened it before, and took from it the roll and key. The box she gave to her brother. She then went back to the fireplace and pointed below. They understood her meaning, and Tim threw out into the night the burning sticks of wood and embers that lay upon the bricks, and with a shovel cleaned away the ashes. There was no sign of door or entrance to be seen. Elfreeda now moved nearer, and passing her hand over the back of the fireplace, as one that is blind feels a dress to know its color, she at length said,—

“It is here.”

They looked, and could see nothing but a large flat stone. Again she said,—

“It will move.”

They pushed it, but it did not stir.

With a sweep of her dainty hand she motioned that she would try it, and, laying aside a white shawl that was around her shoulders, she pressed the right-hand edge with her two fingers, and it slowly moved towards the left. There was no sound. It was so well grooved and fitted that it moved noiselessly from its place, and revealed behind a staircase of stone, descending by four or five steps into the earth. She started to go forward, but Tim rushed back and brought candles, that he put in the hand of Dana and young Cathmore. As they looked at Freeda standing below in the blackness of the night, they saw a woman in white enfolding her in her arms, as if trying to express intense love. She took Freeda's hand in hers and guided the little key towards a round hole; the grating of a rusty lock was heard, the door again closed, and both women had disappeared. Carul now made a rush for the door, calling his sister to open and admit him. But no answer came. He would have been thoroughly alarmed, had he not known that his sister could not be harmed by forces that had led her so long; so he put his finger upon his lips and waited patiently. It might have been only seconds; it seemed hours to those standing in the underground passage, surrounded by midnight gloom; and to Dana it was as if years had passed before the door again opened, and they all entered the first room of the cave. It was exactly as had been described in

Van Guilder's letter. The second room had been improved and beautified, probably during the long years of his waiting. The stalactites and stalagmites now in many places touched, and where the altar rose in the centre these formations had taken wild and exquisite forms, until altar, and the form it held, seemed like a barge fitted for a bride, upon which she was floating from darkness into light. Yes, the young wife and mother still lay where love had placed her. The flickering candles burned fitfully, and little jets of blue flame were seen issuing from crevice and niche, as if gnomes had come out to do the bidding of the masters. All eyes followed the movements of Elfrieda and her ghostly guide, who seemed intent to seek and find something that was hidden at the feet of the corpse. It had fallen to the floor, and when the spectre stooped to pick it up, reverberations long and loud were heard, as if all heaven's artillery were joining in the scene. The jets of light were now increased in number, and their flames grew larger and more fierce, till, by their light, the features of the dead could plainly be discerned. She lay as if she merely slept,—her cheek upon her hand; her wedding-dress still snowy, though in rags. A placid look still rested there. The flesh had never shrunken, and perhaps had turned to stone. The spectre stood beside her, and the two were just alike in outline and in contour. A smile passed over both, and none could tell where it had started. It may have kindled first upon the cold, dead face, and then reflected in the spectre, or contrariwise. Then the two—Elfrieda and her guide—moved over towards the place where

many flames, like tongues, shot towards a common centre, and looked like swords that guarded well some sacred spot. The points all met, and scintillated back and forth, as if revolving. Through this light, or rather lights, the spectre passed, and then, with hand extended, took the maiden safe and stood her by her side. The others gazed appalled. Dana would have rushed forward, but Carul held him back. "Do not fear. They would not harm a hair upon her head, for she has proved herself true and pure and brave. Look!"

They gathered close together and watched the figures moving off into the darkness. Groans, hisses, curses rent the air, and lightnings came and went, and thunders rolled, and tramp of feet and heavy bodies fell. Then all was still, and from the dark there came a soft, effulgent light, irradiating all the room beyond. The swords had disappeared, and where they blazed a door was seen, and just beyond Elfrieda stood and beckoned them to enter. The room was small, with dome overhead, and on its sides were niches, shelves, and tables, covered over with the rarest minerals that man has ever seen. The brilliant beauties ranged above flashed forth the colors of the rainbow, and, as Dana glanced around him, for a moment he forgot the woman that he loved, in the presence of these idols of a lifetime. Only for a moment. His thoughts went back to her who stood a queen among the mortals. He met her glance, and in its mild reproof he knew that she had read his want of loyalty. He could have cursed all stones forevermore. The spectre now left Miss Cathmore, and, reaching up her arm to a small recess behind

a stone, she gave to each a precious stone, of color rare and size immense. Then, pointing to the door, she stood till all had left, and then went out and left the swords to guard the treasure.

In silence they filed by the corpse to place of entrance. When Elfreeda followed, the door was heard to shut as with a spring, and they were in the passage leading to the room above. Each held his gem within his hand, and in Miss Cathmore's hand the roll was seen.

She laid it upon the table and spread it out. It was neither upon paper nor parchment, but a thin metal as enduring as the hills. The figures engraved upon it were exactly like those upon the jasper-stone that Sul-Mal said had fallen from the moon. After a brief look at it, she rolled it up, placed it by the stone itself, and, with the box of bones, she started out into the night. She was alone now. The moon was just rising. No spectre could be seen nor any guide. She led the way to the flame-tree and stood for a moment beneath its branches. She plucked a leaf and gave to each of those that followed her. An owl, just overhead, was the only living thing beside themselves that could be seen or heard. As Miss Cathmore moved to take her place by her brother's side, suddenly Sul-Mal was seen standing against the tree. He beckoned her to him, and talked long and earnestly. Then, pressing his hand upon her head, as he had done in far-off India, when he had urged her to undertake the work for him and for the world, he waved her from him, and began to speak.

"Know, all ye witnesses of this night's work, what is to be the outcome of it all. What doth it mean, and wherefore has it been? Naught ever is without a purpose. As yon moon, now growing smaller, looks upon our earth with cold and dying light, so looked she in those early days when this old earth was new. All life, all light and energy existed there, while here were only gaseous exhalations that were the sure forerunners of our heavens and earth. The Pitris said to higher Dyans, 'I will watch the passing of the years on earth, the slow, slow forming of the trees and plants, the coming in of animal life, and then the upward march towards physical perfection. Here, upon the moon, will be evolved the globes of fire that first were sent from Central Force to be the spirit's germ.' When Egypt's seers beheld the Scarabæus flying through the invisible ether, they saw it was the movement and the force of something like a god. They worshipped and adored it, and made the graven images that men now find within their tombs.* And they were right. The time at last came when matter had attained its highest state, and mindless man had home upon the earth. Tall, grand, a giant he became, but with no more thought of what might come than if he was a bird upon a tree. And all this time the winged spirits of the moon were growing wiser and more strong, until they knew the truth of life and death and all that bound the worlds together. At this time came the

* There is no emblem more universal among the tombs of ancient Egypt than this of the Scarabei, so full of occult meaning.

longing for a body and a life upon the earth. The Pitris, or Moon-fathers, said, 'The Great Creator has his plan for all. It hath been ordered thus. A body small and feeble shall receive the spirit first, and smaller than the mindless shall it be, until the mind begins to form it as it will. The ages that must pass before the mind has wrought a perfect body, no man can ever count. All holy books shall evermore begin with story of the perfect man, in whom the body, soul, and spirit are complete. All races of the former times are not remembered, and will sink into the shades of night, to be forgot, save here and there some wise man find a trace in rock or sand that time has pressed.' When ages upon ages passed, and from these children of the moon and earth came perfect men, a sign was sent from yonder orb to tell the world at later time the story of her Adamic race. One piece of stone on India fell, and one ye found where bones had whitened of that early race. The roll of metal tells the story carved upon them both. When all is over, if you can longer doubt, go to Sarnath Tower and put the pieces together, and lay the chart beside them, and prove the truth of all. From this hour life flows calmly on. The veil will fall that has revealed so much that lies unseen, and even she who gladly gave herself for others will soon forget the unseen world, of which she long has been so conscious. Love, joy, and happiness will be her recompense. The story of her life will never be told but to the few, and only as all men and women note her rare, exquisite quality of heart and mind, will they believe she once had given up the world. And now fare-

well. As yon moon rides the heavens, I say all that I now have told is true and more than true. When next we meet, the veil will have been raised, and you that hear and I that speak shall know each other face to face where all is light. Now go. From yonder wall I would that you might watch the night."

They moved to obey him. No sooner had they reached the wall than a terrific explosion seemed to occur under their feet. They looked back towards the tree. It was burning with a blue flame, and in the centre of the flame was the spectre, and by her side Clothilde. Another form was there, strangely like Dr. Grotius, but animated and transfigured by the intense love that shone from every feature as he gazed upon the face of her he had so bitterly mourned, and to whom he was now reunited forever. Another crash. Tree, flame, and the group of figures vanished. A deafening roar; the ground shook beneath them; the old house tumbled; the hill seemed to burst open, and down from the mountain tops poured a great volume of water, as if the lake were broken loose, and where had been the hill and tree a mighty hollow formed that seemed to have no bottom. Into this the water from the lake flowed ceaselessly, but never overlapped its banks.

* * * * *

The war had come and gone; ten years have passed since the closing act of the strange drama, and no one would imagine, in the magnificent woman that has filled the life of Hugo Dana with such happiness, the dreamy mystic of Elfrieda Cathmore. Around her play two lovely children, and, as she watches them, she thinks

of something in the past that brings a smile to her lips. She turns to speak to a young girl that has answered her summons.

"Hurry, Sal. I must have Mr. Carul and his wife and baby here to supper. We will set the table under the trees, and you must tell cook to get all the best things she can make. To-night is an anniversary."

"Yes, marm."

Sal could never learn to say anything else. She moved off, saying to herself,—

"I wish I know'd what an anniversary is."

When Elfreda went to greet her husband, she laid her hand upon his shoulder, and, looking into his face, she asked,—

"Do you know what day this is, Hugo?"

He paused a moment.

"So it is. How could I forget it? What joy we've had in these few years, eh, Freeda? If only there were not the shadow over it of the strange fate of Doc. How could I, for one moment, have neglected him? I shall never forgive myself."

"I knew it was his fate. I tried so hard to keep it off for your sake, dearest, but it was to be, and rest assured that all that is, is best. You are at least no longer in the fog. You see the light, and love it, too, and some day we shall know it all."

"But, Freeda, was it all the truth? Why does Sul-Mal never come again? I sometimes think that I am now the stronger believer of the two. You never say a word about that strange, uncanny life."

"I am content to live. That life was all a dream, at

least it seems so now. Some day, I suppose, your love and all my children's joy will seem again a dream. I feel that I was taken from the world and set apart to do a certain work, and now am living just as other women live. Sul-Mal will never come again. He told me so. And when we call our boy, we must forevermore remember Aubrey Grotius, whose name he bears."

"To tell you the truth, Freeda, Carul and I have been planning a trip to India. What is to hinder? He wants to hunt and I to see that Sarnath Tower. All else was true; why should that fail? We could take Sal and let her learn to charm snakes."

"The fact is, Hugo, you are a genuine mystic, and some day will be an adept."

"Perhaps. You know what Shakespeare says,—

'We are such stuff as dreams are made of,
And our little life is rounded with a sleep.'"

THE END.

MYTH, MAGIC AND MORALS By Fred Cornwallis Conybeare, M.A. A Study of Christian Origins. (1910 copyright). Mr. Conybeare was a scholar with a wide range of knowledge in the byways of Christian literature, and an unrivaled acquaintance with the archaeology, ritual, and social life of early Eastern Christianity. His pages are rich in illustrative material drawn from these sources. The book is rationalism of the best kind. He was a distinguished scholar of the University of Oxford, an authority of the first order on Armenian literature, and a diligent student of Christian antiquities. There is a most valuable chapter (Additional Notes) which many students of literature and comparative religion will find valuable.

CONTENTS: * PAUL - History of Paul; In his visits to Jerusalem Paul avoided any general contact with the Church there; Paul silent about moral teachings of Jesus; He conceived of Christ as an ideal eternal being & Savior of the world and not of the Jews alone.

THE GOSPEL COMPILATIONS. The Fourth Gospel develops in the Pauline view of Christ and elevates him into the Divine Logos; Plagiarism no reproach in ancient and medieval literature;

MARK: His literary method; Jesus's figure of the Son of Man; Why was Jesus sentenced to death?; His literary method.

STRUCTURE OF MARK'S GOSPEL. Mark compiled his Gospel from pre-existing written sources, which sometimes coincided with the Non-Markan source of Matthew & Luke.

MATTHEW AND LUKE: The pious friends of English Rev. Version; Prophetic gnosis in Matthew; But the 21st chapter of Fourth Gospel enshrines some early traditions.

LUKE: Examples of how Luke could invert and travesty his sources; Luke freely adjusts Mark's narratives to his own dramatic ideals; Later Christian literature furnishes biographies of these disciples, who yet only existed in Luke's fancy.

THE NON-MARKAN DOCUMENT: Of this source Matthew best preserves the language and Luke the order and arrangement; Professor Harnack's reconstruction of it. It ignores the miracles of Jesus; Takes a Jewish view of the Messiah.

THE TRUE JESUS: There is not enough material for writing a life of Jesus; Luke's statement that Jesus & John were almost exactly contemporaries improbable.

JESUS'S MORAL TEACHING. Some of his precepts inapplicable to civil society.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS. The psychology of conversion; The descent of the Spirit as a dove; Why was the age of thirty chosen as that of Jesus at Baptism?

BIRTH LEGENDS. Waning of the legend of the virgin-Birth; Mark implicitly denies the Davidic origin of Jesus; The legend that Jesus was born at Bethlehem unknown to Mark and the author of the Fourth Gospel; Criticism of Luke's stories of Birth; Virgin births among animals; Philo on virgin births; Docetic influence worked even to a denial that Jesus was ever born at all.

MAGIC USE OF NAMES. In folklore the name embodies the personality; Names of power; Use of Jesus's name in exorcisms; In concocations; Magic Use of Keys.

THE END. The Gospel stories of the trial of Jesus coloured by Christian hatred of the Jews; Pagan analogies to the darkness all over the earth; Descents into Hell; The rending of the veil of the Temple; Jewish and Egyptian belief in a bodily resurrection; The burial of Jesus; The Gospel stories of the empty tomb invented to confute the Jews.

BAPTISM. Origin of Bishops; Invention by Pope Calixtus of the rite of penitence; Use of rings against demons; Significance of baptism of Jesus obscure; the later Christology which grew up with infant baptism.

MARCION: Charles Darwin on Jewish origin of Christianity; The conception of omnipotent, but merciful, God contradicts all experience; The idea of a first cause criticised; Matter and mind, subject and object.

DEVELOPMENT. J.H. Newman's Development of Christian Doctrine; The early Church and Jesus himself believed that the end of the world was close at hand; Criticism of the idea of a Chosen People; Cosmogony of the Church wholly mythical and unquoted; In Italy and Spain the ingrained fetishism of the poor a greater obstacle to intellectual emancipation than official Catholicism; Tenuity of Anglican divines, etc.

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THE VIRGIN OF THE WORLD - Now First Rendered Into English With An Essay, Introduction and Notes - By Dr. Anna Kingsford (President of the Hermetic Society London) and Edward Maitland - Authors of The Perfect Way. One of our customers first told us of this book. She said this is one book we must reprint! 'I paid \$25.00 for my copy and will lend or trade it to you, so you may reproduce it for the benefit of mankind.'

HOWEVER, we must herewith issue a warning to all customers! This book is for the strong, not for the weak - for the educated, not for the uneducated. Do not buy this book if you seek an easy way to the top of the mountain. No refunds/no exchanges. Another former owner says in his note inside the cover:

'I acquired this (book) in 1841, long years ago out of print, and a rare, scarce book. It is only by enlightened people that this book can be read; the ordinary man is not made for such knowledge; philosophy will never be his lot - Those who say that there are truths which must be hidden from the people, need not be alarmed. The people do not read; they work six days of the week, and on the seventh go 'to the end.' In a word, philosophical works are made only for philosophers, and every honest man must try and be a philosopher, without pluming (proving) himself on being one.

'The most useful books are those of which readers themselves compose half; they extend the thoughts of which the germ is presented to them, they correct what seems defective to them, and they fortify by their reflections what seems to them weak.

'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.' -- Arthur Newbury, January 1841.

NOTE (From the Flyleaf)

'In presenting the 'Virgin of the World' -- which with my 'Hargrave Jennings' Edition of the 'Divine Pymander,' now so much in repute and demand, are the textbooks of Hermetic thought -- it is no act of supererogation to gratefully acknowledge my appreciation of the valued services of all associated with me in the privileged task of once again reviving those priceless writings of that 'Master Initiate,' Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus; (to be shortly supplemented by the Third Volume, or 'Golden Treatise Concerning the Physical Secret of the Philosophers Stone, in seven sections,' esteemed one of the best and oldest pieces of Alchemical Philosophy extant; comprising, in epitome, the whole Art and secret method of its confection, with corroborative annotations from Flud Behmen, Vaughan, etc." -- Bath, May, 1885.

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