

EVANGEL AHVALLAH;  
OR,  
THE WHITE SPECTRUM.

A NOVEL.

Whose Incidents are Linked Together by a  
Chain of Metaphysical Deductions.

BY

C. JOSEPHINE BARTON.

All is concentrated in a Life intense,  
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,  
But hath a part in Being, and a sense  
Of That which *is of all* Creator and defense.  
—*Lord Byron.*



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Yours Truly,  
C. JOSEPHINE BARTON.

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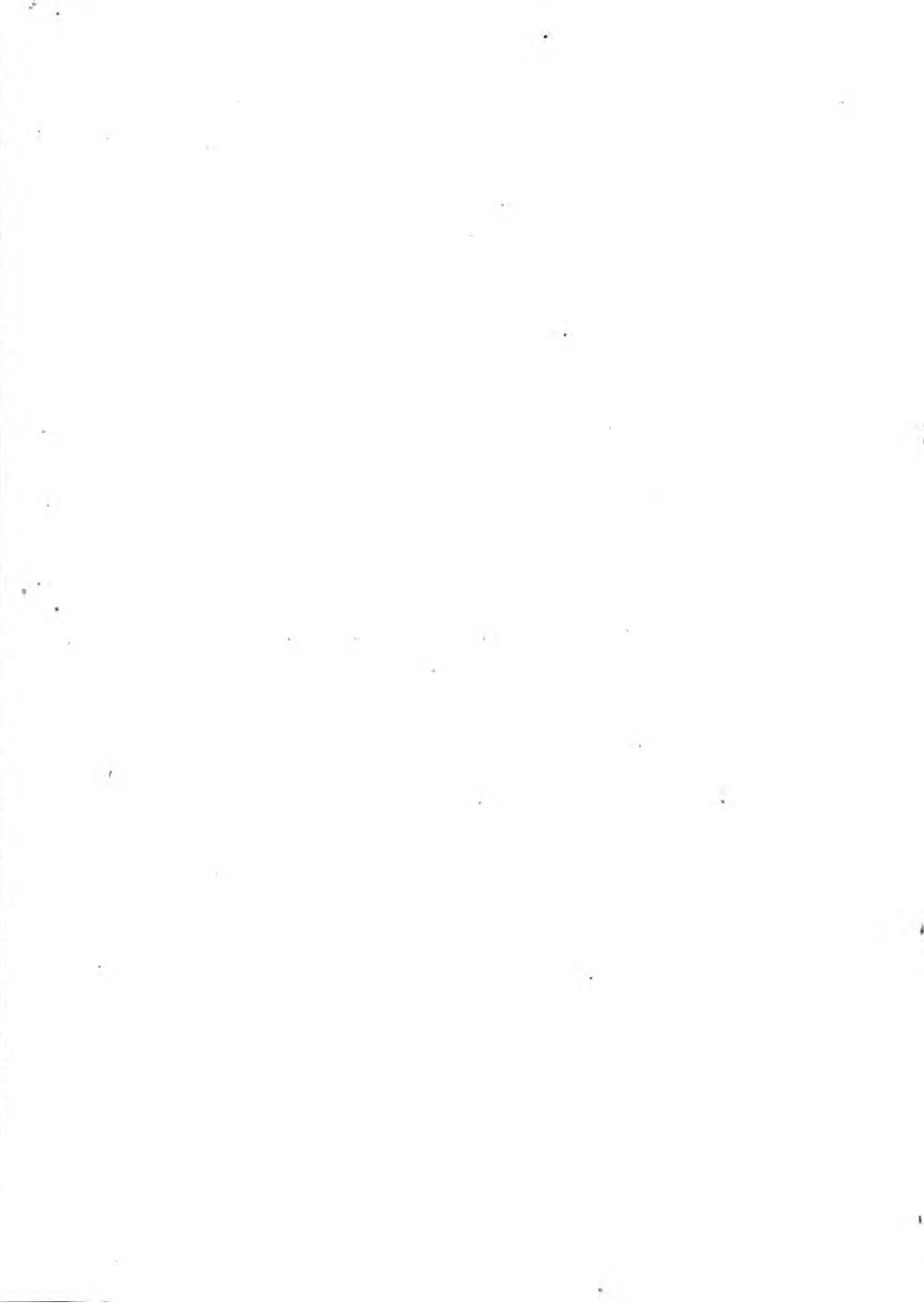
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**FRATERNALLY DEDICATED  
TO  
ALL PEOPLE.**



## PREFACE.

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DESIRE to throw some light upon the subject of Human Progression, and to show that all the steps taken by man lift him to a more comprehensive plane in Being, is my motive for giving the world this book.

Looking Backward is not progress. But when a few steps are retraced for the purpose of finding a better way of ascent, or for the purpose of drawing parallels and teaching a higher lesson, this is not retrogression. And if trouble is purifying, then trouble is in the line of march upward so long as purifying is needed.

The thoughts formulated upon the events herein recorded are the results of years of careful observation on the one hand and the outcome of a natural love of the metaphysical upon the other.

They are reviewed for the purpose of illustrating how commonplace transpirations that seem to impede our progress upward, prove after all but steps upon which we mount to higher planes.

Our old church of creeds and forms and fetish idols

of worship, was zealous in its fight against an ideal satan on behalf of a personal God. Their honesty of purpose rendered their works as bread cast upon troubled waters, which is returning to the race after many days in a clearer comprehension of God.

Transfiguration is spiritual illumination. It is *clear vision* after freedom from false beliefs. The Alchemist cannot produce gold from dross, but the spiritual perception sees only gold where the double visioned see dross.

Power is silence, and its place is in the depths of Mind. Those who *incline their ears* to the language of the Still Small voice, walk by the light of intuition and are lifted to the higher states, and saved the labored steps of the rough and thorny path along the dreary heath of superstition and ignorance.

When the Science of Life is understandingly entered upon, we no longer imagine "*vain* things," and our energies are no longer wasted in opposing our brother's opinion. We have only to let our light shine. Then the Holy Presence heals, strengthens and beautifies.

The little child, fresh from its Truth Source, still sees God and the angels, and believes in only Truth. But the teaching of evil disturbs the vision of his native glory and confuses his ideas. At first he is inclined to rebel, and say impious things about God and religion: then he grows callous and does not believe such a God

can be universal or real. This precipitates him into the old ruts.

The children now being born of inspired and regenerated parents become the leaders and teachers of the older people, and the prophets of our new era.

Hoping and believing that this volume will help many to see the way of Life and Truth, and turn from the doctrines of superstition and fear to know the true God, "whom to know is Life and Peace", and understand the Science of Life, I send it forth, lovingly, freely, with a blessing, a prayer and thanksgiving.

C. JOSEPHINE BARTON.



Evangel Ahvallah;  
OR,  
The White Spectrum.

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CHAPTER I.

OAK HOUSE.

A wide tract, remote from any city, and intersected but sparingly with public roads, a few houses built of what material could be gathered by the hardy people of that time,—with here a school-house and fifteen miles away a church and as many miles from either a half dozen cottages collected by the presence of a post-office, a blacksmith shop and a dry-goods store—composed the very frontier district, in which our story opens, a little more than thirty years ago.

Situated a mile and a half from the old fashioned school-house, stood Oak House, a quaint, prim, white, substantial residence that turned out several children to the school, furnished the pastor for the nearest

church and furnished a surplus of butter and eggs for the nearest market,—the village with the post-office, the blacksmith shop and the dry-goods store.

Oak House facaded towards the south. Upon the east an old fashioned veranda skirted three large rooms and looked forth upon the orchard and wide fields beyond unto the boundery lane which seemed a mere pencil-line between them and the distant prairie that melted into sky upon the horizon.

The yard was well-bound in blue-grass which waved in luxuriant immunity from incursions of scythe or English mower. Honeysuckles, sweet briar and roses decorated the rustic path leading to the stile-blocks—the old stiles—which were ample enough for a score of people to ascend and descend together, and worn smooth, as a mute testimony to many a warm hand-shake and fond farewell of the past.

Upon the horizon toward the southeast and across a mile of waving prairie grass where the prairie-chicken muscled in the dewy morning, and where nestled the cottages and field-fences of several tillers of the soil, there began a pencil-line of forest, in broken touches, which grew nearer upon the south, still nearer upon the west, and culminated in a zone of deep, bellowy green as it skirted the northwest, just beyond the clover-field back of the garden fence.

Deep in the forest and half a mile away wound the careless waters of Fabby creek, reflecting the many-tinted flowers and singing a low lullaby to the ones that hung in charmed silence over its verge to listen, while the grasses and ferns that dipped into its fountain were washed clean and glistening as it glided on. The air

of freedom over the broad, unfenced commons, the long, quiet days with monotonous scenes of natural beauty, the ease and freedom of the people and the slow-moving tide of events, were but commonplace considerations to the inhabitants of those districts, who—expecting no more miracles forever—battled with the exigencies of the hour and lifted up beleaguered eyes upon the cast and coloring themselves had given all things.

A dusty path winding by the clover-field upon one side, and the corn-field upon the other, stretched away over the slope and down to the sumach that edged the forest, and on through its shadows to the rocky ford of Fabby creek where craw-fish, minnows and mussel-shells were visible in the twinkling shallows of its tide, and where the heroine of this story often loitered in love of nature's life and genial transitions.

“To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,

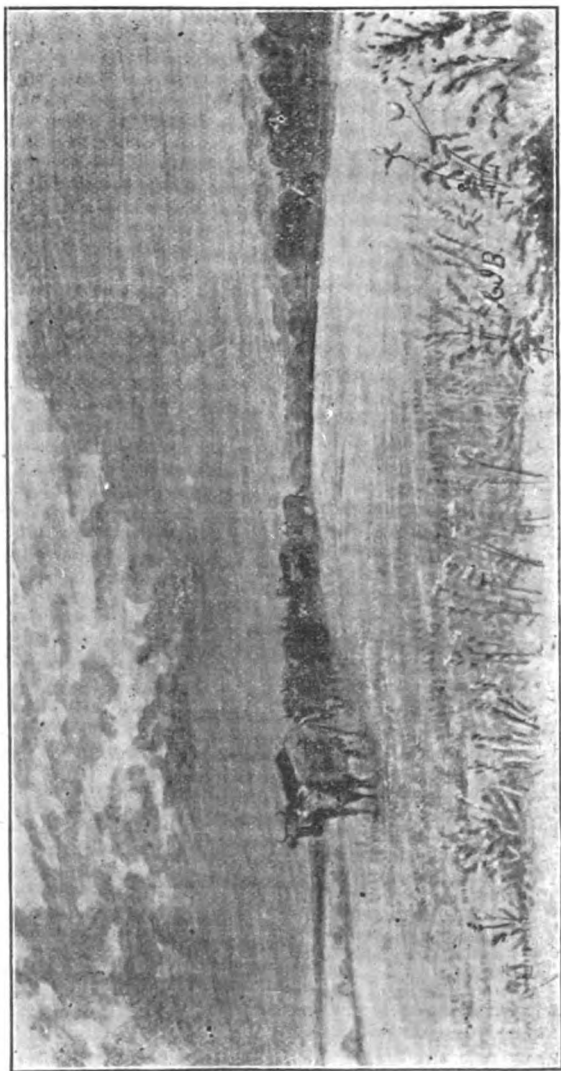
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,

Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,

And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;

———This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold

Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unroll'd”.



HOMeward BOUND.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE DUSTLESS WORLD.

It was late in the afternoon of a golden day in Summer, when bees were whirring in and out of the honey-suckles by the old stile-blocks, keeping the blossoms in perpetual agitation—with an air of attending strictly to their own “buzziness”, and with as much dispatch as possible,—and while cows were grazing with untiring eagerness, in the shady pasture that began where the clover-field left off, and thinking of the reunion time in the evening when old Crump and Pied and Red and Brindle should be let in through the “cuppen” bars to lick, caress and suckle their meek-eyed “calfies”,—it was about this time that a little girl in a faded blue dress—crowned at the top with something that looked at a distance like a miniature straw stack, and carrying in her hand a pink skirted “shaker” bonnet that hung by one string while the other trailed upon the ground, came leisurely up the path from the creek.

The dress pocket was plump with treasures—snail-shells, pebbles, and a few withered flowers, the remains of a lap-full that had been thrown, one by one, into the stream, while she dreamily watched them float away.

Finding a level place in the path, she stooped and began sketching in the dust. She was deeply abstracted in the sketch when her reveries were suddenly broken up by the sound of a rough, grating voice that came from the uncleared throat of a man with fragments of dinner still in his teeth:

“Hello, Puss!—What ye’ doin’ in th’ dirt?”

Instantly the child sprang to her feet, and without making any reply disappeared round the garden paling.

The man, enjoying her fright, and pleased at the fine run she had made, quickened his pace, as well as he could with one leg stiff, and again raised his voice:

“Hello! hello!—What’s yer hurry? George sent yo’ his best respects!”

This was grunted out in that peculiar kind of voice men have who are naturally indolent, but who work hard from necessity, and who put forth even a small amount of voluntary exertion with indolent reserve.

But the child was out of sight and safe for the time from the distasteful badinage about his son George, in which he usually indulged. She would not go to the house for full half an hour, but would hide in the stable and watch for his departure, when she might venture forth.

She seated herself upon the long hickory pole that divided the stalls of old Blaze and Whipstock, and began a calisthenic round of swinging over the pole, head first and then feet, and then head again, until her face felt full, and the plump cheeks pressed their roses close upon her eyes. After hanging thus for some time, in which she gave the sky a scrutiny to see how it looked upside down, she came round again, right side up: and springing upon her feet, ran lightly to the door and looked toward the house.

As she could get no sign that the creature of her dread had departed, and fearing yet to venture forth, she climbed upon the outside along the logs, and from thence over the garden fence, dropping down among the vines and mint that grew in that portion of the garden,

where the grape-bower shaded a rustic seat. She stopped very suddenly upon hearing voices coming from that direction, and catching a glimpse of Virginia's dress, she stood for a moment with wide open eyes, and with her ruby lips parted while a bright smile suddenly dimpled her cheeks. In a moment she was at her sister's side.

"I heard you talking," she said, as she looked about inquiringly.

"No," replied Virginia, "I was just praying to God to make Mr. Pewlett's leg well."

"What for?" asked Evangel in surprise.

"Because Miz Pewlett has to work so hard. He could help her more if his leg were not stiff."

Evangel thought a moment and then said:

"God don't care about Mr. Pewlett's leg. *I* don't wan't it well."

"Why?" questioned her sister with a troubled look.

"Cause, he could run good then; he's awful hateful, and always chases me!" the child replied, and then added: "I don't believe God 'll do it!"

"O, God can make his leg well if He wants to," said her sister with emphasis. But Evangel shook her head:

"*No—o!* Why, it's a thousan' miles to God! *I* prayed to God to make a brother out of Dollie, but there she is!"

There was a defiant glance in the deep hazel eyes as she said this. Her sister made room for her by her side and then said:

"Ma says God is everywhere, and knows every-thing."

“How *can* He be?” asked Evangel doubtfully.

“I don’t know, but He is; Pa says so too,”

There was a long pause, and the little girl again asked:

“Is He here too?”

“Yes, sister,” she replied, “He is here too,” and thinking it an opportune time, proceeded to give one of her moral lessons, which closed with the remark:— “and ‘Vangel, if we are not *awful* good God will burn us up forever!”

After profound meditation, Evangel replied in great sincerity:

“I wish somebody would kill God!” It had seemed to her the only way of escape from so vindictive a being.

“O, ‘Vangel, don’t say such a thing! It’s awful wicked,” replied Virginia in alarm.

Evangel said no more, and placing her head in her sister’s lap, she became very thoughtful, and Virginia hoped the lesson had been received.

Evangel was looking at the landscape through her half-closed eyes, and wondering *how* God could be everywhere. Soon the line of forest towards the south-west began to glimmer, and then, changed places with the sky. Then it returned, grew darker and then lighter, and in a little while a whole group of lights and shadows wove themselves into the fabric of a vision:— The distance came near and made itself known. It was a great illumined realm, most beautiful to look upon. The atmosphere was like white diamond and very pleasing to the eye. The child had a wish to go forth amid the attractions.

Delicate shades of color radiated at the thought of

color, and played before the spectator in dazzling splendor, and bloomed into radiant flowers. These chimed in sweetest musical tones as their petals unfurled, making all the air redolent with sweet odors as they bloomed, and as their music sounded forth.

Evangel caught the color of the tones in their circuit as the warm, red globes of life fell in with the current of holy thinking.

And as this sea of light and beauty glowed and glorified all space, there arose in the distant limpid depths a luminous Globe, a moving, living WORLD. She understood it now:—the white light, the tints, the fragrance and the enchanting music were its aura, its magnetic signal of approach to the other worlds. Nearer it came; a great, beautiful, living world, so different from, so superior to the earth which now swung darkly in mid-air and glowered at the orb! The child wandered down a grassy slope to the deep verge between the two worlds that were now meeting each other! Nearer the beautiful world came, until, like a great luminous diamond, and gently as a nun's hands fold together in prayer, it rested for a moment against the earth. Unhesitatingly the child stepped abroad upon the new orb. As soon as she had inhaled the beautiful atmosphere, a sense of immense expansion of the domain of thought, a liberating and launching of the entire ego as if suddenly conscious of omnipresence and immortality, inspired her! No flight of Poet's fancy has ever yet touched the shores of this glorious realm.

The child met these radiant individuals whose presence revealed new glories and beauties without the use of slow, stammering speech. Their very presence was

poetry, music, fragrance, happiness, love, wisdom. And in it all there was no lack and no sting, nor fearful apprehension of change! There was no looking backward upon less glorious times, and no depression for to-morrow on account of to-day's debauch, for nothing impure was known.

Flowers were unfading. When they ceased to bloom they metamorphosed into aroma, leaving no dust as there was no decay. And so with all things. Even music when it was done changed to silent poetry, or to sweet odors, as was most fitting. Perfume resolved into colors of the rainbow, and added new lustre to the flowers it had graced.

Music gave not expression in sensuous formulation, since outward expression was absolutely unnecessary. Intercourse had no need of outward expression, and the heavy encumbrance of instruments was unknown.

Nor was the expression of music a spectacular display of the control of voice or instrument, but it was a wondrous language expressive of high praise and royal glorification, consonant with the surrounding conditions.

All musical tones have their coloring; all colors have their rhythmic tones: the sweet aura arising from these is their poetry, their breath, the atmosphere in which they thrive. Flowers open with praise. In the gentle unfolding of their petals there is cadence; and a chiming tinkle as of far off bells, when fruitful pollen falls. Rare colors, in order and harmony play upon their unfolding beauties like rainbows upon Niagara's dancing spray. This, this is high-praise! Behold the tint in tapestried corolla, and note the rapture when tint and tone unite! And so the undisturbed, free cir-

cuit of the current crimsoned by the warmest, highest ray, sings in perfect praise, shows in perfect colors, moves in perfect order, and is a poem undisguised.

(It is well known that young children are pure and sweet as fragrant flowers and with a like aroma: this is because of pure thinking, day and night.)

Evangel watched the changing scenes, the unwithering flowers with fragrant auras as they bloomed into the colors and their rhythmic tones, and joining in the praise and gladness, she realized that all things of intuition born, are possible. That external forms are the landmarks of limitation. Only the mind free from external judgments can look upon this.

Lightly Evangel moved about. Motion was both restful and invigorating. Gravitation (material affinity) had no influence. Hither and thither—just as her thoughts—she went, visiting many spheres, seeing conditions past portraying in words, and greater and more beautiful than any earthly ideal can reach. She visited the central Pleiad—crossing many heavenly centers of Light, and meeting radiant creatures like herself. Love, and Joy and constant realization of hope radiated from the white spectrum of happifying Light.

What were the radiant beings of this bright realm of purity and happiness doing?

They were pressing onward to a higher ideal. Eternity is timeless and spaceless, and the Spiral Path of progress is forever upward and onward unto more Supreme conditions.

What silent rapture in the simple research of Truth, wherein nothing that offends, nothing that is impure, can enter! Here it is revealed how there can be no loss.

*for all change is but a dustless resolving into higher substance.*

Here it is revealed how every cause is an effect and every effect a cause. Every cause is the effect of a previous cause, and every effect is the cause of a coming effect, and so on in endless succession.

So there can be no first cause or final effect, and God is thus proved too great to have either beginning or end.

Life, being Cause, ever pushes upon effect, transforming it, in most beautiful and mathematical perfection, into other cause.

Life is Positive cause, and being Positive cause, it forever metamorphoses effect into cause. It "draws all things" unto It. Effect is forever becoming cause. The two are one. God is both cause and effect.

Virginia changed her position a little; the vision dimmed, and Evangel thought of her sister. In a moment she was by her side. She stood for some time quietly looking on. Presently she asked, as with a troubled look she pointed to the sleeping figure of a child resting its head upon Virginia's lap:

"What is *that*?"

Her sister smiled and moved her lips as if speaking, but no sound reached Evangel's ear. Again she asked the question, and the response came as if by telepathy:

"That is Evangel!"

She was frightened, astonished!

"Is that *me*?" she questioned, more as if musing.—  
"Is that the way I look? Oh, how I am bound!"

## CHAPTER III.

## ONE OF THE LITTLE SHEEP.

“Vangel, Vangel! Why don't you wake up? What's the matter—what is it you want, heh?” asked Virginia as she tried to awaken her sister.

The child slowly raised her head and looked up. The big, hazel eyes wore a startled look, and Virginia again asked:

“Did you have a scary dream, Honey?”

“No,” she answered, but her lips trembled.

“What was the matter, then?”

“Oh, I dreamed about a pretty world!” and the child sighed.

Virginia thought it the result of the moral lesson, and told her that that was “heaven.”

Evangel was now fully recalled from the effects of her nap, by the sound of Mr. Pewlett's voice just beyond the garden fence. He was saying to his pastor that his wife was “porely” and could not be present at the next meeting he “reckoned”, but concluded by saying:

“Permely loves 'er paster bettern anybody, an' my wife thinks more uv you 'n she do o' me, any day!”

“We'l, however that may be, bring them all out if convenient; we may all be mutually benefitted. Bring them out?” replied Mr. Ahvallah.

And extending his hand to the one Bro. Pewlett held out, he continued warmly, as he stood shaking his hand, “and all of you come to our house for dinner? My

wife would be glad to see them."

The minister and his wife both considered it Christian duty to treat all people alike, they were loved alike by rich and poor, learned and unlearned, and had many friends among all classes.

The invitation to dine was just what Bro. Pewlett had wished for, and at once shortened his long face into a smile as he replied:

"Well, I dun-no: I'll tell er: she's porely all th' time, an' my wife's a mighty pore hand fur-to go!"

Bro. Pewlett was tall and spare, with a very flat chest, and legs proportionally too long, and always incased in very wide pants when narrow ones were fashionable. His son George was a delicate looking boy, with a freckled face and grinning countenance. He was a miniature reproduction of his father—having the same kind of perpendicular head, covered with light-colored hair which resembled faded grass in color and texture. His coat and pants, too, were like those worn by his father. But the woolly naps had disappeared from the surface and occasional outbreaks showed signs of insurrection on account of prolonged service. His brown cap, manufactured by his patient mother, likewise showed marks of age and ill use. He always threw it on his head—catching in it first the bump of philoprogenitiveness, then self-esteem and the depression at benevolence, and then with an extra jerk pulled it upon his forehead. The half-moon rim, that had always been torn half off, danced good-naturedly upon his forehead whenever he ran.

"We are having fine weather now," said the minister.

"Yes, tolerable," Mr. Pewlett responded, "but I'm feard 'twont last! I allers notice ut my jint's bothur me 'afore a change—I cun purty nigh tell, ever time!"

"Well, let's hope for the best," said the other, seeing he was disposed to look upon the dark side, "and trust to the Lord in that as in everything else."

The man 'hen said it was time for him to go. They again shook each other's hands and separated.

The two little girls then walked slowly forth from the garden—The first, with an unbelieving prayer upon her lips that Mr. Pewlett's stiff leg might soon become limber like the other; and the second, meditating how stiffness in both his legs would greatly lighten the only cause of trouble she had in the world.

Bro. Pewlett was one of the tender lambs of the minister's fold, and required a good deal of "carrying" to prevent him from back-sliding, and to keep in remembrance the "time and place" when and where all past wickedness was freely blotted out for him, and a guarantee given for future infringements of the law of right. Mr. Ahvallah felt it his duty to make the religious life as attractive as possible in order to prevent "back-sliding" and promote the cause of the church. And it came to pass that the lambs he thus generously carried, grew to consider it their right and his privilege, and claimed a sort of ownership in the very texture—not only of the clothes the family wore,—but of their persons as well.

In building up this church the Rev. Ahvallah had been impelled by an earnest desire to "serve the Lord and promote the cause of truth." He prayed that he might be the "humble instrument" in the hands of

God, for the upbuilding of the cause of Christ in the present field to which he believed he had been called and set apart.

Surely it was something to enlighten and Christianize a people so profusely simple in their lives and education.

These people had been gathered together upon a west-bound wave of emigration, falling in from several eastern and southern states where circles of learning and progress had pressed them from their too active centers to a surface more lenient in its requirements. They were usually the lack-judgment and improvident class, with a small minority of the more intelligent, led by the desire to investigate new places, and not averse to the idea of becoming leaders in even little communities. The frontier states were settled by just such people, and many of them held their land by squatter tenure.

Here and there was to be found a family or two of education and refinement, with broad and isolated views. For his neighbor of equal advantages and similar attainments might be found at no less a distance than ten or fifteen miles.

Many of these people who blamed the luck, or the weather, or anything but themselves for their poverty and "hard times", married duly, reared families as duly as it was possible for recuperation and reproduction to occur amid constant and laborious toil. Their clothing was produced upon the farms, the fabrics being woven and transformed into "home-spun" by the wives and daughters. Barefoot, ignorant, unprogressive, they were enslaved by the doctrine of a mental image god,

very far away, who would save the deserving, giving to each a harp and crown—at some future time—casting the disobedient, unbelieving into a place of torment filled with fire and darkness forever, where they could find no place for repentance though they might desire to reform ever so much, through all the countless millions of years composing eternity.

The church people believed the Bible to be the only Word of God, and as such their guide to heaven. They had been taught that their bodies were “vile worms” and their best righteousness but “filthy rags.” They were taught that they might get rid of the effects of the deeds of their “vile” bodies and “unclean” righteousness by becoming “sorry”, by repenting with weeping and agreeing to cast them all upon the Innocent Jesus who had already paid the penalty of all they ever might commit. They were urged to leave off their sins as far as possible, although it was taught that to leave them off entirely was impossible for man, who was naturally prone to sin, and who actually sinned every hour of his life, anyhow. “In Adam’s fall we sinned all,” was one of their choruses. They were instructed to believe this doctrine as coming from the written, infallible Word of God, the Bible. Mr. Spurgeon claimed to believe every word and punctuation point “inspired” of God, and they all placed much store by what the London preacher said. But it is the Life in all things that glows with inspiration, and not the letter. The outer is but a cloak.

## CHAPTER IV.

## "THE WORD."

Since it has been proved to be impossible to accurately translate the original languages of the Bible into English, it would be well for every man who believes the Bible to be the only medium through which God speaks to man, to study the *originals* for himself.

But they have been content to accept as infallible the translations, or mistranslations, of others who saw not farther than their literal significance.

Whatever is of Truth is inspiration, and this spirit of Truth is the Word of God, whether found in the lids of a Bible or in the petals of a rose. Truth breaks all the chains that have been forged by deceptive doctrines.

Preachers and Teachers should be frank and not allow prejudice or sectarian zeal to prevent them from honestly revealing to their audiences the history of the construction of our Bible.

This Bible is a collection of writings selected from a large number of scrolls and manuscripts that have been found at different times and in different parts of the world. The sixty-seven booklets and scrolls of which it is composed—were written at widely different times, from Moses to John, covering a period of over 1,700 years. So, its growth compassed the flight of nearly two thousand years.

The manuscripts of these booklets were found in various parts of the eastern world, where they had lain

—many of them—for hundreds of years out of human sight.

“They were found in the dirty and neglected chambers of the monks; from the dusty cells of the monestaries near the Natron Lakes, and at Thebes in Egypt; from the forgotten and long-closed rooms in the Greek monestaries in Albania; from the Libraries on Mount Athos, where it was noticed that the monks had for ages used the volumes for seats; from the Crimea, and from Odessa, where a Bible Society has collected valuable specimens from all over the eastern world; from Jews in China, Malabar and India; and from Mount Sinai. In some of these places they had lain forgotten for centuries, and were, in some instances covered with the dust of a thousand years!”

All the truths they held for man were but awaiting the development of riper times, when the people would be able to investigate them for the Spiritual lessons they contained.

It took the dusty and yellow manuscripts 1,700 years to flutter slowly out of their hiding-places and gravitate into one massive volume, whose mystical letter, rather than its solid truths, has been given out to the common people.

And so, from the time far back, when men yearly set their sins upon the back of the scape-goat and scampered them off together into the wilderness, and the time when its brothers' blood was sprinkled upon the mercy-seat and seven times upon the floor of it to cleanse away any remnant of sin that might have dropped, to the time when a purely innocent person was selected and charged with the transgressions of the peo-

ple, and on to the present time.—Truth's Law has been drawing men into the knowledge that their salvation lies alone in their own righteousness through faith in God. The literal significance of the Documents themselves is meager and unsatisfying. In vain has man sought comfort from the literal statements he has tried to believe. No wonder the church-leaders declare the world is becoming worse all the time. (Strange they have not abandoned doctrines so disastrous!)

The first copies of our English Bible were printed about 300 years ago. "The Holy Bible contayning the Old Testament and the New, newly translated out of the original Tongues, and with the former Translations diligently compared and revised by his majestie's speciall commandment. Imprinted at London, by Robert Barker, Printer to the King's most Excellent Majestie, 1611," was the inscription.

Bible writers say of this translation: "It is not sufficiently exact and uniform in rendering the *originals*."—"It is not calculated to convey precise and critical information in difficult and mysterious passages; even in the Gospels mistranslations occur, originating from ignorance (!) of, or inattention to the peculiar force of the Greek article." Later translators have discovered 20,000 in this version.

Of the compilers of the Septuagint it is acknowledged by their advocates that several of them were quite unequal to the task. They owned to each other that the Prophecies, History and Laws of the chosen people are intricately mixed and a puzzle in themselves.

They were perhaps quite as uninspired as other men. The Jews divided the Old Testament primarily into "the

Prophets, The Kethubeine (or. in Greek The Hagrographa.) This classification is alluded to by Jesus in Luke XXIV:44: "That all things might be fulfilled which are written in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms " The exceptions to Hebrew origin in the Old Testament are Jer. XII; Ezra, IV:8 to VI:18, VII:12 to 26; and Dan. II, from middle of verse 4 to VII:28, which were of east Aramæan (Chaldee) origin.

The order of the books composing the Old Testament was originally arranged by Ezra.

The order has since been overhauled by several different church councils.

The final decision, in regard to the authenticity of the books making up our Bible, was reached by the Council of Trent, A. D. 1545, convened by the Roman church, not long after the burning at St. Paul's cross of all the New Testaments in existence but a single copy. This was only a few years after the burning at the stake of Wm. Tyndale, Coverdale, Cranmer, Bishop Latimer, and others, because they saw and condemned the errors and vices of the Romish church.

The Psalms were not all written by David. He was forty years in writing his share of them.

The book of Job is by some supposed to have been written by its hero; others think Moses must have been the author. The date of writing is unknown.

Proverbs was written by Solomon and others, about 1000 B. C.

Ecclesiastes by Solomon when an old man.

The author of the book of Ruth is unknown.

First Samuel was written by Samuel, within a period of 30 years.

Second Samuel was written by Nathan, Gad, and others, in 39 years.

Kings is supposed to have been written by Jeremiah, and others. Kings was 428 years in writing.

Esther is of doubtful origin.

There were many copies of the Gospels during the lives of the Apostles, written in the different languages of the peoples among whom they traveled, taught and preached—Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Arabic and Ethiopic. The authors of these are unknown.

The very earliest date of the writing of any of the Gospels was between the years 64 and 68, A. D. Before this time the whole record of the Gospels was preserved by oral tradition, so far as we now know. The oldest copies we now have date about A. D. 145.

All the New Testament was written originally in Greek with the following exceptions: Matthew's Gospel which the Christian Fathers, Jerome, Origen, Paprat, Paulænus and others, say was originally written in the Aramaean about 100 years after the time of Jesus.

The Acts of the Apostles were chosen from a collection of books called "Acts", and were written in the second century after the time of Jesus.

Many gospels and epistles were rejected that contained some lessons as beautiful and useful as the ones selected for the New Testament. All the books were probably written by the leading minds of the different periods; but the upward trend of mental research has produced men so superior to such men as David and Solomon that much of their conduct would be accounted as unprincipled and criminal, in the light of the present time.

People who have closed their eyes to the real history of a book so sacred, preferring to believe every word, letter and punctuation mark holy and inspired, have failed to find the deeper significance of truly inspired texts. They have looked with suspicion upon any book but the leather-bound one descended from grandfather, and would reject the original itself if presented in the first manuscript and roll form.

Church-men have held that it is better to allow the veil of mystery to remain over the historical facts, since a clearer insight into the private lives of some of its heroes might prove detrimental to both prophet and people! diminishing the ardor of the latter and the salary of the former.

The Hebrew of the Old Testament does not agree with the Greek of the New, in the quoted passages. Critics capable of seeing back of the masks realize that the inaccuracies amount to embarrassing hindrances to both student and translator. The phraseology of the remote east declined correspondingly with the Greek and Hebrew tongues, and the terse and vivid English—which is destined to become the chief medium of communication throughout all countries—is as different in power, tone and spirit, from the original tongues, as the corolla of the lily from its calyx. It differs as widely from the ancient tongues, as the nine great symphonies of Beethoven—who, as the world declared, exhausted the resources of instrumental music—from the hampered and limited achievements of Beethoven's father.

The times, the languages and conditions when and under which the different books originated were too widely unlike for them to faithfully coincide and harmo-

nize. The bold and brilliant genius of Peter Paul Rubens could not correctly reproduce the angel-illuminated atmosphere in Raphael's Madonna, although both men were powerful in high art, and though the latter one might desire ever so earnestly to perpetuate the work of the earlier.

Every living reality speaks forth the Word of God. Man must catch the spirit of Truth himself, gathering aid from all true resources, and deducing therefrom—intuitively—the knowledge for himself. Then, looking far out from the heaven-enthroned originality, he discerns—written upon the waving banners of all nationalities, and within the Bibles of all peoples—the hallowed and eternal WORD. In this study of this wonderful book, all the attention that has been devoted to the *letter*, and to the teaching of creeds and forms and "men-made doctrines", to the neglect of the spiritual significance, should be directed henceforth toward *spiritual* awakening, quickening and illumination through the inspiration of Truth.

Part of the Bible is genuine history of actual events. The Talmud of the Jewish doctors mentions many facts connected with the history of Jesus.

Josephus, a Jewish historian, twice mentions Jesus.

Phlegnon, a Greek writer, speaks of the earthquake which took place when Jesus was crucified.

Tacitus, a Roman historian (52 A. D.), gives the account of the trial of Jesus before Pilate. These authorities corroborate the New Testament record of the historic Jesus.

Part of the Bible is pure allegory. But whether

“real” or ideal, the Spiritual meaning is alone the best test of its value.

The Bible, when truly interpreted, teaches of the Word of God; but it is not the Word of God. The Word *is* God. All nature declares God:—utters the Word:—The rosy dawn and splendors of the sinking sun declare God;—flowers drinking dew of heaven and smiling in return—the wild rose thriving in the thorny hedge—smart-weed and fennel springing at our feet, persistent in their Word of God—the ceaseless song of insect and the joy of birds—the “lulled lake and hoary mountain crest”—the trackless air tinted with distance blue, the child’s arch-way of heaven, and jewels twinkling in their joy of life—stars leap for joy and shout to us the Word of God—the billowy forest moves in praise, and zephyrs kiss its leaves in love—the fountain, symbol of purification, joys in its office, and brook and rivulet fulfill their mission moving to the sea—Symbol of pure wisdom, free from “knowledge of good and evil,” are the eyes of little children,—all Life is centered in “The Life intense and hath a part in Being.”

Man, imaged like Divinity, was made to express God.

The Bible, all Bibles, are full of great lessons: Even the mistranslations, over which men have puzzled, and fought, have made strong the muscles and sinews of those who were determined to *overcome* its mysterious meaning.

Man’s body is the Temple of Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit is the Breath of Truth—Pure Mind—in us.

Man is the Ark of Testimony of the Lord of Hosts. He is the delineated expression of The Almighty.

The Light and beauty and glory that shines into the idea of darkness to dispel it. That Light is in every man that cometh into the world and is the avenue of inspiration.

The Word of God is not confined to the pages of any book. THE WORD IS GOD. It is the creative Power of the Universe. And Inspiration is natural to all men. If they do not seem inspired it is because they have not known their Oneness with the Source of inspiration.

Man must learn communion with the Father—face to face.

He must deal with Truth himself.

## CHAPTER V.

## PEOPLE OF THE PARISH.

“To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,  
In the loved presence of my cottage fire,  
And listen to the flapping of the flame  
Or kettle whispering its low undertone.”

—*Wordsworth.*

The more substantial farmers were the mainstay of the pastor, in addition to his own efforts, for he, too, conducted a farm. The poorer and less thrifty members of his flock, counting themselves in, talked of the support “we” give our preacher with as important an air as those who rendered some honest remuneration for his services. Bro. Pewlett always voted for a re-election of Mr. Ahvallah and found occasion to hint that it was through his personal influence that the brethren’s vote had proved so unanimous. Mr. Ahvallah silently allowed him to indulge this vanity, and then changed the subject of conversation.

Bro. Pewlett had been “converted” and could tell a wonderful “experience”—ornamenting it with ideal flights, varied at each recital, always making it a point to rehearse the particular passages previously indorsed by the pastor, and dwelling with stress upon them. He was a firm believer in poverty, never dreaming of owning property, and lived upon scanty fare earned chiefly by the efforts of his delicate help-meet. He liked to walk over to “Oak-House”, the pastor’s residence, and linger in spiritual conversation until after meal-time.

Upon one of these occasions, when Evangel had been honored with a place at the first table, immediately opposite the chair occupied by Mr. Pewlett, she became conscious, just as that gentlemen had finished an embellished rehearsal of his experience, that she was being critically scrutinized by him.

There was a sarcastic smile upon the long, lank face, that made her exceedingly afraid of him; but she hoped, as there were two or three other visitors present, that he would fail to notice her presence upon this occasion.

She partook of her meal as quietly as possible—looking down at her plate to escape his eyes—for she knew she must succeed in this way or leave the table abruptly, and had half made up her mind to do the latter since he still persisted in looking up at her. This she could see by glancing half way up in that direction, so she had determined to act as if she had finished eating and excuse herself, when the man, anticipating the effect of his impudent gaze, opened his long lips, exposing tobacco stained teeth, and said familiarly:

“Puss, I’ve all’ers heerd ut when a hoss shows lots uv white in ‘is eye, he’s shore to be a bad hoss!”

The child looked straight at him while he was saying this, and read in that look the whole cause of his ungracious manner, and the spirit which made him desire to tease her about his ugly boy!

Evangel’s keen mental vision saw people as they were, and she often wondered why her father failed to see the little deceptions some of them practiced.

With a feeling of extreme disgust she removed her eyes from him and looked at her father, instinctively

feeling a defense from him was imperative. But catching only an abstracted look from him in return, while he busily filled his mouth with a spoonful of pudding, she put down her knife and fork, rose from her chair, and placing it in position, quietly left the table.

Brother Pewlett, who had watched her every movement, smiled until his shoulders shook as he applied himself with new energy, reaching after dishes as he felt inclined, and helping his plate to enormous loads of delicacies, after he had finished the first courses.

The child could not have expressed her feelings if she had wished to do so; but she knew that it would have made a better man of him if her father had rebuked him and reminded him of the command not to judge by appearances, but to judge *righteous* judgment always.

But her father said nothing. He believed in the man's goodness. Mr. Ahvallah was a conscientious man himself and usually judged people in righteousness. He had fasted a long while and was too occupied with his meal to more than look up, first at the man and then at his little daughter questioningly for a moment, and only asked Mr. Pewlett to help himself. Bro. Pewlett felt all right and proceeded to appropriate another turn of sauce. As he did so he turned his eyes towards the door where Evangel stood, and winked his eyes very slowly, and pinched up his mouth to pretend to be suppressing a smile.

The fact that he had not mentioned the name of his homely son, for once, made the present trial more endurable to her.

Evangel was a strange child, quite different from the other children, who were much alike in manner and

grew more alike upon association. While the current of her emotional nature ran deep and pure, a feeling of inadequateness of words for expression kept her much retired within herself, so that no one guessed the hidden pictures in her daily thinking.

She stood contemplating the very flat-chested man whose woolly brown suit, even, seemed to try to avoid touching him, and stood off in writhing wrinkles over his stomach and all the way down his legs. She wondered at the seemingly exhaustless capacity that made the most elaborate dinner of no account to correct the outline, for all his eating never perceptibly rounded out his physiognomy. She was wondering, too, whether he had possibly ever been a fair, plump body like her little brother, and if so, what had caused the great change, when her mother called her and handed her a plateful of bones, bits of bread and numerous other debris, to convey to the kitchen. It was the remains of Brother Pewlett's course "No. 2."

The "fourth" of a family that was steadily upon the increase, with two or three already following, and conscious apprehension upon the part of the mother that before another year it might be three or four instead, this child received from her parents very little thought outside of family prayers, and the consideration of clothes and food necessary for her. Full of fancies, without question as to whence they came or what they might portend, she grew like a vigorous wild flower upon which anxious thought cast no shadows. A wave of measles or scarlet fever usually passed over her head, for the angel of peace had touched upon the lintel and door-posts of her mind making her exempt from the fate

of those who had not felt the touch of the Hyssop and the crimson sprinkling.

The neighbors said it was because she was so "stout"—"couldn't anything hurt *her!*"

Evangel's mother and father had married when they were children, at the ages respectively of fifteen and twenty, and without objection from parents or friends. Her father, the youngest of a family of boys, had his own way about most things, and no objection was heard from the parents of her mother, because they thought it a suitable match, and both the girl and her parents felt proud of the handsome youth standing full six feet in height, and well proportioned. He looked the full-grown man of twenty-one or two.

Besides he was descended from one of the oldest and most substantial families of Virginia—one of the "F. V's".

So the little maiden with eyes "blue as the cloudless sky," was lawfully wedded to the "promising youth" with eyes of deepest hazel, and with a family tree, in full faith of having done the best thing for all concerned.

And children came, right along, as flowers in spring-time persist in doing. So it came to pass when the pair had reached the age when men and women of the present time have completed a college course and are fitting themselves to begin a career, they found themselves the parents and sole guardians of several children as like themselves as they could desire in thought and feeling.

It is said that forest trees stimulate each others' growth. Whether it is through any consciousness of

brotherhood on the part of the trees, or whether they receive their stimulus from a peculiar exhalation made up of the odor, color, and voice, or music of the trees,—which we might call their breath, aroma, or atmosphere that bands them together,—the truth of the figure is the same.

There is less anxious solicitation about large families than small ones, and the causes more apparent in conscious man than in the silent multitudes of trees.

People leading busy lives and turning the current of their thoughts upon exacting toil, find less time for the indulgence of fear and wayward fancies, and are sustained by better thoughts in the intervals allotted to prayer and higher faith when life, safety, salvation and support are simultaneously reviewed.

Most of these pioneer families were rapidly increased without the least consideration as to whether there was room or prospective sustenance for them. They said the Lord sent them—(truly the Law brings all things)—and as children are usually born in the night, it was not difficult to convince the youthful that babies are handed down bodily from heaven, and ready for the material clothes that the mother somehow was inspired to prepare.

Brother Cooper, who lived in one of the amplest houses in the neighborhood, had only three such gifts from heaven, while Brother Rucker, who lived a mile away and who was greatly encumbered by continual presentations of this character from the hands of the Lord, fell little short of murmuring when, upon the arrival of his ninth celestial donation, he was heard to suggest that Brother Cooper was far more able to sup-

port a big family, and he couldn't understand how some people managed to avoid responsibilities! For his part, he believed the interpositions were of the devil, and that that personage had his eye upon such, and it would be like the case of Dives and Lazarus between him and Cooper in the next world, he reckoned.

He was duly consoled, however, by his good wife—who had changed during her married career from a very cheerful, fun-loving girl of fifteen to a very sad, apprehensive, and very religious matron of thirty-two. She instructed her husband, in a thin voice, and through pale lips that drew close over the once pearly teeth as she spoke, that the child should be named after him; that "ever-body says its the image of you, any ways".

A protracted meeting was in the air about Post Oaks. The fields were becoming dry and the people talked of good times they had once had.

Brethren from all four of the churches.—Zion, Beaver Dam, Salt Lick, and the young church they had temporarily christened Post Oaks on account of its proximity to the vast groves of oak—were met in the front parlor at the residence of Mr. Ahvallah, for the purpose of laying plans for conducting a revival meeting.



SKETCH FROM OLD HOWARD.

The wandering thoughts of the people needed calling in, and the back-sliding members needed renewing in their religious observances, and the lagging cause needed upbuilding.

Brother Steambergen, a wealthy slave-holder, and owner of a section of blue-grass land, came from Mount Zion, a heavy wooden church with immense pulpits built in the walls.

Brother Short,—from Salt Lick,—was a short man, but heavy built and bald, with an easy, smiling countenance, and a circle of grayish whiskers about his throat. He wore a gray-mixed suit, frock coat with the tails always curled out from sitting upon them, and pants buttoned at the sides, and a smooth large front of shirt-bosom very convex, and vestless.

Then there were Brother Gofar and another brother from Beaver Dam: and last but not least brother Pewlett of Post Oaks.

These gentlemen and Mr. Ahvallah, sat with heads inclining towards each other, as if in profound consultation.

Brother Steambergen, suddenly raising his head and sitting very erect, remarked in an almost trembling voice:

“I feel like we are about to experience a great—outpouring—brethren.—A great outpouring!”

He abruptly paused, compressed his lips, and awaited the effect of his words. Mr. Ahvallah spoke:

“I am glad to hear you say that, brother Steambergen,—so glad. I too believe the Spirit of the Lord will be made manifest and that souls will be saved.”

At this the other brethren assumed an earnest ex-

pression, but remained quiet and their host went on warmly:

"Where two or three are met in my name, there will I be in the midst and that to bless!" Turning to Mr. Short he asked, "Isn't that true, brother Short?"

"Yes, that's so, I believe myself." Mr. Short looked so serious as to almost obliterate the radiating lines that usually extended from the outer angles of his eyes to the bump of destructiveness and visible all the way on account of baldness.

At this moment Mrs. Ahvallah entered the room, carrying a small box containing ashes which she deposited at the feet of the men. The minister absently made room for the little cuspidor by removing his feet, while his thought was still absorbed in the religious fervor aroused by the encouraging remark of Mr. Steambergen.

"What will you do for a house?" asked Mrs. Ahvallah, pausing and looking back as she was about to leave the room.

"There'll be a place provided," responded the husband, with a beaming countenance. "Old father Good has offered us his new barn in case we get no better place." He abruptly paused when he had said this, bit off the corner of a plug of manufactured tobacco, shifted it into a convenient corner of his mouth, when he continued:

"Its *big* enough," he said, as he waved his hand convincingly, "and can, with a little work be made neat as any church."

"His *barn?*" exclaimed the little woman in astonishment. "Why, that would never do! People wouldn't

attend meeting in a *barn*! Who ever heard of such a thing?"

Looking slightly disturbed, the minister replied; "Why, our Savior was born in just such a place! For my part, I think I would rather like it: we are getting too proud and worldly. Any body concerned about their soul's welfare wouldn't care what kind of a place he found the Lord in!"

He looked at brother Short who said what he thought was expected he would say: "That's the truth," and Mr. Pewlett nodded his head affirmatively several times, while the other brethren, who had not expressed their sentiments, all assumed an attitude that said plainer than words perhaps—that their pastor was right and had their co-operation.

Mrs. Ahvallah, at this pause in the conversation, asked:

"Did any of you ever *hear* of such a thing before,— a *barn* for a church to meet in?" I can't imagine how it would seem."

"I don't know about that, sister," began Mr. Steam-bergen graciously, "I am sure if it was never done before, it can be done now?"

"You must not forget," began her husband, "that this is a comparatively new state, and not old Kentucky. Her father owned a country place like a village"—he explained to the brethren;—"he was a large slave-holder, had a tannery, distillery, a black-smith shop and a farm, all conducted under his supervision. Of course they had large churches, fine churches, but the country was old and well-improved."

These remarks closed the controversy: but the little

woman rather conjectured the project would prove abortive, as she returned to the dining-room to complete some preparations for supper.

The conference finally decided to engage father Good's barn, and went to work soon after, to see that obstacles were removed, and seats prepared. Only one tall crib had been utilized, and the ears of corn peeping out between the poles reminded Bible students of the story of Joseph (the greatest man in the Old Testament) and the famine in Egypt, following the seven years of plenty.

In due time all was ready and the time for the meeting, which had been announced for more than a month, arrived, and people for fifty miles around, came, full of curious expectation, and daily filled the backless pews.

They came in buggies, wagons, afoot, and many on horse-back, so that when the large folding doors were thrown open to the gathering crowd, the grove across the well-beaten county road seemed alive with teams, vehicles, and saddled horses. The horses were usually hitched in pairs and ornamented with saddles of divers shapes and various stages of wear. They were the steeds of husband and wife, or of sweet-heart and lover.

Sometimes when there was no previous engagement between the latter, the young man after mounting his own horse would ask whether the young girl had "any objection" to his accompanying her. If not, as was usually the case, —for young men did not often venture where they were doubtful—he would attend the lady to her home, where they would usually find a number of other gay couples chatting and laughing and enjoying themselves. Sometimes a girl would have a beau upon

either side,—sometimes a long train of enthusiastic admirers would follow in line so long that the last initiate could scarcely guess whether the pink ribbons fluttering against the roses in her cheeks were really ribbon or blushes and bright glances.

Certainly the flowing riding-habit adorned the embodiment of self-confident sweetness, piquant coquetry, a joyously-beating heart, and, the assurance given by abundance of oxygen that only open country air can supply. But such damsels, though impelled only by an unquenchable feminine desire to appear attractive, were usually denominated “flirts”, and talked about—even before they had passed sixteen—as heartless coquettes.

Later on, these very girls usually settled down into sober wives, loving mothers and thrifty house-keeper.

Was not the entire regime of the latter office quite sufficient to fill every moment of her time to the unavoidable renunciation of pretty airs and coquetries that had been the chief inspiration of all the deep sentiment her husband as lover had lavished upon her?

When the “old folks” who had completed their course as gay young people in the courting period looked out from their sober sun-bonnets at church askance upon all this seeming gayety, they called it nonsense, saying in their hearts that the saucy girl had far better be saving her energies for the numerous family she would be expected to have, when there would be no more time to throw away upon flirtations and foolish fancies.

Reason will some day work out the problem of the use of vital forces, and man will glorify Truth in his spirit and in his body which are one. Even in the question of perpetuity he will “stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.”

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE AHVALLAHS. MR. JANE'S PROPHEMIC VISION.

"Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,  
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise."

*Goldsmith.*

It was Saturday, church meeting day, and half past ten o'clock: People had filed into the barn until the low, backless seats were nearly all filled. A good many looked up at the walls and absence of a ceiling as they remarked that it looked pretty sunny, and would do well enough.

There were families and family relations, and connection of the relatives, and connection's feiends with the aunts and uncles of friends and their cousins and acquaintances, until if the entire audiance had been estimated, there would have been found some half dozen families—distinct constellations—with a few distant stars and their satellites from other and entirely different systems. The constellations were attended by lesser lights of all magnitudes and varying, in age, from the infant to the grown up son and his big sister who had reached her teens and was "set out", and rode horseback.

There was a general "hush-sh-ing" of babies and trotting of knees when it had been whispered that the minister's family had arrived and were coming up the aisle. Mrs. Ahvallah's bright, self-conscious little face appeared just above the long white dress with immaculate embroideries and frills that the baby was ambush-

ed in, and that half hid the form and dress of the little mother herself.

By their side walked a little girl about two years old, and just behind this trio were three other little girls in blue and pink chambrà dresses and shaker bonnets, trimmed in goods like the dresses. Antoinette, the eldest, had dark eyes and an aquiline nose like her father, and the clear, rich complexion of her mother, and an expression full of innocent inquiry peculiar to much younger children.

Virginia, the next, was a delicate looking girl—sober-faced, dark eyed, with queenly features and light brown curls which hung loose about her shoulders.

Evangel walked alone behind the group. She was a round, plump, sober, hardy-looking child, with clear hazel eyes that bespoke either an idling fancy, or a memory harrassed by ghost-stories. The eyes were large, and would have been very happy eyes, but for the shadow something had cast there.

The little girl who walked by her mother's side was dressed in a very short gown whose skirts quivered and tossed incessantly as she managed to keep pace with that lady! This was Dollie. She found opportunity to engage in several turns at a skip and a hop as they ascended the aisle of the rustic church. (Illustre was upon a visit at her grandma's.)

Had the bit of baby humanity upon the mother's arm been a few years older and in pantaloons, he would have filed in on the male side of the assembly. But being yet in dresses, and the audience in doubt as to whether the bundle contained a male or female child, it was not considered a breach of propriety to allow him

to remain in his mother's arms.

When the seats were all filled and the hour had arrived, Mr. Ahvallah arose from the low bench behind the mock pulpit. The seat was so low it caused his knees to set up several inches above the level of the seat; but when he arose it was with that unconscious dignity peculiar to honest purposes which cannot be assumed even with great effort. He was tall, erect, well-built. His figure and face were commanding, while a deliberate manner and earnest look together with a graceful poise of the head when about to speak demanded the attention of all.

He held a song-book in his left hand while the fingers of his right hand rested upon the bottom of the open pages. The brethren had cleared their throats and settled into as comfortable positions as possible and looked with interest at their pastor, while he read the hymn in his full, positive voice—a voice that always electrified his hearers. He had proved oratory a natural gift which the rules of elocution had not hampered in the least. His attitude was almost motionless while he read, thus directing the attention of the audience to the words he spoke,

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,  
And cast a wishful eye,"—

He repeated after reading the hymn through: "Brother Cobb," he said in a low tone, addressing a sleepy individual with long black whiskers—"will you please start the hymn?"

The figure addressed moved very slightly, as if the request had come unexpectedly, and motioning over his

shoulder with his thumb, requested his brother Thomas to officiate in that capacity.

Brother Cobb was of so gentle a disposition that his conversion had taken place without the usual demonstrations, and was seldomly alluded to by himself. Upon this occasion, when the song had been started, the long black whiskers did not show sufficient agitation to make it at all definite as to whether he sang or not.

They all sang together. They were very friendly and called each other by their Christian names. When two brothers married girls of the same Christian name they were distinguished as, "Mary George" and "Mary Thom."

Now George's wife could sing like a lark, but Mary Thom—George's brother's wife, it was said, was altogether too bashful and could not sing "before people."

(These people were thrifty: they had small ambitions and large families. They owned the property they used, cultivating their own "vine and figs," raising cows and pigs, sheep, horses and chickens and realizing from these all their home supplies, with a large surplus for market. Money was not particularly in demand, and nobody howled about whether it was "hard" or "soft," one metal, two metal, or no metal. The indigo blues, walnut-bark browns and Spanish-needle yellows were home woven with satisfied pride into their garments.

The Spanish-needle colors, fresh and warm and wooly, and vieing with the gold of the sun, came from the honey-bees' favorite blossom and source of richest honey. There was a difference between these "help-mates" in homely toil and some of the women of today, women who lead idle lives in boarding houses, nourish-

ing poodles and being aimlessly driven about by colored coachmen, while husband is hard at work in the monotonous office, struggling to meet the expenses of a wife with no known method of disposing of her irksome hours.)

Upon the present occasion as they all sat in the pews of the plain church, where George's brother had safely started the hymn, (after first failing upon an octave too low and then upon an octave too high and then starting out pretty boldly upon the octave between), George's Mary whispered to Mary Thom and asked her to assist in the singing.

And Mary Thom, a little enthused by the sound of the voices, modestly held one side of the book while her heart fluttered at the supposed sound of her own voice. But when they paused at the end of the verse, she was startled upon hearing the squeaky, but scarcely audible tones of her own voice prolonged into the pause, which she suddenly checked with a blush and downcast look, while an unquenchable smile played upon the faces of two or three of the relatives nearest her. How utterly ungaited her own voice was!

She continued looking intently at the Du Puy's hymn; but her embarrassment prevented her from distinguishing a single word, and she gave up the effort for that time. But it was with a full resolve to try it oftener and at home until she could and would sing. For she believed she had a better voice than some who laughed at her, and they would see!

Another hymn was started.

'I hope you will all join in singing', said Mr. Ahvallah, seeing that something awkward had happened.

He read, "What ship is this that is now about to sail? O, glory, hallelujah! 'Tis the old ship of Zion, hallelujah"—&c. After the singing there was a prayer by Brother Short,—a long, begging, beseeching prayer, full of fear and regretful over his lack of faith and coldness of feeling, and which, after all the effort, seemed utterly unsatisfactory.

This was followed by a common metre song—(most of the hymns were long metre.)

"Come humble sinner", &c.  
 'I'll go to Jesus, though my sins  
 Hath like a mountain rose,  
 I know his courts, I'll enter in  
 Whatever may oppose.'"

Evangel wondered what they meant by mentioning a "mountain rose" in the song, and, long after, remembered settling it in her mind that they were comparing the sinner to the wild nature of the mountain rose, and thought it appropriate enough, for she could not see anything vile or sinful either in her own nature or that of the wild rose.

The song created emotion and the audience swayed a little; there were a few groans from anxious parents who had children that were still 'posting the downward road'.

When the songs and prayers were ended and the minister had risen and announced his text, there was a general air of expectancy: every ear listened and every eye was upon him. His subject was of "Christ and Him crucified". He spoke earnestly to the church of the importance of the Christian armor, and the faith—"without which it is impossible to please God". He

talked to "the sinner" with increased zeal, urging them to leave off their wicked ways and accept the offered terms of mercy before it was too late. "Now is the accepted time," he urged, energising his remarks with forcible gesture and elevated voice, until the perspiration rolled down his temples. He spoke for an hour and a half. Some of the good women quietly wept while the sermon lasted, but dried their tears when it closed.

Bro. Peters arose and followed with an exhortation to sinners that, to Evangel, seemed as endless as a round in music, for he kept on until he seemed puzzled to find a way to stop. He regretted to see the "stiff-necked sinner determined to post the downward road" in spite of all he could do. He finally closed by saying: "I have faithfully warned you,—my skirts air clear—friendly sinnah, If you *won't* be saved I can't hep it".

When the meeting closed, the young people met about the door and talked of the weather, the "church house", and most anything but the theme presented by the preachers.

The minister and wife moved out last of all. And as they went they invited all the people they could see to go home with them. They made it a point to omit none, because those they failed to invite went away feeling downcast if not actually offended. When they finally reached home, they found a long line of horses and vehicles extending the full length of the front yard fence.

Old Sister Railsbach, with her heavy, ancient voice and devout looks: Brother Gofar, a regular protracted meeting organ, arrived at the iron-gray age, "able in prayer", and useful upon all meeting occasions, and

many more, were there.

Brother Gofar did not have the long face peculiar to people of pious mien, but on the contrary, all his features were upon a stretch from side to side. This gave to the mouth a capacious and smiling air and to the eyes a look of languor, while the very characteristic voice was forever in need of clearing from a rattling hoarseness, which, on the other hand, acted as an apology for any lack of fluency in his prayers, in which he seemed always to be giving out his very last energies in behalf of lost souls.

Mrs. Ahvallah spoke pleasantly to all as she worked her way into the kitchen. On the road home she had been collecting her wits and her energies for the work of accommodating the thirty-four men, women and children that would compose the half-dozen table-fulls she had already counted. The people were hungry from fasting, riding and from long meditating upon the good things in store for them at the parson's.

Dinner was served upon the veranda. The long table set in full view of the people in the big room, sent out odorous announcements of each new dish as it arrived.

Upon invitation from Mr. Ahvallah the grown up people filed out,—after first demurring with each other deferentially: "You go out, Bro. Steambergen?" "No, no, Sister Railsbach, you go out!"

"Both of you walk out" interrupted Mr. Ahvallah—"there's room for all,—Ten of you walk out—the eldest first," as he showed them the way.

"Yes, certainly, certainly!" said Mr. Gofar, "the other's have to wait while we talk," and he hustled

out, followed by the rest. They appeared very comfortable and licked their lips and swallowed in preparation for the full plates that were helped to them.

It was at the fourth or fifth tableful that Mr. Bleevnevl found his way out to dinner. He was a very modest old bachelor, of a very sober countenance, and with a very small bump of self-esteem.

"Pass your cup, Mr. Bleevnevl—let me give you another cup of coffee," insisted the hostess, as he finished his first cup. He complied readily but looked very much ashamed of himself for having done it, and said apologetically: "I'm a mighty bad hand to drink coffee, Sister Ahvallah!"

This remark called the attention of the minister to him for the first time, and he asked after Mr. Bleevnevl's mother's health:

"Mother is porely—thank you, this summer."

"Ah! how is she getting along spiritually now?" he asked; taking a swallow of sweet milk, very thoughtfully, after he had spoken.

"Porely enough!—She still thinks her prayers are never heard!"

"Humph! I am sorry to hear you say so,—I am indeed!" The minister straightened himself up, wiped his mouth, and then continued:—"Now, I have little doubt in my own mind, it is conviction—your mother is under *conviction!* If so, there is more hope for her—far more—than if she felt sure she was all right! Don't you think so Brother Steambergen?"

"Most assuredly!" assented Mr. Steambergen, as he poured a fresh supply of coffee into his saucer and scraped the bottom of the cup on the edge before setting

it down. "She is at this minute a chosen vessel! Ef she has sinned, the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin."

"How do you feel in regard to this matter, Brother Janes?" The host asked, not wishing to slight any guest's opinion. So far this brother had not spoken, but had partaken quietly and diligently, only looking up to receive more food from the many dishes that were passed round.

The Janeses were strange-looking people. The wife and daughter had very black eyes and hair, and very dark, pale complexions. Their eyes were so black they seemed almost invisible, or absent. The pupil and iris were undistinguishable, and had an air of emptiness as when the door is thrown open upon a dark night. Black is only absence. In perfect black no color is present! A ray falling upon a reflecting surface will return in light, heat and color according to the condition of the reflecting surface, but a ray falling on a surface that reflects nothing, is lost.

Clear black eyes are very pretty, but the eyes of both Mrs. Janes and her daughter looked as if the dark circles round the eyes were caused by the eyes fading and running into their sockets. The Janeses were very good people, and but for the terrified look they wore the two women were pretty enough. But they had seen many strange sights, and related in a quiet, respectful way many stories of ghosts and other strange creatures—in very soft, droll language. Their manner made it all seem doubly weird and mysterious.

Mr. Janes, when thus appealed to partially raised his face, glanced up at the other faces at the table, and

then said: "Brother Bleevnevil thar, *knows* the caze of his mother's trouble."

Raising his hand and pointing his thumb towards his wife who sat next to him (his thumb was covered with crumbs) he went on:

"*We* knows all he do an *mo!* We air sorry far her—but her trouble haint over yit! It is the sin agin the Holy Ghost."

The man had spoken very slowly and Mr. Ahvallah was frowning.

"O, but, Bro. Janes," he objects, "I think she is mistaken. Her fears 'only prove to me that she is still on pleading terms with the Savior," and turning to Mr. Bleevnevl he continued: "You may tell your mother for me that so long as the spirit strives with man there is hope! When his day of grace is past he ceases to be concerned any longer about his soul. Your mother is tender-hearted, loves God's people, and if not a converted woman, will surely be if she prays on. The Lord loves a broken and contrite heart—as shor'es you're born!"

Brother Steambergen appendixed these remarks with:—"Smoking flax he will not quench—a bruised reed he will not break!"

To this there was no reply, and Brother Janes only groaned and helped himself to another piece of fried chicken. Getting a mouthful ready, he paused, with the morsel upon his fork and turning to his wife he began: "We seed hit all 'tother night—we didn't git th' name but I know hit's what we seed!"

Feeling sure he had caused a sensation he became unusually silent after eating the morsel. They all looked at him as if expecting a strange revelation,

when he slowly raised his eyes toward Mrs. Ahvallah, and said: "We hadn't mor'n blowed out the can' tother night when we heerd a voice—a little child's voice—a callin',—fur away, it peer'd like, 'un it peer'd to be a callin' some body; we both looked at oncet, and shore nuff thar was somethin' in white, dim like, agin the rafters. Hit moved slow, out of the corner wner hit first appeart! I never hearn sech raps, agoin' all th' time!" He paused and sat quietly eating for awhile, and the folks sat wondering at his story. "She'd moan an' moan, an' when the old 'oman ud ax questions hit ud stop—and then commence agin. She axed hit who us in trouble, an the little think sighed! She axed ef she cud do any think an' hit shuck hits head, over 'n over! It peer'd to be a pray'n, an' then got dimmer 'n dimmer tell hit varnished."

His dark yellow eyes were shining from beneath shaggy brows as if the story, or the coffee, or both, had put a new glimmer in them. He wiped his mouth with his red silk handkerchief, ignoring the napkin by his plate, and after clearing his throat and sawing the handkerchief across his mouth several times, he thought of some more, and went on:

"The strangest part's to come! Arter calling toe it toe come back—and hit never done it—*she* seen a vision"! (He again pointed his thumb with the crumbs still on it at his wife.) "The world ud come toe an eend, and everthing was blazin, when a old woman 'peer'd to her, a wringin her hans an' cryin' 'lost! lost! lost!' as she hurr'ed by. 'Can't I do nothin' to help you,' sez *she*, (again pointing his thumb.) But she shuck her head and screamed out ut she'd committed th' unpardonable

sin time an again!—she said all the gots were pitchin fire-brands et 'er, an' when she said it, she jist turned into one herself—a big fire-brand—an' hit made *sech* a light we both waked up and sot up in bed!"

At this recital Mr. Ahvallah only said "Humph" several times, and asked Antoniette to—"Pass the pie, honey. Sister Mary is waiting." (Mary Janes was the only one at the table who gave unbroken attention to the repast.)

The children comprehended a few of the things the mysterious man had said. Illustre was hid behind her mother's chair, and Evangel stood so close to her father's side he asked what she wanted with him. The children all believed every word the man said was true.



## CHAPTER VII.

“OLD HEAD ON YOUNG SHOULDERS”. SIBYL. HENCE  
FABBY.

It had been announced that dinner would be served upon the ground the following day at the barn meeting. Many a gentle lamb was slain, and many an unsuspecting fowl that had picked away the shell-limits to find itself still bound, was caught up, and for no offense whatever, forced to the guillotine. The worldly shoat, ruminating upon roasting-ears and fresh buttermilk for a glad month, walked forth one day to his usual feed-place but to meet—the savage knife of the incarnate Christian!

Brother Peters was to fill the pulpit in the forenoon and Brother Storms in the afternoon. When this was announced, Sister Willan whispered to Mrs. Ahvallah that she was “jest mad” to think she wouldn’t get to hear Bro. Ahvallah, and she did hope Brother Storms would prove to be better-looking than Brother Peters!

Many dishes were preparing at Oak House. The capacious old side-board was appropriated to its utmost limits with various relishes, preserves, and jams,—white, gold, and chocolate cakes. A large boiled ham with the rind just peeled off and poika-dotted with black peppers upon its oily surface, adorned the center of the top. Juice still oozed from the fork-stabs, and steam, laden with the odor of boiled ham, rose and curled away.

There was an immense jar of cookies that were con-

sidered an indispensable article in filling the needs of hungry children who should fast at church long after their usual meal-time.

It was a well-filled kitchen, that of Oak House. There were peppers, and citron, and barrels of dried fruits. stored along the corners and sides. Above the barrels there hung a large bunch of dried pumpkins Sister Railsbach had "fetched" because she felt like she "orter do something for Brother Ahvallah." Thus was the obligation relieved, though the gift was worth nothing to the immediate family. It was, nevertheless, thankfully received. Many good people relished pumpkin stew, and pumpkin pie had so long ago distinguished itself that it had come to be a historical thing, dropping down into the biography of every American of note from the days of Washington.

But there the pumpkins had hung day after day, in utter neglect until this important afternoon. Sister Railsbach was expected at the August meeting, and the minister's wife had seen fit to consult her receipt book and had made a prodigious pie out of the long slighted pumpkins. The pie now rested in golden glory upon a corner bracket, under a fresh white napkin.

Sister Railsbach already arrived, rested at full length upon the black-hair sofa in the big room. Several gentlemen from a distance were reconnoitering in the peach orchard.

Brother Pewlett and Brother Short having stationed themselves in the forks of a tree were busily peeling and eating the finest fruit within their reach. Brother

Pewlett had peeled a dozen or more in the regular spiral order, when he changed, cutting a belt round one and then with a cautious whack at the fragments of peeling on either side of the zone already peeled, put the peach to his mouth and paused to say, very cautiously feeling his way into the other's sentiments,

"Don't Sister Willan strike you as a little queer?"

"Don't know," said the other swallowing a large bite of clingstone, and looking up inquiringly, but not neglecting to add:

"Why, what about her?"

"Oh," replied the first speaker, pausing and looking at the peach a moment, and then falling to and nibbling it nearly all off before finishing his remark,

"She peers to like to hug the men, don't she?"

"Yes, I noticed 'er," said the other, and after a moment, he continued:

"I don't spose she means no harm—Brother Ahval-lah seems to have onshaken confidence in 'er."

"Fur's that's concerned, he bulleves in everbody," said the other, "Now *he* don't think thar's a hypocrite in that barnd! But," after growing very solemn and thoughtful, he continued: "Brother Ahvallah's a mighty good man, I can tell you!"

"But 'peers to me a man with his education and experience ort to know some of 'um puts hit all on!—Did you notice when he called on me to pray, Brother Fabby commenced?—Now he node he wan't called on!"

“He did?”

“Yes.—Now Brother Fabby’s a good man, I reckon, but he’s done that twicet!”

“Humph!” ejaculated Mr. Short; and after a pause added: “You can’t never tell,—there’s Silas Bourd—they tell me he’s ben a bad man. ’afore he was converted. He looks like he’d ben thu th’ ‘flint-mills,’ to-be-shore!”

Here the conversation turned upon other members of the church—on Lou Taffyhorn’s strange domeanor after the Rawham murder; The Pastor’s family, and what a good housekeeper she was, and what good housekeepers the girls would make for somebodies’ boys. Mr. Pewlett smiled as he said: “Little Evangel and my George air jest matches! Ef I live I’m going to see they *warry!* She’s a shy puss, and the sassiest thing I ever seed, but she’ll grow out’n that. George is jest like his daddy!—He likes ’er, but the young ’un’s so bashful he nearly melts and runs away through ’is close wher she is near.”

“Maybe *she’ll* take a notion summers else?” suggested Mr. Short.

“Don’t you ’bleve it! I’ve got my heart sot on *her*, and when I set my heart onto a thing I git it, shore!”

There was another pause, and then Mr. Short spoke of the strange life Mrs. Bleevnevil led, and asked:

“Did you ever hear about ’er savin’ Bourd’s two children?”

“How’s that?” idly asked Mr. Pewlett, his thoughts still upon Evangel and her peculiar ways.

"Why," began Mr. Short, quietly wiping his knife-blade with his thumb and finger before closing it and replacing it in his pocket,—“the old man got to feelin’ spry, I reckon, took the children in the sled, and got upset in the snow. The horses run a mild into the woods! They run by Bleevevil’s an’ *she* caught on to what ’us up, followed th’ track back through snow up to ’er knees, found the two young ones almost frozen an’ tuck ’em home.”

“She did?”

“Yes!”

“Hain’t that the woman Brother Janes told about at the table?”

“Yes,—she thinks she is ‘give over.’”

They now climbed from the tree and returned to the front yard, where a number of brethren and sisters were seated in chairs upon the blue-grass, listening with profound attention to something Mr. Ahvallah was saying:

“A man lives by believing something,” says Carlyle. The minister talked earnestly upon the subject of spiritual awakening, and the brotherly love he must have in order to be justified. He was deeply in earnest; but his manner and tone took hold of his hearers rather than any logic that was in his reasoning. When Sister Janes and daughter silently wept, he felt sure that they were moved by what he was saying, and the knowing expressions of Brother Janes assured him of that brother’s appreciation and interest. Evangel was seated in her little chair, close to that of her father.

As they moved to make room for the two men, Mr. Ahvallah placed his hand upon his daughter's head and said: "Brother Steambergen, this is my old head on young shoulders."

"Ah," responded he and Mr. Cobb at the same time, looking down upon Evangel Ahvallah much as they would have looked at a fine pig.

"Humph!" said Mr. Cobb, when he saw that Mr. S. remained quiet, not comprehending that the minister had meant that the child was a "thinking one", but supposing there must be a little obstinacy, or odd ways, that made her differ from other children. He placed his hand upon his big whisker, slowly passing it downward, while resting his sleepy eyes upon Evangel. The child, with her face lowered a little, looked at him in return. She was wondering what kind of mouth he might have—if he had any—when the moment arrived for her to make the discovery. He had finished smoothing his black whiskers and replaced his hand in his pocket, when the whiskers slowly parted transversely near the top, and a dry voice muttered:

"Don't she play with t'other children none?"

"Yes indeed!" responded her mother, smiling, "she's ring-leader when she does play, whether its boys or girls!"

"But she thinks too," suggested Mr. Ahvallah, "Now, she hasn't lost a word we've been saying!"

At this Bro. Steambergen, feeling that something was expected of him, said:

"What air you thinkin' about now, sis?"



OLD HEAD ON YOUNG SHOULDERS.

‘O, nothin’!’ the child replied evasively—looking down, and wishing they would talk about something else. Her father spoke to her.

‘‘Can’t you tell the gentlemen what you are thinking about, Honey?’’

"*You* said," she began after a pause, "that Jesus died to save everybody, and when you *preached*, you said wicked people were not saved!"

"Is *that* hit?—Is that 'ut yo' 'z thinkin' about?" Mr. Cobb asked; but as she made no reply, her father again asked:

"Well, Honey, what of that?"

"Why, I thought God could do it," she replied.

"God *can* do anything, but the wicked one persuades men to follow him. God could save *all* if they were willing to give up their sins."

"Why don't God make them want to?"

"My child," answered her father earnestly: "God *has* all power, but if people will not turn to Him"—

"But why don't God made them like to—so they *will* do it?" urged the child.

"There are many things we cannot now fully explain, things we do not fully understand ourselves, but some time we hope to know more fully," answered her father very sternly.

The first bell rang for supper, and the group removed to the big room, where they would be in convenient waitin' at the second bell.

Evangel removed her chair and again located it in juxtaposition to that of her father, but did not take a seat. She was wondering how it was that satan could prevail against God, and yet God be all-powerful and everywhere.

She walked down the path leading to Aunt Sibyl's cabin. It was a picturesque place. Upon the log-walls were pasted various pictures, bills, newspaper notices, and advertisements of all sorts of things.

Aunt Sibyl was a quiet old remnant of family service that had descended with some other property, and was preserved in due consideration of the good service she had rendered in her time.

"Aunt Sibyl," she began with quite a degree of freedom: "Is God *everywhere?*"

"Yes, chile, doan yer paw tole yo' dat?" replied the brown lips that were wrinkled with care.

"Yes, but 'e says God can do anything he wants to, but"——

"Dat he can, honey!" broke in Aunt Sibyl.

"Does he want people to do bad?" persisted the little girl.

"No, *no!*"

Evangel thought for some time, and then protested: "I don't see how it can all be true!—I"——

"Now, chile! doan yo' go an' git *bad!*—bible sayso. an' you go an' blebe 'n ax no questions!—Ef yo done' Honey, the bad-man git yo' sho!"

The little girl became very thoughtful and Sibyl continued warming up as she went on:

"Your ole Aunt Sibyl use t' serb de debil!—She got on a high hoss, Honey, a serben de debil:—but she got thode, she did,—an' she's quit ax n questions!—Yes Honey. *Humph*—eh! she's quit a axin questions!"

"What did you do, Aunt Sibyl?" she asked curiously.

"Prayed to de Lawd," answered the old servant, clasping her hands, "prayed tel my face was wet, and my heart broke *all* to pieces! De debil tuck 'n bline-fole me!—I kep on prain'—I seen him—his eyes was big as a spinnin'-wheel, an' he had sharp claws, an' fire an' smoke comin' out 'o his belly, chile!—He had a tail

like a scarpin,—I seen 'im chile—plain as I sees you dar!"

Evangel was very imaginative and had gradually retreated toward the door during this description. But when Aunt Sibyl had ceased for a moment, she came near again, and the woman continued:

"I had a heaps o' sins to tote—but when I got *tired*, *humpth*-eh!—I jest cass 'em on de Lawd! Dat minute hit was gone an' stead o' de debil dar wus de Lawd!"

"Did you see God, Aunt Sibyl?"

"Yes Honey:—plain as I sees you! His face shine like de sun, an' his gearmens wus white es wool! He wus holen out his han's to me, an' I cas' myself an' all my kares on his bressed sef!"

Evangel was much awed at this recital and the weird expression of the black face; but before making any remark she fell to musing upon the face, and then suddenly asked solemnly:

"Aunt Sibyl, don't you wish your face was white like mine?"

The dusky face lowered as if she adjusted her thoughts to this abrupt change of subject. The blue-check apron gave a browa tone to the dusky hands in her lap by way of complementing their color. Then the old woman rolled up her eyes at Evangel as if about to impart a bit of important information and said in a lower tone:

"*I is!*—I's a dark-skinned wite lady, an' you'll fine it out some day, Honey, fo' yo' sef!"

The little girl stepped to the wide fire-place procured a charcoal and made a rough sketch of Sibyl's face upon one of the bills: The old servant could not

fail to recognize the likeness, and Evangel asked:

“Do you call that white?”

“Stop yo’ markin’, chile; didn’t yo’ paw git after yo’ yeestiddy ‘bout markin’ on things?”

“Why, is *markin’* bad, too?” asked the girl.

“Yes it is,” the old woman replied shaking her head.

“*No, Sir!* I just know it is not!” Evangel retorted while a blush spread over her face. She was standing by the wall with her hands behind her. After a pause Sibyl asked,

“Done yo’ wish yo’ ware a good little gearl?”

Evangel was looking hard at her and frowning. She was away off, down at the cabin and felt free to talk as she pleased.

“*I am good!*” she said.

At this Sibyl only shook her head, and the little girl fell to musing again. She was sorry any body had ever told her she was bad. She didn’t wish to be bad, but just liked to feel happy and not have to think about such things. She felt sure she wasn’t *bad*; but a whisper somewhere in her said she *might* be a little bad; and after *thinking about it* there seemed to be *two opinions* in her mind. The fine good feeling which continued saying—“*I am God’s child and am good!*” and the opposing feeling which she had just recognized, and which said slyly but significantly: “Yes, I guess I am. Maybe I am bad!”

Whenever she considered the subject after that, the second voice always insinuated itself. She could never feel free of the cold, shadowy notion that had so suddenly intruded itself. She sometimes felt like crying about it but a fire stirred in her little breast and

kindled a desire to *prove herself* either the one or the other! She thought of some words her mother had said to her:—"You must love God, love Him better than anything else. Love Him better than your father or mother"—

"I can't do that! I *don't want* to do it!" she had interposed.

Truly she disliked the ideal of God which had been taught her more than anything else! "I wish God would 'tend to his own business and let me alone" ran in her mind. This thought frightened her! She felt pretty sure she had thus taken sides with the "second voice," and without speaking again to Sibyl, left the cabin and returned to the house. She seated herself again in the little chair by her father's side. At this juncture the attention of the group was called to a shuffling noise at the door. A boy with a dirty face was seated—or rather reclining—upon the top door-step with his arms crossed cherub-fashion on the sill and his chin upon his arms, while a pair of dull brown eyes, half hid by the heavy upper lid, looked stupidly from one to the other of the occupants of the room.

"What is it, Hence, did you want anything?" asked the minister. There being no reply he repeated the question. Still there was no reply, but only a peculiar action of the under lip which he drew up against the upper teeth several times, while looking straight before him. Then he grew motionless again and continued looking at the speaker.

Mr. Ahvallah again asked: "What did you come after, Hence?—What did they tell you to do?"

Without changing his expression in the least, and

lifting his chin barely enough to be able to speak, he replied:

“Come arter the chains in the m’lasses.”

“O,” Mr. Ahvallah replied turning to his wife—  
“Didn’t some of you buy cane molasses of his mother?”

The little girls were all laughing, though trying very hard to desist. Antoinette had turned away her face and the boy fastened his eyes upon her dress-buttons, and Virginia told them they ought to be ashamed of themselves. But as he appreciated this remark as little as he had the others, she too showed her pearly teeth; and when they heard their father smiling through his nose, they all fled out of the room, and a smuggled tittering was heard off in the little room.

At this the boy’s eyes fell; he licked his lips but made no reply, and shuffled square round with his back toward them all. There he remained until they brought him the “change” when he took it without so much as a nod and walked slowly away.

The company had resumed their conversation when half an hour later a sharp female voice interrupted, as a fat woman entered and came across the floor,—“I come over t’ tell yo’ about the mistake in the change—yo’ never sent it all,—hit us a dollar un’ fifty cents, yo’ didn’t send but a dollar’n a quarter.”

There was a sharp, accusation ring in her voice. She had to pause for a moment and breathe freely. This woman knew her son was unreliable, yet felt that if she had not received the money for any reason, the minister, *her* minister, ought to be conscientious enough to make it up anyhow. Mr. Ahvallah turned to his wife who had entered to announce supper, and said:

"I thought I handed you the full amount?"

"You did, and I handed it over to the boy," and turning to the woman who was their neighbor, Mrs. Fabby, she said rather forcibly:

"We certainly gave your son the full amount due. We both counted it and I am sure it was right."

Mrs. Fabby was not tall, and wore a very small knot of hair for so large a woman. Her nose was decidedly roman on top but celestial on the under line. Her eyes were very small, walled a little and danced with agitation as she made her response to Mr. Ahvalah:

"O, well," she began, letting her voice rise and then fall upon each word, allowing her wrath to wax warmer as she continued, "Hence wouldn't tell me a lie,—hit's yure mistaken,—thare's a quarter yit behind, an' we sold the molasses cheaper by ten cents on th' gallon 'n we ort, an' I hain't willin' t' lose the quarter, what's more: Ef Hense tuck it—'n I don't bulleve he done it—but if he done it, he done it unbeknowns to me! But I'm a quarter out on the molasses—if yo' don't choose to pay your honest debts!"

She turned as if to go as she said this, when her pastor, stepping forward, handed her another twenty-five cents, remarking in a conciliating manner:

"It isn't much—not enough to make any difference between neighbors—any way."

"No," answered Sister Fabby, smiling, "and I don't inten' t' let it nuther." And putting the money into her pocket she glanced round at the faces present, now very pleasantly, exclaiming, "Now, yo' all come over?" and started as if to depart, but paused at the door and

turned abruptly as if remembering something and again began,

“‘Spose you’ve heered the news?”

“No,” responded several voices.

“‘Humph!—Things can go on right under your noses in the settlement unt yo-’be none the wiser far it!” She turned and addressed her pastor, “You or’t o’ be over there a comfortin’ o’ the distressed! *Somebody’s* wanted, un me un Mr. Fabby’s both mighty nigh laid up uth our backs, unt’—

“You have’nt informed us yet, Sister Fabby, what it is all about,” replied Mr. Ahvallah.

“No!—Nor I would’nt, ef it want my duty,—hit’s the wust doins *I* ever seed ur any body else!” She ran on as she stood batting her little eyes and breathing very audibly.

“What have you reference to, Sister Fabby, what have you heard?” again queried Mr. Ahvallah.

“*Heerd!*” ejaculated she, snapping her eyes and frowning, “heerd nothin’!—I seed the raskils uth my own eyes!—Why they passed our house arter they’d done ut!”

“Done what—Mrs. Fabby?” questioned Antoinette who had come in to invite the folks out to supper. But without heeding her she continued, still addressing her remarks to the gentlemen.

“They’s a whippin’ ther horses an’ a tearin’ by—feard they’d be ketched—I know ut us them, for they us two, an’ they say they us two amplicated in the deed!”

The woman paused for breath at this point and fanned herself with her bonnet. Varginia entered the room—a second messenger of invitation, and quietly

asked for a solution of the mystery. Mrs. Fabby then replied without further hesitation.

“Why, hits the *murder*, of course.”

“What!” said the host with surprise.

“Of course hit is!”

“Who?” asked several at once.

“Why Rawham;—John Rawham!” she replied, enjoying their surprise.

“Is it possible!”—said Mr. Ahvallah. “Who could have”—

“Why, some says it us Lon, some says Buchem, unt some says”—here she abruptly paused, and some one asked her what it was she was about to say.

“Why, some says they don’t know who it us.—Lon’s afeard o’ his shadder!—hit want Lon!”

“Are you sure this report is true?” asked Mr. Ahvallah hoping there might be some mistake.

“Everybody knows ut,” expostulated the very corpulent personage, “Good gracious alive!”

“Who did you say is the injured man?”

Mrs. Fabby had taken a seat upon the sofa, and sat looking at him reproachfully. Mr. Ahvallah was now deeply concerned, as he had by this time concluded something must really have transpired.

“Why, hit us ohn Rawham—I tell ye! shot down in his own field a follerin’ the plow!—I reckon the world *is* a comin to an eend!”

She was fairly out of breath. The subject was too exciting for a fleshy person to expatiate upon coolly, so she drew a long breath and fanned herself vigorously, holding her bonnet with both hands. This seemed to soothe her, for she now drew her lips together and de-

pended solely upon her nasal facility for respiration. This went on for a little with a wheeze and a whistle through long flat nostrils, until she thought of some more: "They've got three little children she went on, a right young baby—they'er all babies fur that matter. The oldest's not us old as my John Henry, unt *he's* only two year unt six munts—I can mighty soon tell—he's borned in soft peach time, unt so us her little Benny—unt"—

"When did this occur?" asked Mr. Ahvallah, feeling it his duty to be concerned in the case. Before she could reply supper was announced for the third time, and they all rose up. Mrs. Fabby could not resist the invitation which the good wife extended, and smiling comfortably, placed her bonnet upon the sofa and walked out with the rest.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE TWO VOICES.

“Thou that hast breathed in slumber on my breast,  
When I have checked its throbs to give thee rest,  
Mine own, when young thoughts fresh before me rise,  
Is it not *much* that *I* may guide the prayer,  
And circle thy young heart with *free* and *healthful* air!”

*Felicia Hemans.*

Evangel went direct to the kitchen where she found Dollie enjoying a fresh biscuit and piece of fried chicken. She told Evangel she might sop the skillet if she would take only half the gravy. Evangel procured a fresh biscuit, divided off the amount granted, ate it with the bread, very thoughtfully, and then retired into the little room where she stretched herself upon the bed without removing her clothes, and soon fell asleep.

The two voices that had struggled in her young breast for mastery became less and less demonstrative until the second had disappeared altogether, and the first kept on saying:—“I am not bad—I am not bad!”

But the negative of nothingness hints at positive somethingness—as a minus quantity multiplied by a minus gives a positive—and she dreamed of a vermilion sky and earth all in an even glow of lurid flame. She beheld a far-off form, diminished by distance, and dimmed by unpractised first sight. It seemed to threaten “for time to come,” yet at present was only a curious thing of sight. Enlarging, it grew in terror; and as she looked more keenly, she saw more plainly, and the image was black! Something like vapor became visible.

and rose from it where the arms and body crossed each other. But the form was distant still, and the child was at play among the shrubs. She loved play so well—loved the bending sky, the sweet-scented forest, the flowers and pleasant airs, she refrained her thought from looking for some time.

Strangely, it enlarged *only when she looked!* If she looked one day, it would increase, one size, upon a view the next; but if she waited a month or more, there was still but one increase in size.

Sometimes in the night, or when the day closed gloomily and she had dwelt much and studied long upon the ugly image, it would intensify in color and size. Dim armor then became visible about the breast which emitted fire and livid smoke, suggestive of that fire which would not quench, and of stubborn wrath heaped up for many years!—Years that went on and on until the child became a woman—not altogether a good woman like her mother, for she did not love God, the imaged man of power so far off and inaccessible, and despised the ugly beast who executed the business of retribution for him.

But, many views of the dark image had swelled its proportions until it was now impossible to look upon the fair world at all without beholding the image or its work. It had become impossible now not to look upon it! for all men magnified it. From the scholar to the ignoramus it was proclaimed in thunder tones. The gloomy pulpits resounded with figures of speech in honor of its great power and prevalence, as the mighty opposer of God!

Poets made it the hero of cute and cunning per-

formances. Sunday-school teachers taught the good beat a retreat before the banner of irresistible evil!—That the image slew the children of the King, while the preachers and teachers weighed notes, and speculated upon the office and mode of baptism, the sacrament, and numerous worthless forms! The skies were filled with the smoke and soot, and the earth with blackness and mildew! Claws and warts appeared, and poison and disease exuded from the contortions of the beast! Direful sentiment prevailed, touching fire to men's hearts and making them instruments of wrath and hate and crime! The terrible countenance of the image wore the impress of all the vices, while the eyes rolled fire beneath the scaly lids. Looking long upon the monster, made men blanch with fear and cry, that the "world is waxing worse and worse!"

The child's thoughts wandered on. It is a law in Fantasy that as soon as an image is conceived in the mind the image at once appears, and link upon link may then be added, extending phantasmal images without number.

It was the focussed ideal of evil the world formed when it first thought the Universe divided! Every thing God made was good—*very good*, and in the beautiful garden, everything is for man, but, the *fruit* of the tree of the *knowledge*, of good and evil! A knowledge, or recognition, of both good and evil, supposes division in God! But the Law reads, "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." "For in the day thou eatest"—(imbibest)—(see Gen. 2:17.)

As the image towered in all its tormenting outlines, the child in her fancy called for light. In her denial of

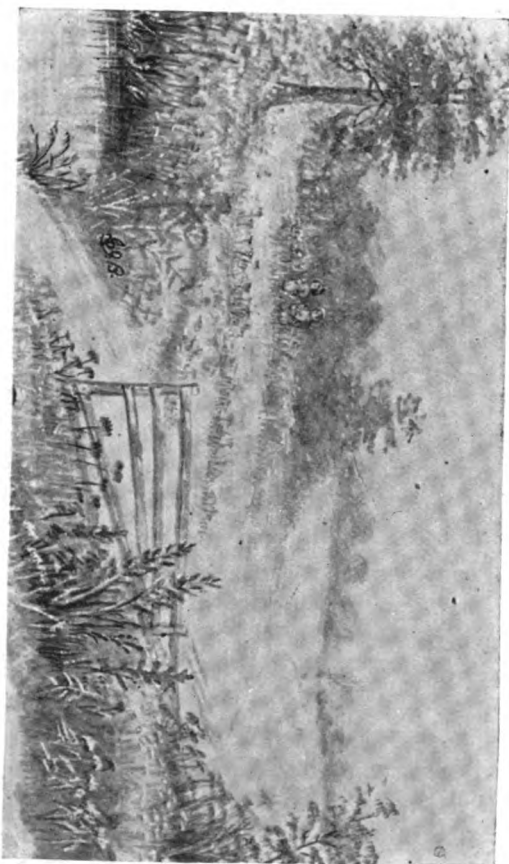
the darkness, and, in turning her thoughts towards the Light, it came:—another glow of glad, pure, wholesome Light. In the first moment it was *Universal*, all Light, but upon quizzical inspection induced by what preachers and teachers had taught as a power opposing Light, the curtains of Heaven lowered, the light lessened, and she beheld that Light had been reduced to an ideal image no bigger than a man! Like the sun miniaturized in a dew-drop; so an ideal image of the Infinite was miniaturized in the mind of man! Man cannot rise higher than his highest ideal.

*While God is circumscribed in form, man's bondage must continue!*

Man cannot break his fetters, and progress, while believing in limitation of God.

A ray of light fell across Evangel's pillow and she opened her eyes. Some one had entered the room with a candle. She experienced a tired feeling as if a long journey had been traveled and many difficulties encountered. She slowly arose, and tried to collect her thoughts. Hearing voices out on the veranda, she remembered the group she had left only an hour ago, and went out to where they were then seated in conversation.

Immediately after breakfast upon the following morning, she and the other children went forth into the wide fields that were edged with dewy flowers. She gathered her lap full of them. O, how she loved their sweet, cool, caressing ways!—Loved, until she forgot the people and the preachers, and the images they kept on painting of good *and* evil, of shadow *and* sunshine all conglomerate in the lives of men!



How good is Life! O, sweet elysian Breath from God, All Good!

The intuitive nature of childhood saturates its being through and through, coming to the very surface and defying the external with its ceremonies and icy forms. Yet with a loving interest in all things, and a stranger to malice, it holds in sacred reserve the deeps of the pure heart within.

The eyes of children that look in faith all day, are bright and sparkling until sleep returns. In the absence of exercised passions the young cheek does not blanch, the silken-floss locks touch upon each other



SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

gently, as if love-conscious, and toss back the sun-light responsive to the sun's caress.

O, preachers of devils! O, men and women who practice things in your lives you would be ashamed for the pure eyes of childhood to look upon! O, teachers

of division in God,—of crooks and cranks and imps of evil as powers of darkness in God's world.—open not, I pray you, your stock in trade to these immaculate ones! close up your false and self-created pagoda of uncouth images;—come down upon your mental knees, and saturate *your* thoughts with thoughts of these! You cannot teach even knowledge without true wisdom, and the love which thinketh no evil.



THE TEACHER OF THAT CLASS.

The Sunday-School might be a great success. So far it has been a farce! Only in very sectarian societies have they ever been a success even as to numbers. Churches broad and liberal and honest have failed to elicit sufficient interest from the young thinkers, to teach them the spiritless "letter."

Incompetent people are the very ones who are readiest to engage in the work of "instructing the young!" The people who have acquired through years an innumerable horde of deceptions and arts, are incapable of correctly imparting to the average free-born child as much of God as it already knows. On the other hand, I doubt if such teachers can at all help them to avoid the traps they themselves have set, in hypocrisy, and the false beliefs they tend to instill.

"I have led a bad life," said one, "and desire to do all I can to make amends." Now, these are the very ones that need to learn of the little child; why have they so reversed the order?

Let such sit dumb in the presence of the little ones, and in quiet study seek to *become* himself like unto *them*. Seek to be as free from evil thinking, as free from both condemnation and temptation, yet as gladly alive!

There can be a proper Sunday School. Let him who has fallen from the natural grace of life study diligently the immaculate character of youth and thus make a tour of the perfect, the true, the abstruse in God. "For, except *ye* become as one of *these*, ye cannot enter The Kingdom."

Arriving early at church one Sunday I heard a woman ask of her Sunday School class:—

“Now, what’s a prayer?” An intelligent boy answered: “Its telling God what we want.”

“That will do.” the well-meaning teacher said. “What’s a *song*?”

The boy hesitated and the teacher suggested:

“It’s something *sung*, ain’t it?”

“Yes’m,” responded several voices, pleased at the brevity of the last of the irksome questions.

The adult may teach older children who have been mistaught if he does not mix evil with good in his own thoughts and actions.

The night of false doctrines is far spent, let us arise and walk in the Light.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE REVIVAL:

“All manners take a tincture from our own,  
Or come discolored through our passions shown.”

—*Pope.*

All thinking not intuitive and undisciplined by true judgment is subject more or less to the electric influence of the mass thought. He who does not think for himself has thinking done for him; and the aggregate reach of a mental conglomerate may be rank and forcible in the extreme. Men who listen day after day with the outer ear alone, find themselves portraying in their outer lives that which has already been enacted, and thus they stultify their own growth by suppression of their inner convictions.

The meeting at the barn had been progressing. Slowly at first were their wandering thoughts drawn in sufficiently to pin them down to the business in hand. But one and then another found their interest enlisted, and before the middle of the second week the “mourner’s bench” surrounding the altar was filled with men, women and children with bowed heads, and weeping eyes, convulsed with sobbing.

Those not yet concerned were earnestly exhorted to “flee the wrath to come” before too late!

The minister often referred to a young man who had postponed the important matter, until the day of grace for him was forever past!

One day after the awful condition of lost souls was

fully portrayed, and no more could be thought of to move the sinner to repentance, the minister, amid heat and perspiration, and with a bowed head and glowing countenance, retired to the homely bench back of the stand—calling upon Bro. Peters to follow with an exhortation.

Many women were in tears,—some wept aloud—the “saved” ones were rejoicing and the yet unsaved, bewailing their lost condition.

Brother Peters was a small man with very sloping shoulders, and merciful looking eyes that drooped at the outer angles. Tufts of hair curled out above his ears after falling straight down the sides of a high forehead. He wore a white and blue striped cotton coat that was rather low in the neck, too short for his figure and much soiled by perspiration and dust. His pants were too short—had probably drawn up in laundrying—and displayed beneath a pair of much wrinkled boots. Their rather liberal length curved up and down several times before the toes were reached, as if tortuously bent upon adjusting themselves.

Bro. Peters came from the South, and had all its warmth in his blood, only he was somewhat overworked, and began his exhortation with all the languor and heaviness a heart sorry for sinners and in sympathy with a suffering Savior could command.

At its conclusion, prayers were offered for the penitent.

Suddenly there was an outcry at the end of the seat, and a square-shouldered, blue-eyed young man, by the side of the slender, dark-eyed girl whom he had followed to the “anxious seat”, cried out that he was lost,

that there was no hope for him, he knew! The dark-eyed, gentle girl had just received pardon for all her crimes (!), and he felt left out. "Bro. Bourd," said the minister with a half-smile lighting his earnest face, "come and pray for this young man! He sees his awful condition!—may the Lord have mercy upon *him!* The Lord has never yet refused to hear the pleadings of a penitent soul!"

As soon as he could make his way to the place, Bro. Bourd came forward. Now this brother had himself been a great sinner, whom the Lord had "snatched as a brand from the eternal burning." He had led a mis-spent life, most of the history of which was clothed in mystery! They knew that he had married rather late in life a woman much younger than himself, and who had borne him several children, most of whom died in early infancy. When he told his "experience" he sometimes referred to hidden wrongs connected with his past, in which he reckoned he had served the devil as faithfully as any man living, but desired now to give the remnant of his days to the service of the Lord. But since the church had taken him under its wing, he had considered his feet safely set upon solid ground. And since for lack of physical ability he could not longer sow as he had sown, and since his heavy frame had collapsed into a physical wreck, he had reason enough to change his course.

The minister considered him one of the "little ones" of whom it was said, It were better for the one offending him, "if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." So, though prayer seemed awkward to him, and singing quite foreign to

his nature. he was called upon in desperate cases and when emotional feeling was most demonstrated.

Silas Bourd's countenance was of the most striking kind. He seemed about sixty-five years of age. His head was almost destitute of hair, and his eyelids drooped—the lower lids hanging entirely off and turning over from the eye-ball so that the inside of the lid was visible. His face was red, and the mouth coarse and thick, with lips hanging off from the teeth and setting in several broken wrinkles at the corners, which were discolored with tobacco.

Evangel was sitting in a retired corner by her mother when she saw this man coming as it seemed towards them. She dropped from the bench upon the floor and crept under the seat in front of them. The moment he had safely passed them she returned, and her mother asked in some surprise:

“What do you mean?”

“I thought that man was coming here,” she explained. And her mother sighed for the child's irreverence for—the absence of “gray hairs.”

It was a “warm meeting”, indeed! Many were praying and begging for mercy. Mrs. Willan, who had been talking in low tones to Antoinette, at last led her to the “anxious” seat” and kneeled by her side. Antoinette had always been a good-natured, warm-hearted, happy girl. Evangel's friend in all her little troubles, and the child strained her eyes to see whether the man with the horrid countenance and swimming eyes should go too near her darling sister! “Thank the Lord!” said the voice by her side, as Evangel's mother, forgetful of the child's presence, arose and started for-

ward. She could not proceed far, but knelt with her her face upon the ground and wept aloud, in the earnest belief that her child had started upon the upward way.

A child's wild cry now rose on the air, amid the mingling of other voices. "Ma's hurt! somebody help her up," Evangel cried, while tugging with all her might to assist her mother to rise. At last the mother decided it was wisest to do as the child wished, and resumed her place at Evangel's side. At this moment a male voice was heard above the rest shouting:

"If any-body wants to go to heaven let um get on my wings. Glory, glory!" Mrs. Willan, who had left Antoinette with Slias Bourd praying over her, waved her arms above her head and shouted; and striking her hands together with all her strength, she ran towards the place where the man, Lon Taffyhorn, stood, and threw her arms round his neck exclaiming: "Here is one ready to go to heaven with you—bless the Lord:" She then proceeded to faint away in his arms. He held her up until he seemed to weary of his burden, when he placed her upon one of the vacated seats and went his way.

She soon recovered, and rising, followed the winged one a little, then checked herself, saying: "O why couldn't I go while I had the wings!" and then sat down and fanned herself.

Evangel was pinned to the wall by the crowd. She called to Dollie to come to her, but in the mingling of forms and babble of shouts and laughs—pleadings for mercy and thanks for deliverance—she did not hear, and the muffled, roaring voice of Brother Bourd still praying for the minister's daughter, rose above it all.

His voice had long lost its natural ring, and worked its fettered way as if trying to ambush a passage past the nasal allies and did not very well succeed.

“She has seen the awfulness of her condition!”—Evangel could hear him saying in that mushy voice—“Now, ut 'er bes' righteousness is filthy rag”—and then again, ‘snatch 'er O—Lord—God! from the external burnin’”— Evangel could listen no longer. She stopped her ears, turned her face to the wall and cried as if her heart would break. She wanted to take her beloved sister away from the horrid man, but they all thought him good, and she dared not go against them.

After she had become somewhat quiet, and while the audience raised their voices in a praise song, the child felt impressed that they were perhaps all very good and that she was a little different from any body else! About this time Mrs. Willan, seeing the child's wet lashes, came up to her as if to speak to her, when Evangel seeing her intentions.—turned suddenly away. The good woman received it as an affront, but persisting a little, ventured:

“Don't you care nothin' about your soul, sissy?” Upon receiving no answer, she questioned again, indicating with a grunt through her nose very softly, with rising inflection, “Humph?”

“No, sir,” the child replied, using the masculine title in her confusion. At this the woman's plump cheeks grew very pink, and she turned abruptly, saying:

“Go to the old scratch then!” (and the next day her father asked her why she spoke in that ungentle way to Mrs. Willan. But he never knew what this woman had said in reply.)

The child longed for the exercises to close. The meeting had continued until almost five o'clock, and she so wished to see all the family in a natural condition once more. But the interest was at its height: several men, located here and there upon their knees, were praying for groups of young men and women while the voices of the latter wailed and trembled hysterically, alternating with the outcry produced by the male voices. The square-shouldered, blue-eyed young man before mentioned rose up rejoicing, and clasped the slender young woman who had received the pardon of her sins a moment before. Brother Short was officiating at one of the groups of mourners. His voice rose and fell at intervals with pleading stress upon the upper tones, and falling to almost a whisper as if trying a plan too sacred and tender for anybody but himself and the Lord to hear:

“*We know O Lawd that if thou would'st deal out justice to us miserable sinners, we would not be hear upon pleading grounds and praying terms with Thee, O, Lawd, but would have our places apportioned with the hypocrites and unbelievers long ere this!*”—The rest was lost in the starting of a hymn.

Evangel had forgotten herself or her appearance as she stood looking upon this wild scene, simply wondering what they might do next, when she suddenly became conscious of a hot, odorous, breath on her cheek, and a very heavy, mushy voice forming some hurried words through scanty and untidy teeth, accompanying the breath.

“Do you feel the heinousness of your guilt?” the voice and breath said. The man was standing close be-

hind her. He had placed one limp, fat hand firmly upon her shoulder as he said this.

"No!" the child replied almost in a scream, at the same time shaking off the tenacious grip that left a cool wet spot upon the shoulder of her pink chambra gown. She wiped her face with her handkerchief and brushed her shoulder.

"Well, well," said the voice, "the Lord help you," and the intruder went away.

Another song was started by the pastor, who now thought it time to pour a little oil upon the troubled waters.

As they sang, a piercing scream rose above their voices, and a woman, wildly clapping her hands, rose up, started forward, faltered and then fell back upon the seat prostrate, full-length, with her feet dangling over the edge. This brought the singing to a standstill. The woman's cries and shouts grew less distinct after a while—from mere exhaustion—and finally ceased altogether. Her hands refused to move and they were very white. Her face became like wax in color, and she seemed to have stopped breathing.

Only one or two of the women seemed at all uneasy about her condition. She was quietly removed to the house of old Sister Good, where she was placed upon a pallet. Meantime the praying and pleading continued at the barn. The episode was alluded to as merely a display of the power of the Spirit, in which "self" had been renounced, as in the case of the Apostle Paul.

Evangel was glad to escape with the women who accompanied the fainting woman to the house. She hurried out into the big green yard, and as she walked

listlessly about, wondering and half dazed at all the things that had happened, she said in her heart that something was wanting in them, if it required such things to make people good. And the child looked up toward the sky so high above it all into the pure, white light she loved so well, and whispered very softly:

*"I am not bad. I am good, I am good."*

When she went into the house the dark complexioned man, whom she had seen at her father's house in company with the Janeses, was bending over the pale face and saying something to her in very gentle tones. "There, mother, don't worry, you'll soon be better and I'll take you home."

"O, can't we go now—now?"

"In a few minutes, I think—you are scarcely strong enough now," replied the son. He was smoothing her hair which the child noticed for the first time was quite gray. She opened her dark eyes and glanced at the faces about her. Mrs. Fabby and two other women were whispering mysteriously in one corner of the room. Mrs. Fabby was saying:

"Why, I's right by 'er! She dropped jest like she'd been shot that minute Bourd spoke to 'er!"—and then her voice sank to a whisper, and she was presently answered by Mrs. Cooper, "Why, I thought she was converted again!—I—don't know—but"—and she whispered the rest. Just then the woman upon the pallet made an effort to rise. The dark man supported her in a sitting posture for some minutes, while one of the women bathed her face with camphor. After a little he helped her to rise, and she called for her bonnet. Mrs. Good could not persuade her to remain longer, and her son

led her to the door. As they moved out, Evangel heard her murmur:—"Something awful has happened! I want to tell you!—not now - not here!" and they were gone.

The time finally came when songs and prayers and mourning ceased, and the barn was deserted and voiceless for the night. Only a little later the minister's family were snug inside their home, with cheerful candles burning, and the beds ready for half a dozen white little night-caps and gowns. Soon they were all sound asleep, the parents as soundly as children. But one of the little girls dreamed that the world was burning up and that people were running to and fro excitedly, and that most of them were disappointed because they were among the lost! While only a few were calm and happy, waiting with their eyes rolled up, to meet their Lord in the air. Her father had gone through with some sort of examination which resulted in making it pretty sure for him, and was saying all he could for her mother, whom it seemed most of the angels did not remember very well. But they finally accepted her on some other account than her own, it seemed. They only frowned at the children who had been told that they were upon the broad road to destruction until all but Evangel were persuaded that it was so. Even Antoinette, who had been to the mourner's bench, was not recognized, since she had not yet been converted.

Bro. Pewlett looked agitated, but threw himself upon his knees and the angel's mercy, and waited. Bro. Bourd was among the "blood-washed" throng! At a little distance Bro. Short was visible, and also audible, —in that same crescendo and decrescendo style.—The atmosphere was red as when viewed through stained

glass. Then the white-robed angels suddenly fell in line and faced about! Every eye was turned in one direction as if expecting something. Soon a large black object shadowed the place, an awful form with claws and warts and a long writhing, restless tail! It had drooping eyes like those of Mr. Board, with the lower lid curled out, showing fire and anger within, while the loose balls rol'ed in restless ire! Each ball seemed a human head meditating crime! A fearful note sounded! A terrible blast from a distant horn! Immediately the dreadful balls turned upon the dreamer. The tail waved and the scales rattled and the monster leapt towards her! She turned to fly, and looked wildly for her father and mother, but all had disappeared! The child sprang to her feet, and stood for a moment to hear three strokes from the clock as its familiar tone was striking the last notes of "twelve."

"Fa!—O, Fa!" said a very weak voice by her father's bed,

"May I get up in the foot of your bed?"

"Yes certainly," said he half waking, and turning over in bed. "What's the matter, Honey?"

"I had an awful scary dream!" she replied, as she crept over the foot-board.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE STRANGE MAGICIAN AT HOME.

“And a woman’s waving shadow  
Is passing to and fro,  
Now rising to the ceiling  
Now curved and bending low.”

*Longfellow.*

In a dismal cabin whose logs were smoked to a reddish brown, dark inside alike on wall and ceiling and darker still now on account of night that hovered over the sea of forest where the cabin hid itself, sat an old woman with her look fixed intently on the coals of fire that now burned low upon the chimney hearth. The candle had burned so low it needed snuffing, and the dim light from the stand in the corner upon which it rested—together with the light from the declining coals—sent a blurred mass of shadow on the floor back of where the solitary figure sat.

There were still a few images in the coals: but Babylon and Athens and Rome had risen, flourished and settled into ashes, and the ruins of other cities of a while ago—in the woman’s fancy—now crumbled and fell in the progress of consuming heat.

The woman’s hair and face—the only white objects in the smoke-browned room—shone in soft contrast to the ghastly shadows, and the black drapery she wore. The face, now so white and thoughtful, gave evidence under scrutiny of having belonged to the type called “strong”, and of the Græco-Roman class; the forehead

bulging a very little, too much to fall in line with the decidedly Grecian nose, and with a gentle off-set at the top of the latter where the arched eye-brows stopped abruptly against frowning lines. Otherwise the face was almost free from wrinkles, though the hair, which hung down the sides of her face and over her fingers upon which her left temple rested, and about her shoulders, was white as frost.

Her eyes—which at this time wore a hopeless, mysterious expression as they gazed into the fire—looked black as the deepest shadows. But they were not black; in her youth they were of a soft, deep blue with an expansive pupil, that always made them seem black when seen in the night.



The woman straightened herself up, moved her chair back a little, and placing her slender, care-worn hand above her eyes, exclaimed in a low, wailing voice, "O!—That awful, awful fire!"

And her thoughts went on painting a place where, in her vivid phantasy, there was a fire that could never be put out! and a loathsome reptile monster having full power to fasten hopeless chains upon white wrists like hers, torturing his victims as he chose, and with a natural instinct to tease and torment with flames the flesh God would keep alive for that very purpose, and with no possible intervention from any creature or thing! Such had been the woman's teaching. With the light of Truth denied, how could she find the key to the true fount of Wisdom?

"There is a sin unto death," ran through her thoughts:—"Ah, yes!" continued the voice of the dark figure, bitterly, rising and walking the lonely room, "I know what that is too well, too well!—O!—is there no way of escape! Is there"—she paused and her voice trembled—"no mercy in God for the lost?"

She said this in a subdued, bitter tone, looking upward and slowly lifting her hands as high as she could reach them, but finding no response in the blackened boards of the low ceiling, she bowed her head—the long white hair falling low over her shoulders—dropped her hands, and sank upon the floor! She remained thus for a few seconds, prayerless, hopeless, stunned, longing, wishing only for oblivion! The hours were lengthening into the night, and the feeble moon-light falling upon the lonesome roof was silent as the judgments that duly fall on men and things:

Now a horse's feet were heard clattering down the road approaching the quiet place. Clatter, clatter, nearer they came, and paused as they reached the gate. The rider dismounted and was at the door.

"Witch!—woman!" said a rough voice almost in a whisper, as a man opened the door and peered into the room. Upon seeing the woman rise to a sitting posture, the man again addressed her, still speaking in an undertone and displaying a pale face and two scared, wide-open eyes.

"Hide me for a little, will you;—tell me quick!" he added seeing the woman hesitate, "I am in trouble and you must hide me—tell me where I may hide, *quick!*"

Thinking that it perhaps was some one whom the same question that was perplexing her had rendered desperate, she replied, very earnestly when she had risen to her feet:

"If I can help any-body, or do anything good—that is purely good—I will do it."

"Hide me then—show me where to hide—as quickly as you can!" he returned, entering the room as he spoke, and closing the door after him.

The man had fled to this desolate place hoping that what he had heard of the woman might prove to be true, and that she might be induced by the use of her strange power to screen him by rendering him invisible for a time. His education was poor enough, but he had travelled some and had heard talk, when tramping in the east, of people who had power to thwart the purpose of other people by a peculiar art called "magic". They claim the power to invoke the aid of dark principles in men and of strange elements in nature, to punish their

foes or to gratify selfish ends. He believed the days of sorcery and witchcraft were not at end. (There are still two schools of black magic in the East. But the magicians go under different names. The ceremonies of some of them are horrible, and their rites revolting in the extreme! They are said to be able through these performances to engage the aid of some of the worst principles in the realm of the conception of evil. Through a course of concentrated selfish effort, it often happens that men about to form good resolves are turned by them from the right course! Magical art was known to the inhabitants of the lost Atlantis, 11,460 years ago. Poseidouis was the last of the continents to disappear. Bengal, India, Cashmere, and Bhootan, have been seats of the practice of the magic arts.)

This man, depending on anything but the true principle, had come straight to this retired spot to seek for concealment, hoping that somehow he might find refuge until he could have time to plan his escape from pursuers.

Upon noticing her hesitate, he spoke again, this time with threatening fierceness:

"They are after me, woman! My life isn't worth that, if they get here before I hide! If you want to see me mobbed before your eyes, refuse one minute longer!" As he spoke he held up the palm of his hand and blew lightly upon it as if to blow away a feather or something very light.

"Show me how to hide!"

He was growing more desperate every moment. She looked straight into his fierce eyes and reading the awful consciousness there, said:

“You must first tell me what for!”

For reply, he drew a pistol saying hotly under his breath.

“Show me where to hide, or by the blackest magician, you wont have another chance!”

She thought of the oblivion she had longed for, of the sorrowful life that had been hers, of the man before her who was weak and trembling from head to foot, and feared him not. She coldly repeated what she had said before,—“Tell, first,—answer my question; what for?”

“For murder, then! now be quick, will you?” said he desperately. The woman calmly stepped to a corner of the room, caught up a small iron ring and raised a heavy board on the floor. It took nearly all her strength. She motioned him to the place, saying as she did so, “That is the best I can do.” He had expect-



ed her to accomplish all this by a word or wave of the hand, and in like manner afterward to conceal him. He

did not wait to question about the place, but descended the steps, lit a match for a moment, glanced round and put out the light. The woman closed the trap, and returning to the door, opened it and looked out. There was a low moon, which made the solemn night all the more gloomy. What benighted traveler has not watched with some foreboding the fast retreating light of the cold moon as it nestled in among the leaves of the distant forest, before he had securely crossed the dark, swollen creek just ahead?

There were voices and the sound of horses' feet tramping along the public road from which the house was hid away by clumps of forest trees, beyond whose dark trunks several forms could be seen stealthily passing. She withdrew from the door, fearing she might attract attention, in time to hear a low knocking beneath the floor. Guessing the cause, she went to the board in the corner and listened. She then asked:

"Do you want anything?"

"If anybody calls," replied the fugitive's voice below as he pushed the board up a little, "let me know as soon as they are gone?"

Again she left the spot and going to her chair sat down and fell to musing:

"The boys will never come back, I reckon. What will I do if they stay all night?—and yet I told them it made no difference if they wished to do so—that I was not afraid. Poor Arthur, I wish he could forget the woman he has so set his heart upon! How little *she* knows of the true love of his great heart! O, my boy, your mother knows few women are worthy of you!"

She continued thinking of present danger. For, up-

on due consideration, she had almost made up her mind to quit the house and go to one of the neighbors; but the nearest of these being more than a mile distant, and the moon now hid behind the trees, she dismissed the thought, and wished for the children's return. "But I suppose they are glad enough to look at other than their mother's gloomy face whenever they can," she mused.

It was by this time near midnight. The moonlight had gone out behind the extensive mass of dark forest that stretched into the horizon upon the west, and everything was very silent. Thinking to rest her trembling limbs awhile, she seated herself upon the bed, leaning upon the pillows in a half sitting posture, and soon fell asleep.

Sleep is restful because that part of the brain which acts during wakefulness, "closes its office," and thought retires, leaving the fruit of its activities in the quiet, but busy laboratory of the sub-conscious mind.

This laboratory is the Camera Obscura in which mental chemicals lie in solution transforming the thought-pictures furnished by active consciousness and and "billing" them upon the soul's bulletin,—the human body.

Active thought passes into this sub-conscious realm and from thence to the body. Whether the cerebellum (formerly called the organ of motion and instinct) be this store-house, or whether it only assists the larger brain, true it is, the sub-conscious realm is forever making active record of mental states. But if this sub-conscious mind ever reasons or acts, or criticises, man has not reached that point where he is in any degree conscious of it. But it seems to be the office of this organ

to receive from the conscious active mind the thoughts just as they come, maturing them, when they record themselves upon the body.

The human body is the soul's chief bulletin-board—its Official Record—its landmark of idea limits! The Camera Obscura does not alter the photograph, it only holds the chemicals to it until the impression is complete. And it makes not a particle of difference whether the picture is beautiful or grotesquely ugly, the reproduction is as faultlessly perfect of the one as of the other! This is why the quality of our *daily thinking is of such weighty importance!*

Not until *all* our thoughts are *perfect* can our bodies reach harmony, or our minds be unified.

The nature of sleep has been a mystery, before which the profoundest philosophers have paused, thwarted in their effort to analyze its nature, or tell what it is that sleeps.

Consciousness, which is the recognizing power of the individual ego, is never really "unconscious." It has been described as the Inner Light, the *self-knowing power*, etc. Sir Wm. Hamilton says "it is a comprehensive term for the complement of our cognitive energies". Locke called it "Reflection". Leibnitz and other philosophers called consciousness "ad-perception."

This recognizing power of the individual ego is a tripple mind-valve:—

Sense-perception consciousness, Reflective consciousness and Intuitive consciousness.

1st, It knows the things it perceives through the senses: 2nd, It knows through memory the facts learn-

ed from any source: 3rd, It knows that within its own depths there are judgments and truths derived from its spirit-nature alone.

The powers of the soul acting in conjunction with each other are inseparable in the complete analysis of the workings of any one of them.

The Representative faculty has greater play where Presentation has furnished large supply, and Phantasy is strengthened in its flights in wider knowledge in both of these. In taking up the faculties separately, it is impossible to find one that is entirely inactive at all times, in sleep, while the one most important in ordinary dreams—the faculty that retires most yet stands on guard remotely—is the one that has most power to rouse from sleep when occasion requires. This faculty is the human Will. It is the judicial Will that closes the door of conscious activity and opens the door of sub-conscious mind. The sub-conscious mind is the Inner Court, the Mount of Transfiguration, the Holy of Holies, through which the Genii of Records, with talismanic wand, unerringly transcribes upon the outer the representations of the thoughts and intents of conscious mind. When the Will has opened this door, the Fantasy is then unbound, and Fantasms spread their wings.

Before closing the door of Conscious Thought, the Will may charge the ego with certain responsibilities which nestle lightly in the Sub-conscious mind as the door closes and sleep comes on. This charge, through the Will, will prove a wakeful sentinel that will call up the sleeping at the hour designated. The weary watchman awakens at the hour named when the Will set the charge.

Mind never sleeps. It is immortal and enduring and has no needs. The body may need rest under the pressure of erroneous experimenting among "theories" about mental limitations! If the individual believes in weariness, this belief in the thought pictures the condition of weariness upon the body. Body is plastic and yields to *every* impress of active thought. The ocean tide sends out a shell and imbeds it in the pliant sand; when the shell is removed, its exact impress in minutest detail, is recorded in the sand!

*To know* that Mind never sleeps, never wearies for lack of sleep, but preserves each symbol whole like itself, will save the body from weariness: for mind is the only Law-giver and only Executor.

In extreme flights of fantasy, the common events are forgotten, or, dismissed for the time, for mind never loses anything it has ever held, (and herein lies a hint of its Infinite possibilities!) and remembered only in a fragmentary way. The moment in a dream the Fantasy images a thing, the object appears.

In the present instance the physical consciousness of present environments was entirely absent. The woman was transported, in a brief space of time, to the banks of a beautiful stream where there was a garden. In the garden a rose-bush was just budding into blossom. They were white rose-buds. A fair young girl was kissing a white-lipped, half-blown rose. By her side was a youth, tall, graceful, good. "Will you give that to me?" he asked.

"Yes; I gathered it for you," brightly replied the girl.

"I shall always keep it. It shall remind me of the

one who gave it," he said, with a bow that would have honored a princess. "I will call you my white rose. I am off for college this fall, but I will find you when I return home."

"O, I am so glad!" the young girl answered, with an exclamation of delight. "I believe you! But, the white rose will not endure forever," she faltered, with a tinge of sadness in her downcast eyes.

"But the kiss upon it will!—that will embalm and preserve the blossom! Take my hand and say 'I am glad,' again!"

She gave her hand and a wild thrill of delight painted her cheeks and flushed her face, as she repeated, "I am so glad—I am always glad when you are by me!" Then, there was a carriage at the door. The young man bent down and pressed his lips upon her forehead, entered the vehicle, and was soon gone. Then in her dream many years passed. The orphan girl worked on in the old way, dreaming of what might be and of what was, attending to the most servile offices about the house in a way expected of motherless children, but never ceasing to pray and watch for *his* return.

It was white-rose time once more. She was bending over the young blossoms wondering why he had not come!—Some women wrote that he had "learned to love" another, and that she would be happier to seek a husband among those of her own station in life!—

A long illness, so long the sheep forgot their shepherdess, and the rooms were dusted by a less careful hand. The rose-tree withered of neglect! There was a broken heart. — The young man across the way sought her hand—some tenderness returned:—for is not

the ideal of this kind of love often only a bundle of fancied attributes?

So, the robe of paradise which she had painted and illumined to fit the form of her Arthur, was placed upon this country boor, a misfit indeed! But in it he was glorified so that she saw not his inferiority. Who can see ugliness through an aura of beauty? Who would, if they could? There came a child; then another and another, and the glory faded from the woman's eyes, and the curtain rose. She begged for a marriage ceremony, and was refused! Half crazed she listened to a sermon on the unpardonable sin and went away, believing she was doomed!

But the dream continued of the former time when she and Arthur loved each other and were "engaged." "We cannot walk apart," he had said, and taking her hand in the old way drew her to him very tenderly, saying:

"If anything should part us here, Julia, we will be one hereafter, wont we?"

"Yes, Arthur, my life would be worthless without your presence." O. pure had been her regard; tender and true every motive in her heart! — An angel spoke close in her ear:—

*"Focus not thine regard upon any form thing! Love the Law of Good with all thy mind and heart and strength, and after that so what thy hands find to do, and all things are yours."*

The dreamer woke with a start at becoming again conscious of her present self and surroundings! She remained very quiet awhile, meditating upon this dream review of her own life.

“O, that I might dream on until unconscious of all things forever!” she finally said. Being already dressed, she sat up. It was some moments before she recalled her wits sufficiently to remember the dark man crouched away in hiding in the cellar. She sprang to her feet. The cocks were crowing in the yard for day. Going at once to the cellar door she stooped and raised the heavy board.

After calling to him and receiving no answer, a terrible fear crept over her! “Suppose he should be found dead in there! another crime would be charged upon my list! But what of that? Can it be any worse than it is?” She said this aloud as with a desperate resolve to know the worst she lit the piece of candle and descended the cellar steps.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE BASEMENT VISION.

Men who have chosen perverse ways, find later on that they have taken a circuitous route to Right, and have willfully added unpleasant and unnecessary experiences to their category of events.

Men rise by overcoming race errors, and not by committing errors to afterwards overcome!

That which is exercised in thought affects both the mental and physical conditions.

The reason some people feel better in the morning, is because they have rested from the strain of mental anxiety, mistrust, false beliefs, unholy thoughts. Behold the texture of the flesh of little children—whose thoughts are pure and lovely! Every indulgence in imaginations of evil, or looking back upon the Sodoms of experience, is a thought against God, tintured with denial of His omnipresence.

“Knowledge of good and evil” is the *forbidden* fruit! Our thoughts should be as free from guile as are the thoughts of little children. Men are saved from errors through the overcoming of them. They are able to overcome when illumined by the light of *understanding*, which is a knowledge of the unity of man and God. This knowledge, or understanding of this Truth, may be attained to by deliberately filling the mind with thoughts of good. (Evil must not be believed in nor thought upon. All evil actions come from thinking up-

on evil actions.) Contemplation of the True, the Beautiful, the Good, and these as being in Strength, and Dominion, and Omnipresence, makes anybody better and greater. This process is subjective, and will *quicken* the understanding into a saving knowledge of the Truth.

When the Higher Spiritual life is followed and the old way forsaken—entirely given up—then the new Birth, clothed in illumination, is reached and the man is indeed a new creature.

It is very clear why men differ in their lives, and it does not require the renewed entanglements of reincarnation to make equal provision for all. God makes no mistakes. "Thou mayest go to him (who has gone before) but he cannot return to thee." No traveler upon the Great Spiral Path of Life can have his experiences over. If he refuses to learn his lessons peaceably, they will force themselves upon him like a flood at the closing of his flesh career, and *make* him fit for the next higher grade. Living again and again in the flesh of different animals—as taught by one school—or even in different human animals alone, could but multiply experiences and so augment the difficulty of getting clear of the incumbering effects of external influences! For if there are puzzling mistakes to make up for in one incarnation, what advantage could there be in having the second! The second is utterly unconscious of the first so far as any positive proof has shown, and is itself open to the mistakes of a "first experience;" and so on through them all?

The only return, that in my mind, could be made profitable, would be a reappearance in the same body and conditions with power to remember old experiences,

and with superior ability, so as this time to overcome them.

Man must learn that a perfect heart will save him from catastrophe. The chief purpose of Christ's descent into human form as Jesus, was to prove to man by example that even death should be overcome. And that the *way to go to the Father, one must demonstrate* by his own energy, through the power of God.

All flesh must be spiritualized. Man should never go to the Father in any other way!

When we have solved our problems *correctly* and are ready for a higher plane, we may become so spiritual as to become invisible to flesh at will.

A perfect balance transfigures form.

Jesus was invisible spirit, limited in visible flesh, and overcame the dogma of death and birth in changing from the one past the other at will, and without dust or pain. Even those who did pass the limits tragically, failed to impress His mind with the idea of catastrophe, for he saw no death. He was too good and great. He said they slept: "Come, let us go that we may awake him."

How profoundly hypnotic is error!

Man must become perfect, even as His example. "*I am the way, the door.*" Any other way is theft and robbery, He taught. As Jesus went by turning into spirit so should we go, and only thus.

Good is positive, and the only substance; evil is the imaging of negative substance. Thus imaging evil makes people believe in it. Now the imagination is the search-light of the human soul. It is its explorer. But the imagination, of all the faculties, most needs the

guidance of the Reasoning and Intuitive consciousnesses, to keep it within its proper sphere.

So long as it is employed upon the Beautiful and True its products are wholesome and happyfying. Whatever the mind *wills* the external performs.

“The witch” was far from certain she was not following the vague impressions of a dream, as she peered into the darkness for the murderer’s figure. The shelves and rows of jars were barely visible in the dim candle-light, and objects assumed human shape as her eyes searched the corners and nooks of the cellar floor.

“Where are you? had you not better come up now,” she had said. But as she had received no answer she made up her mind that something was wrong. Unfortunately she had the kind of imagination that painted everything in its blackest and most tragical form, and she half expected to find the crouching figure half-crazed, or, waiting for a convenient moment to spring upon her and end her life. Or, it might be he had tragically taken his own life and she might find him there!

How very still it was. Even the early bird that had hinted of dawn in an occasional note could not now be heard. She shaded her eyes with her hand and looked about more keenly. Her heart gave a sudden bound, and then stood almost still, as a disturbed rat suddenly scampered across the floor and took refuge beneath an old chest. The object of her search could no where be found.

“It is like an ugly dream!—This is an ugly world!” she moaned as she turned to ascend the steps. She thought of the *other* Steps—the ones she had so wrongly taken—steps that had so completely overshadowed a

life that might otherwise have been as genial and hopeful as her most sanguine dream had ever pictured.

"How is this?" she wondered as she seated herself indifferently upon one of the steps, in an appropriate place to imagine unnecessary things. She recalled first the dark frown that had gathered, that day, upon the brow of her eldest son, when, for the first time she related to him the cause of all her sadness and seclusion. It was a story of false promises, a network of deceptions and beastly entanglements, with a finale of desertion, at a time most trying of all others, in the life of woman. Mystery of mysteries! Was the cause of her mistakes all clear to astrology—was it an unlucky star—did fate pin her acts inevitably within the limits of a zodiacal sign?

Astrologers should always state that it was many years ago that the sun entered Aries on March 20; and that *now*, owing to the precession of the equinoxes the point of the heavens intersected by the celestial equator technically called the first point in Aries *has* moved *well into Pisces*.\*

She had set her heart upon him, and had the promise of his love in return. (Did not the hungry lion yearn after the lamb?)

She had said to her son: "Did you see that heavy-set man at the meeting praying so long for the minister's little daughter?"

The dark faced boy bowed his head.

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\*It is estimated that 25,867 years are required for a revolution of the zodiac.

"That man," she had said after a struggle, "is your brother's father!"

It was some time before he could comprehend that such was the case. Then with a look of melting pity for the deserted mother, he only said.

"O, no, no, no, you could *never* have loved such a face as that!"

"Listen," she had replied, "my love was much like yours,—it hid all faults. The woman you love is not capable of loving as you love, and though you might gain her love, it would disappoint you. Pray do not let it be known your mother is the woman whose life he blighted, for I could not feel free to leave the house at all—afraid of seeing his bleared eyes consciously contemplating me! But I know the voice—the heavy, faithless voice—so smooth in deception, so harsh in hate and bitterness!"

Her son was about to speak. "Hush!" she had said—"if he should chance to see me he would never know me unless informed, for his sight is dull, but he must not learn that I am here."

She continued this unpleasant recall, for some minutes as she sat there and watched the candle send out its last glimmer of light and fade into darkness.

"How did I happen to settle in this place—only five miles from him" she mused!—"Why was I ever born? Will no light ever shine again for me? If God were a woman, or a friendly bird, or a lily even, or forgetme-not, I could make Him listen sometimes, and tell Him how good I will be if I may but sit at His feet and learn!"

Again her thoughts turned back upon the sodom of her life. While wrapped in this unwholesome and un-

righteous meditation, she saw in fancy, a wide, dark plain before her, whereon there were many wrangling monsters struggling in the dark for mastery. But they were all so linked and pulled about by a zigzag wire that was electrified red with magnetic fire that none of the beasts seemed able to free themselves from the entanglements. Indeed, they did not seem to try to become *free*, but only strove for benefits from one another and pampering of appetites, as they wrangled to overcome each other.

The red wires were interlaced, tangled and bent in many shapes. They were barbed and jagged too. An indistinct howl that reverberated along the wires was caught up by one and then another until the network of wires tremoled with the jarring sound and sent out sparks that burned into the blackness and re-electrified the air. A dim line of ghastly light, high up, after a long while appeared. In contrast the plane grew darker and darker, until the forms were hid from view, and the wailing howls sank lower and lower until they were heard no more.

The light increased, as in the clear morn after a storm has suddenly cleared away, and in the center of the welcome Light a beautiful vision came, and a voice said:

*“Look not into the Shadow,—O! child of Light—for it is bottomless, and you are lost until you look the other way. Looking away from Substance is rejecting life. Shadows are bottomless, substanceless, lifeless. Thy powers of imagery are sacred; abuse them not with images of evil! Look not away from God! the only reality. Deceive not thyself! Turn quickly to the light! Cling to*

it; abide in it; keep thine eye upon it. Yea, even hunger and thirst after Light!"

The woman rose up from the steps, and said:

"I will forget the darkness and the shapes! I will have no other gods before Thee, O, Thou Beautiful Reality, Thou God of Light!"

She was sincere, and kept her word—for a day—recalled the images after a week and failed to deny them—then tried again to forget them—but found herself musing anon upon the horrid forms, until she again set-



WHO ART THOU THAT MAN IS MINDFUL OF THEE.

tled down among them, seeing only the dark plane, the forms, the voices, the blackness! and the merciless EYE of "vengeance" and "jealousy" and "wratn" looking coldly on.

Who art Thou that man is mindful of Thee?

How long, oh, Law of God, before she gathers wisdom unto salvation, while gazing so continuously into that shadow of absence which is bottomless?

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE GREAT SPIRAL PATH.

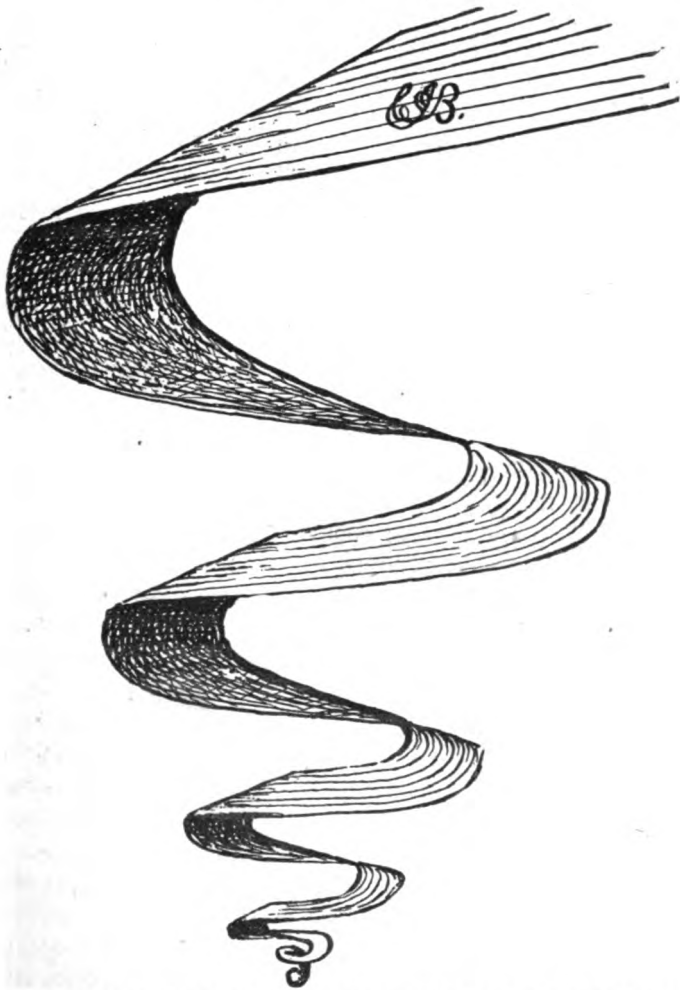
Existing in the center of boundless dimension, all the steps taken by man lead him upward into broader, better and more perfect enlightenment. We weigh, estimate, plan and perform, by the comparison of the lawful arrangements of things upon either hand, receiving ever that knowledge which to us is revelation.

We are upon a Great Spiral Path, that, rounding upward, widens as we ascend!

Reasoning from the comparative known, this progressive pathway, starting out from a Point in Consciousness and from the comparative Atom in space, the way is at first narrow and progress slow and labor-ed. We call wisdom just gained "the dawn;" past wisdom we call "darkness," so that man is forever just upon the dawn of a new era and a loftier civilization.

The Great Spiral Path which widens as it extends higher into the boundless, is the path of Human Life, that, starting from a Point in Consciousness, and an Atom in Space (which is its autograph written in the external) widens until it passes all limits, widens into nature of the Universal.

The Atom is the *expression* of a limited *idea*. It is the *externalized form* of man's *smallest mental concept*: the inclosed diagram of the size or force of the thought they illustrate: they are pens or enclosures that represent hemmed-in thoughts that are born under restric-



THE GREAT SPIRAL PATH RECKONING FROM THE ATOM.

tions. The Atom symbolizes the smallest, most obscure and humble point of Idea that lies in process of solution in the depths of the sub-conscious Individual mind.

Conscious thought placed it there. Conscious thought received the "Idea Point" through the Infinite, and it now lies in sub-conscious solution—just as the camera plate with the photographic impression lies in solution for development—until the due time for expression arrives when it is portrayed in full upon the body, the Soul's Bulletin Board.

Sub-conscious mind is the store-house of Conscious mind. Or, we may call it the Camera-Obscura wherein life-pictures receive their cast and coloring.

The reason we have not been able to discover the ultimate atom is because we have not before been able to analyze those operations of individual mind that are hid from ordinary mental scrutiny. But knowing their source, and their mysterious and wonderful transformation in the labyrinths of the "still waters" of the human mind, and also their certain ultimate in the external, we learn the wisdom of dealing only with the true and lofty in thought.

When conscious, active thought keeps unbroken guard over the quality of her activities, abiding in the live and true, then may she discern the exact character of the ideas that are stored in solution for outward expression. When this power is attained, sense-perception will have widened its scope, (as a natural consequence) and the ultimate Atom may be seen.

Had our physical eyes the lense capacity of the most powerful magnifying glass, we would at once discover means for constructing another instrument as su-

perior in power to the old one as the old magnifying glass was to our eyes. We would then be able to see objects so small that the best magnifying glasses we now have could not discover them. *So we see things but comparatively.*

Recognition of a thought so delicate and deep-hidden as never before to have been known in conscious thought, will, that instant, record itself in limited and externalized form. But while yet submerged in the depths of Sub-conscious mind these thought Atoms form the submerged platform—like rocks heaped beneath the bridge's solid pier—and are the firm foundation upon which the important structure is reared.

The material universe symbolizes the Spiritual. It is forever trying to become like it. How could the unseen be demonstrated to sense-consciousness except by an example written in figures?

After a long and arduous struggle through an age of image worship—seeking rest and finding it not among externals—man has at last caught the meaning of the true purpose of external form, and this has given mental research an impulse and power never before known.

The new heaven and the new earth are ever just appearing: the Kingdom of Heaven is always just at hand. The external has been made a stumbling-block instead of a sign-board; the external man has been called the only man, and his deities have been of wood and stone, or, mental images of God.

The "X" of the unknown equation stands to *aid* in the *discovery* of its Principle. If a wrong value is given to "X," the proofs are delayed; but right or wrong, the work must continue erasing, correcting, resolving until

the true value of "X" is reached and principle appears in truth.

Man's body is the Temple wherein recognition of the Real Self becomes natural. I, the temple and son of man, and my Real Self, which is the perfect Son of God, are *one*.

Atoms are the (comparatively) smallest externals that seek to form after the pattern of their Prototype in Spirit, and they will ever move restlessly toward it—as liquids driven by tempest—until their work is fulfilled and they cross each other no more. The ultimate Atom which has been the subject of so much speculation is here sufficiently discovered and set forth.

The microscopic Atom of matter, is not the ultimate Atom; nor are the miniature Atoms that make up the microscopic atom prime; nor are the accreting atoms of these atoms the ultimate; nor yet the atom that is the least of all these, (which is the reflection of the minutest point of thought.)

All that is to be known of the Atom is but *comparative* knowledge,—viewed in that light, *that atom is ultimate which the most limited and obscure thought of man has circumnavigated, bound into a concept, submerged into the mysterious labyrinths of sub-conscious mind, and expressed, to the vision keen enough to see it, upon the limited external.*

Mind is a great deep, holding all knowledge in potential being. Ideas originally in the mind, are discerned by intuitive consciousness, independent of any relations to phenomena! The ability to contemplate, reason about and name them is a special power for the

True, the Natural, the Infinite. Conflicting conditions among externals originate somewhere in previous cross-attitudes of *conscious thought*. Mental war results in conflict among the Atoms of the external.

Disturbed mentalities are the seats of all wars.

Principle is always correct, whether the figures are properly or improperly employed, or whether they succeed, fall short, or fail entirely. Nor is there any error in the figures themselves. It is in the falling short of the mental attitude that writes the figures. If I write "one plus two are four," the figures I employ are as innocent as if I say "one plus two are three." Perfect, persistent attention to any problem masters it. We scatter and become entangled mentally, for want of concentration upon the real.

All that is not pure and perfect must be cleansed from man's thought before he can be accurate or right. Malice, lust, hate, revenge, etc., are caricatures of truly good qualities, and must be changed.

The body, the Temple of the Lord, must be a *perfect* medium for the expression of the True Self. The health-blush of childhood emanates from its Real condition. Unfettered by false conceits common among the adult portion of the race, its mental attitude is serene, and the atoms of its body obediently harmonious.

The *metaphysical* is above the physical. Mind is exceedingly active, and efficient. It moves all matter into continued effort at copying mental attitudes.

Now, he whose conscious thinking is so sluggish or so indifferent as to subject the realm of sub-consciousness to whatever may tumble into it from *rice pressure* and error, finds his thoughts are often impelled by

mysterious forces, his actions prompted by strange motives which he is unable to analyze, and the results, which are false figures upon the external, are often startling even to himself. *Mind must take control of its environments.* There are two sets of nerves reflecting the vibratory motion of individual mind. The one, receiving impressions by the senses and communicating them to the central nerve station, the brain. These furnish the stimulated knowledge from without inward. The other set are the motor fibers that transmit the nervous stimulus from within outward, and repeating and reproducing individually what is going on in the mind. The body ever holds the record of the pictures formed in the depths of the thinking ego.

Mind energy may be successfully utilized, since it may be applied to work *at will*. The flow of superior nervous force to any organ may be accelerated *ad libitum*.

Culture may augment or modify the consentient or consilient nerve action in any member of the body. But people have called it will or nerve-force to the neglect of the higher comprehension of psychological laws proper, always watching for ultimates in material substance, and vainly striving after the mystical and abstruse through external forms!

Mind is prior to all manifestation. It is the motive power that moves not only the nerve-pendulum after its own vibratory manner, but all material mechanism whatsoever. The nervous system is a plane figure upon which are displayed the operations and attitudes of individual mind. A message is received from eye or ear by the afferent nerve which flashes back the intelli-

gence to the nearest ganglia and from thence to the brain. The efferent filament at once sends answer outward that the particular piece of information is received and is upon file. This reflex action of the sense-motor nerves shows but a picture playing upon the surface of the reflecting mirror of the human body.

If the afferent messengers gather information from appearances alone, they will often bring reports of imperfect outward conditions, which will be reflected in full, *unless conscious mind, understanding the laws of Being, instruct the efferent nerves to the contrary.* Then they will carry back to the surface the report of health *instead* of discord. But if the mentality believes it has trouble, it fails fully to reflect the mind, and the result is a false report.

The *Conscious* Mind is aware of present activities.

The *Sub-Conscious* Mind is the receptacle of past mental acts.

The circulatory system is, at all times a perfect reflector of sub-conscious condition and may portray conscious activities.\*

The Conscious mind's act being always in advance of the sub-conscious attitude, THIS MIND SHOULD BE THE ONE IN POWER, and so control the subconscious plane as to make it subservient to the later and superior judgments of the present Conscious Mind, in all work of form-building and beautifying. For instance, Jesus, with His present conscious activity, quelled the storm

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\*It is called "*miracle*" when one is able to work *instantly* with the conscious mind, "*nature*," when by the slow processes the sub-conscious thought turns out products from the mills of the gods.

at sea, that was but reflecting the riotous mental subconscious state of the people! But had his conscious attitude been as inharmonious and imperfect as the subconscious condition of the people, he could not have wrought the work.

Right is Might.

One atom of foreign reflection will cause a shock along the nerve-lines that is told to the brain, when it is flashed back with force through the efferent system of nerves to affect the body.

Now suppose the mental attitude reflecting such condition be connected with another person's mental battery?—for mentality is exceedingly volatile. It would unite and mingle the two just as would impure blood hypodermically injected unite with and affect blood previously healthy. When a foreign element is introduced into one's mentality without resistance, the giving and receiving are simultaneous, a new and common base is formed, and the mental plane becomes homogeneous with the foreign element, being of the same quality! Every mentality thus affected is modified, more or less, by foreign mentalities, and every point of nerve, in all the multitudes of batteries, takes on the conditions, not only of one, but of each and all!

Tangled are the lines that intermingle in mentalities thus united! He that hateth is a murderer; he that lusteth, an adulterer,—that is, hath cast down his mentality upon the plane where criminality is possible! (“For *without* are dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers and murderers and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie!”) (Thought, leaving thus its own, goeth out “seeking rest and finding none” and taketh to itself

seven other mentalities worse than itself!—The last state is worse than the first!)

Who can estimate the extent of error to which these vagrant mentalities may lead one when once the improper connection is made, in the great hidden battery of human thought and action. In such entanglements lies the secret of horrid cohesions! Men who surrender their thought-actions to the will of lower orders of beings as controls, thereby join with a current of unclean thinking, for thought circulates like blood and nerves.

False impressions are every one ingrafted from the external. The nerves get their impulse from the brain; the blood from the heart.

Thought should get its food first from God, through intuition; then it would be actuated by right judgment in all knowledge.

Ingrafted atoms are unnatural. These inharmonious impressions received from the outer through sense-perception,—through the blood—or through the nerves,—are alike but the transference of atomic fires, from one or many to another or others as the case may be. Every atom of which bodies are composed, is an electric body made after the image of the thing of which it is an integral part. It holds its place in perfect order according to the perfect condition of a harmonious mind, or, according to the disturbed condition of a disordered mentality. The atom is an integer of the body and of the universe. To disturb its aura or sacred atmosphere by uniting it with a foreign or inferior body either by blood or thought, is to disturb its natural order and institute disorder. Every atom in the body has then to readjust itself, and will continue to be disturbed until

the intruder is removed, and the normal condition restored and its aura left undisturbed. If a high order of mentality bows before some supposed overwhelming influence upon a lower plane, the two—the higher and the lower—become physically one. Is it any wonder that the blood surges when the pure atoms of the body are forced into the flame of some incendiary's torch? The two have met in mortal combat like Michael and Belial. "But soon obscured with smoke, all heaven appeared—How hast thou disturbed heaven's blessed peace!—How hast thou instilled malice into thousands once upright and faithful, now false and failing?" (Milton.)

God tempts no one. No temptation is ever met beyond what can easily be resisted, be it presented in whatever way. The best time to resist is at the first appearance. Error is willful, and incurs an imperative harvest of corrections.

Peace is restored by purifying. Every evil thought indulged, is a fagot held out for incendiaries to light their deeds by. It is a gangway put down upon which lower mentalities crowd and menace your life-boat. That is how "evil communications may corrupt good manners."

The downward course is precipitous only when entered upon—only when the balanced life is shaken.

It is the office of the physical to reflect mental attitudes.

Cross-currents of thought, darkly meeting, generate smoke of torment, in which imps of evil and distressing shapes are imaged. This is what makes beasts howl at midnight! Waking from the startling dream of other

beasts that bewail their dismal lot wherein identity is lost, they utter what they feel. The blackness itself takes up the chaos of tangled lines of wayward thoughts, and gives it over to the crooks and dwarfs that multiply again the wraiths and monsters of a disordered brain!

*Delirium tremens* is but the disturbance of a point reached by the shadow pilgrim, after many entanglements with the thought-currents of evil participants, as they sink together into the shadow called "bottomless pit."

The mechanism of the sensorium is truly wonderful! and beautiful is the Law that works its evolution toward the perfect state!

How glad are we that of our own *free will we may choose* the pleasant, the delightful way, that leads us ever upward into Light!

"I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE." "I THINK THY THOUGHTS AFTER THEE, O SOURCE OF ALL GLADNESS AND PEACE."

Beneficent is the hand that is forever straightening disordered lines: ever purifying and upbuilding anew; attuning the finer harmonies, over and over forever. The Law works the Will of God. Towards impure thinking it is a consuming fire.

Invisible but sure is that energy which bears down upon this line and buoys that, changing the course of one and straightening the gnarls in another, until the interlaced mass is untangled and each line directed, in a way most beneficial for all. There can be no loss. Destruction is an obsolete term. Unrealities disappear from the thought because they are unreal, not because they have been destroyed.

“The Law of the Lord (Law of Laws,) is perfect,  
*making* wise the simple.”

Our path in life is like our line of thinking.

Thoughts we cannot tell, and that are scarcely re-  
cognized by ourselves, write their impress upon our  
house-top banners, and shine forth in our faces.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE MYSTERIOUS SKY-LIGHT.

When Evangel had risen from the siesta in which she had listened to the two voices, and finding the afternoon had glided into evening, she rejoined the group then seated on the veranda engaged in quiet, desultory conversation.

The supper-table had been cleared away. Mrs. Ahvallah and Jerry, having completed their gymnastics in the culinary quarters, emerged from the department of dining-room tactics and made their appearance upon the porch.

The Janes's had related many ghost stories, and described in their homely language many weird visions within their experiences.

Chairs had been offered to the lady of the house upon her arrival, by one or two of the gentlemen, and two or three of the children, when her husband, his attention having been attracted by all the noise and moving about, and feeling impressed that something was expected of him, rose up suddenly, and then sat down again, when he discovered that she had already found a seat, and continued conversation with the group that had surrounded him. He held his chin well up, so as to be able to retain the extracted essence of the tobacco until the completion of the sentence, when he would take occasion to expectorate. Bro. Short, who had been listening intently, and observing the suggestive

attitude, held out his hand, in the first pause that ensued, and asked whether it was "manufactured" he was chewing, and if so he would try a bite. He said he had chewed some of Bro. Bourd's "twist" in the morning and that it had made him sick, and he "would like to try something milder". He was not accustomed to the twist, he said, and somehow could not get used to it, although he raised it every year upon his farm. He said its use had made his dyspepsia worse, although Bro. Bourd claimed that it had greatly assisted him in the labor of digesting his food, and that he swallowed all the "ambeer" for that purpose.

The minister handed him a square plug as he talked, and Bro. Short, placing a corner of it between his molar teeth, bit off a liberal morsel, with great relish, and said, as he returned the remnant:

"I find it a trifle sweeter 'n what I've ben use 't 'o late. I don't know, though," he added complacently, "ef I dont like it better!" He then tipped his chair back, put his hands into his pockets, set out his feet to balance himself and chewed away with great satisfaction.

The conversation had turned upon some of the prophecies that had been made at the meeting, by wise old heads, foretelling the early consummation of the closing events and end of the world! Bro. Janes had prophesied that the great change would come simultaneously with his own demise, and he was now well stricken in years!\*

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\*Egotistic old men commonly make this prophecy. The notion is a selfish one. They hope that when *they* are through with the world the Lord will "shut up shop" and give the remnant into the hands of the receiver.

Mrs. Ahvallah appropriating one of the many chairs offered her, located next the parlor door which opened upon the varanda, while Jerry modestly seated himself upon the floor and leaned his head upon the wall. He was careful to get in hearing distance, where sisters Janes, Fabby and others had formed group number two. These ladies had been exchanging yarns, in low, mysterious tones, before the lowering of the drop-curtain in the kitchen. They brightened up a little when Jerry and their hostess appeared, but soon settled down to the same monotonous warble, only speaking a little more openly, on account of the need of manageable material for conversation.

Sister Janes, addressing her words to the new comer, explained that she had been remarking to Sister Patrick and Sister Fabby that it was her opinion that the comet now blazing across the heavens was sent as a warning to the young people of the "settlement:"—that she had noticed that the tail pointed directly over the "Barnd", and that she had observed that while the meeting was going on it seemed to quiver and flare out as if "trying to hold in a leettle longer!"

Mrs. Janes looked very ashy and sallow as she said this, and her eyes flashed blacker than ever; then they saddened perceptibly as she turned them upon Virginia and Antoinette who sat not far away straining their ears to catch every word, and looking over their shoulders at intervals toward the orchard, to make sure no ghosts or hob-goblins were coming up from the shadows.

The garden pailings were so many silent, white sentinels, pointing toward the starry witnesses to the gen-

uineness of the awe spread over nature by the great fiery comet, and its mysterious meaning now about to be revealed!

Bro. Pewlett and daughter Permelia were among the listeners: she thinking it honor enough for her to sit in her pastor's presence and look at him while he talked: he turning over in his mind what a fine thing it must be to have the influence and position the speaker held, and half believing that with his education, a little encouragement, money and friends, he might himself have made almost as good a show in the world. He glanced at Evangel as she listened intently to what the women were saying, and mused:—"She's jest the cutest thing I ever seen! She an' George 'll marry ef I live! The ain't a thing about 'er but what's purty, and her sassy nater jest tickles me. Her daddy thinks lots 'o my folks—and *ortto*, why not?" he asked himself as the reverie suddenly checked.

Sister Janes had relapsed into silence; Jerry had collapsed and all the folks were showing signs of subsidence, when the colored boy began a deep seated snoring which sounded like the far-off starting of the wheels of some unseen chariot.

As Evangel sat listening and thinking of the queer people, the silent blue-black night, the far-off stars, and the comet blazing beyond the house-tops, she found herself intently watching the pale face and dark eyes of Mrs. Janes, who, in turn, was gazing at the child's eyes, winking her own with sheet-lightning effect, and wondering what could be the import of her wide, wondering eyes.

The child's eyes seemed to take hold of her, and

shake her into thoughts of a better, higher life! They seemed to thunder into her ears the question: "Why are you so stupid, so dull like the rocks when all that is good until such as you make it seem false by your lives?"

Evangel was thinking of the ashy-faced woman's prophecy. If it were true, how soon she might be forever separated from all the friends she had ever loved! She had been taught that children began to be "accountable" at the age of five years, and she had had many dreams of the "last day" and of being confronted by a horrid monster, with a natural gas well inside, saying, "Now I've got you, you wicked child!" But somehow in her dream he would always relent when she told him she was not bad, and rather admired her courage, and seemed to consider her scarcely worth bothering with, anyhow, since he had so many big folks already on his hands! His deputies seemed to have little to do since he jealously chose to fill the office of both executioner and general collection agent.

Just at this moment there burst a lurid glare of light, as an immense ball of fire went whizzing across the eastern sky! It was all in full view of the people upon the veranda, and was so vivid that the shadows it cast of the people upon the porch were as distinct as daylight shadows as they danced swiftly round from the right to the left, as the light moved in the opposite direction. All who were awake sprang to their feet, Mrs. Ahvallah exclaiming in the wildest excitement: "There now! It is the end of the world! The awful time has come! The comet, the comet!"

She was holding the back of the chair with one hand,

the other spread out toward the heavens; while Sister Janes, Bro. Pewlett and several others had fallen upon their knees in humbly submissive attitudes. The minister silently held his face invokingly toward the sky.

Bro. Short threw away his quid of "manufactured" and brought his hands together in a supplicating manner. Bro. Janes, aroused from sleep, got his eyes open just as the display was over, but being unwilling to make it known that he had lost consciousness in that manner, stood staring and awaiting developments.

Illustre could scarcely stand she was so frightened, and Evangel built a score of awful pictures in her effort to conjecture what it all meant! The children had drawn as near as possible to their parents, Illustre holding tight to her mother's dress with both hands, while Evangel pressed close to her father's side.

Jerry's slumbers had been unbroken:—it did not matter so much about him, for the question of accountability did not certainly apply to him, since a majority of slave-holders had held that the negro's soul was not immortal, and the question was not yet settled.

But the sky had become natural, the comet streamed on, and it slowly became evident that the end was not yet.

"I was so frightened!" said Mrs. Ahvallah, and then expressed her wonder as to what the strange light could signify.

Mr. Ahvallah, entirely collected, urged her not to be alarmed, and said it was only a large meteor shooting across the heavens, and briefly alluded to the time when, as a youth, he had witnessed a whole shower of them, and described how very frightened the slaves

were. They became so frightened, he said, that they rushed into his father's bed-chamber until the floor was covered with prostrate forms, begging for mercy, and praying his father to intercede for them and save them from the "terrible elements!"

He related how his father remained calm through it all,—not so much as rising from his bed—but waited until the shower was over and then kindly sent them off to their cabins, urging them to remember how they would feel in the real judgment, and make their peace, calling and election sure while they had opportunity.

But no one was harmed in the great meteoric shower of 1833. The people on the veranda were soon calm again.

Some learned man had surmised that this comet was identical with the one of 1807, and that she had returned for the purpose of completing an unfinished work, for, according to the Savants she should not have returned for 1600 years. Would she burn up the world? Some of the colored people became at once frantic and religious, and would have become moral had the race reached that plane.

The people remained quiet and thoughtful for awhile, and Mr. Ahvallah found himself wondering why astronomers had not discovered more of the real nature of comets!

"It is not a diamond, it is scarcely brilliant enough: perhaps it is topaz, and the sun's rays, shining through it as they would through a prism casts a line of light behind. This is why the tail is always in an exact line from the sun, the real nucleus never failing to remain

towards the sun, whether flying to, or, from that luminary."

Then he thought of the comet of 1744 which carried six magnificent tails after it had passed the perihelion: "then the comet is a crystallized gem—perhaps was metamorphosed in its perihelion passage—and having several faces, would throw out several streams of light. What wealth there must be distributed upon this planet!"

Then his thoughts turned upon the Stellar mysteries: what Saturn's rings and eight moons stand for: what the composition of meteors that shoot through space night and day, sometimes boldly striking our own atmosphere: what the real cause of the *aurora borealis* and whether our moon is concerned about style in the arrangement of her back hair, or whether, as her face might suggest, she is rather untidy, or, maybe bald! At this juncture he was rather startled at the humorous drift his thoughts had taken, and banished the train of meditations from his mind.

Meanwhile the comet was flying onward in its passage, as the world spun on from west to east, leaving the sun far down beyond the Rockies and the billows of the Pacific, and the little fiery weather-cock far up in the sky to point out his track.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## DINNER ON THE GROUND. THE FATAL PAPER.

There was every appearance of a big turnout. The summer air was sweet and balmy and full of twinkling suggestions of church meeting. Old Blaze and Whipstock were hitched to the big farm wagon, and only waiting until the children and the baskets of provision should all be hustled in. The minister and wife—the latter very rosy from exercise—had offered the most comfortable seat to sisters Taylor and Patrick, the former of whom had suffered over night from a spell of indigestion and needed the latter to carry her reticule containing camphor, hymn book, eye glasses, etc.

Bro. Short who had been “troubled with his kidneys,” and who had taken a quantity of soothing syrup or something of the kind, also required special attention. Bro. Pewlett too, frankly acknowledged that he had over-eaten, and that indulging in the delicacy of onion for supper always did give him the headache; but he hoped it would wear off soon:—that is the *ache*, not the head.

Arthur Bleevneevl who had come by upon horseback with a hope of getting a look at Miss Amanda, rode sadly on, after shaking hands with Mr. Ahvallah, and discovering that her absence was the most conspicuous thing present, to him.

The baby was cross, which was very unusual for him, for he was a fine, good natured fellow, and Antoin-

ette, of whom they all expected better things, refused to carry him, for fear he might rumple her new lawn dress. So the minister's wife climbed in, while her husband was assisting Sister Taylor, and seemed very glad of the privilege of having a comfortable seat after the mornings exercise.

"Why ma!" ejaculated the eldest, "I didn't know you had to get in by *yourself*, I was coming to help you. Give me the baby."

"Never mind," said the mother, glancing at the group in the back of the wagon, "see that Dollie don't tumble out there—sit down Dollie!" she added, as that nimble little specimen stood bobbing up and down, as if she would just as soon jump over the big wheel as not.

Bro. Gofar, who rode horse-back, went along with the wagon, when it finally moved off, to open and shut gates for the minister.

The motion of the wagon soon lulled the round bunch of white muslin in Mrs. Ahva'llah's arms into a state of quietude, and set the round cheeks of the little girls in the back of the wagon to shaking and dancing like jelly, much to the amusement of all.

The baskets were pushed under the seats, from whence they displayed their white napkins and gave a broad hint of appetizing delicacies to those who rode by upon horse-back.

Bro. Gofar, whose horse was somewhat mettle-heeled, rode first upon this side and then upon that, chatting first with the minister and his wife, and then with the two ladies upon the next seat, just as it suited the caprices of his horse. Mr. Ahvallah had privately requested Bro. Gofar to speak a word to Antoinette,

whenever he had an opportunity, upon the subject of religion, in order to keep up the concern about her soul. Bro. Gofar had loitered this morning for the very purpose of trying to find an opportunity to speak. So just after they had crossed the branch and were pulling up the hill he ventured to ask:

“Have you felt any change yet, Miss An?”

Whereupon all the little girls looked questioningly at him, and Antoinette, a little ashamed of the distinction, answered evasively, as she looked down at the road-side:

“Why,—I don’t know as I do,” and hoping he wouldn’t say anything else turned away her head. But wishing to secure some degree of success to his efforts, now that he had “broken the ice,” he turned toward Virginia, who was still looking at him trying to comprehend his meaning, and asked:

“Do *you* ever feel anything, Sis?”

“Sir?” said Virginia very honestly, and looking straight at him with her delicate lips apart, and the effort to comprehend in her expression.

“Do you ever feel serious about your soul?”

“Why,—yes sir—I reckon so,” she replied, innocently wondering why he asked her such questions.

“Virginia *thinks* a great deal more than she *says*, Bro. Gofar.” said the minister, interrupting apologetically, and looking back for a moment. But just then Mr. G’s spirited animal shied to one side, and became almost unmanageable.

“*Whoa!*—you blasted fool!” ejaculated Mr. Gofar suddenly, as he struck the animal a smart blow with the cowhide he carried, “You’ve got nothin’ to skeer

at!" This caused the horse to plunge forward into a rapid gallop, and he so continued as far as they could be seen. The children watched the fine run with much interest, as Bro. Gofar's coat-tails flew behind in the breeze in an agitated manner.

The wagon reached the Barn just as numbers of others were arriving from every direction, and in a few minutes they were once more filling the low, backless seats of the proxy church.

A couple of long sermons lasted until after one o'clock. The people were tired and hungry. Even the mourners and converts, and the exhorting brethren and sisters wore pleased looks when at last dinner was spread under the trees upon the blue grass in the open air freshness, and a hospitable invitation extended to all.

"Sister Ahvaller,"—said Mrs. Nancy Fabby, stepping forward near Mrs. Ahvallah's abundant dinner that was now spread upon a fresh cloth white as alabaster—"Ef ye haint no objections, I d jist as soon put our dinner uth yourn?" And without scarcely waiting for a reply she deposited a couple of pies that were still in their baking pans, and a platter of fried breakfast bacon upon the white cloth, just as Bro. Bourd and Sister Willin found their way to the dining place. Bro. Short and the tall Bro. from Beaver Dam, and two women, filed into the opening Mrs. Fabby made when she withdrew to look after her folks. The gentlemen began helping themselves and the "ladies" to the toothsome viands. Miss Steambergen daintily held a chicken-wing between the extremities of the thumb and first finger of her left hand, and a pickled cucumber in her right, while Harry Crozefete stood by holding her parasol and

fan in one hand and a biscuit sandwiched with roast pig in the other, and they laughed and made merry.

Bro. Fabby concluded the next step to be taken was to invite his friends to partake of "our" dinner, and became bold in so doing, speaking out loquaciously to the many hungry relatives and their friends who were waiting to be invited, and who looked very hungry and wishful.

"Come fards, Bill Tom, you unt Susie:—make yerselves ut home.—Come along, there's room for all," he continued, not noticing that he had stepped immediately in front of Mr. Ahvallah and wife, so pre-occupied was he with the feeling of generosity over their bounty.

The two dishes supplied by Mrs. Fabby might far better have been dispensed with entirely, as to the general effect.

Mrs. Ahvallah could not restrain herself from feeling regretful it had occurred, and disappointed that the fine display for her husband and friends she had worked so faithfully all the day before to secure, had been so suddenly marred. She could only invite her friends to the few vacant places left after the Brother's voluminous and very generous invitation to his relations and friends had been responded to.

"What will we do, if there's not enough?" asked Mrs. Ahvallah aside to her husband, as they stood in the outer circle with a group of friends they had failed to find places for.

"O, I don't know," he replied hesitatingly, "I reckon there'll be enough,—I hope so." Then turning to Bro. Steambergen, who had come all the way from Zion that morning, and who had not yet succeeded in finding

a place at the minister's table, he said, taking him by the sleeve: "Just step round this way, Brother Steambergen, I will find you a place at our own table."

And they walked on to the farther end of the table, passing Bro. Fabby as they went, who, upon seeing their intention, spoke out in very fine humor, while holding a "pestle" of fried chicken in one hand and a square of gold-colored bread in the other, saying, with full mouth:—"No room here, brother;—all full," and he motioned with his hand down each side of the long table cloths. The minister moved on, with Brother Steambergen on his arm, trying here and there wherever there seemed to be any opening in the circle that surrounded the edibles, to find a way to the table.

"Come in here, Brother Steambergen: I think we can find"——

Here he was checked by a heavy-set woman who was rising from the table with her hands full, and who said, as she squared herself into the niche,

"You haint a gwine t' scrouge me out'n *my* place, air ye?" at the same time reaching back, after hastily depositing upon her left arm and hand the food contained in her right, and making a desperate grab at a tow-headed, barefoot urchin who stood back of her. She caught him by one shoulder and drew him hastily forward until he stood upon the edge of the cloth, remarking just as he arrived, and while shaking him into a steady position:—

"Eat yer dinner, you goose you, while you've got a chance!"

The boy fell to, beginning upon a finely frosted

pound-cake, and branching off on custard pie and honey after he had eaten half the cake.

"Will you allow this gentleman to come in here, sir,—if you please?" asked Mr. Ahvallah, as he was trying to work Bro. Steambergen in between two young men, one of whom was very tall and large boned, the other very short and delicate; but before he had finished the sentence, the tall one having just finished a slice of melon he had been eating, threw the rind behind him over his shoulder, and Mr. Steambergen's silk hat bounded away with the remnant. That gentleman picking up his hat as soon as he could get to it, remarked with some energy:

"Bro. Ahvallah, I thought you meant to take me to your wife's table;—I don't see'er?"

"*This* is our table," he answered with some hesitation, "but—Bro. Fabby and wife desired to spread their dinner with ours, and—and—they seem to have a good many friends!"

"*Mart*," screamed a female voice at this juncture, "knock Hence off'n that plate afore he breaks hit!"

The speaker snatched up a piece of chocolate cake, and continued addressing her unmarried brother, as she wedged a piece into her mouth without pausing in her remarks:

"Herr, give this t' An!—She's a standin' back thar, too bashful t' eat a bite!" and poking his side with the handle of her knife, she continued: "I thought yo' thought too much of 'er to 'low 'er to starve!" She then laughed as only a fat woman can. It had long been her heart's desire that Antoinette should think well of her brother, and that Mart—a long-chinned, sunken-eyed

blonde—should in due time aspire to unite himself with good blood, and be somebody, though her grounds for anticipation, could she have known it, were exceedingly small!

When the appetites of the cousins and uncles and their friends were partially appeased, they found it in their hearts to give back a little, so that the minister and family and friends found enough for all. Many jests and droll stories had passed, and even the hearty young men and women whose eyes were red from weeping, smiled in a sheepish way, and enjoyed their dinner with the rest. The children too, were pleased at this varying of the monotonous program, and were finding amusement with each other upon the green sward. Illustre was parading up and down with a new boy under her red parasol. The boy had succeeded in procuring a sandwich for both, while poor Robbie Taffyhorn, whom Illustre liked so well to play with when she could do no better, stood aloof with only a slice of the pumpkin pie she had given him.

Permelia Pewlett promptly paraded forward to meet Mrs. Fabby's brother Mart, and smilingly extended her hand to receive the bit of chocolate cake that had been designed for Antoinette; for had he not smiled at her several times during the exercises? Antoinette had said to her, giving her a little push, "she means you, Permelia; you go," as Mrs. Fabby motioned Antoinette to take the cake.

There was an eloquent sermon from Mr. Storms, in the afternoon. Mr. Storms was a gentleman of education and means, and lived in elegant style in a suburban residence near State College, a female institu-

tion of Athena. He was one of the board of directors, and mentioned the school whenever he preached. Athena was the foremost town in the state for educational advantages, several state schools being located within its limits. After the sermon, Bro. Storms spoke with warmth of the school, their efforts in behalf of the children of parents of that denomination, making an offer of liberal terms to those who were unable to pay full price down, and urging upon them the great importance of seeing to it that their children received that which could not be taken from them—a good education. All of which was innocently listened to on account of its novelty, but all of which nobody heeded, or so much as dreamed of making practical for themselves. Away back behind the big whiskers of Bro. Cobb he was quite unconsciously ruminating upon the thought that his children knew far more than he knew at their ages, and soberly assented within himself that they would be just as well off if they knew less.

Both before and after noon the services were attended with about the same results. When they had reached the close, and the people had collected their baskets, and children, Mr. Ahvallah's wagon could be seen coming slowly up from the bushes, where it was generally supposed Jerry had slept while taking care of the outfit. But upon seeing him come with the wagon, without having to be aroused, the minister changed his opinion somewhat, and was pleased that Jerry was becoming more diligent.

“You wasn't asleep this time, Jerry?” spoke Mr. Ahvallah, good-humoredly, when they had crossed the branch more than half-way home.

"No, sah," after a pause in which Jerry seemed to be turning some question over in his mind, he asked, with great effort: "What's pardom—onpardom, or somethin' that way?"

"What's 'unpardonable,' do you mean?" asked the minister.

"Yes sah. I b'leve so, sah, 'dat sounds mighty like it."

"Why, anything that is very wicked. But why did you ask?" again the minister questioned with considerable interest.

"Tha's a woman shuck me in te wagon, and tole me to go tell um t' pray fur 'unpodum'—unpedoble."

"To pray for *her*?" questioned he in some surprise.

"I don' no—I spec so."

"Did she tell you her name, Jerry?"

"No sah. She shuck me—I's skeered!" added the boy, smiling.

"What became of her?" asked Mr. A.

"Meetin' was a comin' out, and she run in the woods, towards the mill."

The minister pondered for some time, and then turning to his wife said to her: "I wonder who it could have been?"

Mrs. Ahvallah, whose intuition had already leaped at the conclusion, said: "I expect it is that woman!"

"What woman?" he asked, more puzzled than ever.

"Old Mrs. Bleevenevl, you know,—the witch, they call her."

"O," returned he, growing very thoughtful, "I can't see why she would do that way! Why don't she come to the meeting?"

"Why, I suppose she thinks the people would make remarks about her—and some would—you know."

He made no reply, meditated upon how awful a thing it must be to throw one's self away, and have no hope to lean upon!

It was upon the afternoon of the same day that a small boy accompanied by a tan colored dog was to be indistinctly seen, driving home the cows. He was very small looking and dusty, and the cows were large, but he and his dog managed to hurry the gentle, lazy creatures into a trot which left behind them a long line of thick dust which almost obscured the two little creatures that were stirring up the whole commotion:

"Seæk 'em, seek!" said theurchin, determined to make the cows pay for the trouble they had occasioned him. It was the job he had all afternoon been hiding to escape.

"Seæk 'em, seek 'em," he said, as he gathered energy to stoop for another clod to throw at them. He dragged his feet along to assist in raising the dust clouds that settled upon his clothes, his head, his ears and in his mouth that stood habitually open.

The clattering of a horse's hoofs were heard. The cows turned their clumsy bodies, and against the protest of both Hence and his dog, made a rush backward.

"Here, here! What's all this?" asked a rather heavy voice, as the horseman pulled his bridle and caused his horse to change almost instantly from a gallop to a rough trot, and then stop, just as the gentle cows began their retreat.

"Cows!" replied the boy as if with considerable effort, and after moving his under lip several times.

"I see it is; what are you doing with the cows? Hadn't you better let 'em alone?"

To this the boy made no reply, but only looked at him sullenly. As the horseman moved on, the dog set up a furious barking, which made the horse shy to the road-side.

"Seek 'em!" urged the boy in a tone low enough to escape the ears of the man. The dog sprang at the rider's feet when the man wheeled his horse round and galloped forward upon his journey. A folded paper fell to the ground. When the man had gone Hence picked it up, put it in his bosom, and then called to his dog and started for home.

He was again accosted by a squeaky voice from the road side. George Pewlett had been over to Mr. Ahvalah's to "borry some peaches" and had a dirty sack full of the luscious fruit thrown over his shoulder.

"Whad ju fine?" George asked, as he entered the road.

"Nothin,'" replied Hence.

"That ut yo' picked up?" persisted George, supposing Hence had forgotten about the folded paper, and taking the sack down as he spoke he opened the top, showed the rosy peaches, and then proposed giving him one if he would tell.

"Nothin,'" repeated Hence, attaching more value to the discovery as he thought about it, and then determined to keep it a secret until he could deliver it to his mother. Hence believed it must be a love letter that "would give *somebody* away."

"Yes you did, I seed you!"

"Shet your mouth," returned Hence, shutting his

own mouth after this in token of his positive attitude and determination to impart nothing.

“I’ll give yo’ two peaches, ef yo’ll tell?”

“Give um here then,” said Hence, holding out his hands and looking at George.

The boy took two peaches from the sack, handed them to Hence and then waited in good faith for the bit of information. But Hence quietly set to eating the peaches—taking a bite first from one and then from the other, without so much as looking at George, or making any sign of fulfilling his agreement.

George waited until the peaches had disappeared, and then asked:

“Now let me see ‘ut yo’ found?”

“Humph—eh!” responded Hence, through his nose, while keeping his lips firmly closed until he had munch-ed the last morsel of peach. George showed signs of anger, and began urging him, while hot tears rolled down among the freckles on his cheeks.

“You said ju’d tell; you tole a lie—you”—

“Seek ‘em Bose,” was Hence’s only rejoinder. At this the dog sprang towards him snorting and threatening when George instantly left his sack of peaches and sprang up the nearest tree.

The cows, who seemed to have been forgotten, thinking they might as well go home, had moved on in that direction; and the dog undecided whether to follow the cows—which seemed his duty—or whether to linger and await further orders from his master, decided to do the latter, and now stood barking at the foot of the tree; and Hence, without change of countenance, but taking advantage of the occasion stood quietly se-

lecting and eating the best peaches George's sack contained.

"I'll tell mother, shore!" George began, from his place in the tree.

"She'll make your daddy whip you shore!"

"I aint afeard o' *her*. She's a sow cat," replied Hence, squinting his eye and looking up defiantly. When he noticed that George was crying and rubbing his eyes with his fists he added:

"'N yo'r a'nother!—an' I heard Lusty say ut you wus!"

"You never!" came a quick retort. She sent me 'er best respects by pap, she did, an' so did 'Vangel;—pap said so!" and he drew his sleeve across his eyes and nose and mouth which all seemed to have been shedding tears in condolence of each other.

"Shame-e, shame-e!" said Hence, and he threw a peach at the head in the tree. He then proceeded to fill his pockets and shirt-waist with peaches, saying as he and the dog started slowly homeward.—

"Good bye, gal-boy-cry-baby. Take your old wormy peaches to your old mother, me un Bose's got all th' good uns."

At the cross-roads Hence met Mr. Bourd as he was returning home after the close of the dinner-on-the-ground-meeting; and as Hence was anxious to discover what the note contained, he took it from his bosom, showed it to Mr. Bourd, and telling him he had found it on the ground, requested him to read it. Mr. Bourd took his glasses from his pocket, and, after much effort, succeeded in deciphering the contents of the paper.

"Let me 'ave hit, sonny, will you?"

“Hence made no reply, and Silas Bourd added:  
‘I’ll fetch hit over to your house to-night, ef you  
will.’”

Partly through respect to Mr. Bourd and partly because he did not know how to refuse, he allowed Mr. Bourd to continue his journey with the paper in his possession.



## CHAPTER XV.

## THE OLD LIBRARY AND THE SKETCHES. RETROSPECT.

It was early in the morning while Mr. Ahvallah was rearranging a row of valuable books in the old book case that formed a part of the building, that Evangel quietly entered, and stationed herself by his side. Her father wore a thoughtful look, while he overhauled a number of volumes in leather to see whether or not all went well with his treasures. He scanned the titles upon the backs, felt the solid weight of the books and meditated upon the solidity of their contents. They all treated of religious subjects.

There were stacks of encyclopedias, concordances, commentaries, and biographies of distinguished Christians and the Christian martyrs. "Baxter's Saint's Rest;" "Lady Huntington and her friends;" "Geo. Whitfield;" the "Dodridges" and "Wesleys;" "Bunyon's Pilgrims Progress;" "Milton's Paradise Lost;" "Somebody's Call to the Unconverted," and many more.

Evangel had been noticing the changing emotions of his face when his brows suddenly contracted into a frown, upon one of the shelves he had discovered a worldly volume! He examined the title-page, glanced at the author's name, and then hastily closed the book with a characteristic "Humph!" of disapproval, and placed it to one side as if to wash his hands of an offense. It was the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, some one had loaned Mrs. Ahvallah with praises of its merits.

“What is my old head thinking about now?” said her father as he looked down at the waiting figure at his side.

Pleased to have attracted attention so soon she at once replied:

“Why Fa, I would like for you to get me a new dress.” Then, instantly remembering what an enormous thing she had asked, and at the same time remembering to have heard him speak to her mother of being in debt, she added before he could have time to reply,—“when you get out of debt, Fa.” At this her father smoothed his whiskers and looked down at her. He then moistened his lips a bit to keep off a smile, and asked:

“How much does it take to make you a dress. Honey?”

“Four yards—about four,” she answered, holding her breath and wishing it had been a yard less she had asked for; four yards seemed a great deal after she had said it.

“What kind of goods shall it be?” her father asked as he took down another book.

This last act had the appearance of not being so deeply in earnest as she had warmly hoped, and his interest seemed indeed flagging.

“Calico, I reckon,” said his little daughter as she looked up very earnestly into her father’s eyes that were as earnestly scanning the books one after another. But he presently asked:

“Hem?” and Evangel repeated: “Calico, I reckon.”

At this her father smiled, looked down at her, rub-

bed his nose a little and then said:

“Don’t you think you’d rather have a *fustian*?”

“I don’t know,—any kind would do,” she replied hopefully.

“I think you’d better have a fustian,” repeated her father.”

She again began to despair of getting a new dress, but thought it best at present not to agitate the subject further. So she did not speak, but stood hoping he might not forget to tell her whether or not she might hope.

Just at this moment of silent expectation, her father took down a small book neatly bound in dark cloth, and opening it, moved back a little. Then he flipped all the leaves through with his thumb, frowned again, and said with more than usual emphasis:

“Humph, humph, humph!”—lowering his tone a little each time. Turning his head to one side as he often did in the pulpit when explaining a doctrinal point, and with an injured look he stooped down and pointed Evangel to a page full of uncouth sketches.

There before her eyes were the familiar drawings, caricatures of people, and pictures of the devil; homely women among the church-members; Bro. Pewlett and Sister Railsbach; dogs, horses, boys, and a host of other things upon blank leaves and margins alike were sketches filled in, grotesque, pleasing, burlesque, large and small.

The child’s face burned as she looked at them. They looked so strangely out of place in his hand! The

thought that she had wounded her father made her lower her head, and the idea of improper conduct in making the sketches now first occurred to her.

At length the burning silence was broken and her father said, holding the book out:

“That’s my Elijah The Tishbite,—ruined! It isn’t worth anything to me!” Both their eyes were riveted upon the sketches.

She wondered how she happened to get her eyes fastened upon the most unpleasant drawing there, Mr. Pewlett, whose striking likeness only helped her father in his silent but scathing rebuke! She remembered when she had made the first tiny face upon one of the fly-leaves, and how she afterwards added another, when there was no objection offered, and several others the next time she found occasion to interview the book, and so on, until the whole compilation of sketches was complete. When there was no more space left and it was closed up and the book returned to the library, and the sketches forgotten.

She knew her father understood all about it, and without replying to his question looked up at him, and then slowly withdrew her eyes letting her glance fall very sorrowfully off in the corner of the room. She almost hoped he would say he must punish her. She was very sorry it had happened; not because the book had been injured,—there were plenty of books,—but because she had thus brought coldness between her father and herself, and indefinitely postponed the new dress.

Some moments passed in silence. The question was not repeated, and Evangel had not replied.

“I will *give you* this book, Evangel, I will make you a present of it. It is of no more value to me, whatever!”

He handed it to her as he spoke, and she slowly took it, but did not hesitate to do so. She knew this was her punishment, and submitted very solemnly and obediently!

If he had only punished or rebuked her openly, so she could have found opportunity to show how sorry she was, it would have been easier. The book, under other circumstances, would have been thankfully received: for though books with solid pages were plentiful enough, books, on the other hand, that contained bits of story, broken by questions and answers suggestive of variety and some dights of fancy, were rare enough.

“Elijah The Tishbite” contained bits of narrative relating to the exploits of that gentlemen, which were spicy and interesting to Evangel.

The Story of the Woman of Zarephath gathering a few dry sticks to cook her last meal with, that she and her son might eat it and die; and how they were saved from such a tragical end by the good Elijah who, by thinking in a certain way in prayer could make the meal increase and the oil meet her demands whenever she needed them,—even long after Elijah had gone upon his mission into Samaria,—were things deeply interesting to her.

“For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth.” (I Ki., XVII:14.)

All things are miraculous, or, rather, the miraculous is natural. By application of implements, and increment wheat is grown, gathering by slow process its needs from the elements in due and proper proportions, until day by day it ripens and is ready for the harvesting and preparing into food. The bread Elijah made went through the same process exactly, only accomplishing by the direct energy of the Word in a moment or two all that the results of months would produce by Nature's slow unfolding.

When the Law that governs nature and miracle are understood, the toil with tools, and the "long results of time", will give place to a higher and truer method.

"Martha, Martha! thou art troubled and careful about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen *that good part* which shall not be taken away."

To mind there are no mysteries. In Righteousness is found the golden thread that unravels day by day and reveals the truth that what seemed mystery, or miracle, is *natural* and in perfect accord with Truth.

A few days passed, and found our heroine walking about the favorite haunts in a pretty new "fustian" dress, and carrying a small black-back book under her arm. She and Illustre had been walking in the garden, but the sudden appearance of a torn cap brim just above the paling, and an apologetic grin beneath the brim, made her decide to make old Whipstock a call, and she was soon making calisthenic rounds upon the long pole and meditating after her usual fashion, while Illustre busied herself by picking posies for the boy.



There was no burden upon Evangel. She was as careless of care as were the weeds in the edges of the fields, when a line of philosophy sprang to the surface of her thinking; and before she had comprehended the extent of the mental operation, it had like a gilded lasso, caught up her reasoning faculties with the half-challenging proposition:—

“I KNOW THAT I AM.”

After a moment of thoughtful silence, the question was asked, “Can you prove it?”

It was physical consciousness propounding to reasoning consciousness:—“You who believe in demonstrable proofs.”

After another minute of impressive silence, Reason made answer,

‘I must be something, since I cannot be nothing! But, to prove it to you or to attempt to prove it to intuitive consciousness would be unnecessary.’

‘Then prove it for yourself’, the challenging voice continued.

At this the intellect shut off its lesser lights, stopped the wheels of its material mechanism, closed the outer doors, and withdrawing into the inner chamber of the Secret place of the Most High *listened* to the voice of the inner consciousness. Around the Intuitive Faculty they all then circled in a spiral path, some nearer, some more remote, yet all influenced by the glory of the light and harmony of the music that thrilled and attuned all the faculties as they listened to the ‘Still Small Voice’.

The Intuitive consciousness is the point of touch where man meets God and becomes confluent with the mind of the Infinite.

It is the gateway through the last sense limit where all lines are dissolved, and the soul looks beyond the circumscribed. It is the putting aside of form and limit, while reasoning back unto the Real Self, where even reason gives way as the soul gazes upon the Infinite.

The paths leading into this gateway are the *ideals of perfectness*.

Hungering and thirsting after Righteousness and wisdom and holding firmly to the highest ideals and thereby abiding in the radiant way, is sure to lead unto this gateway.

The Intuition is the faculty of the human soul that

has never been closed to the Infinite. It is the Light that lighteth every one that cometh into the bonds of limitation of ideas. A flood of Light ever flows in through this window into the soul, so that when the individual looks steadfastly that way, he exclaims: "I SEE AND KNOW."

Here proof is impossible and unnecessary. Attempts to prove it to the outer darkness would be futile; for to *know* one must himself learn of God, and wisdom thus developed, though mathematically accurate, cannot be proved to one who knows not experimentally, the nature of Truth.

Wisdom unto salvation is gained at that point of progress where the human will becomes confluent with the universal when there is a continual inbreathing of the Infinite. This is the point where the sense-form may be illumined out of the lines of limitation, and may also have power to return. *Anything* is formed by drawing lines. The limited idea is symbolized in form-things. A cubic block is formed by drawing lines and extending them into surfaces and surfaces into solids, after the pattern of a cube already finished in idea.

Some make this limitation or external form, a wall of separateness between God and man, spirit and matter; but those who are able to look beyond the marks may understand how God and man are one; how all lines and all limits are subject to the will of mind and may be made to come and go, like faithful servants.

The broadening of ideas and the dispelling of limiting lines results in transfiguration.

The more material a man is, the denser are his lines of limit, the shorter his range of vision, and the greater

the imagined magnitude and distance from the Universal.

But to hold in thought only true ideals. Right, Beauty, Wisdom, will finally wash away the beliefs in antagonism, thus widening the limits and reducing distance from God. These true ideals will so thin and illumine the walls of separation as to let in the light all the time.

Whatever things are true, good, lovely, or are of good report, we are to *think upon*, even when a great many contrary seeming conditions show both.

For instance: If I have a neighbor who is an inebriate, and I hear he is a drunkard, and also hear that he is a very charitable man, or kind-hearted in some way, why, I must not dwell in thought upon his drunkenness at all, but upon the other qualities.

This will help him to reform! It is judging him *in righteousness*—a splendid thing to do at all times.

“I KNOW THAT I AM,” uttered Evangel mentally, as she rested against the pole where she had been practicing calisthenics. She was looking out through the door at the sky, and had grown very quiet as her thoughts ran on.

“But, do I know anything else? What if the rest is a dream of mine, the people I see only a vision, or image of myself,—not really people, but products of my thought!”

“The forest and sky, and earth—Fa. and Ma, and even the air, and—the space above the air—nothing, nothing, but myself,—nothing at all but *me!*”

“Then what am I, and how came I here, and what came I for? Who will answer me? *I will think.*” This thought oppresses!

*I think*, and I know I think; and I know I am the thing about which I think, and know my mind is the thing that thinks.

Evangel had gone so far in her reasoning as to recognize herself as both the subject and object of Consciousness, the active ego made up of Intuitive consciousness, reasoning consciousness and perceptive consciousness, without ever having heard of such things, when the sound of her mother's voice roused her from her reverie.

"Evangel, Evangel, where *are* you? Get off o' that pole this minute, and come to me."

"O, I forgot," said she to herself, as she left the rustic gymnasium and hurried out. As she did so she handed Whipstock the bundle of oats she had procured, smoothed back the bunch of black hair hanging between the horse's honest eyes, lovingly patted the submissive black face, and then skipped out at the door.

She scaled the stake-and-rider fence back of the lot, and began gathering the dry sticks her mother had sent her for half an hour ago. Evangel's hands were supple and strong and used to work about the house, and in the field and garden too. To-day she worked mechanically, and set her thought upon other things. She had heard voices in conversation for some minutes, but was so deeply engrossed in reverie it was some time before she became conscious of it. George Pewlett had gathered some flowers and was offering them to Illustre:

"You may have these, ef you 'll have me." he said, as he increased his habitual grin.

"*You* belong t' Evangel," she replied blushing.

"No I don't norther! I don't like her, I like *you*."

“No you don’t.”

“Yep.” He waited a while and again offered her the bouquet, saying, “Pap likes her, an’ I love you. Here, take um.”

Illustre received the flowers and the boy took his seat beside her. Evangel had witnessed it, but said nothing, and she was glad to have anything stand between her and the boy about whom she had been teased so much. She continued collecting the wood, and enjoying the beautiful things nature displayed on every hand. The distant blue, the song of the bird and insect, the airs that tuned sweet nature’s keys, and the light that tinted the flowers and made them fragrant.

But to-day there had crept in with memory a little shadow. Norman, her darling brother, had gone away, mysteriously and sadly, and had never returned! They had told her he *could* not, that she could never more see him!

A rebellious feeling rose in her mind, and suggested: “*My nice, pretty brother* ought to be here alive and well. It is somebody’s *mistake!*”

Evangel was the embodiment of perfect health. To her it was a joy to breathe, to move, to think and to behold. To the ordinary observer the events of the moment obscure all finer emotions, and the ideals of “to-morrow” fade into dusty airs when subjected to the common-place smoke and smell of the battlefield of “to-day”. But to the natural child, all times are acceptable, and the sweet present is the moment of realization. In one sense to-morrow never arrives: but whether it does or does not, it is forever always coming; and the porter standing at Expectation’s door sees the meta-

morphasis as he swings the mystic gate day after day, calling that not not yet ushered in "to-morrow", and the one just in "to-day".

"To-day," the nature of Truth is forever manifesting, and the Kingdom of Harmony forever at hand, whether the phantom of to-morrow ever arrives or not. Man ever has upon Life's current a huge ship laden with mighty possibilities for each day as it comes.

TO BE ONCE,  
IS TO BE FOREVER.

Once in life man *cannot* escape it: for *Life cannot be broken nor destroyed!* Symbols change, but Substance remains intact.

The tangled heap of brush once stacked high, but now settling low into sober decline, was now the subject of Evangel's pleasing comment. She thought she would like to sketch it, with its broad, cool shadows underneath stretches of tangled sticks upon whose bark were lichens and splashes of white which time had penciled with here and there touches of "witch-butter" and red wafer on the stems.

How well the reds and blues and tans harmonize. Nature always harmonizes her colors unless interrupted by art, making rhythm in her deep shadows and neutrals and chiaroscuro. Over such a back-ground, these smaller sticks and stems of wood now threw threads of intersecting high-lights, warm and many colored

Suddenly some dry sticks were heard breaking not far away as some boy's bare-foot stealthily pressed them down.

Evangel started from her reverie and looked up. Hence Fabby was standing near her. She did not speak

as the boy was usually averse to talking, but looked at him questioningly.

After a few moments of unmoved silence Hence raised and then lowered his under lip several times and Evangel waited while he framed the words:—

“Mother’s found out who done ut!”

“Did what, Hence?” asked Evangel, surprised that he had spoken so freely.

“It us Arthur Bleeveevl what shot John Rawham!”

“What?”

“I found the paper he dropped arter he’d done ut! I give it t’ Bourd, un Bourd give ut t’ mother, an I heard um a talkin.” said Hence, leaving off the titles of names after the fashion of his mother.

“They are mistaken,” said Evangel, turning to go to the house. “He didn’t do it, Hence, it was some one else.”

The boy said no more, and Evangel left him gazing after her, and breathing through his mouth.

“Call Jerry and tell him to fix the fire”, said her mother upon her return.

The child complied and then asked:

“Where’s the slate ma?”

“I don’t know:—Miss Amanda and her father have just come and I expect they are hungry. It is almost supper-time.—I think the slate is on the mantle-piece in the big room.”

A black, much-scratched old slate! The children all sketched, or “marked” as the Fabby Creek children denominated it.

This slate had been the property of the eldest child, a brother, who had been the first in his classes, the first

in his home duties and the first to depart the material form through catastrophe caused by the pressure of false beliefs of the race.

Her thoughts ran back to a time—only a few years ago—when this brother came home from school one day with a flush upon his pretty, intellectual face, and a tired look about his clear, deep hazel eyes. In reply to the anxious inquiry of the father—who in addition to his other duties conducted a private school—he said his forehead pained him:

“But I knew all my lessons, didn’t I pa?” he said.

“Yes Honey,” his father replied with anxiety in his voice, “you always know your lessons.” There was a look of loving pride in his eyes as he said to the mother,

“If the pupils were all as apt and as diligent as Norman, it would be a pleasure to teach.”

“I didn’t have to do but one problem on my slate, in all that big lot of mental solutions Fa gave us,” continued the boy.

“Yes,” said the mother, “I remember.”

“Well, I know that hard one by heart now,” he said; “see, ‘If 3-4 of 6-7 of a ton of ore cost \$2 2-5, how much will 5-7 of a ton cost?’” He then went on with the solution with unusual energy, and with a feverish glow upon the usually calm, self-possessed young face:

“If 3-4 of 6-7 of a ton costs \$2 2-5, one ton will cost 28 times (3-4 of 6-7 is 18-28, you know,) he continued in a lower tone, “will cost 28 times 1-18 of 2 2-5-15-5 12-5 or, 12-5x28-18; and 5-7 of 6 tons will equal 30-7 tons, will cost 30-7 times 28-18 of \$12.5 which will be \$16.”

He finished the solution without a break and looked at his mother while a bright smile of anticipated ap-

proval lighted his perfect features.

“It’s all right now. I’ll never forget that solution! I don’t know what in the world made me so bothered to-day:—it’s not hard!”

“Come to supper. Honey, I expect you are hungry,” his mother said, placing her arm lovingly round his neck, as if to lead him out.

But he had ‘run almost all the way from home, with some boys and wasn’t hungry a bit,” he said. At this the father looked up anxiously, saying, aside to the mother that Norman was not well:—that he had seemed a little slow in recitation and he had urged him up a little, and was so sorry, for he had not noticed his indisposition. He did not really need urging he was so prompt usually, “but some of the other pupils need it so much, I thought I would speak to him instead upon this occasion.”

The parents were both very apprehensive, but tried to hope he would feel better the next day.

Evangel recalled the time later on when the owner of the slate very pale and tired-looking, lay upon the bed, in that very room. And she remembered another day, after the doctor had made many visits, and her darling brother had grown gradually weaker, a good old woman come,—it was Granny Good—and took her hand and led her away saying, very gently:

“You must come along with granny:—Brother is very sick and there musn’t be no noise.” Granny said she would take good care of her, and tell her pretty tales and let her play in the orchard, or anywhere she pleased. She would give her apples and a “case-knife” to eat them with. So, in full faith of Granny’s good-

ness, and dreaming vaguely of the "case-knife", (she had supposed it had a pearl-handle and would open and shut), she trudged along towards Old-Mill cottage.

The gray eyes of that baby upon that nofable day, clothed many a naked object in fanciful garments of her own creating. How balmy and lovely everything was!

Truly "every prospect pleaseth", but the preachers add that "only man is vile!" (It is surely time they had grown above being vile, or had changed a doctrine that had so long failed to regenerate them!)

There is no loss. All beauty she embalmed in the sweet ointments of pure thinking and stored away in a mind as hallowed as the Prototype whose likeness she expressed. "Believeth all things, hopeth all things, suffereth all things, and is kind"—expresses the beautiful equipoise to which men and women must attain.

It had been one of the greatest events of her life. She was then three years and a half old, and could step over the low gap into the old orchard, whenever she pleased.

Granny seemed to forget about the case-knife, but the child had thought of it many times, and wondered every day when it would develop. And when she reminded granny of her promise, she was greatly surprised upon being informed that green apples made little girls sick! But at dinner there were some fresh pies, fried chicken, and some crisp, brown fish fresh from the mill pond. And when Father Good closed his gray-lashed, dark eyes, and asked "the blessing," she forgot the case knife in making a study of his physiognomy:

In a kind of explosive way, he began, "OH, LORD! we thank you for this good dinner."

He was very sincere, but concluded without the "amen." He was so very uncouth looking with his gray hair pressed down about his forehead just as his hat had left it, and the corner of a coarse cotton collar, beneath his chin that much needed shaving, the little inspector was at first much afraid of him. And then his sharp eyes looked fiercely out from under shaggy brows, that made him appear quite awful to the little girl who was used to seeing her father with trimmed hair thrown gracefully back from a high white forehead! But father Good ignored all formalities, even to the neglect of comb or brush. Immediately after the close of the "blessing", the old man turned to his wife and in a brusque tone said:

"That darned fool needs 'er neck broke!"

In utter consternation at the strange language, Evangel removed her eyes from him for the first time after sitting down at the table, and looked at his wife. Granny said nothing, but turned her glasses upon him and waited for further explanation.

"That critter I traded Fingertail fur's been at 'er devilment agin!—broke in the oat-patch and tramped it down—hit'll be fit fur nuthin', 'n' u'll have t' be cut uth t' scythe, un' half of it u'll be obleeged t' be lifted afore it's fit!"

Granny Good listened quite composedly, and the little visitor only wondered, until he said, abruptly, as he turned towards her, (she had been vainly trying to manage a chicken wing by use of the knife and fork:)

"Jest take yer chicken in yer fingers". She at once

did so, pleased at the facility and freedom it gave her.

Several days after this, Mrs. Good brushed her hair, adjusted a neckerchief and placed a clean white cap upon her own head; and again taking Evangel by the hand, led her through the orchard and along the very quiet path leading by the grave-yard and its neglected slabs and grass, then on through the pasture with scent of young hickory and oak and ash leaves, frazzled hazel tassels and flowers.

Evangel could not recollect that any word had been spoken until after they had crossed the "branch," a little stream that ran lazily along between the two farms, when a flock of geese upon the opposite hill, stopped picking grass, raised their heads, spread their big white wings and with a squawking and screaming and shouting ran up the hill. Believing it a manifestation of joy at her return home, and carrying a conviction in her breast that her visit could not be completed until she had seen the wonderful "case-knife," Evangel exclaimed:

"You needn't be so glad, cause I'm going back again."

And now as the sketch upon the slate developed very slowly indeed, as her reminiscence ran on, she could not recall whether she returned with Granny or not; but she did remember how shocked she became when she saw how changed her brother was!

The horrid medicines had blackened his pretty mouth and tongue and teeth and he was very pale and thin!

She cried when her brother did not recognize her—it was not like him! But his look was so hopeless and

helpless! He had begged for water in a feeble way that made her beg her mother to give it him,—which only made her mother cry. Then she told him the *doctor said* they must not give him a drop! At this, he turned his head away and would have cried, but there were no tears!

“If I had it over again, I would give him water in spite of them and all the doctors!” she indignantly exclaimed.

He had looked at her so pleadingly, when she had begged her mother to give him some water, but she could not forget his look when her mother had said: “What *shall* I do, Mr. Ahvallah, the child is burning up with fever?” and her father replied, “I am afraid it won’t do, the Doctor strictly forbade it”—and then, puzzled at the look Norman gave, he added, turning to him, and gently placing his fingers on his pale cheek.

“Son, can’t you wait till the Doctor comes?”

A slight gleam of hope flitted across his features, as he turned his eyes toward them.

In an hour or two the Doctor came and sat down by the bed, examined the patient’s tongue and felt his pulse. Taking his saddle-bags across his knees he opened one of the pockets, selected a small vial filled with brown powder and one filled with white, and after mixing the latter in a spoon-ful of elm-bark water, offered it to her sick brother.

He took it unhesitatingly, and swallowed it with almost a relish.

A drop of the liquid spilled upon his breast, and when the feeble fingers found it, he lifted that also to his lips and licked it off!

## CHAPTER XVI.

## EVANGEL'S RETROSPECT CONTINUED.

"My eyes make pictures when they are shut.  
I see a fountain large and fair,  
A willow, and a ruined hut."

*Coleridge.*

Evangel went on to recall how Dr. Khillus had taken several small bottles from the square, black, saddle-pocket, and measured out the powders upon the point of a small, pearl-handle knife. Calling for a plate and some flour, he turned the former over upon his lap and made the medicine up into balls. He then took some other kind of powder from other bottles and measured it into square bits of white paper, and folded it like the letter Z.

Everything was done in strict observance of the rules of Ante-lucum college, from which Dr. Khillus had graduated.

"One poudah must be given every houah, in the elm-watah," he began in his soft, genteel voice, "the white poudahs in syrup every other houah, until it acts freely. The brown poudah must be given if the patient becomes very restless, and the pills I gave you yesterday, continued, alternating with the white poudah. Give spoonfull of toddy if he should show signs of weakness;—but by all means don't let him have a drop of watah till after the white poudah acts, or,—wait till I come again."

Upon hearing this the hopeless look had come back into the child's face, and he turned his beautiful eyes towards his mother with a look in them that said, "I *beg* you to give me one little drink of water before I burn up of thirst!"

But the tender, loving mother sat still, only turning her face away to hide the tears. The Dr. buckled down his saddle-pockets, pulled on his gauntlets, and softly muttering something about calling tomorrow moved towards the door. Mr. Ahvallah had followed him and when outside asked apprehensively:

"Doctor, what do you think of the case?"

"Very critical indeed sah, very critical!" the doctor replied.

"You have not given Norman up?" he asked in an alarmed tone.

This minister who every day prayed for the preservation of his family, his church, the government and the whole world, and who weekly taught his flock that God was ruler of the universe and Father of us all, and that as such he surely heard the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous,—this man stood in awe before the opinion of the priest of other gods, and sought the aid of material medicine to heal his child. He had taught his churches that God only must be worshiped, that image worship was an abomination since man is commanded:

"Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him *only*." He had been guarded in all his actions—keeping the whole Law lest breaking one he might be found guilty of all!

But he had now unconsciously let his fears open the door of that most subtle and unsuspected of all the

"beasts of the field,"—a belief in some other power than God!

He stood unnerved in the presence of the man who gave what he did not take, but who carried the household images with him nominally to heal the sick. "If any be sick among you, let them pray" did not seem substantial enough. And so that other, the idolized and tenderly loved object of his highest hopes had been surrendered and now lay helpless and emaciated, the manifestation of fear, and of belief in evil equal with good!

The doctor replied to the minister's last question in a hesitating manner:

"Well, no, but you will have to be very careful. Don't let him eat anything and see that they give him no watah. The medicine will not admit of that at present. If his mouth should get very dry, moisten it a little with a sponge dipped in elm-bawk watah."

"Dr.," began Mr. Ahvallah, as if turning over some plan in his mind, "do you think it advisable to send for any other physician?"

"I think not—but do as you like, howevah," he replied, looking away, "if you should get Dr. Alligh he would prescribe just what I am giving—he is an Alopah, and graduated at Ante-lucum. Give him good nursing, much depends on that, you know."

"Father Good is to sit up with us tonight," returned the minister.

"I'd rather you'd have the old lady," he interrupted.

"Why, they say the old gentleman makes a fine nurse, and then, Sister Good was up last night," replied Mr. Ahvallah, "and besides she is taking care of Evangel."

"Ten to one he will neglect the medicine,—you know he won't take it himself—never took a drop in his life, he told me!" the doctor replied.

"If you are afraid he might make some mistake, I would rather find some one else. The neighbors have been exceedingly kind. I have not slept at night for more than a week and his mother is worn out; she won't go to sleep unless I am with Norman, no matter who is here." responded the minister.

"That will do if one of you sit with him," replied the doctor, turning to go. A new thought seemed at this moment to cross Mr. Ahvallah's mind and he said:

"Pray with us doctor, that he may recover, will you?"

"I will do what I can," said the Doctor, a little abashed at the mention of prayer, and after shaking hands with the minister, mounted his horse and rode away.

Retrospect is a rapid traveler, and Evangel, sitting upon the floor in the big room with the unfinished sketch upon the old slate before her, recalled the incidents of this sad event in far less time than it took Dr. Khillus to reach his home, a distance of two miles and a half, although his horse was swift of foot and thoroughly knew every step of the road.

Evangel had stood by her brother to see whether the drink of water would be forth-coming when the doctor had disappeared. As her father sat down by the bed the little sufferer, tormented more with burning thirst than with anything else, held out a white hand to him and said: "Pa, give me just a little drink?"

But he turned away his head and so hid the unspeakable longing in his great bright eyes at hearing the first words of her father's reply,—

“My *dear boy*, your father wants to give it to you, so bad, so bad! but the Doctor charged me the last thing to be very careful until this medicine acts. He said you could then have a little. I'm *afraid to* do it, now, Honey?”

He smoothed his hand lovingly over the white forehead and added:

“Try not to think about it if possible and see if you can't sleep a little.”

It must have been the evening of the same day, that a burly, grizzled man with a cane, and a hat covered with meal, came over the stile-blocks and up to the big room door at Oak House.

“Well, how's the boy?” asked he, as the minister opened the door. He was invited in and then said:

“Well, the Dr. says he don't think he's any better: will you have a chair by the bed?”

The old man took the chair offered him, and gave a long look at the patient, and then said in his blunt way:

“Still stuffin' medicine down 'im?”

“Yes,” replied Mr. Ahvallah with a sigh, “he is taking several kinds of medicine: the Dr. thinks of changing some of it, and giving something else in its place, to-morrow or next day:—according to the way he seems.”

“It ud do a deal more good in the fire! He's gettin' too much of the mortal stuff!” replied Father Good, for the rough man was he.

“I think we'd better go strictly according to the

Dr's. directions. I'm afraid to change it myself, for the present, any way. He says if what he is giving him won't help him, nothing will."

It was late that night before the parents could be persuaded to leave the bedside. The mother, utterly exhausted was persuaded to rest a while upon the sofa, with the promise that they would awaken her if Norman should stir, or seem to need her. Mr. Ahvallah was persuaded by the old man to take the large chair and rest a little, with the same promise to him if he were needed.

He took the chair, after twice going over with great care the directions for giving the pills and powders and toddies and moistenings, etc., and was soon in a deep sleep.

The old man took the child's wrist and fluttering pulse into his hand, when the large dark eyes turned wistfully towards his face and the dry lips said:

"Can't you let me have a little water?"

"Humph?" he asked, a little startled at the unexpected request, but he followed it quickly with the remark:

"Ef ye want it, yes; of course ye can; a leetle 'll be good fur ye!"

And Father Good just "fetched hit in the gourd," as he told his wife afterwards, and let him him have a good drink of cold water, while he gently raised the head as he placed the water to the child's lips. Norman waited a little btween draughts, as if to enjoy it a long while, and then, as he replaced his head upon the pillow the boy looked his kindest thanks and drew two or three good breaths as if he felt much better.

He soon slept, looking very satisfied and rested.

The tired parents slept and Father Good remained very quiet.

He had made up his mind that he would not wake the child to give him the "mortal stuff", but would let him have his nap out.

"The Lord knows hit's the best thing to do," he muttered, "and I can't give it when he's asleep, that's one thing shore." And then he further soliloquised:

"Wh..t 's 'medicine' anyhow, more'n idols? Why don't they git down on thar knees afore thar maker,—they won't find no power no where's else; I've ben coured aver time yit, without the stuff. The *Lord* done it for me, an' He kin do it again'."

He was much warmed up by these thoughts, and encouraged to depend alone upon God.

He continued thus for two hours—meditating upon the goodness and justice and completeness of God, and then began:

"Now Lord, I have opened the door in my old heart to let you in, and here ye air, jest as ye was afore I opened it! My Father, make this fine little fellow well again?—*I know you will do it!*" His eyes were closed: he was saying a'll this silently, just in his own thought. He then added, very fervently but mentally,

"We thank Thee, O Father of us all, that thou hast heard me." And the effectual, fervent prayer was ended. He turned towards the child, with his heart full of faith and love; he noticed that he was very pale and still.

A worldly thought took possession of him; a fear-wave of race-belief in other power than God. Had he

done a fatal thing in giving the sick child water? But it was only for a moment. "Not so", he said. He at once remembered that God was really Omnipotent, and muttered aloud, "Them that trust in the Lord shall *never* be confounded!" and in this unconscious resistance in temptation, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Right Word, divided asunder the imagination of evil from the imagination of good, so that the former was put to flight and the latter prevailed that night.

Again he took up the delicate wrist which yielded so helplessly, and examined the pulse. The fluttering, and the heat were gone, and the temperature reduced to nearly that of his own. The breathing, now scarcely perceptible, was regular and even; but his face was white and the eyelids closed, showing a dark line of lashes as the only contrast from the still whiteness, made it all look very suggestive of the human face after the individual life had deserted it. But still the old man held faithfully that such a thing could not be, for had not his faith amounted to more than any mustard seed?

"Sink or swim," said father Good with mental emphasis. "by it I will *stand!*"

The clock upon the mantle-piece struck mid-night. The sleeper on the sofa roused, sprang to her feet, and glancing a look at the bed and then at the clock concluded that she had overslept the proper time, advanced towards where her child, lay saying:

"Why *didn't* you wake me! Is it possible I've slept so long?" For the first time she had noticed the altered look in Norman's face, and called sharply to her husband who still slept in the chair. He sprang up at

the sound of her voice, and looking confused and apprehensive went towards the bed.

"I'm afraid Normon is worse! O. why *did* we ever shut our eyes? What had we better do?—give 'im a toddy?" said Mrs. Ahvallah as she reached for the glass.

"No, no!" interrupted the old man, who had risen and walked between her and the bed. "He's restin' very well, and 'll take a turn for the better, 'n' git well ef you'll let 'im alone!"

"Do you think so?" said the husband, leaning over the bed and looking steadily at the face. He suddenly stooped lower, placed his ear to the child's breast and listened very attentively. When he raised his head his face showed no sign of encouragement, and Mrs. Ahvallah clasped her hands and fell upon her knees beside the bed saying in agonized tones:

"Don't tell me he is gone!—I can't endure it! Do something for him! Send Jerry after Dr. Khillus!—Oh, do"——

"Hebe, calm yourself. Don't give way so. I hope it is only the crisis. The Doctor thought the crisis would occur yesterday or today. I do pray that may now be the case." replied the husband.

The mother was bending over the bed and speaking very gently, while her voice trembled with anxiety:

"Norman!—Darling child! Are you awake, Honey?" She had placed her hand upon his forehead and cheeks, and though receiving no reply to her question she looked up with some hope in her eyes, saying: "He is warm and his flesh is moist!"

"Thank the Lord!" responded her husband, fervently.

The old man could have told them all this and have saved them from so much disturbance if he could have secured a hearing. He was sorry they had aroused so soon and feared they might do more harm than good.

But the two would not rest until they had sent Jerry after Bro. Cobb, who, upon his arrival, pronounced Norman "certainly going." He too became alarmed, not at the doubtful condition of his neighbor's child, but for fear the fever might be contagious, and saying his own folks were not at all well, he soon took his leave. The three then took up an unbroken watch by the bedside. Suddenly Mr. Ahvallah asked:

"Did you give all the medicine?—but of course you did—I have been so anxious is why I asked I reckon."

"No," answered father Good with forced bravery. "I didn't give him none, cause I'd a had to wake him. It us best to jest let him sleep."

At this, they looked at each other with a degree of doubt in their faces, but said nothing.

"Did he beg much for water?" at length asked the mother.

"No, very little. I think he got over his thirst mostly," said he determined not to let them know yet that it was on account of having had plenty of water.

They continued their watch all night and into the day, and long after breakfast, and still there was no change in the quiet sleeper before them.

Jerry had brought the Dr. and he had pronounced it the crisis, he thought so at least, although he must be closely watched and not allowed to have a sinking spell. He directed a little toddy whenever he should

show signs of rousing, and with other injunctions he went away.

The good old man determined that they should do nothing to disturb the progress of the crisis, and neglecting his farm work, lingered all day by the bed side. But the deep sleep, so like the other sleep, held unbroken through the day and late into the night; and still the old man kept his vigil, and the anxious parents waited,—hoping, praying, looking towards that far off image sitting upon a great, white throne! An image that had been so far away and so slow to lend a listening ear and saving hand! So loth to send down from his heights of mercy or of wrath, as it pleased a varying will, a *feeling* spirit-ray; and in any case, so doubtful as to whether in His wrath He would smite, or, in His loving mercy heal!

All night the sleep continued and again day opened calm and fine outside but close and dark within, and the mother's hope was waning! There was a slight movement in the bed covers!

Mrs. Ahvallah stooped over the sleeping child, and asked in a natural way that surprised herself:

“Do you want anything Norman?”

The feeble lips moved and he said, audibly, ‘I am hungry.’”

These few words brought a glow of delight to all the faces present. Mr. Ahvallah kept repeating as if to himself: “How thankful I am!” and going up to the bed he said,

“You shall have it, Honey,—what would my boy like to have?”

“Fried chicken—an’ biscuit.” he replied promptly,

but in a feeble voice.

"Hebe, see that he has what he wants, right away, will you?" said the father to his wife.

They gave him a swallow or two of toddy, and then the father asked how he felt.

"Very well," was the gentle reply, and then he added:

"I'm mighty hungry."

"I'll go right now and hurry them up in the kitchen."

They actually had dressed a chicken and had one wing on boiling away! and his wife smiling so thankfully and urging things forward as rapidly as possible.

"I'm *so* thankful! *so thankful!*" her husband repeated, as he walked up and down the room where the preparation was going on. Then he stopped in the middle of the kitchen floor and asked, as if a thought had newly occurred to him.

"Don't you think the old Brother's prayers had something to do with it?"

"I do, certainly," she replied.

"And then," he said hesitatingly and looking down at the floor, "it was just about the time for the crisis, the Dr. said. But, we will thank the Lord for it all."

Then he strode to the door, and just remembering something, he walked straight into the big room. Again he asked, "How is my boy getting on *now?*"

"Very well," came the same reply. But he continued to look in his father's eyes, with a question in his own.

"The chicken is almost ready, Honey, you shall have it in a minute."

"Tell 'em to hurry up," said the old man, as he prepared to go, "and don't be stingy with it,—let him have all he wants."

He took the slender hand in his rough palm an instant, and said cheerfully,

"The Lord knows you are about well, ef they'll give you enough to eat and stop that medicine! Bless your sweet heart."

And turning to the minister and his wife he continued: Dr. Khillus is a fine man, a *good* man, but he's like all other doctors, he gives too much o' the stuff. Nater can work out all right ef let alone."

Such was the argument of the old man whose intellect did not stand in the way of his Intuition.

At this moment the boy was really well. He only lacked the amount of flesh and strength the condition and the medicine had taken from him. At this moment, too, a knock sounded at the door: it was a sounding knock, in contradistinction from that of the omnipresence that forever stands knocking at the door of individual consciousness, and forever and ever ready to come in and fill our needs. Whosoever will may receive of the glorifying, beautifying, healthgiving Presence.

The knock, the noisy knock was made by the smooth hand, whose companion hand hung at the other side, innocently clutching a small pair of black saddle bags, while its owner waited! But the knocking that appealed to external ears did not have to wait long, for it was a familiar knock, one the household knew too well!

"Open the door: it is Dr. Khillus." The colored

boy opened wide the door, and the Dr. entered.

"How's the little man?" he queried, glancing at the bed and taking in the situation. I was sick myself yesterday and could not get out," he continued as he seated himself, and took the wrist between his thumb and fingers, by dint of habit. But as the boy seemed inclined to draw his hand away, the Dr. let it fall, and moved his chair away a little. Mr. Ahvallah entered, smiling and carrying a waiter containing a bowl of soup, some tea and crackers, and the much longed for chicken wing.

"Deah mercy," the Dr. said in his genteel, careful voice, "ah you bringing provender for my hobse?"

The minister's wife stopped short and explained: "Why *no!* this is for my boy; don't you think he looks like he needed someth'ing to eat?"

"Yes, cehtainly, but you can't be too careful what you feed 'im on, if you would avoid a *relapse.*"

The last word had the effect of frightening her,—indeed the very word "relapse" started a score of muffled bells that clattered so she wished in her heart there never had been such a word!

"Don't give him *any* of the *fowl!*" he ordered, well knowing with what authority he spoke! "You may let 'im taste the *soup*; at noon make 'im a little gruel, but let that be all. You will have to exercise a little self-control in this mattah,—he will have a keen appetite, and you *must* allowance him if you have to run off and cry about it!"

The child ate his allowance of soup, after the wing had been returned to the kitchen. But there was an unsatisfied look in his fine eyes as he turned them to-

wards his mother and said: "Ma, I *know* it wouldn't hurt me! I am so hungry!"

"I will try to get the Dr.'s permission to let you have more tomorrow. He says you must eat very little today. Ma wants her boy to get well, so he can eat anything, and as much as he likes," returned the anxious mother.

"Can't I taste the chicken?" he asked.

"Wait till tomorrow darling, and I will promise to let you have some of the wing then. I am sure the Dr. will not longer object."

"But, ma," urged the hungry child, "I don't *like* gruel a bit!"

He was very pale and weak, and it made his mother's heart ache to be obliged to refuse him so little a favor, when she had been so anxious to hear him ask for food; but the Dr. must be obeyed. At noon the gruel was only tasted.

"Ma," said the gentle voice, to his mother, after the Dr. had gone. "do you hear that chicken crowing out there?"

"Yes, darling;—why?"

"Well I feel like I could eat it, feathers and all."

His mother smiled, "I'm glad my sweet boy has a good appetite. It is what I have so longed to see and prayed for all these weeks. The Dr. will be here tomorrow and I will insist that he lets you have what you can relish."

Tears rose in the child's large eyes and it touched the mother's heart, and she called her husband who had been resting a little, but it was soon decided that they had better not risk doing anything rash and must wait

until the Dr. should prescribe chicken before giving it to him.

The time went on, and the Dr. feeling unwell again did not return at the specified time, and some unpleasant symptoms in the case began to manifest themselves. The parents were puzzled and sent Jerry for the physician. He came and after examining the wrist and tongue, and pupil of the eye, dryly remarked that some of the old symptoms had returned, that he must have taken a little cold. "There is a slight relapse."

"*Can* we give him anything to eat Dr.?—He don't like gruel and begs and cries for chicken."

"Certainly, certainly, give him chicken if he wants it," pretty well convinced by this time that the desire for chicken or anything else had lost the keenness of its edge, he doubted whether he would taste it at all!

Under such circumstances is it common for physicians to come honestly forward and acknowledge their course as a fatal mistake and urge the people to depend more upon their common sense and faith in Good, to prevent another similar mistake, or, do they at such times only button the cloak of silence and deception about them, and laying the blunder to a cold or some other ruse, thus pave the way to other and similar tragedies? Among physicians there is a class whose lives are spent in the most zealous effort to benefit the race. Nothing is left unturned in their search amid the possibilities or probabilities of the resources in *Materia Medica*. The broadest and truest of this noble and self-sacrificing class give their patients only what they themselves would take, and prescribe a *calm and hopeful mind* in preference to any drug!

The material age is drifting by. The greatest results are being reached through the most imponderable of all Agents, when God will be no longer mocked with drugs as household gods.

"Some times it is impossible to tell how a cold is taken," continued Dr. Khillus, "but he has managed to take a little cold some how, which I must say discourages me!"

He did not remain long. He was not feeling well himself, and throwing the saddle-pockets over one shoulder, went his way. Square and black and leathern the pockets were! They contained the household gods of many families, "strange gods," upon whose merits hung the hopes of healing and strength and even Life of that immense multitude called Christendom, who claimed to believe in the omnipresence of God and the Christ He sent us as a *perfect example* to the children of men.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE GHOST'S FLIGHT IN THE STORM. THE MINISTER'S  
REMUNERATION.

One August afternoon, just before twilight at Oak House, a cool wave was wafted through the previously very quiet atmosphere to herald the storm cloud which was then rising dark and ominous in the western sky.

There was a low mutter of distant thunder, which grew more distinct as the storm approached. Zigzag lines of electric light played fitfully upon the dark surface of the cloud, while the landscape seemed awed at the pending event. Human nerves were excited to double energy and the thoughts were filled with vague dread. The wind came on in fitful gusts, now starting as if upon a fierce drive, now suddenly checking into a stillness so profound that the leaves upon the big oak were motionless, until again starting up as if stirred by the rolling thunder or the electric flashes behind it.

Travelers homeward bound urged their horses onward. Farmers plowing in the fields unhitched their willing teams and hastened toward shelter.

The leaves of the lucusts vibrated solemnly during each lull as if anxiously biding their time and anticipating the next gust of wind. The heavy, dark arch of the cloud now nearly overhead, twirled angrily above the ghastly, greenish body.

Oak House nestled cozily among the giant oaks, and the spiritual atmosphere that surrounded it should have been sufficient, with faith in the omnipresence of

God, to prevent any harm from coming nigh the dwelling. But Mrs. Ahvallah, who had been out taking observations of the cloud, and who was easily affected by electric storms, remarked as she re-entered the room:

"Some of you run down to the cabin and tell Sibyl to come up, there's going to be a dreadful storm!"

"What makes you think so, ma?" asked Virginia coming out of the little room with a handkerchief round her head. For reply her mother pointed toward the darkened window, and then remarked:

"I do wish your father would come before it gets here, there's hail in that cloud, I'm certain. If he's crossing that prairie when it overtakes him," she continued, her fears increasing as she spoke,—“and that's about where he is—there's no telling what'll happen!"

"O, ma," cried Illustre, "send Jerry with the umbrella, why don't you?"

"The umbrella'd be of no use in that wind; just listen!" The wind now blew furiously, and the rain began to fall. The thunder, which had been growing louder, kept up a continuous roar and growl, between the outbursts. Then came a terrific crash, following instantly a vivid glare, which caused them all to spring to their feet. Mrs. Ahvallah had gone towards the door thinking she would look out for her husband, but stopped short, placed her arms akimbo, and said in some perplexity:

"I don't think there's any use. I've watched the lane for a full hour. Besides, it is quite dark now only when it lightens!" Opening the door a little, she spied Jerry, with two pails of milk, walking very unconcernedly up the path. She urged him to hurry; and Sibyl,

who had been sitting very quiet and moving her lips solemnly, here roused up saying:

“Dat’s a mighty fool nigger, dat is; humph—eh!”

“Hurry up, Jerry,” Mrs. Ahvallah said, “don’t you see the storm?”

“Yes’m,” replied Jerry, quickening his gait.

“Did you see any little chickens, Jerry,” Mrs. Ahvallah asked when he was upon the veranda.

“No’m, — *Yes’m*,” returned the boy, “some dead ones.”

By this time the storm was at its height. The big hack-berry tree at the corner of the kitchen, and overspreading nearly half of the roof, swayed and beat upon the top until it seemed destined to unroof it while the big oak lashed, and swayed its limbs but to be torn again by the tempest.

“Do come in!” exclaimed Antoinette, as they all went to the door to open it for Mrs. Ahvallah and Jerry. They closed the door just in time, for the hail had begun to fall and several boards from the stable came dashing against the house.

“Dear, mercy! What will become of us?—it’s a hurricane!” said Mrs. Ahvallah, walking the floor nervously. “I shouldn’t wonder if the house is torn to pieces;—just listen! Did you hear that?”

“What’ll we do, O, ma?’ screamed Illustre, now thoroughly excited.

“Pray, child, if you can!” replied her frightened mother. “There’s no telling where your poor father is!”

They were all trying to pray, and walking back and forth in terror, thus exhibiting a very small degree of faith in the efficacy of their prayers.

Evangel was thinking of God upon a distant throne with a ray of spiritual light that converged towards them, but whose force was about exhausted ere it reached Oak House!

“Ma, you all say God is everywhere; you all say God is good and all-powerful. If that is so we are all right and I wouldn’t worry; we just act like we didn’t believe it a bit!” she said.

“Hush Honey! don’t talk so!” pleaded her mother.

“If God hurts you or the baby, *I’ll* have no more use for him, and I won’t believe He’s the true God!” defiantly retorted the child.

“Don’t talk so, I tell you; it’s wicked, child!” urged her mother.

The rain and hail fell in torrents; the very clouds seemed coming down in cataracts, while the wind dashed sheets of water and ice-balls about in a fearful manner. The hail sounded on the roof as if it would come through any how.

“I think it will soon stop, ma; don’t be so scared,” Evangel said as she went up to her mother and took her hand.

“I don’t know how anybody could be easy in such a storm,” replied Mrs. Ahvallah.

Meanwhile the heavens’ artillery abated not its fierce engagement. Loud peals burst in quick succession and then rolled on into the distant darkness, while the lightning flashed continuously.

The raindrops were dashed into a thousand fragments, covering the window panes with a foaming spray which seemed angered that it could not gain an entrance.

The anxious group inside grew more composed after Evangel's words, and the fury of the storm soon began to abate.

They now ventured out upon the veranda which was on the protected side of the house. Mrs. Ahvallah strained her eyes to see if there were any signs of a horse or rider along the deserted lane. To the north the fields rolled away in three gentle undulations that were separated by two small ravines whose hollows deepened towards the west when they were lost in the woods.

"I do hope he will stop somewhere," Mrs. Ahvallah said, half-aloud, as her thoughts and her apprehensions went out after her husband. "If he don't, I'm afraid"—at this moment her words were suddenly checked by the discovery of a strange object over in one of the ravines dimly visible through the rain.

"*What is that?*" she exclaimed, pointing toward the farthest ravine.

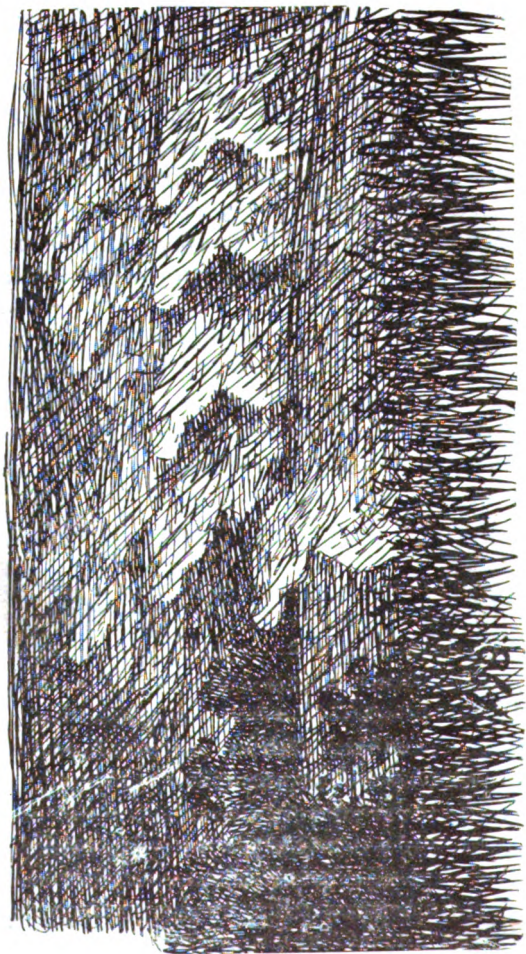
"Where? What is it?" asked several at once, looking in the direction indicated.

"Why, over there in that gully,—see: What on earth can it mean?"

"What is it, ma?" asked Virginia, who in her excitement had forgotten her headache.

Look over yonder in that branch the next time it lightens.—now—don't you see it?" said her mother indicating the direction with her finger.

"Yes, *I do!*" said Illustre, standing as high as she could, and looking over in that direction, "I see lots of them when it quits lightning.



THE FIGURE MOVED SLOWLY DOWN THE RAVINE TOWARDS THE WOODS.

“So do I!” exclaimed Antoinette, “It’s *somebody*, ain’t it!”

“Certainly,” replied the mother, “it must be; but who on earth could it be!—It’s dressed in white, or is wrapped in white, rather—and see, how it is stooped!”

The figure was moving slowly down the ravine towards the woods. It grew dark again, and they all began conjecturing what the strange figure might mean. Just then the lightening glowed, and Mrs. Ahvallah again exclaimed.

There it is again! *plain*.—see it! Now what can that mean, and out in such a storm!”

They were all leaning forward to look when another vivid flash revealed the object again. Illustre suggested that maybe that was one of Mrs. Jane’s ghosts, and said she could see the cloud-full of them when she shut her eyes. The form seemed regardless of the rain that was pelting mercilessly down upon field and figure alike. It seemed to be a woman, or a woman’s ghost. When another flash of lightening disclosed the fields, but the figure was gone.

“Its mo’ broken in de wes’,” said Jerry, being the first to notice that the storm was clearing away, as he rolled up his pants and stepped out. He soon returned, after wading about awhile, and with several chickens hanging by their feet. He supposed they were drowned. He was told to place them under a dry cloth, and search for more. They were placed upon a rug and covered over.

As soon as the rain ceased Mrs. Ahvallah and the girls prepared to make further search, after starting Jerry off on old Blaze to meet Mr. Ahvallah. They

found a whole brood submerged, and the mother hen still sitting over them in the pool of water, herself almost helpless from wetting and chill. The thrifty housewife understood thoroughly the economy of a country home, and went to work upon the creatures to resuscitate them, although they seemed as dead as "do' nails" Jerry had urged. She first held them up by their feet to allow the water to escape from their mouths, and then wiped the wet from their scanty coats. She then placed them between dry cloths with their heads uncovered, much as she would have arranged the children in their trundle-bed, and waited for them to "come to."

The first examination discovered some warmth; then, shaking them up a little, and stirring them about and replacing the dry cloth, it was not long until they were "cheeping" and trying to stand up.

The storm now lay in heavy billows in the east, giving evidence that its energy was not yet spent, though it had marked many miles with its track.

The last glow of day had faded out of the west, and the line of forest lay in black masses against the quiet night sky.

Back of the lawn gate, and the open space leading up to it, and emerging from the dark woods that lay so motionless behind him, a horseman carrying a coil of rope and a heavy gun, was making his way toward the hitching rack in front of the stile-blocks.

Since the passing of the storm the air was so chill that Mrs. Ahvallah found it necessary to start a cozy fire in the fire-place. It was around this that they were all seated awaiting the return of Jerry and his master,

and talking over the events of the day, when a rousing rap was heard at the front door; the door knob turning the next instant, a man's face peered in.

Mrs. Ahvallah having started to the window a moment before, gave a little scream upon seeing a man's head protruding within so short a distance from where she stood, and asked in a louder tone than her gentle voice was used to and which had quite a show of boldness in it,

"Who's there! I say?" She was all the while backing towards the children who had all risen and were frowning questioningly upon the intruder.

"Who's here? you mean." said the familiar voice of Lon Taffyhorn. "*I'm* here, and *I'm* here on business, too!"

Without stopping farther to explain, he began peering into all the corners of the room like a spy. Presently he asked:

"Has there been a man about here today?"

"No." responded the lady, "not that I know of." She was looking at him in questioning surprise.

"Have you *heard* anything about a man prowling around?" he continued.

He had entered and was continuing his scrutiny about the corners of the room. After asking the children if *they* had heard of anybody, and receiving an answer in the negative, she informed him to that effect, and then asked:

"What are you doing here armed in that way?"

"Why, we're after the murderer! He slipped us twice today—oncet when we had 'im as good as hemmed. But we'll git 'im yet, confound 'im!" said the man

frowning darkly.

"Are you sure the man you saw is the one who committed that awful deed?" asked Mrs. A.

"*Sure?*—We *know* he did it! He threatened 'im!—he's threatened me! He says he'll be satisfied when he gets me; but I'll git him first!" He had taken a chair and was toying with the rope, showing how they would tie him up to the nearest tree, and showing the easy action of the noose, when Evangel suddenly remembered the mysterious figure they had seen in the field, and mentioned the subject aside to Antoinette, who in turn imparted it to her mother who said:

"O, yes, I had forgot about the—that—ghost, or whatever it was—*woman* I thought."

"Where was 'e,—here?" broke in Mr. Taffyhorn, not a little excited and growing visibly fairer of complexion.

"No, it was in the field, just over in the gully," Mrs. Ahvallah explained, going on to give all the particulars. She wound up by asking if he supposed that could have been the man. He replied that he had no doubt of it, at the same time uneasily glancing at the twelve-paned window far more like the hunted than the hunter.

"Does everybody think Buchem committed it?" asked Mrs. Ahvallah after a pause.

"Yes, everybody *knows* 'at 'e did,—Bourd, I believe, tries to believe he had an accomplice—he thinks Arthur Bleevneevl had a good deal to do with it!"

"O, I don't believe that!" said Mrs. A. and Antoinette at the same time. "He wouldn't hurt anybody," continued Mrs. Ahvallah. "Mr. Ahvallah thinks he is one of the best men on earth."

"Yes, a good many do. I never saw any harm in 'im, but he's got a dark countenance, or complexion, and you never can tell. They say he's high strung when he's roused. Bourd never liked 'im."

"I believe he's a mighty good man, Mr. Taffyhorn, far better than some who make fine pretensions; and they say he belongs to a family that has talent in it. He is superior to the other children, you can see yourself!" remarked the lady.

Mr. Taffyhorn had wound up his rope and as he replaced it in his pocket said:

"He's made himself a goose over Mandy Steambergen! She'd take 'im at the drop of a hat an' drop it 'erself ef she node it, but he's too bashful to tell 'er. He's old enough goodness knows, and she's no spring chicken, neither!"

Mr. Taffyhorn was laughing heartily, when Evangel suddenly rose to her feet saying:

"There's the gate latch!" and springing past the man she started forward to the front door.

Mr. T. with but one thought, that of the murderer, also sprang to his feet as he asked in a startled voice:

"Where is he,—which way?—and falling in with Evangel, followed until about half way to the gate, then suddenly turning he rushed back, passed the now thoroughly frightened group and fled in the opposite direction.

"What on earth is the matter?" exclaimed Mrs. Ahvallah as she too started for the door. She looked out as she passed the window and being frightened surmised that Mr. Taffyhorn had discovered that some awful accident had happened to her husband.

"Run!" she exclaimed excitedly, "run to the stile-blocks, Antoinette—hurry—it's your father! Lord have mercy, I pray!"

Two of the girls started, but were pushed aside by their mother who rushed past them towards the front fence.

"I've been expecting this!" she murmured as she hurried on. Before she reached the stiles she was calling to the horse in an effort at a softened, coaxing tone;

"Whoa, Whipstock!—Whoa!—Whoa!"

"Here, there!—What's the matter?" called a voice from the corner of the yard. She recognized the voice of her husband and checked her speed.

"Is that you, Mr. Ahvallah? Are you all right?—Has anything happened?"

"Why, no," replied her husband who had not comprehended the full cause of the disturbance. "We are pretty wet, that's all. Is there anything the matter?" he asked in a quiet tone.

His wife had come up by this time holding up her drabbed skirts, and after making sure that all was well, she explained the cause of the disturbance.

"I *never* had such a fright in my life! Come in as soon as you can; the baby is crying at the top of his voice! Give Jerry the horses and do come in; I feel as if I should faint!" ran on the little wife.

She hurried forward to the house, her anxiety now turned in behalf of the baby and called to him soothingly as she went:

"There, there, I'm coming;—don't cry, darling."

She had just turned the corner of the house when another object caused her to stop suddenly, and exclaim: "Oo! what do you mean!" when a trembling voice from the outside chimney corner softly asked, as Mr. Taffyhorn stepped forward,

"Who is it, Mrs. Ahvallah?—Tell me who that is, quick!" he asked.

"For heaven's sake," she went on, to the intruder, "what *are* you doing there? Are you trying to scare us all to death?"

"O, your *husband*," said Mr. Taffyhorn coming boldly out of his hiding-place, upon seeing the minister about to join her, and assuming some control of himself he took the arm of the lady and assisted her up the steps.

"Hand me the baby," she said to one of the girls, as she dropped into a chair.

"Ye—s, *Honey!*" she said sympathetically as she hugged him close to her, trying to soothe him, for he was crying and sobbing as if his heart would break. Partly to soothe him, and partly to reassure herself and feel again natural, she forthwith allowed him to nurse, and next day wondered what made baby sick!

By the time Mr. Taffyhorn,—who had remained only long enough to explain the purpose of his errand and the cause of his strange conduct to "Bro." Ahvallah, had departed, and the minister had entered and removed his muddy leggings and wet hat, the baby was fast asleep and Mrs. Ahvallah was stirring about removing the wet things, getting dry ones and making everything cozy, she and the children asking more questions than he was able to respond to:

"Did the hail hurt you? Was you on that prairie?"

How did you manage to keep the hail from hurting you?"

"Why, I got down, took the saddle off Whipstock and put it over my head," he answered as he began partaking of the bread and hot tea she had prepared. "But I didn't escape altogether; a hail-stone hit the corner of my forehead before I could get the saddle off of the horse. I had some trouble holding Whipstock too.—I couldn't if she hadn't been the best disposed animal in the world, for the hail pelted her fearfully!"

The little girls had all made an examination of the bump made by the hail and united their sympathies upon it.

"Why, just look ma!" said Virginia as she gently rubbed the place:

"Did it make your head ache, Pa?"

Antoinette mixed some camphor and cologne upon her handkerchief and applied it to the spot, and then asked how much they paid him for his services. It was a marriage ceremony he had been called upon to perform in the family of one of his flock at Beaver Dam.

"O," replied her father, hesitating and looking as benign as possible. "they didn't pay me much—only a dollar; the people are poor and have a large family. The girl is only fifteen and the young man twenty."

He took a fresh slice of bread without looking at his wife, who in turn busied herself with supplying his wants and hoping the wetting would not give him a cold. She knew that the recording of marriages cost fifty cents and that the officiating clergyman had that to pay. But they did not know that the best and quickest way to impress people with a clear sense of duty would be to tell them of it. Mr. Ahvallah should have named a

reasonable amount and have said: "That, my brother, would be about right."

This would have put the man to thinking, which would have been a wholesome exercise for him.

Jesus would have said more than this although asking no money. He did not indulge false principles, but said "no" to mistakes and "yes" to truths.

How very slowly has the world learned that all right actions emanate from right intentions, and that men are judged for their secret thoughts.

"Never mind," he continued cheerfully, "it will be all right. I have another ceremony to perform that I am sure will pay better. Bro. Kingsbury's eldest daughter marries the governor of the state and they have requested me to perform the ceremony. It is to be next week."

He had finished his supper and they all drew nearer the fire. The hail had rendered the air quite cool, so that fire was not objectionable.

The candle having burned low, Mrs. Ahvallah got the snuffers, trimmed the light and brought the family Bible. They all became quiet and thoughtful as she placed it upon the table.

"Whose night is it to read?" asked their father, looking towards his daughters.

"Dollie's, I believe," said the mother, looking towards her, assuming a half-inquiring, half-reassuring expression.

These occasions were observed with impressive solemnity. The wife appeared with a lovely dignity befitting the time, and the children regarded it with filial and sacred feeling. It was not until the occurrence of

some droll mispronunciation or peculiar accent, as was some times the case with the last "initiate", that the gravity of the occasion was ever interrupted.

The children were enlisted into the band of readers just as fast as they learned to read sufficiently well.

Dollie took the position upon the present occasion with pretty good confidence, making a brief survey of the faces around her, and being reassured by an admiring look from her mother. She got on nicely until she came upon the word "delivered", which she got mixed up in her mind with "believed", and called it "belivered". She paused, doubtfully and stole a look at her mother's face. Was it only one of the dimples in her mother's cheek, or was she struggling to suppress a smile? She felt sure something had happened, for she also detected a martyred smile upon her father's dignified face. She knew what it all meant when the girls smiled without disguise. But her father having recovered his gravity sufficiently to make the correction, added, "You may read on, Dolly, you are doing very well!" She was much relieved, and continued.

It was the First Epistle General of Peter, chapter three. Dollie was a little weakened in confidence, but more hopeful on account of her father's reassuring words. She did very well until she had reached the seventh verse, when she again paused, whispered at the orthography awhile, and then rushed on, "give—honor—unto—the wife—as unto—the—the—water vessel, and——"

"Wait, Dollie, you mispronounced 'weaker', 'weaker vessel', that reads", her father said, hinting that deliberation would have prevented the mistake. Dollie

raised her round eyes upon the audience and reread the paragraph with great fluency and without looking at the book. Her father laughed gently through his nose—but immediately lifted his face, took a chew of tobacco from his mouth, and throwing it at the cuspidor, said,

“I believe that’s the first real mistake you have made. You are doing first rate. You’ll soon read as well as any of them.” He then tried to change the subject, since some of the girls kept on laughing quietly, by spells, with much clearing up, as if getting entirely over it.

“What reader are you in at school now?” he asked.

“First,” replied Dollie, promptly, “but my teacher says he’s going to put me in the second as soon as I can read well enough!”

“To be sure! and when did he think that would be?”

“Pretty soon, I reckon—any-how, my first reader’s tore up.”

“Ah”, said her father smiling again, “worn out with severe study? Well, go on and finish the chapter.”

When the reading and prayer were ended, the minister called the children about him and asked them to sing a hymn. They formed a half-circle about him, raised their young voices, and sang, all the time looking up into his attentive face. The song he had called for was,

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!”

When the song was ended, he told them it made him very pleased and happy to have his children gather round him and sing those good old songs.

It was several days after this that the Governor of the state and Miss Kingsbury were united in the "holy bonds"; Mr. Ahvallah officiating, for which service he received fifty dollars and the recorder's fee. After a most hospitable entertainment he was returning homeward with a buoyant heart and pleasant reflections.

He often told his wife how happy it made him, after he had filled his appointments, to be returning "homeward."

Whipstock was a faithful traveller, and before the day had waned, the familiar objects in the neighborhood of Oak House dawned upon her vision. Whether she reasoned about it, or only instinctively surmised they were nearing home and plenty of feed after a jaunt of forty miles, the horse brightened up perceptibly, and quickened the rhythmic, easy pace she had held, almost unbrokenly, for many miles. Faithful old Whipstock: surely if the lilies of the field are noted, and the sparrows cared for, there will be a haven of rest, some where for your kindly, patient eyes to look upon, and a fender hand to lead you, amid green pastures and pleasant harvests with your posterity and your kind about you.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## REMEMBERING THE THINGS THAT ARE BEHIND.

There was a bright smile upon Mrs. Ahvallah's face when she met her husband at the door, upon his return from the wedding. She was glad and couldn't help laughing, and couldn't help the little smack of a kiss that accompanied the smile.

Well, how did you get along he asked.

"Very well," the little woman replied:—She always said "very well." After a pause, in which she smoothed her white apron and looked about to see if anything were in the least out of order, she said:

"We've had lots of company—Some of the Mt. Zion folks are here now."

"Ah; who is it," he asked as he mechanically handed her his saddle-bags.

"Bro Steambergen and wife and Miss Amanda. There are some folks from Deer Lick, too, and Old Bro. Janes and family, and a couple of gentlemen from Beaver Dam. Some of the company walked over to Bro. Pewlett's; some of the folks are in the orchard and garden, and Sister Steambergen is taking a nap." She explained while he was removing his hat and leggings. The latter Dollie took the liberty to store away; Virginia became responsible for the hat, and Mrs. Ahvallah deposited the saddle-bags behind the closet door, while Evangel procured some water and a towel.

Before he had finished his bath Miss Amanda's girlish figure came bounding in at the door, with what

looked like a brilliant blush upon either rather thin cheek, and a happy smile upon her lips.

"Look at my foot, now do!" she exclaimed as she held out a long slender shoe all covered with mire. "I stepped flat in the branch—ef you believe me:—the ground looked solid, and I don't know but I'd a gone out of sight ef Mr. Blevneevl hadn't come along! He jest took me right up in his arms, and I felt as safe as a baby. Ha, ha, ha!"

Sure enough Arthur B. had happened along just at the right time.

"I'm glad I came this way, Miss Steambergen," he had said. "I started to go across the fields but changed my mind; I am glad t' be of service to you."

"I am glad, sure! Mr. Blevneevl. I don't know what I *would* 'ave done;" she responded, as the two had walked up the hill together. At the lawn gate he left her side.

The moment Mr. Ahvallah had taken a seat Dollie climbed upon his knees and began briskly swinging her feet to help in expressing her joy at his return. When Miss Amanda came in Dollie jumped down and taking a position between her father's knees faced about. Her father managed to rise in time to extend a hand of welcome to the young woman. She was very small at the waist, very delicate at the wrists, and very slender at the neck. She wore a dress of pale blue swivel silk with delicate sprays of honeysuckles here and there, and with ribbon trimming the shade to match the honeysuckles.

Miss Amanda was about the age of the minister's wife but seemed younger with her youthful smiles, arti-

ficial embellishments and innocent ways. Dollie, how had been engaged in her favorite exercise of springing up and down, removed her hands from her father's knees and quietly admired the young woman. The little one's head almost reached to her father's chin, but she found it such a snug place for such exercise, she soon returned to her old pastime of jumping up and down.

"How are the friends at Mt. Zion getting along now?" he asked as he lifted his chin sufficiently to articulate.

"They are doing nicely, thank you; pretty good health, I believe, this season," she replied.

"Ma, do look at Dollie!" urged Illustre in a whisper. Mrs. Ahvallah had been trying to maintain the solemn dignity and air of importance expected of a minister's wife, and was not a little annoyed by the persistence with which Illustre at intervals continued to pull at her sleeve and urge her to "watch Dollie, do, pray!"

But Dollie's father though conscious of some kind of annoyance was "absent minded" and did not realize that by sending a little girl to Sibyl's cabin he might be free to employ his chin as he chose and also have hid a multitude of Dollie's faults.

Miss Amanda continued:—

"Father has right good health and mother looks pretty well. She was mighty poorly in the spring, we thought we'd lose her, but she is much better, indeed."

Mrs. Ahvallah here excused herself and withdrew to the kitchen, motioning Illustre to follow.

"Illustre," she said, "I *do* wish when company is present you wouldn't gouge my arm off! Didn't I see Dollie all the time? She always batters in your father's

chin when people are here! I didn't *want* to see her! I would rather *not* if I could help it. I have talked to her enough. I do hope she will grow out of it!" and without waiting for a reply she hurried about her duties.

"Dollie?" said Mr. Ahvallah, becoming cognizant of the cause of the annoyance. "I think there is an orange for you in my saddle-bags." and the little girl hurried away.

Mrs. Ahvallah, Jerry, the girls and even old Sibyl flew around lively until supper was on the table and its aromatic announcement floating through the rooms.

The richest of fragrant coffee, the freshest of eggs with fried ham, the lightest, brown biscuit, the brownest and crispest fried chicken, the purest of butter and milk and cream brought by Crump and Pied and Brindle from the blue grass pasture; the rarest, richest preserves, blackberry jam, chocolate, gold and white cake, pies and pickles.

The people pushed back their chairs ready to move at the first sound of the bell. The callers at Mr. Pewlett's had returned, accompanied by that gentleman and his daughter P. Sister Steambergen had roused from her nap well rested from the long carriage drive. But the bell did not ring. Mrs. Ahvallah came to the door and the company reflected the glow of pleasantries upon her face as they all turned towards her. She wore the conscious air of having made a complete success of an important duty, a duty the fruits of which have pleased alike poet, preacher and sage.

"Walk out to supper," she said with a pretty, girlish voice that always sounded a trifle more musical when

her husband was present. She looked with satisfied pride into the pleased face of her husband as he said in his cheerful, hearty way:

"Come, come out to supper Bro. Steambergen. Sister Steambergen,—come out Bro. Pewlett, Sister Permelia, Bro. Gofar, Bro. Peters, a ! of you walk out, walk out."

They all rose up deliberately, artificially restraining their eagerness and filed out into the dining room.

"You take this seat by me, Sister Steambergen," said the hostess pleasantly, "and you may sit there, Miss Sallie.—I always give pretty girls that place." At the same time Mr. Ahvallah had assigned Bro. Steambergen the seat upon his left and that upon his right to Sister Railsbach. Sister Fabby who had happened in as was often the case upon such occasions, chose her seat next that of Bro. Steambergen because she "liked to sit beside fine-lookin' men and opposite sech good uns as Brother Short."

"I always tell my wife she is prettier in the dining room than anywhere else: look at her cheeks now,—they look like roses, don't they?" said Mr. Ahvallah, standing a moment before inviting the guests to be seated. The generous remark was drawn out partly by the occasion and she knew it, and partly because she did seem invaluable as the genius who commanded so delightful an array of good things.

As soon as they were comfortably seated in the solid oak chairs, Mr. Ahvallah closed his eyes, set his left hand up edge ways by the side of his plate and said in a solemn tone:

‘Bro. Steambergen will you please ask the blessing?’

The gentleman closed his eyes and began a form of words. He placed much stress upon the first two words as if uttered by the expulsion of a long, full breath, following which was a collapse and a decrescendo to the end of the ceremony:

‘O LORD, make-us-thankful-for-these-table-comforts-we-are-now-about-to-receive!-bless-them-to-our-use,-pardon-all-our-sins-and-*eventually*-save-us-*all*,-for-the-Great-Redeemer’s-sake.’

A prompt amen from the host followed so immediately that but for the difference in the tone of voice which was fuller and far more distinct than the other, one might have thought it the brother’s own finale.

While they were turning up their plates and Mrs. Ahvallah was preparing the cups and saucers for the reception of coffee and tea, Bro. Steambergen cast his eyes round at the blooming faces of the numerous children forming a circle at an observing distance of about every fifth degree of radiation from the table. They were mostly round, big-eyed faces, expectant and interested in the nice things and in the manners and looks of the people. As Bro. Steambergen’s eyes swam round the irregular line a very solemn expression came into them, and Mr. Ahvallah noticed as they turned and rested upon him that they were filled with tears. A strange feeling of fear came over Illustre as she gazed at him, and she wondered whether he were agitated on account of the comet! She shrank back behind Dollie who had stood undaunted and deeply interested, and

peered at the gentleman over Dollie's head. Dollie feasted her curiosity without satisfying it and looked with round, wide eyes from the strange man to her father, hoping to find some clue to the mystery. Mr. Ahvalah surmising that there was something bearing upon the brother's mind that called for solemnity, groaned very gently preparatory to the reception of whatever it might prove to be.

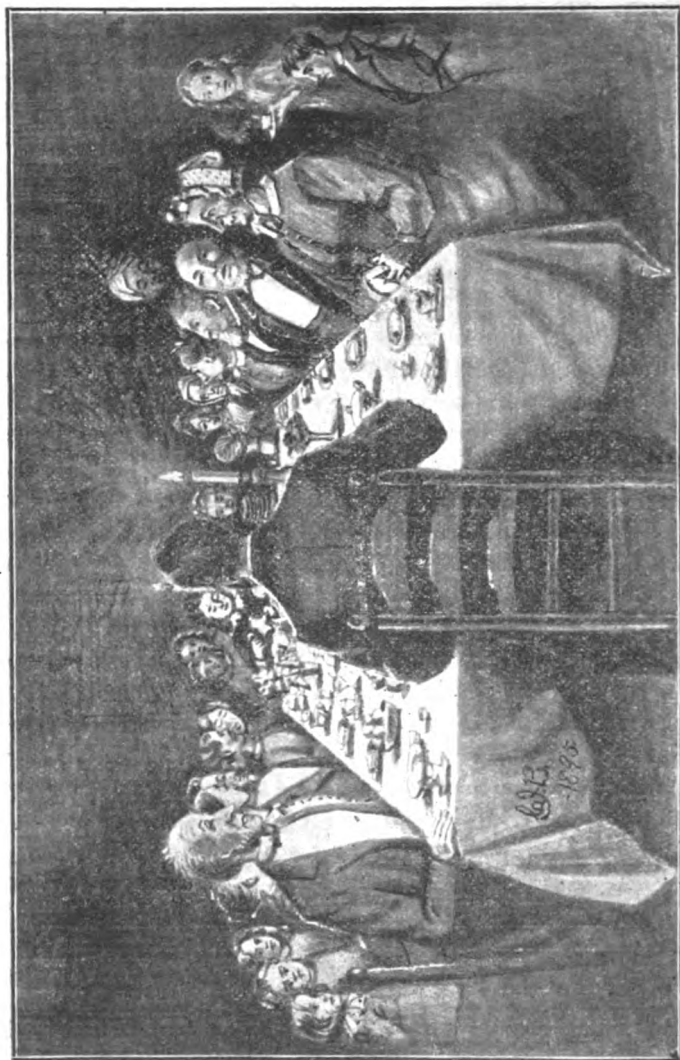
The children had turned over several suppositions in their minds. Illustre wondered if there were not a ghost just back of where she stood, or, did he see some horrible vision he did not dare to disclose! But she changed her mind when she noticed that his expression remained the same when looking towards the other children, and finally settled upon the comet:—It must be the comet. He had had a revelation that it was to burn the world up sure enough, and was grieved to tell them of it! May be it would come off to-night! Many fearful images came into her fancy for a moment, but to retire for others that crowded to the front. She saw, too, that her mother was embarrassed and not a little puzzled at the man's strange manner. Finally her mother made an effort to break the unpleasant lull, by asking in a quiet, respectful voice:

“Will you have tea or coffee, Bro. Steambergen?”

“Coffee, mum, ef you please,” he said, in a pretty clear tone, Illustre thought.

“Do you take sugar and cream?”

“Ef you please,” he replied bowing his head and waving his hand solemnly.



"I AM ALTOGETHER OVERCOME."

While the hostess was making inquiry of all the people, as to whether they would take coffee or tea, or sweet milk or buttermilk, or water, and whether they would take cream and sugar, in case they preferred tea or coffee, and whether those who would not take cream and sugar both would take either the one or the other, and if so, which one, and how much, Illustre still stood eyeing the old gentleman from her fortification, every moment expecting to hear some terrible revelation from his awful lips.

At last Dollie's curiosity and Illustre's fears were partially relieved.

"I am altogether *overcome!*" said Mr. Steambergen, with much feeling. "I am melted down in my feelings."

Here he sobbed half aloud; and turning to Mr. Ahvallah went on in a broken voice, "I can't tell you, brother—I cannot express my feelings!—when I look around me on all these!" Here he paused and waved his hand slowly, extended just above a line horizontal with the children's heads, describing an arc of about  $40^\circ$ , and looking very self-pitying out of his eyes, and very red about his nose; and very sorry about the corners of his mouth, and very furrowed along his retreating forehead. His eyebrows were set up like circus ladders, meeting at the top and starting a wide circle of waves above them, whose maximum of swell wrecked a little above the bumps of causation, and broke up finally against the few remaining dykes of iron-gray hair just back of the region of self-esteem.

"When I look upon these tender scions of the parent stock," he found voice to say, "and think of all that is before them,—for I know the pitfalls,—when I loo x

at these young, blooming faces"—Here Illustre drew nearer to her mother as he paused, feeling that the occasion was an awful one in some way, and that terrible things were about to be revealed. Following a natural instinct she held to her mother's chair post and almost ceased to breathe!

The brother went on, after another sob or two, and an application of his silk handkerchief:—"Round and rosy and so free from the cares of this world of sin!"—

Dollie's curiosity was not yet recompensed. When the sentence closed, leaving her in as much mystery as before, she turned her pointed nose questioningly toward Evangel, raised her eye-brows and primped up her small mouth with an expression that said: "There don't seem to be any immediate danger," and stepping a little in advance of the "rosy line" in order to confirm the man's opinion in case he should show signs of thinking anybody in particular pretty, posed in good view, while he continued.

—"And when I think of myself now beginning to totter with the weight of years," (here he wept aloud, and the minister again groaned,) "and with my afflictions upon me, and think of the great contrast between the morning and the evening of life!" his voice had lowered to almost a whisper, "I can but be sad!—could we but see the future as clearly as we see the past, how many errors we might avoid!"

Mr. Ahvallah had groaned gently several times during this broken talk, as if coinciding with all his guests' emotion: but at this moment he caught sight of Dollie's face and Illustre's staring eyes, and reviewing the whole situation as it really was, lowered his head

a little to give vent to the involuntary smile that would portray itself.

The children all but Dollie drew back a little: her curiosity had warmed to such a pitch as to make her quite forget how near she was to the man until in a rather changed voice, and holding out his hand he said:

“Come here, little one, and hug Uncle Steambergen.”

Dollie thus recalled to herself, retreated at once to the row of veterans that had not broken ranks, and faithfully held her post. They all moved back a little, fearing lest in their turn they also might be made the subject of his remarks.

Sister Railsbach passed her cup for more coffee. “not a bit over half a cup,” she instructed; but the hostess filled the cup up to the brim, but not running over in this instance as she had done at first, when a cup-full was expected.

In the meantime, Mr. Steambergen gradually lowered his circus ladders, spoke peace to the troubled waves on his brow, dried up the waters from his eyes and cheeks, and prepared his mouth for the reception of food. This last he accomplished after a few gentle openings and shuttings of the same in response to the secretive action of salivary glands made lively by an excited imagination of the pleasant performance of partaking of the delicate things steaming within the range of his vision.

The guests had traveled a long way and had an appetite. The change of diet, the ride through the bracing air, together with the friendliness and good feeling, lent great zest to the occasion and supper was a long time serving.

Before it was over the bright faces had grown sleepy looking, and some of them had crept into quiet corners on the floor, and nestled down to sleep. The rest were very quiet as the old folks lingered to indulge in a chat over the remains of the repast, in regard to the next days' meeting. But finally the chairs moved and awakened the sleepers, who glided quietly into the vacated chairs looking far sleepier than hungry.



## CHAPTER XIX.

## EVANGEL'S IDEALS.

Several years after the close of the barn meeting and the organization of a church which was the outgrowth of it, a neat, white meeting-house adorned the slope opposite the Old Mill Cottage. They named it "Walnut Grove" because there were no walnut trees near.

It had been recorded in the church rules that none but ministers orthodox to the faith as set forth in their "articles" would be allowed the privilege of preaching in the new church, and that no other need apply. The "Campbellites" were offended upon being informed that the regulations precluded their ministers, and Mrs. Fabby's Bro. Mart said he would never put his foot inside the door again, and he hoped it might prove a failure in all the ways possible for churches to fail!

Mr. Ahvallah retained year after year his place as pastor, even after he had traded Oak House for a handsome place suburban to Athena and removed his family to it.

"You have done quite enough for the people of Post Oaks. Why don't you sell out and locate where you will be convenient to college and send your daughters to school?" Mr. Ahvallah's brother had asked. "They will never be at home here, and if you remain they will form attachments with the young people of the vicinity."

"I had never thought of the last obstacle," replied the minister. "I think their mother's training will save

them from anything unwise. As to the rest I don't think the people are sufficiently established in the faith yet to be given over to an inexperienced leader. They are attached to me and I am to them: that is, I desire their uplifting exceedingly."

His brother Paul was a man of few words and only said:

"You needn't give them up; you can come back and continue their pastor, but I am sure your children would have better advantages elsewhere. Think of it, will you?"

"O, yes, I want to do what is the best. There are some fine people in this community, honest and true, but mostly rough and uncultured it is true. Poor fellows!" he said sympathetically, "some of them would take an education right readily." Then he ran over a list of names, noting how rapidly they had developed in the few years he had known them.

"Well, there are other people who need you. Let these take advantage of the opportunity while they may."

Antoinette had been away at school. She was now a beautiful young woman, although she came home with a good many new airs as well as new songs, (some of them unorthodox and which were never sung in her father's presence) and a new class of acquaintances.

Virginia was a quiet, queenly girl of sixteen. Evangel a well-formed, vigorous child of twelve. Illustre, scarcely two years younger, gave promise of great beauty. Dollie, the irrepressible, was just seven. The next child a second beloved son had succumbed, as had the eldest, to the united anxieties and fears of parents

and the strong medicines of the physicians, only to be succeeded by a wailing and scarcely welcome little girl that had proved tenacious and "hearty" in spite of regrets that she was not a boy and who was now at the age of four. Dot, for that was the extent of her name, was now a rosy little darling who didn't know but that she was the most desired baby ever born. She smiled at those who regarded her apprehensively and seemed glad as her little heart could be that she had been born into such a bright and pretty world. There was now another little boy two years old, who, somehow, lived along perhaps because the parents and friends had become resigned to what they thought God's will in taking all their sons, or because they had ceased to be anxious;—anyway there was not mistrust of God enough to prove fatal and the little fellow thrived, grew rapidly and was one of the most fearless, impetuous pieces of robust humanity to be found.

The parents often wondered at his rugged health and consulted with Dr. Khillus, whom they employed by the year to prescribe such things as would keep off diseases; but when the child persistently refused to take any medicine, they were forced to conclude that one could get on very well without it and trusted more in prayer and consecration for preservation from that time on.

The preacher's daughters were thought very desirable by the parents who had marriageable sons. but Antoinette was considered a little unapproachable, simply because she was choice in her selection of beaux and looked outside the home church circle for some of her associates. Her dress was simple but stylish and ex-

ceedingly graceful and pretty, and gave the cue for most of the new fashions in the neighborhood. But many of the dresses although costing twice the amount that her's cost, being imitations, failed to attract the admiration, originality and good taste elicited. The young men of all four of the churches were at her feet. Bro. Thomas a man of faith and an excellent citizen had quietly expressed himself to the pastor as sincerely hoping that Antoinette might think favorably of his son Solomon who was pining for her. And Bro. Peters whose son Absalom had offered her his hand and heart and all that he possessed, and had been politely refused, (to the infinite joy of Feriby Short who had given him her heart without the asking) and had mentioned the matter to her father hoping to secure a different decision from the higher court. But the minister after expressing his regret said he could do no more than give his advice. Absalom's younger brother a very religious youth had seemed to set his heart upon both Illustre and Evangel, and the minister thinking it only childish fancy playfully suggested to the boy to never mind, that if Illustre and Evangel did not like him when they were grown up, he would make them, to which the boy made no reply but laid the matter up in his heart.

An old bachelor of means suing at Virginia's feet and being rejected by that diffident young woman, had desperately turned and knelt at the shrine of Antoinette. But his bald head presented so ludicrous an appearance that she laughed at him in answer, and was pronounced by him the most heartless woman he had ever met.

The trouble was they entertained too large an opin-

ion of their right of ownership in the pastor's family. But if a just account had been rendered between preacher and parish the latter would have appeared heavily the debtor, for Mr. Ahvallah's service was remunerated but scantily and that by a minority who rendered what they did in his behalf quietly and with honest purpose.

Bro. Pewlett, whose son George had become what they called a man, had hinted more than once that Evangel was 'groin' mighty fast and was awful smart and sassy and was now only two year younger'n' his wife when he married her. George had informed Jerry that he had a colt of his own and a sow and pigs.

Virginia read poetry, wrote verses and fell deeply in love with the little black-eyed man chiefly because he was unknown in the vicinity, wore a mustache and melancholy look, dressed well and had a soft voice.

The girls, all but Antoinette, attended public school. That young woman was not infrequently puzzled in assisting Virginia in her parsing and solving some of the applications of cube root.

Evangel had gained local notoriety by playing the role of 'Martha Mather' in an amateur theatrical at one of the new teacher's public exhibitions. Her father who had been persuaded for the first time to attend such exercises—much to the horror of Evange! who had not suspected such a thing!—and coming up just as she was donning the "old woman's" costume, Evangel was hardly prevailed upon by the teacher to proceed.

When she appeared in her cap and glasses and antiquated garb and tottering over her stick she realized that her father was witnessing her nonsense and a keen feeling of disgust for the whole business came over her!

But realizing the importance of the part she had to play and not wishing to spoil the exhibition she overcame her feelings so far as to make a complete success of it.

Mr. Storms said to her father at the close of the exercises:

"That girl's a success. You wont have to send *her* to school. She'll make her way in the world!"

And when her father repeated the prophecy to Evangel she said in her heart that she would prove that his words were true.

Mr. Storms was one of the foremost preachers in the state. He went home with the minister, and after supper urged the necessity of sending his daughters to college even though it must be with sacrifice.

"You know I love you as a brother and I will help you liberally. Your churches do not pay you as much as they should and the denomination is indebted to you."

Mr. Storms was wealthy and had assisted several young men through school.

Evangel longed to go to college. She had thought much about it. Antoinette's descriptions had inspired her with a desire to become a pupil and she could see the spires of the building in her fancy all gilded with gold and spangles, massive and extended and towering. Her sister's glowing descriptions had been embellished by Evangel until no structure in the land could half compare with her ideal.

## CHAPTER XX.

THE SPEAKING EYES. MRS BLEEVNEEV L INTERVIEWED.

One pleasant evening while the hands at Oak House were unhitching their horses from the plows, dropping the heavy chains at their feet, and with the tangled gearing turned in a heap over their tired backs were plodding homeward, and just as the children were returning from their tasks at school,—it was about this time that two dusty travellers rode up to the front fence, dismounted, stepped lightly over the stiles and walked toward the house.

“Lusty, oh, Lusty?” called Mr. Ahvallah, entering the room and wearing a pleasant smile, “you and Vangel fix up, put on your best, Bro. Montall’s boys are coming!”

He said this playfully, yet said it from real interest in the youths, for he loved Deacon Montall like a brother.

The two girls hustled off in good earnest, washed their faces, brushed their hair, put on fresh bib aprons, and walked shyly into the room, where the two young men were by this time sitting.

“Here are the girls, boys,—Evangal,” said their mother motioning toward the eldest, “and this is Illustre; they are just from school”, and turning to the boys she said:

“These are Bro. Montall’s boys; Joseph, and—and—”

“*Mark*,” said the boy promptly, “Mark’s my name. At least that’s what they call me at home.” They all

laughed at this and they all thought Mark very cute indeed.

Soon they were all chatting pleasantly. Antoinette entertained Mark, while Mrs. Ahvallah talked with Joseph, the elder of the youths.

Evangel and Illustre took positions side by side, with their backs to the wall and their hands behind them, while their two bib aprons spread out like small window curtains and rustled comfortably whenever they moved. They only looked on while the folks asked and answered questions.

Presently they were greatly shocked when Antoinette asked Mark which of the girls he thought the prettiest! As Mark looked that way, a warm blush deepened his dark complexion, and a fine row of teeth accompanied by dimples upon either cheek came suddenly to view. He said he did not know, and would not like to say "right before them, he was sure". But he was looking straight at Illustre who looked as steadfastly upon the carpet, smiling consciously, with her lips firmly closed.

Mark was splendid! Illustre had formed a delightfully warm sentiment for the hardy, dark-eyed boy, at first sight, and from that moment forgot all her former sweet-hearts.

Evangel had felt very kindly toward them both, they were so free and fearless, and their way seemed so different from the mummy-like existence she had been used to.

A clergyman knows what is expected of him and enforces precept after precept upon those of his own household, and often until they are crowded and ten-

sioned and bound with restrictions like mummies.

This law is imbibed, that restriction argued and decided right, (and was it not well even if it extended its discipline to the prohibition of smiles or freedom, if, in the end, salvation from the "bottomless pit" were gained!) But to see the genial smile and easy manner of these boys, and in that sacred family-worship-room, was refreshing and inspiring as dew upon thirsty flowers.

Joseph attracted Evangel, but in a different way. She found herself studying his face, when she could do so without attracting his notice, for his eyes seemed to know what was going on in her thoughts. She avoided meeting his glance, but caught opportunity to make his face a study when he talked to Antoinette. He looked straight into the eyes of the people he talked to. His eyes were large, very clear, and very strong looking: they seemed to know that there was a great deal more to be known in the world than their owner had yet found out. One peculiarity about them was that they were of no decided color, while those of his brother were a jet black! They were large, dark and very piercing: not intense eyes, but they were open and rather rolling as they changed from one object to another. But like all eyes that are profound and beautiful, words cannot tell, and only other fine eyes can see and read. Eyes are the conveyancers of intuitions, and man may look at man and say more powerful things than volumes of words could express. When eyes speak vocal words may hold their silence!

"Luther's words are half battles," said Richter in eulogy of his powers of speech. Such eyes as Joseph Montall's waged whole and winning battles. The other

senses are but auxiliaries to the sight. All things that attract the taste or smell or that apply to the feelings, are judged of, received or rejected according to the eye's decision;—the smell or taste may make mistakes which can be cleared away by the invincible judge, the eye.

The human eye symbolizes Pure Wisdom, intuition, or innocent understanding. It expresses a free conscience; before its glance the perpetrator of evil cowers and shrinks, and in its look the pure find the glories and beauties of higher ideals. The eye looks naked Truth. It does not symbolize the knowledge of good and evil, and is an Evāngel of Truth, pushing its conquests to the "ends of the earth."

The Montall boys came to bring a message from their father. They had traveled a distance of fifteen miles and were to remain over night. Bro. Gofar's son was again in the gutter, they said, and the church would have to do something at the next meeting.

Sure enough poor Dick Gofar had fallen back into his old habits of drink. The man had seemed to struggle very hard against temptation, but he was often influenced to err by former associates who urged him to take a glass with them.

Dick was a kind hearted man when sober and seemed to be very fond of his wife and two little girls. She was an energetic woman, a tidy housekeeper and always looked so pleased when she watched the little ones trudge off to Sunday school with their father as neat and trim as the best of them. The little cottage belonged her,—her father had given it, and they were snug enough and might have been very happy. But many times had he come home intoxicated, when he

would go wild and abuse the little woman whose love for him was great, but who was often obliged to leave the house and take refuge with one of the neighbors. Upon one occasion poor Dick got drunk and began his cruelties, but told her if she went to the neighbors again he would kill her. It was a cold night, but the frightened wife fled out of her home, found refuge in the stable and took a severe cold which settled on her lungs. While in feeble health she procured a divorce, and the man was obliged to give up his wife and children. The wife spent her last days in the little cottage with her two little daughters. He lived about the livery stables and the saloons until she was gone and then awoke to a consciousness of his erring ways. He was broken up with remorse, and so far reformed his life as to be able to provide for the wants of his little family by his own labor, and took delight in taking them out to the prayer meeting and Sunday school. He spoke with pride about how nice his "little chaps" kept house for him. Mr. Montall had talked to him about the importance of leaving off drink altogether, and of perfecting his life more and more, which was every man's duty and privilege.

Mr. Gofar had returned some weeks after and told Mr. Montall that he had spoken to his pastor, Bro. Ahvallah, about the "perfect life" and he had received the reply:—"Bro. Dick we all have our faults! as much as I would like to lead a perfect life, I find that I sin every day." Mr. Gofar was shocked! but after thinking upon it decided that if so good a man as his pastor could claim to sin every day, surely God would forgive him for yielding to the one sin when the temptation so strongly urged him!

“You know, Bro. Montall,” he said not long after, “you know how I love my little chaps; you know how hard I have tried—for their sake—to be decent and behave myself? Well the other day I met some of my old cronies and they would make me take a friendly glass, jest one, with them,” he said, his eyes filling and weakness and indecision showing all over his face and form, “and I didn’t know I had taken so much,—but when I went home and my chaps run to meet me and says,—‘pap you’ve been drinkin’!—I’d ruther you had stuck a knife through me. I haven’t got over it yet!”

And Mr. Montall had taken a profound interest in the weak man and again urged him to believe in the perfect life. “We are taught to grow more and more perfect until we attain the likeness of Him who is perfect, since we are made in His image and likeness, and a holy life is expected of His children!” Mr. Montall’s position was that man cannot reach the heavenly condition until he leads a righteous life continually.

“But,” Mr. Gofar had urged, “you know what a good man Bro. Ahvallah is?—*he* says we all have our besetting sins, and I reckon that’s mine!” So he was in the gutter again, and Mr. Ahvallah called upon for assistance. What could he do? He had preached to this young man ever since he was old enough to become accountable! The case oppressed him, but he rejected Mr. Montall’s position as error emanating from overzeal. He would place the matter before the church and see.

Boys were rare at Oak House and Illustre was delighted. They were all pleased at the novelty of having two interesting youths who were not afraid of anything

and who were coming back to see them again *sure*, before very long."

Dot informed Mark that her pa sold "sheeps" to buy their new chairs and asked if the boys' pa had any new chairs; and upon being informed that they had none she stated that her pa would give their pa some sheeps and then they could buy some new chairs. The boys laughed merrily and thanked her for her kind intentions. At this juncture Jerry appeared at the door and called for "Miss Dot," and she did not reappear until after supper.

In the morning when the refreshing boys had to go—which was later in the day than they had intended—the girls all walked with them to the stile-blocks, telling them about the flowers, how nice they *had* been, and urging them to come back as soon as they could.

The boys mounted their meek, fat steeds and were gone. But a vision of them both remained with two little maids whose round, fair faces and soft, brown hair shown soberly from the tops of two bib aprons that did not rustle half so much as their owners returned to the house.

They found their parents in close conversation relating to the case of Mrs. Bleeveevl. The mysterious conduct of that woman at the close of the dinner-on-the-ground meeting had disturbed the even tenor of Mr. Ahvallah's mind not a little. The case should be investigated he thought. After due meditation he had requested sleepy Bro. Cobb to see that a committee was appointed to wait upon the sister. Mr. Cobb found it convenient in the course of a few weeks to associate with him upon that committee three prominent church

workers namely: Sister Willan, Len Taffyhorn and Silas Bourd.

One fine day after a fresh shower of honey-dew had fallen upon the broad leaves in the fragrant forest that shaded the road leading to the cabin of Mrs. Bleeveevl, some very rich coffee was steaming before the fire, some very light biscuit was browning under a skillet lid, as an odor of fried ham and fresh eggs rose from the hearth and rolled away. It was almost dinner time. The very kindly voice of a dark-complexioned man, just in from the fields, was saying, as he assisted in drying the cups and saucers:

"I think, Mother, you surely must be mistaken! That feller's got a fambly, en' I heerd 'im say he' lived in Eendiana. I jest want you to be happy and not keer whether it's him or not!"

He spoke in a tender affectionate tone, as if to avoid disturbing the serenity of the mood she was in, but wishing exceedingly that he might relieve her mind of any anxiety upon the subject. But his remarks did not seem to improve matters: she looked at her son with the solemn expression in her eyes, and said, slowly and with a sigh, as she took up a pair of hooks and lifted the skillet lid to look at the biscuit.

"He's ben around a good deal, but he's born south. I know," she continued after she had replaced the lid and shoveled some more coals upon it, as she was hanging the hooks upon the peg, "I know he is the man. I would know 'im by the scar across his under lip; I'd know 'im by that red mole on his nose; I'd know 'im, son, with my eyes shut if he were to speak, or come near enough for me to smell him," she went on with un-

broken earnestness. "The odor is like musty meal and men's old shoes,—you may smile, but the memory of the odor as it comes back is dreadful!"

She shuddered and busied herself about the dinner.

"He is not my father at least, or ef 'e is" the son replied with a sigh, "I don't take after *him*, a bit! I'm my mother's son znyway," he said with an attempt at pleasantry, as he stooped down and looked into her face while he patted her shoulder very gently with his hand.

"No, no, son! *you* never was *his* son. Your father looked different and *was* mighty different! But, son, I was *married* to your father—it was done secretly—but nobody believed it," she added as she looked backward over her troubled life.

"I'm glad you told me that, though," he added quickly; "it ud a made no difference to *me*. You'r the best mother on earth, to me and I'd do"—

At this moment a woman's gay laugh, chorused by two male voices, was heard down the path leading to the front door, and then, Mrs. Willan, unannounced, bounded in at the door. The woman and son both looked up in questioning surprise.

"We've come t' find why we never see Mrs. Bleeveevl at meeting any more?" she began, without formality, as soon as she had entered.

Mrs. Willan liked to show her companions how very smart she could be, as she now proceeded to add another visit to the list they were getting ready for the report to the General Association. (As often as you have done good unto the least of these little one, you have done good unto Me, but as often as you have made a

report of it to the world, verily have you already had your reward!)

They carefully counted the number of calls they had made upon delinquent members in the parish, in their capacity as visiting committee, and duly entered them upon the pages of a little book kept for the purpose.

Mrs. Willan here took from her reticule the small note-book and wrote Mrs. Bleevneevl's name therein.

She then ran over the week's work, pointing her finger at each name until she had counted nine, when she looked up at the brethren saying:

"This'n makes *nine*, and we've got old Ned yet, Cooper's nigger, you know—he'll be *ten*! We've done mighty well, ain't we?"

Mrs. Bleevneevl had not learned what it all meant. She was completely stunned, and loaded down with the flood of unpleasant reminiscences that crowded upon her at sight of one of the company!

"Please excuse me," she said in a subdued voice, "what did you call for? I did not understand."

She addressed Mrs. Willan who sat tapping the little book with her pencil. But Silas Bourd made answer, in that rattling, mushy voice of his:

"We're a callin' upon the back-slidin' of the church, madam."

He paused abruptly, as he saw the woman's face blanch, and then slowly grow red in spots. She tried to speak, but failed entirely and waited a moment.

"A blushin', Sister Bleevneevl, I declare! I thought you's too old fur that! He, he!" laughed Mrs. Willan, as she clapped her hands together and peeped at the brethren through her squinting eyes.

This had the effect of recalling her a little and the hostess said, with an effort,

“I’m not a member of the church—that is, I told them to take my name off, a good while ago—I reckon they did.”

“No, they didn’t,” replied Mrs. Willan spicily, “you’ve been too good pay—we can’t do without you, he, he!”

“I would rather they would do it. I will help what little I can, when I’m needed, but I rather they’d take it off,” replied Mrs. Bleevnevl.

Silas Bourd could neither see nor hear very well, and judged from all he could gather, that the woman was scarcely worth trying to keep, and decided to use his influence to get them to take her name off the books. Some how he felt miserable, and proposed going; but Sister Willan demurred, and looked towards the dinner. At an invitation from the hostess, she removed her sky-scraper and gloves, sprily removed the men’s hats and placed them all upon the bed, as if she compelled them unwillingly to remain, while they both smiled and looked flattered. Again Mrs. B. requested them to érase her name from the church-book.

“Hit’s mighty easy done, madam,” began Silas Bourd, “a pen an’ a leetle ink’s all uts need—an a rope an a leetle knot’s all uts needed fur the man what killed Rawham!” he added as he glanced significantly at the woman’s son.

“I wish you would not say such things as you see frighten my mother so, sir!” remonstrated the son as he drew near to her side.

“Ef yo’ could see the paper I have in my posses-

sion, you wouldn't jaw your betters, young man," Bourd said hotly, his face reddening the while.

"O, Arthur, what is it! What is he saying?" asked Mrs. Bleevneevl, her face now white with apprehension.

"Nothing, Mother, don't listen to him," then rising and steppin' forward he requested Silas Bourd to leave the house. Mr. Bourd retreated towards the door, saying as he did so:

"You'll git hemp around your neck whenever I choose to show the paper," he muttered.

"What paper?"

"A paper Mr. Arthur Bleevneevl dropped and Mr. Hence Fabby picked up a good while ago," he said, with an ugly puffed up look.

"O, I know what you mean! Have *you* got that paper?" Arthur asked, interestedly.

"I've got that paper." He replied, looking as threatening as possible with his horrid countenance.

"Hurry up!" interrupted Mrs. Willan, we've got the ole nigger to call on yet:—he's sick, and old, and attended regular as any of the members:—come, we must go."

After they had finished the hearty repast and were again upon their horses, Silas Bourd said, as he looked questioningly at the others:—"I think we ort to scratch 'er."

"So do I," coincided Taffyhorn. "She never goes, no how!—least, *I* never see 'er there."

"Well, next Saturday's church meetin', might as well ten' to it then as any time," said Mrs. Willan.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## SATURDAY'S WORSHIP. ILLUSTRE'S DISAPPOINTMENT.

The sky was cloudless and the air serene. Everything seemed to suggest that it was church meeting time, and that tomorrow would be Sunday. Jerry had brought his big-toothed comb from the stables to have in readiness for the morrow when he would doze upon some sunny side, "loosen the snoods" and comb the tangles from his wiry hair. Tasks were falling from the shoulders of men who had measured out all the burdens they could carry for the week. It was the eve of a day when all respectable farmers and their hands, and farmer's wives might actually fold their hands and dare to meditate.—Provided the wives had no hungry people to feed and there were no other "oxen in the ditch" that she alone must extricate. But this was Saturday, and an ox large enough for a barbecue was in the ditch and the woman for the work at her post.

Old Whipstock and buggy were at the fence. Two horses with side-saddles upon their backs stood meekly near by half asleep with their heads hanging and a hind foot resting on the tip of the toe. The only sign of animation was in the occasional switching of their bushy tails when a hungry green fly began vigorously sinking its shaft into the flank, prospecting for blood in Artesian fashion. There were horses hitched in close juxtaposition to these two, in the order of their arrival. Old Bro. Steambergen's carriage was waiting by the buggy house with Fly, the colored boy in the back seat, com-

pelled to indulge in a literal "looking backward," and at the same time observing about as little literally as metaphorically, for he usually slept until called to when upon a journey.

Mr. Montall and Mark had arrived. Mark was riding his own pony and "looked awful nice" Illustre thought as she watched their arrival. She at once hurried into the little room where the girls were dressing for church and began making her own toilet.

Virginia was donning a pale blue chambre, a dress her mother had conceived would be becoming to her while assisting Sibyl at the churn. She had estimated that the present lot of butter together with the last would finish paying for the black silk for Antoinette and also cover the entire expense of a chambre for Virginia. The chambre had proved just what V. wanted, and she had finished it with a lovely border of rich embroidery flouncing for the skirt and sleeves. She felt very sweet and pretty in the new "love of a thing," and smiled and blushed when she or the dress received any of the many compliments offered her that day.

Miss Amanda Steambergen who was not so young as she had been, was still a gay young woman and could play more pranks than any fifteen year old school girl. She was so habitually gay that good-natured lines had stationed themselves about the outer angles of the eyes, nose and mouth.

Fly had driven the rig round to the front fence and Miss Amanda called upon him to fly to the carriage and get the satchel before I've time to say "Jack Robinson." "It's half past nine an' it'll take me every inch of the time to dress fit to look at!"

She was a rapid talker but her tones were emphatic, each word set out by itself and ended in a resonant, vibrating twang.

"Give me that box—I know I shall not be ready! Stand before me, sis!" she whispered as she caught at Illustre's dress. That little girl being just in the act of putting on her hoops, became entangled in them and dancing and shuffling half across the room finally tumbled just as she reached Miss Amanda's side, and a little too soon to furnish the desired screen for her.

One of the windows had been left open and Mr. Ahvallah had actually passed; but he walked by unconscious of the spectacle, for he was thinking upon his text.

"Which mus' I pit on first, my hoops or my petticoat?" questioned Illustre as she rose from the floor.

"Why, my little honey!" said Miss Amanda with her warmest enthusiasm and trying to conceal her amusement, "you sweet *pet*,—why, put on your hoops first, you poor, dear *sugar!*"

"Bring me the other box," Miss Amanda continued after giving Illustre the desired information,—“the box with the saucer. That's it, ha, ha, ua!”

When the paint was handed her she applied the contents liberally. Virginia was next requested to help her with her corset.

"Pull the strings a little—just a little."

Virginia was already pulling with all her strength, but found it necessary to call upon Evangel for assistance. They were both swaying to and fro with all their might when Miss Amanda said:

"I don't believe—in—lacing—not one bit. I never—lace—I think it's vulgar. Now; once more—tie it;—

there. And I don't think it's *right* either." She then put on her bask.

"I've eaten *such* a breakfast. I always do when I come to Sister Ahvallah's!"

By dint of much tugging and pulling the dress waist was fastened, the sleeves and skirt brushed down when she began again with the saucer—retouching lips and cheeks and ears, until the long, tapering finger's ends were as carmine as her features. While doing all this she kept up a good-natured chat in solo, setting out each word alone and firing another after it immediately so that none of them had any opportunity of becoming lonesome.

"I do say, upon my word, they'll all take me for an Indian! They'll say when they see me coming: 'I'll vow if that ain't an Indian,—she's painted herself right red!'"

Antoinette was quietly arranging the bands of her dark, chestnut hair and storing it away in a simple knot at the back of her head. Her dress was a plain, black silk, sleeveless, low at the neck and ornamented with rose-buds secured by a coral pin that matched dainty ear-drops of the same ruby hue. The minister's daughters had finished their toilet and were waiting for Miss Amanda when there was a rap at the door and a voice called:

"Hurry up girls, they want to get off a little early today; your father says there's lots of business on hands today."

"All *right*! We'll be out in a wink, looking as sweet as oysters," replied Miss Amanda at random, and then

added in an undertone: "I orto a said *lobsters*, ort'nt I, An?"

There was another knock at the door. But it was not Mrs. Ahvallah this time, but cousin Harry who was unaware of the presence of visitors. Miss Amanda screamed, and then remembered that she was dressed and ready to meet people, when she rushed to the door and gave him a hearty greeting.

"Harry Crozefete, upon my word! Everybody's glad to see you. I'm so glad *you've* come!"

Every body did like good old cousin Harry because he was always happy and therefore pleasant to have round. He smiled his assent. He was always well dressed, with an unconscious air about him that made him seem unaware of the manner in which he was dressed. He owned a fine farm adjoining the village and some of the young women and planning mamas thought of him and the farm in connection with a happy wife and so forth.

"Goody, *goody!*" exclaimed Antoinette in a childish way. "We are all going horseback and will have a fine time."

Mr. Montall and several of the brethren had gone to their horses. Mark was still under the shade trees and seemed to be waiting for younger company before mounting his pony. Mr. Steamberger had sent Fly round with the crriage long ago, and cousin Harry was walking about the veranda, waiting for the girls when he espied Mrs. Ahvallah at the entrance to the dining-room.

"Hello, Aunt Hebe; I declare, if you don't beat all! What you fixin' up so for? Look at that side-board!"

"Well, Harry!" she interrupted, "why, when did you come?"

She was wiping her hands preparatory to a handshake when a voice from the front door called out:

"Come on, come on,—hurry the young ladies up, Harry, will you? They are *so* slow."

"You'll be back to dinner," said the hostess, "and then we can talk?"

Harry walked to the dressing-room door and called out:

"Folks all out of patience;—come along, come along.—You're pretty enough, come on. Do you hear?"

"Now, I jest know, upon my word, you are going to take *me* Harry, *ain't* you?—Don't you say no!" began Miss Amanda shaking her finger at him, "for I've primped and primped. I'll wager my new bonnet you come by to take me to church." This remark set all the buds and ferns upon the top of her bonnet in the wildest commotion, bobbing and quivering as she spoke.

"What a flower garden!" exclaimed Harry Crozefete, holding up both hands as the girls and new dresses and flowers and perfumes and pretty faces all came rustling out upon the veranda; and in reply to Miss Amanda's question he said:

"Yes, certainly, certainly, of course I did."

She had taken Mrs. Ahvallah's riding habit.

"You can go with Paw in the carriage and let me have your horse, can't you?" Miss Amanda went on, and when the habit was adjusted she put her long arms round Antoinette's pretty shoulders and added while she patted her on the back:

"Ain't that jest the thing, sugar-plum?"

"O, I guess so,—we can both ride horseback, though. Virginia can ride with Pa. and besides, my company's engaged." she continued with a smile.

Miss Amanda pressed her hands together and laughed as they all started out, and said:

"Wont we be gay couples though,—Harry and Amanda—Au. and"— She paused and looked roguishly at Antoinette.

"I didn't say who," she replied, blushing.

"He, he, he—a! This child's company is *engaged!*" laughed Miss Amanda as she cast a roguish look at her escort.

"Take good care of Harry" said Mrs. Ahvallah pleasantly as they moved out of the door. They all looked back. There was a pretty glow upon her cheeks.

"Why, aunt Hebe," said Harry, you get younger all the time, I declare! I never saw the like! You're the best looking girl you've got."

"O, you flatter me! I don't find much time for pretty looks! I leave that to the girls," replied his aunt pleasantly.

She hurried back into the dining room to complete preparations for dinner.

Mrs. Ahvallah was called by the sisters of the church a "mighty stirrin' little woman," and she had some ambition to keep up her reputation for thrift.

In physical altitude, Mrs. A. reached to her husband's shoulders, and to his head in intellect. Her complexion was of the sea-shell kind in pink and white, with chestnut hair, that dipped up and down on her square, upright forehead in pretty waves, and which hung in large ringlets about her neck, upon week-days,

but which was drawn back into the plainest, soberest knot upon church days, or when guests were expected. But the temples exposed the fact and everybody knew the hair must curl, with the least permission to do so.

She believed fully in the goodness and greatness of her husband, and loved him as few women continue to love their husbands through life. She encouraged him in most of his views of life and religion, but was not very sectarian in her own beliefs.

There were a few introductions in the front room before they all moved out to the stile-blocks. The old folks talked of the fine weather, and the prospect for the meeting.

Miss Amanda was putting on childish airs and feeling really gay and happy at having the delightful prospect of a ride horseback with Harry all to herself. Harry, understanding the situation quite as well as she did and doing all in his power to make the occasion pleasant for her, played the gallant in a most charming manner.

Antoinette came next, and a tall, angular fellow with pale blue eyes, hung over her in a patronizing way that came rather from a peculiar kind of diffidence that was a natural characteristic than altogether from devotion. The young girl's head was slightly averted for the purpose of avoiding her father's eyes that would turn that way, although busily engaged in conversation meanwhile with his friends.

Illustre had been promised a ride by herself horseback to-day. Blaze, a very attractive family mare, was brought out. Blaze was dun in color and quite globe-shaped about the chest. She had a stumpy, ungaited

trot, and looked a little ill-natured, and time-vexed about the nostrils, and the outer angles of her eyes. Her mouth, too, showed signs of the bit, and she had long lost ambition to hold up her nether lip. Blaze had been a yearly source of income to the family for a long time. But after all, she appeared pretty snug, as Jerry—with his eyebrows a little drawn up and his face a little drawn down, in an effort to reconcile general appearance and smuggle a smile—led her forth to the stile-blocks, and hitched her a little off and isolated from the rest.

“What’s *that* for, Jerry?” questioned Mr. Ahvallah, with a puzzled scrutiny at Old Blaze, and a peculiar, doubtful look at his wife’s “old”, rather tattered side-saddle whose skirts turned up with every breeze, and whose girth was drawn so tight it made the bulky proportions look uncomfortable.

Jerry did not look up, but simply answered:

“Miss ‘Lustre,’” and then frowned a little to head off the smile that was struggling for expression.

“Humph!” grunted Mr. Ahvallah with a half smile when he had comprehended, and again turned his attention to his friends after cautioning Jerry:

“Hadn’t you better loosen the girth a little? Blaze don’t like a tight belt and then it is pretty old and might break!”

Illustre came switching out presently towards the stile-blocks. She had succeeded in dressing herself without assistance,—except that volunteered by Miss Amanda,—or even attention from any. She hopped about in her short dress and new leghorn hat as important as anyone present. The pale, flimsy, flouncy dress

reached to her knees and the wide rim of her hat bobbed and changed position continually with the motions and extra airs of the little lady. She was in as great a flutter of anticipation of her ride as any of the older ones could have been, for she felt sure Mark would ride with her to church. He was just about the right size to wait upon her and they would make such a snug couple she thought, and if he talked very nice to her, why shouldn't she just tell him she liked him and get engaged that very day? Did not her sweet mamma get married when only about four years older?

By the time she had gone half-way down the path, she could almost imagine he had been thinking as she had been and smiled very sweetly and confidently as Mark came up from the shade trees trimming a switch he had cut.

Illustre's leghorn hat showed signs of renewed agitation and two very happy eyes peeped from beneath its extensive rim with a very pleased expression in their sparkling depths.

How handsome Mark looked in that suit, she thought, and "what nice company I mean to be."

Just at this time Mark came up, but to her surprise and consternation he gathered up his whip, closed his knife hurriedly, adjusted his hat, passed her without a word, hurried forward and joined Virginia upon the left, —much to the amusement of that young woman and the utter depression of the little girl in the flouncy, short dress.

Jerry led Blaze up for her to mount. Jerry, hateful thing, was still struggling to preserve his gravity as a

glance at his face proved as she lightly sprang into the cozy old saddle.

She had scarcely settled herself, pulled down her skirts which the air seemed determined to keep tossed up, and succeeded in getting her foot into the strap above the stirrup, when a horse and rider, conveying a lot of silence and an odor of tobacco and musty clothes glided up by her side. Blaze backed her ears, made a wry face and bit furiously at the horse's head thrust so close and so patronizingly by her own, while the rider simply stopped by Illustre's side without a word or sign. She looked up. It was Hence Fabby.

Mr. Ahvallah seeing the situation, made for the spot without delay.

"Honey", he said, going close up to Illustre and speaking in a low tone, having marked the disgusted and perplexed look upon the child's pretty face, "let him go along, it won't make any difference—it would hurt his mother's feelings, to refuse: You know how easy she is to offend."

But noting in her face an indignant flush, he placed his hand upon hers and said, in his kindest tones:

"Well if you don't want him to ride with you to church just let Jerry have the horse!" and then aloud, "I think the girth is too tight any way, and I'm afraid you might get a fall. You may go next time and ride Whipstock."

Illustre's countenance had lost its illumination. The eyes were downcast, and the little one's hat brim motionless! But the eyes and mouth expressed a degree of indignation, impossible otherwise to make known.

"He shouldn't go with me to save his life!" she finally said as she climbed into her father's arms. He placed her upon the stiles, saying:

"You shall go to town with your old *Fod* to-morrow, and ride Antoinette's pony, and get you a new dress."

Then he directed Jerry to remove the saddle and take the mare to the stable; and to conciliate Hence, who had remained apparently indifferent while quietly watching the whole performance, he said pleasantly:

"This is a fine day, Mr. Fabby."

The boy managed to reply, feebly.

"Yez—sir."

"Will your father and mother go out to church to-day?"

"Yez sir, I reckon."

Mr. Ahvallah went on; and Illustre walked back to the house, without even turning her head. And when the others were all riding through the sweet scented forest toward church, a little girl was lying upon the sofa in the big room, crying as if her heart would break.

But Virginia did not ride with the dark-eyed young man who walked with her upon the right side, nor with Mark who thought to rival him upon the left; for Miss Steambergen had appropriated her horse and she was consigned to a seat in Bro. Steambergen's carriage.

The young man with the black eyes and soft mustache, and the tall young man with the pale blue eyes were from the village with the dry goods store, &c., and thought that the scent of musk and barber washes sufficient compensation, or apology, at least, for any lack of education. After assisting Virginia into the carriage

with disappointed grace, the little man with the black eyes mounted his black pony; put spurs to his sides and started off at a speed faster than V. had ever seen any one ride before. He rounded the slope of the first lane leading to the prairie lane which joined it at right angles half a mile away, and was spinning along that thoroughfare at the most reckless speed, by the time they had all mounted and moved off.

Virginia, full of poetry and romance, was filled with enthusiastic admiration by this exhibition of horsemanship and set him down in her heart as a hero or knight of honor. While mentally framing a poem of the occasion and sitting very erect by the side of Bro. Steambergen and looking far over the wide prairie, her attention was suddenly called down by a remark from the man by her side.

"That feiler'll break his neck—or the horse's—or both! He's one of them reckless chaps that don't care much what they do, I reckon!"

He was pulling in his own team very carefully as he spoke, causing them to halt and move very carefully, until they had turned the corner. He was his own driver upon this occasion, and presently stormed out with,—

"Don't you go to sleep, you rascal!" and after waiting a moment and receiving no answer, he pulled up short with,

"Whoa!" and then called out:

"Fly, *Fly!*—you rascal, you! You ain't asleep, are you?"

"No, sah," came a soft husky voice from the seat at the back of the carriage.

"Does he ever go to sleep while you are traveling?" asked Virginia, with a look of alarm.

"O Lord, yes!" he responded as he urged his team forward again, "I have to strap him on, when we've a journey before us!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Virginia.

"Yes, Miss," he continued earnestly, "we dropped him once, between High Hill and Beaver Dam, and left him a mile or more behind; and when we went back—we was in a mighty hurry too—and if you'll believe me, the jolt hadn't phased him! He was sound asleep, and thought when I waked him, it was morning and time to get up!"

Virginia was much amused at this recital, but felt that she must watch a little with her ears and be able to call his attention in case she should hear anything drop. She could hear behind them the sound of horses' hoofs, and there appeared a long train of young men and women chatting pleasantly and cantering gaily churchward.

The last in the line, but not the least, were Bro. Pewlett and his daughter Permelia. The former was dressed in a yellow duster, wide, woolly "jeans" pants and a low-crowned felt hat. The latter wore a yellow riding skirt and dress bonnet trimmed with several colors of ribbon and a variety of flowers and buds. She was seated upon a clay-bank mare, and carried in her right hand a whip of the sincere specimen called cow-hide, which constantly rattled against the mare's right flank in so rigid a manner that the very ungaited trot did not break or lag, and which kept the weak-legged late colt constantly engaging its utmost energies to keep within

sight. The youthful equestrienne forgot this charge, so enthused had she been with the prospect of beaux. She was the eldest daughter just as Antoinette was, and *Antoinette* had beaux.

Permelia's father rode a trotter also but with a longer gait which made him go up while she went down, and vice versa, in very unrhythmic intervals and pretty quick succession. There would be a decrease of convergence in mathematical order until the heads would bob in unison a time or two and in their maximum of highest rebound. Mr. Pewlett being upon a sway-back horse made up the difference in height. Then the difference would increase again until one would be up while the other went down and so on until they reached the meeting house. But their horses were fat and sober and served their purpose very well for they kept up with the carriages and buggy before and the train of cavalry behind and arrived at church with the rest in due time and in good order.

Evangel had a disrelish for church meetings and asked to be allowed to remain at home; but to please her father went with him in the buggy.

There would be ample time, thought Mrs. Ahvallah who remained at home, for the business meeting would prolong services and give her full four hours for the preparation of one of her rare, rich church meeting feasts. She had tied on a large, blue-check apron, set Sibyl to peeling apples and sent Jerry to the stables to gather up all the eggs he could find in the hay loft.

By the time she had a few things for the table and while she was placing them conveniently upon the sideboard, there came from the stable the sound of great

cackling and screaming from disturbed hens, and presently Jerry appeared with a school basket full of fresh eggs.

Mrs. Ahvallah was an artist in table dressing. She spread one of her daintiest white linen cloths over a white flannel undercloth which she considered a great necessity, and arranged upon it immaculately clean, white china in the most inviting and tempting manner and in faultless abundance.



## CHAPTER XXII.

## VICARIOUS ATONEMENT SERMON.

The following outline of a sermon portrays the extent to which the doctrine of evil as an entity and necessity had reached before the dawn of the present Spiritual enlightenment.)—

("When thy firm soul  
Hath shaken off these tangled oracles,  
Which ignorantly guide, then shall it soar  
To higher planes.")

Mr. Ahvallah had meant to be among the first to arrive at church, but many had already reached the place.

Miss Amanda who had kept up a lively chattering all the way, duly arrived with the rest of the train from Oak House. Harry Crozefete in utter disregard of rural church etiquette, took a seat by her side in the woman's section. Miss Amanda's fan taking the place of her tongue wagged incessantly, vigorously expressing the vivacity and youthfulness of that young woman.

The house was almost filled. The wise heads of the church were in their places. Silas Bourd adorned the amen corner with his personality, while he sluggishly meditated upon the effect it would produce upon Mrs. Bleeveevl when she found herself "excluded" and her favorite son accused of murder! He did not believe Arthur B. guilty, but did believe that the fatal paper in his possession might be used to convict him. The writing was in Arthur's hand and the paper had been lost by him! He rolled his tobacco quid from one side to the other as he almost smiled to think of the ridicu-

lousness of the situation. Sister Willan sat near the midway bar that separated the sexes with her elbow upon the strip and entertained Mr. Taffyhorn who occupied the pew immediately over the line. George Pewlett sat all alone indulging in the tobacco habit. Absalom Peters and his brother sat during the entire sermon with their attention directed towards the group from Oak House. Mr. Fabby very newly shaved, sat very upright and looked important. Hence was scarcely recognizable, so small and clean he looked and so religious. He was so meek looking and unobtrusive that strangers set him down as a very good boy. Father Good occupied a corner pew; all who knew him knew also that the dear old lady was there somewhere; nobody had discovered where.



BRO. FABBY.

A song was started by the choir, composed of Bros. Bourd and Fabby, first an octave too low and then an octave too high ere they calmly launched out upon a happy medium, when Sister Willan and then several other sisters ventured to join their voices in "Sweet prospects, sweet birds and sweet flowers, have all lost their sweetness to me," etc.

Arthur Bleevneevl who had found a seat far back in the audience, sat thinking of Miss Amanda and the happiness Mr. Crozefete must experience so near her coveted presence. He would have given much to have had such a privilege. Mr. Bleevneevl had seen little of the world and had loved no woman but his mother until thrown into the society of Miss Steambergen at the minister's house. Her fresh complexion and vivacious manner were very different from his tan face and modest way.

Evangel felt that a pair of eyes were looking at her from the male side of the church. She infringed upon one of the most exacting rules of etiquette her mother had established, by glancing in that direction. Her heart gave a bound when she beheld the Montall boy with the speaking eyes and the fine countenance looking that way! The warm blood mounted to her cheeks and ears as she turned away her look, and she remained very quiet for a long time thinking.

There was a long prayer, then another sleepy song and then the pastor who was the tallest and youngest of the three clergymen, stepped forward to the stand. He closed his eyes, folded his hands together until the finger ends touched, and said in a firm, earnest voice amid impressive silence:

“Let us all try to pray.”

There was a gentle rustling of garments and those who did not kneel bowed their heads to await the amen of another long and beseeching prayer, the length of the Prayer of prayers many times repeated. But the people were slow to hear and needed “line upon line and precept upon precept.” It is written: “God winked at,” or waited patiently until the time of their ignorance should give place to the higher development before the application of critical judgment.

At the close of the prayer the petitioner stood before his audience, his fine countenance aglow with the subject in mind he was about to present, and apparently unconscious of his own personal appearance. He read a chapter from the Bible, repeated his text and began:

“It is with convictions of my inadequateness and unworthiness that I come before you today, fellow travelers to the eternal world, to present for your consideration the great, the all-important subject of the sacrificial atonement of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

“My text upon this occasion, I have selected from the eighth of Romans, seventh verse, which reads as follows: ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God.’

“I have divided my subject this morning into three principal parts:

“First. Christ died for sinners!

“Second. All men are sinners!

“Third and lastly. Therefore Christ died for you!

“‘God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ I want you my breth-

ren and sisters, to aid me with your prayers while I shall attempt to present this subject for your consideration today.

“Man, created by a perfect God must have been originally perfect. But in partaking of the forbidden fruit he abused the glorious privileges of his birth-right by disobeying the righteous covenant of his Creator, thus rendering it impossible for men of themselves to do aught to regain their original purity and divine favor.

“They have wandered farther and farther away, seeking in the doctrines of men for salvation, and in men-made devices seeking to establish the institutions of divine worship.

“The reptile, the crocodile, the calf—anything but the true God—they have turned their thoughts upon with worshipful intent. Thus has vice been wrought into a ceremony, and the greatest crime—that of idolatry—into a religion! But worldly devices and worldly wisdom faileth.

“Then it was that God beholding the lost and ruined state of man sent His only begotten Son to bear the sins of the whole world. He was rejected of most men and received by only a few!

“The Jew made him a stumbling block and the Greek accounted it foolishness. Aside from Greek or Jew thousands stumble at it though Christ died for all. The Jew went devoutly to his temple, gave tithes of all he had, fasted twice a week; his shoulders bent beneath his self-imposed yoke of ceremony. The wide philactery was a sign of their distinction. The Pharisee disliked the Saducee with no forms at all, scorned the temple upon Mount Gerezim and despised the people of Sa-

maria, while *he* stood up for *himself* and his Synagogue. When he heard of the advent of our blessed Savior he asked who he was! The carpenter's son! His mother's name Mary! What presumption! They had expected a great king decked in jewels and brilliant colors! But instead He came in simple garments and plain speech saying:

“Woe unto you, Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites!”

“May God save the poor Jew from the terror of the curse he has invoked!—‘His blood be upon us and our children’ was his own invocation.

“How many in this audience are looking arrogantly to many things and neglecting their only means of salvation? We cannot but grieve at the indifference of our fellow men concerning the things that pertain to their eternal welfare! Perfect in the day of creation we weep as doth the Jew over the broken walls of his beloved Jerusalem!

“The mind that was created holy has become carnal and is at enmity against its Creator. O, that you all may be convinced by the Holy Ghost of the exceeding *sinfulness of sin*, that you may all plead guilty before God and fly to Jesus for deliverance! For man is corrupt—so that his nature is totally depraved. This sinful nature has been handed down from Adam through many generations.

“The carnal mind is enmity against God;—not *at* enmity, but *is* enmity itself; it is not sinful, but is sin itself; it is not black, but blackness itself; not corrupt, but corruption. Its natural state is that of rebellion against God. The heart of man is sin in the concrete, evil in the very essence; it is the distillation, the quint-

essence of all that is vile. It is itself enmity against God.

“Man is not charged with despising only the laws of Jehovah, but our text says: ‘The heart of man *is enmity against* God himself, the very *person* of the Godhead, the Deity, the maker of all things. The words of the text are solemn words and well arranged by that inspired master of eloquence, Paul, and dictated by the Holy Spirit.

“Since it is written in God’s work that the carnal mind is enmity against God, it needs no proof and we must as Christian men and women bow before it, for the words of Scripture are the words of Infinite wisdom, and if reason cannot see the ground for my statement of revelation it is bound most reverently to believe it. It is above human reason. But if you needed proofs, I would have only to open the scrolls of history to show the exceeding wickedness of man. Read the dark list of sin told in tales of wars and murders, of the prowling wolves of infidelity,—of philosophers who work evil with their arts; of kings and rulers who are led away by ambition of pomp and power, in view of which we are led, as we contemplate, to exclaim with the Prophet, ‘There is none good, no, not one!’

“Look at the benighted heathen bowing down to wood and stone and vile reptiles. The most horrid obscenities are to them sacred rites.

“And again: the best men have always been the most ready to acknowledge their own depravity. David said: ‘Behold I am shapen in iniquity,’ and Paul said: ‘O wretched man that I am and when I would do good, lo, evil is present.’

“Place your own conscience upon the witness stand;—what does it say:

“The carnal mind is enmity against God. We call our little ones innocent, and so they are, of actual transgression; but, as the poet says, ‘Within each breast there lies a stone!’ and even the infant at its mother’s breast is totally depraved because it has Adam’s transgression yet in its heart.

“There are men born in the world who seem to lead even lives and walk uprightly before men: master spirits like lofty Colossi, greater than common men; philosophers, statesmen, poets; but of all these, unless they have accepted the terms of salvation, it must be said, (The carnal mind is enmity against God.)

“You may sit with the Lord’s people, even at his table; you may peaceably hear the word of grace in all its purity of doctrine, attended by a holy unction from on high, but if that holy unction does not rest upon you, all is in vain. The carnal mind is enmity, &c.

“If you have not been regenerated, born again, your carnal mind is enmity,” &c.

(At this point in his sermon, Mr. Ahvallah’s countenance glowed with the intensity and earnestness of purpose, for it was his great desire to be the humble instrument in the hands of God to help men to turn from the error of their way. This plan of showing up the horrors of evil and its results, founded on man’s natural depravity, was thought to be the way to get men to drop back helplessly on Jesus. They did not seem to know that the *knowledge* of good and *evil*, the very thing they taught, is *the forbidden fruit*, that entails death. They claim, too, that the world has been waxing worse

and worse, under this preaching. Is it not a *wonder* they have not tried same other?)

“Methinks I hear one say,” continued the preacher. “But I have stood upon the mountain top, when my whole soul was aglow, and I have uttered songs of praise, saying ‘These are Thy works, Parent of Good.’

“But, remember, what is true one day is not false another! ‘The carnal,’ &c., *at all times*. (Such poetic ecstasy is no sign of regeneration.)

“It has been asked what part of man was injured in the fall. Let me quote from the 9th article of the creed of the Church of England, upon ‘Birth Sin.’

“Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, but it is the fault and corruption of the very nature of every man, that naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own *nature inclined* to evil, so that the flesh lusteth *always* contrary to the spirit, and, therefore, in every person born into the world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that *are regenerated*, whereby the lust of the flesh (called in Greek ‘*phronema sarkos*’) which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God.’

“And though there is *no condemnation* for them that *believe* and are baptised, yet the apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.

“I wish I might make you all see the exceeding sinfulness of sin! If thine heart is against God thou art ut-

terly sinful. Added to the sin of commission is the sin of omission.

“Do you despise God for sending His only begotten son to die a cruel death for you?”

“Lastly: If the carnal mind is enmity against God, then salvation cannot be by merit, or works of man; it must be by grace. Salvation is by grace alone. The necessity of an entire change of our nature is then clear. The atonement must be worked through substitution by Jesus Christ the holy Son of God. Being utterly lost you have no power to please God and no claim upon his mercy.

“And now some of you may be convinced of sin by the Holy Ghost. I will endeavor to show you the way of salvation. The way is open ever, the terms easy, so easy, so inviting! Turn thy tearful eyes to Mt. Calvary; see the sacrificial atonement for your transgression!

“View the Savior in His agony with streams of blood purchasing thy soul, and with agony enduring thy punishment! He died for thee; he sweat great drops of blood for thee, and will save thee if thou wilt now confess thy guilt, and lay thy burden of sin upon him! One look will save! One look unto Calvary, O, penitent sinner, and thou mayest live! Hear the voice of the innocent Redeemer—‘Look!’ ‘Look unto Me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth!’

“Will you come? It is only a look in the right way. Will you not come?”

The sermon had lasted for an hour and a half. The visiting preachers felt the fervent words. With uplifted faces bathed in the consciousness of salvation for

themselves, their eyes ran languidly over the people's faces, with a look of mingled sorrow and rebuke at the wickedness of the thoughtless young people under the gospel so plainly set forth.

The preacher took out his handkerchief, wiped the streaming perspiration from his face and neck; and elevating his brows as he looked over his congregation, he continued in a softened tone, and very pleadingly: "Will you not come? Will you hear the gentle wooing of the Savior's voice and come? *Now* is the accepted time: *to-morrow* may be too late!"

Evangel was glad the sermon interested the people, because she loved her father; but she saw something very unreasonable in the very orthodox argument. These words ran through the depths of her mind: "God made us in His image, and we are His own work. If He *is* all-powerful and all-good *we cannot fall*, even if we try to! That is all *imaginary*. If men will imagine wicked doings they will do wicked things; but if they choose to imagine good, they will do good. Jesus came to set us a *perfect example*, and people will be all right when they follow it, and not before. It would not be right for innocent Jesus to bear the burden of our sins."

Again the splendid eyes met her look, and her thoughts leaped from the thoughts of blood and crime into the light and liberty of an illuminated fancy. Joseph Montall wasn't at all scared at the sermon, and yet he had great respect for her father's sincerity. She read this in a single look. One sweep of the eye may gather information which volumes of written words fail to accurately communicate.

The soaring eagle grasps more in one high sail and

magnificent outlook, than the busy ant perceives in a century of experiences.

"Do look at Harry!" exclaimed Miss Amanda, giving Evangel such a poke with her elbow that it almost over-balanced her. She was a little tired and hungry herself, but lost considerable interest in the occasion, and had relapsed into a semi-dozing state, from which the poke sharply roused her.

*Do* look, Sugar!—Ain't 'e *too cute* for anything? Wouldn't I like to pinch 'im!" And following the word with the action, continued: "Excuse me; couldn't help it to *save* my life; you was beginning to snore.

Sure enough cousin Harry had smuggled himself into the corner of the pew and was actually nodding when she pinched his arm. Many in the audience showed signs of weariness, and some who occupied cozy corners nodded not a little. The preacher descended and stood in front of the pulpit. He invited those who wished for the prayers of the church to come forward and Bro. Bourd would pray for them. A good many wept but no one came.

Bro. Peters who had become "too full for utterance," or rather to "*prevent* utterance," suddenly rose, stepped upon the platform and in tears and agitated voice began an impassioned exhortation before the song "Come humble sinner, etc.," was reached.

He wore the same summer suit of striped linen, with pants abbreviated and coat too low in the neck. But his zeal and earnestness made even these seem to savor of religious ardor, while his high, narrow forehead bulging at the top seemed to give "point" to his words. His wife was not in the audience. She said the new church

was "*too fine for her!*" and so she remained with the smaller children at home.

Bro. Peters made gestures with his whole body, and a very active little body it was. His hair fell about his forehead in graceful negligé, while his coat skirts flew like whip-lashes. He struck upon the Bible with his fists at intervals of emphatic remark so that both the desk and the book were cleared of the last remnant of dust, while his voice increased in tension till it reached its highest pitch.

In his zeal—(he was a zealous man and profoundly sincere and honest in his intentions) he ran over the entire thread of the preacher's discourse, in the hope of presenting the importance of the subject in what he considered a still stronger light. Mr. Peters had been reared in the South with a plantation of negroes and much of their peculiar accent lingered in his speech.

"When I rise befo' you my bren, sistez, to try to speak a few words in reggard to the subject befo' you, I feel mo' like putting my han' upon my mouf an' crying 'Holy, holy Lawd! God of Isrile!'" He drew forth his handkerchief, blew his nose, wiped his eyes as if a part of the performance and continued:

"Wlen I considadah bren, sistez, the great love whah with He loved us and give His only begotten Son to hang on the cruel tree of the cross to save sech po' sinnahs as we, ah, I feel mo' like gittin' down in the dust at the foot of the cross than risin' up to talk to others about these things."

Finally he lowered his voice to the starting pitch and continued: "And to you my friendly sinnah, I would warn you; turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

Tomorrow may fine yo' place no mo' forever! 'Let the wicked forsake his way and the ungodly man his thoughts, and return unto the Lawd who will have musy upon him.

"But, ah, my friendly sineaah, you who ah often re-proved and stiffen yo' neck and hodden yo' haht! *ah*, it is time you was a thinkin' about these things."

Addressing the brethren, he continued: "Let us watch and pray, bren, sistez, and see to it that as for *me*, let others do as they will or may, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lawd. O, may He save us all and make us all the objects of His amazing musy I add no mo."

Mr. Peters taugt the highest he had reached. He was a man of property and was really a person of influence in his neighborhood, for he was a conscientious man. He belonged to a good old stock whose record was without blemish, and upon whose simple "yea" and "nay" rested the implicit confidence of all who knew them.

It all ended at last and the people dried their tears. When emotion and self-pity ceases there is nothing to excite weeping for one's self.

Then the business meeting was arranged for. A bachelor with a permanent blush upon his face filled the chair of church clerk. "Business" began by his reading the minutes of the last meeting. The minutes were adopted by unanimous vote.

This was the bachelor of means who had thought Antoinette so heartless; and he kept his eyes diligently upon the paper, lest he might look upon forbidden fruit.

"Are there any committees to report?" asked the

pastor who was ex-officio chairman of the meeting. Bro. Bourd rose and stated the result of their call upon Sister Bleevneevl, adding it as his opinion that she "ort to be handled."

Mr. Ahvallah was at first surprised, but left it to the brethren, who in turn left it to the committee, "who ought to be acquainted with the case," to say what should be done. Mr. Bourd considered her a backslider and a drawback to the progress of the cause. Mr. Taffyhorn coincided and Mrs. Willan would have no voice. When it was found that the woman had expressed the desire to have her name taken off, nothing more was said for or against it, and the church clerk was directed to enter the usual words of exclusion and erase her name from the church book. He slowly drew a black line through the heart of Mrs. Bleevneevl's name and crucified it,—forming "the cross" by a perpendicular dash of his pen! All crosses are crucifixions. Mr. Bourd drew a long breath and sat unto the close with a thoughtful frown between his bloodshot eyes.

"Is there any other business?"

A slim, blonde man arose from the back seat. He turned very pale when he began speaking:

"I haint a member here; but I jist want to say to Mr. Ahvallar, thar, that ef his new church is too orthodox for Pap's folks to preach in, then since he's ben a sendin' an' sendin' arter our apples when his'n run out a feedin' of his meetin' folks so much, an' ef Uncle Baldy, our preacher, ain't orthodox enough to preach in this here church, then Pap says our apples hain't orthodox neither." It was Mrs. Fabby's brother Mart who spoke. The speaker had almost concluded his remarks

before Mr. Ahvallah or any one comprehended what he was saying. His remark elicited no comment; and when there were no more committees to report and no unfinished business on hands the motion for adjournment was suggested. "Adjournment!" It was a refreshing word and thrilled the hearts of many with joy.

The motion was made by a hungry brother who had taken no active part in the proceedings.

"I second the motion," said Brother Pewlett, as he partially arose without half unwinding his long self and with a humbly, important and appropriate look.

"It has been moved and seconded that we adjourn to meet in this place a month hence, the Lord willing. Those in favor say aye," said Mr. Ahvallah in his clear, deep voice. The "ayes" had it all their way.

After the Doxology and the dismissal prayer, the people stretched their stiffened limbs, smiled upon acquaintances and began the usual handshaking and talking. Everybody invited everybody else to take dinner with him or her. And it was a pleasing subject, they had fasted so long.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TREE THAT STOPS GROWING GATHERS FUNGI AND  
OTHER FOREIGN ACCRETIONS.

"There are invisible threads which connect us with every object which makes up our environment."

"Love gilds every object upon which we project it, and its sheen is reflected back in rays of golden light."

*Henry Wood.*

Most of the visiting brethren and sisters felt drawn into the familiar, well-beaten road leading to Oak House, and Mrs. Ahvallah was glad she had remained at home.

The first table-full had finished their repast and had withdrawn into the front room in reach of the unobstructed breeze to rest themselves. These looked indifferently on as table "number two" filed out to their repast. But the spirits of the hostess were not expected to lag. She had worked very hard that forenoon to make things comfortable for the lambs of her husband's fold, and sociabed through the whole performance of waiting upon many table-fulls. There were a few women of wealth and education, many of moderate means, women of narrow fortune and women of the poorer class, all being entertained alike and their slightest wishes honored.

The foremost of the second table-full was the woman who had donated the dried pumpkins some time before. Mrs. Railsback remembered it and took her seat

with an air of having a right, and began helping herself even before "grace" was said. She said she could just help herself. Then she called for coffee with great complaisancy.

When their appetites were satisfied, and Mrs. Railsback had remained for a few minutes to sip her coffee and perspire freely, she arose, locked her arm through that of Sister Taylor, and walked with her into the big room. There being a chair just vacated near Mr. Ahvallah, she at once appropriated it and opened conversation with her pastor.

"Hit's now jist twenty-eight year sense I was converted, Brother; jist twenty-eight year today."

Mr. Ahvallah looked at her. She was still perspiring from the effects of the coffee and her countenance was glowing.

"Ah?" responded the minister, "I wonder!"

"Jist twenty-eight year today—*no*," said the woman, placing her thumb under her chin and her first finger across her mouth meditatively, "I reckon it's *twenty-nine* year; yes, twenty-nine year today."

'Well,' replied the minister, "You've had a good many ups and downs, I've no doubt, since that time, but none of them can make you forget it!"

"No, not ef I live to be a hundred!"

"That's right," he replied with enthusiasm, "you can never forget the 'time' nor the 'place' where you found the Lord?"

"Lord, no!" she replied (little conscious of shocking him with her liberal use of that name.) "But the devil come the very next mornin' when I waked and tole me I's mistakened, an' I got to doubtin' an' fearin'! But

still I had a little hope." And she closed her remarks with a sigh.

"But you would not take worlds for that little hope," he said reassuringly. "You may not realize the same degree of hope and trust at all times, but in your darkest moments the hope born in that blessed hour will be a light to your feet."

"Yes, Brother, I wish I could walk in the light all the time—mor'n what I do."

"There is none good,—no not one—saith the scripture. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God!" said her pastor consolingly.

Several people were quiet listeners to their conversation. Bro. Gofar's son listened. He had meant to reform and become a good man, but was shocked when he heard this and looked his surprise at the minister. Mr. Ahvallah understood him and repeated:

"Yes, Bro. Gofar, the best of us sin every day, and always will while in the flesh! But the man who has accepted Christ as his Savior has an advocate with the Father who is ready and willing to forgive him."

Evangel listened. She sometimes wished she could believe everything she heard and go forward and ask for prayers and join the church like the other girls; but she could not persuade herself that she was bad, and was unwilling to be prompted by false motives. Sister Railsback was so revived by the brother's remarks that she began herself to grow eloquent, blessing the Lord and the day she had found Him precious, until all of those present had collected round the two. She finally rose up, extended wide her arms and after bringing her hands together in good earnest, walked straight to Bro.

Short, reached down and threw her arms about his neck and shook him severely, while he was trying to preserve a friendly aspect towards the proceeding and at the same time retain a respectable appearance. He submitted to the ordeal until the lady's cap becoming dislodged had shaken over her eyes, thus preventing further operations. The minister at this climax called out soberly:

“Let us all kneel in prayer;—Sister R. will you lead us in prayer?”

While the people who had partaken of a splendid repast were praying in the parlor and the minister's wife was presiding at the fourth table-full without having partaken of any food herself, and while Jerry was walking the floor to quiet the hungry baby, all the little girls in their new, rustling dresses had gone out upon the veranda into the odors of the dinner table, and had finally drawn up in a line facing the little room door immediately in front of where Dollie and Illustre were ambushed eyeing them from top to toe. When the little girls returned their scrutiny they said nothing but smiled and blushed and turned a little from side to side. By and by Dollie, unable to longer endure the temptation, walked up to one of them and gave a sudden pull at her apron. It was Permelia Pewlett who smiled until her lips parted and displayed a very rusty row of large, yellow teeth. Dollie returned the smile, showing an even row of small, white teeth and a mouth about one-half as extensive as the one just alluded to. Dollie stood with her hands behind her.

“Do you know whose little girl I am?” she asked, still smiling.

"No; whose?" answered the girl still grinning.

"Fa's."

"Is *that* your name?"

"*No*;—that's *Fa's*. *I'm* name *Dollie*. What's *yours* name?"

"*Permelia*."

"Is it?" questioned *Dollie*. "What's your *fa's* name?" But before *Permelia* could reply *Dollie* continued: "Let's go in the garden? I'll show you my row."

While in the garden *Permelia* said, as she received the bouquet *Illustre* had gathered for her:

"I jist love your Paw!" *Illustre* looked at her for a moment, and *Dollie* exclaimed:

"O, so do *I*!"

"*You* two don't!" said *Permelia* pointing to *Illustre* and *Evangel* who had come up. *Illustre* assured her that they both certainly did, and the girl again said:

"Why don't you go up then?"

"Where?" asked *Evangel* with reserve.

"To be prayed for."

*Evangel* surprised at *Permelia's* boldness, said evasively:

"I'm not old enough!"

"Yes you air!—I went fords when I's only *leben*."

"I don't have to do like you."

"You have to go up *some* time;—don't you?"

"No," quietly replied *Evangel*.

"S'pose you go up the next time?" persisted the girl, "your Paw's so good."

*Mr. Ahvallah* who had left the big room at the close of the exercise to go and look after the horses, and who having heard the drift of conversation in the garden,

concluded to speak a word in season, now advanced to where they stood.

"Sister Permelia, how I love to hear you talking to my children upon this all-important subject." He would have said more, but Evangel did not remain to hear it. She felt hurt to be so placed in the back ground of this simple girl and went to the kitchen where she found her mother hovering near the fire.

"Evangel,—give me the camphor, will you, Honey? —Where have you been?" her mother said feebly. She brought the camphor, removed the stopper and replied:

"In the garden listening to that 'mountain rose' talk nonsense! But, what's the matter Ma?"

"I've got a chill, I reckon. I've overdone myself, —can you get my feet in warm water?" The fire was almost out.

The water was soon ready however and Evangel was engaged in rubbing and bathing her mother's feet.

"Let me get you some tea Ma,—have you had anything to eat yet?"

"No, I am not hungry," she replied.

"I am awful hungry; I expect that is what troubles you."

"No," this came on while Sister Railsback was at prayers. I had just gone in—they sent for me—and I think I cooled off too suddenly."

"No, Ma, it was those folks. They used to scare me nearly to death. I think it was that. I wish Fa knew those folks as they are. You always get sick when Mrs. R. comes!"

"Yes," thoughtfully replied her mother, "I was sick when she was here before—I hadn't thought of that."

Evangel was rubbing her mother's feet and looking up affectionately and watching the effect when her father and several of the sisters entered. Evangel had rendered her some good service and her mother seemed much relieved, and began to think she need not have the chill. The nervous attack had left her. She leaned back in her chair feeling almost "herself again," when she was roused by the entrance of the group.

The sisters feeling it their duty to be shocked and appear very sympathetic, wore a scared look\*in their staring, curious eyes as they gazed at the form in the chair. Mrs. R. held up both hands, following the motion with a jarring exclamation:

"The Lord o' mercy! She's got another o' them spells. Hit's a suggestive chill, *I* bulleve?"

"No, I think she's fainted," suggested another.

"That's hit," said Mrs. Railsback, and stepping to the water bucket she caught up a handful of water and dashed it unceremoniously into her face.

Mrs. Ahvallah was very pale. She had not perceived the woman's intention and was so shocked that she sprang to her feet with an exclamation which made the woman start not a little:

"What *do* you mean!" she said impatiently. But instantly remembering herself, she added apologetically: "I've not been feeling well,—I'm trying to keep off a chill—I suppose I look faint."

"So you do!" interrupted Mrs. Taylor. "You ort o' be in bed this minute!"

"Better send for the Dr. 'thout delay!" said Sister R., nodding the corner of her forehead at the minister.

Jerry was called and ordered to bridle Whipstock

and ride for Dr. Khillus, when Evangel found opportunity to speak.

"Ma's not sick at all. She's just hungry. She worked hard and hasn't eaten any dinner. I'll give her some tea and crackers and then she will be better."

"Hebe, would you like anything to eat?" asked the minister, bending over her after they had hustled her into bed.

"No—not now," she replied, again showing signs of nervousness.

"You send right off,—the child don't know nothing about it,—she needs the doctor." As Mrs. R. said this she pushed the girl aside, turned down the covers and began feeling in the region of the patient's heart. Then turning, she said:

"She's got no pult, not a grain! You'll be a wifeless widower if you don't do somethin'!" she continued in an excited way.

"*That's not true!*" said Evangel with indignation; and before her father could recover from his astonishment sufficiently to say anything, she added:

"You are telling wicked *stories!* Ma was almost well when you came in and scared her! Let her alone—go in the big room and pray and then you'll be out of mischief for awhile!"

Mrs. Railsback's cap ruffles stood up in astonishment. Mr. Ahvallah was wondering whether it would ever be possible to sufficiently apologize, and taking Evangel's arm he led her gently towards the little room door with the intention of asking her to retire from the room. But Evangel again surprised him by saying:

"You'd better let me stay with Ma, if you don't

want her killed. I won't leave her unless you make me do it." Her father allowed her to remain. Sister R. had left the room highly offended, and the other women looked at Evangel with vengeful countenances. But Mr. Ahvallah by this time saw what most disturbed his wife and asked the ladies to just retire a little until he could speak with Evangel. They all slowly retired, talking in an undertone to each other as they went.

"She may be a dyin'!—I've heard o' sich things, said Mrs. Taylor.

"No," said another with calmer judgment, "I think she has only overworked herself and she has gone without her dinner."

"I reckon they'll tell it ef anything happens," suggested a third.

An hour later Jerry arrived without the doctor.

"Ain't at home?" asked Sister Railsback, raising her hands.

"Nome."

"Did they tell where he was?"

"Yes'm.—Gone to see some body what's got the tarfide."

"Law, what a sight o' sick tha is!" exclaimed Sister Taylor as she drew out her smelling bottle for a draught of its health-giving odor.

They all found seats in the big room where they might wait and ponder over the signs of the times, which began to seem very prophetic indeed.

Every right thought assists in the transmutation of all that is bound under limited ideas, into the White Blossom of Real Substance. Spoken Truth destroys the results of numberless errors. Otherwise the way

might indeed be open to the hosts of random conceptions that teem about the waste places of desert imaginations. By some people it is held that there are mobs and hoards of invading fatalities swarming in multitudinous shades, well known to the occult, and easily disposed of by those who have understanding. There are herds of invisible creatures that flutter like soft winged moths in close proximity to ignorant personalities upon whose vital energy they feed, and from whom they draw like leaches the very life-fluid of the soul. They like to hover about passive recipients who are unconscious of such presence, and who grow less and less able to resist the otherwise powerless encroachments of these soulless imps until growing more and more fiery in their stolen light, they flame out as in a laugh at their success when their victim is thrown into despairing illness, or into delirium tremens, when hosts of wraiths embody themselves in the images that appear, moving in mockery like the will-o-the-wisp, which has gathered its electric force along the marshes and unproductive lowlands, accumulating impurities until indignant nature combusts them.

So long as a plant or an animal flourishes in individual life with a free and righteous will, no foreign accretive microbe ever encroaches or attaches as an extra growth. But if ever a point in the will of the individual weakens then is new life ready to spring in and supply the lack and prevent a vacuum.

These are some of the powers of the air which Jesus said had nothing in common with Him. They thrive in magnetic or astral light and are the so-called ghosts of things and exist only in the bond uniting the soul and

body. Astral imps may be but reflections from the thoughts of living animals; or they may be the walking, wondering shades that ape the departed. But the spirits or individual minds of our friends can only lend their influence for good, and would never urge us to do mischievous or extravagant things, if such were true. Many an honest individual wishing to copy in his life the nonresistant, reflective attitude of Jesus and become communicable with the still, small voice of God, has only succeeded in absenting himself from the inner court of the temple and opening the outer doors to hords of wayward imps that swarm in and occupy. They imitate the voice of God and move their victims to obedience. Such people excuse their rash and erratic acts upon the ground that they *must* obey the inner voice of Spirit. But these same astrals when thus licensed lead their victims sometimes into the most extravagant ways,—even to criminal abuses and into the most blasphemous expressions. Not being entities or personalities they have no volition independent of the active thought current of the person to whom they attach themselves, and hence exact perfect obedience. They may convey an embodied thought from one person to another just as an electric current moves, but in neither case is the carrier agent intellegant or responsible. One mentality may express the reading of another's thoughts and follow up its course, but the mentality does it passively and is scarcely conscious of the process. Clairvoyants and mediums are open to foreign invasions. They are accretive to other people's most external, formative visions common to their emotional natures and speak forth what the other would perhaps wisely have held in re-

serve. The perisoul, the magnetic fluid uniting soul to body is the element in which astrals live. They are only phantasmal reflects of the thought of the person about whom they hover!

Sister Taylor and Sister Janes had retired to the big room where the other sisters had already repaired. Mrs. Janes remarked as they took their seats that she had seen something that appeared like a spirit with a bad omen or something, "just as they got off their criers, but that it disappeared afore they got to the house." But the sisters being stupid from overeating and disappointed in the "case" they expected to have on hands, they lost interest in divinations, and Sister Railsback stretched herself upon the sofa and fell into a profound and sonorous doze. Whether her thoughts were guided about by wafting bats, the melting wings of astrals, or whether it was the sweet and childlike slumber of innocence, who can tell? But she woke with a start, later on, and told her dream; and then said she wouldn't try to sleep again since she always had bad dreams when she took a nap in the day time.

Mrs. Ahvallah's nervous chill was soon over under Evangel's ministration. She had fed the baby too, and it was now fast asleep by its mother's side.

"Look at the baby Ma, ain't it sweet?" said Evangel. The mother smiled as she observed upon the baby face one of those bright smiles babies give when said to be communing with the holy angels, and which cannot be provoked by any amount of enticing from their human guides.

O, painters of gods and of heroes, attune all the

powers of your muse—if needs be, by fasting and prayer,—and at the cradle-side of individual expression, make a study profound of the human face. Look upon the smile of sleeping infancy and close your eyes until the image is painted on the retina of your memory; and before looking upon another face portray it, convey to canvas for the world if you can, the holy rapture of the countenance that sees the shining face of God! You who have hazarded your life by thinking upon evil, meditate upon the picture, and in rapturous, *silent* adoration, learn, that *freedom from the idea* of “good and evil” realizes Heaven, and makes visible the face of God.

Presently Mrs. Ahvallah fell asleep too, and Evangel leaving her father in the room, retired to the little room and stretched full length across her own bed to think a moment. She had heard her father say to some of them that some children seemed “prone to evil,” and supposed he meant herself. Permelia persisted in following her with her eyes wherever she went; and then the insult she had given one of the most religious of all the sisters present! She felt like crying, and tried to admit that she was perverse, and maybe “hardened,” the reason she couldn’t see it any more plainly!

“I suppose I have committed the unpardonable sin, but I can’t help it if I have, and I *can’t feel mean!*—Now there’s Ferriby Short,—cried till her face was red all over, and Mrs. Gofar wrung water out of her handkerchief and *I* couldn’t shed a tear! I wish I could, just to please fa!” She heard some one calling her to dinner, and she did not answer. She was sure—by and by—she saw Permelia kneeling down and praying for her, and

at the same time watching closely to see whether she was observed. Presently they ceased calling her. So vivid was the dream that Evangel awoke with the impression that it was all actual, and upon opening her eyes she realized that there was a presence in the room, and that it was no other than Permelia Pewlett. She very evidently had not discovered the presence of Evangel at all, or if she had, supposed she was sound asleep; for Permelia sat among a collection of hats and bonnets stored upon the other bed by the good sisters upon their arrival from church. She was busy selecting and picking off the prettiest buds and flowers among the ornaments on the bonnets and storing them hurriedly into her dress pocket.

Shocked as she was at sight of the pilfering, it all seemed in keeping with the girl's nature, and Evangel was not surprised! With a feeling of extreme disgust she moved her head a little so as to set her now wide-open eyes squarely upon Permelia: and after waiting a moment and finding the movement did not attract her attention, so intent was she upon her work. Evangel no longer resisted the impulse to say:

"Are *you* getting ready to 'go up,' this next time?"

At this the girl started violently, hustled down off the bed and hurried out of the room. Almost immediately after this the door opened and Sister Railsback entered. She went to collecting her apparel together and placing them upon the pillows, away from the general conglomerate upon the bed. Stopping a bit to shake out the ribbons on her bonnet, she suddenly began a close scrutiny of the flowers.

"Somebody's ben on this bonnet!" the woman said,

looking sharply at Evangel who had been watching her movements. But as she made no remark in reply, the woman again spoke:

"Some o' you children's tore this bonnet all to pieces!" She again looked accusingly at Evangel, who persisted in remaining silent. Mrs. Railsbach was making her fingers fly in and out about the flowers in the top story of her "sky scraper", adjusting them as best she could, when she cast another sullen look towards Evangel as she straightened up a cluster of cherry stems that showed pale green calyxes where the cherries had disappeared.

"I think you'd better go help your mother, 'n tear-in' up folkse's bonnets!"

Evangel sprang from the bed before she had finished the sentence, as if she had just remembered something, and went at once to her mother's room. She found her sitting up and nursing the baby.

"Honey, hadn't you better go eat something?" asked her mother.

"Why, I reckon. Is dinner all over?"

"Yes, and Jerry has washed the dishes. You can have some black-berry jam and some light bread and milk, anyway."

So she had a quiet lunch, thinking more than eating. She thought, "Now, Permelia is behind the house crying and blaming me for seeing her taking the flowers; and Mrs. Railsbach is whispering to Mrs. Janes, who, in turn, looks out here at me, but I can't help it." But very soon her thoughts drifted to happier things; and when she had finished her meal, and rocked the baby to sleep, she strolled down the clover path, forgot all about



the church-meeting folks, and ceased to think about whether goodness or badness were required or suspected of her.

The leaves and the flowers were friendly and offered no word of blame or criticism as she walked among them, but seemed to be joyful in their existence and inclined to praise.

"O, pretty flowers", she said as she bent down, clasped her hands round the corolla of a rose-lipped wild lily and held it against her cheek. "I love you and you love me,—wild lily—and we are both perfection."

She raised her face and looking at the blossom, continued.

"Let's stick to that, wild-lily!" But the lily was reticent; and a new aspect of the subject dawned upon the girl's mind.

"I see", she mused: "Flowers don't know about good and bad. They have no ears to hear about the bad man, and no eyes to see ugly ways. They do not 'take care', nor do they resist anything. They just grow and are glad in their purity and beauty and freedom and harmony."

"Behold the lilies of the field," spoke a voice at her side. Evangel looked up in surprise and saw Joseph Montall. She was recalled to the commonplace, and handed him the lily she had that moment broken from the stem, saying as she did so, the first thing that came into her mind:

"Do you like lilies?"

"I am very fond of them," he replied, receiving the flowers with pleased grace.

"I like them,—I think they are better than some

church people. They make me happy, but these people seem to carry trouble with them!"

"Yes, they are good teachers: but it is by example alone. They don't disturb us with precept."

Evangel had turned into the path leading homeward, and Joseph was walking by her side.

"Where did you come from, so suddenly?" she asked.

"From Mr. Pewlett's," he replied looking at her. "George invited me to dinner, as he often does, and I thought I would go this time." Then after a pause he continued: "They seem to be very poor people."

"I think they are," she answered, as she remembered the petty larceny in the little room, and felt sorry for the moment that she had said anything to Permelia about it. They had reached the garden path on their return, when Joseph took from his pocket a small blank book and placing the lily carefully between two leaves remarked:

"This lily has a new lesson and a new charm in it. It is a wild lily, a lily of the field.—Do you read Byron?" he suddenly asked.

"No. I never did."

"Would you like to?"

"I think so, if Fa wouldn't object to it."

Joseph laughed, and said he would ask him, but didn't think he could object. Then he repeated,

"To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,  
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;  
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean,  
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold  
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## THE RESULT OF LOOKING BACKWARD.

“Do as the heavens have done; forget your evil; With them forgive yourself.” Then will evil cease, and Truth prevail.

A few days after the incidents referred to in the last chapter, two country maids in fresh bib aprons and shaker bonnets, were to be seen walking along the quiet road leading from Oak House to Old Mill Cottage.

The basket they carried between them contained several day's provision for old Speck and her young brood of chickens whom Granny Good had kindly taken to care for through the precarious two week's period of “gapes,” in order that her pastor's wife might succeed in raising a sufficient frying crop for her numerous visitors' needs.

It was a wagon road and lay in the quiet woods, winding round a slope, over a stream and up a hill on whose crest a ruined fence hung with grape vine and underbrush, marked the sudden entrance to the “Old Place,” and from thence it wound through dense woods and then by the Old Mill, and again into the light of day, and by the cottage.

Evangel and Illustre had read and reread the Sunday school books they had procured only three or four days ago, and were thinking of exchanging them for others. They were the only story books the girls were permitted to read, and held a considerable charm for them, although the stories seldom closed without closing also the earthly career of the hero. The boy or girl

in question grew more and more religious until there was no more room for improvement, and instead of being translated into spirit as Jesus and Elijah were, and as all perfect people should be, they died, warning all their sinful contemporaries to go and do likewise.

Granny Good was standing in the door and shading her eyes with her hand. She wore a neat, blue-check apron and a homespun fichu, and looked very clean and soft like a big doll. By the time they had reached the door the little wheel was flying and humming at the top of its voice in response to the gentle pressure of Granny's bare foot upon the pedal, and the dextrous fingers that pulled down the soft bits of flax, that so nearly counterfitted her own hair, and held them to be snatched up, made into thread and wound upon the spindle. The smooth oak floor polished by use, and the corner bracket containing the cedar bucket and gourd were in their places to greet them. The bucket contained living water, clear and cool, and came from the well at the foot of the yard slope.

"Howdy, children," she said, raising her innocent face questioningly, while the light reflected two windows on her spectacles.

"Ma sent you this," said Evangel, handing her the basket.

"Set it on the hath," she said as she again turned on the electric lights over her otherwise very quiet brown eyes.

"Is your ma many hens a settin'?" she asked after awhile.

"I think so," replied Evangel, feeling that she ought to know and wishing she did.

"*Yes'm*," quickly responded her sister. "She has a dozen at least."

Then Granny turned her conversation to Illustre.

"How many fryin' size?"

"She did have a hundred and twenty before church meeting." Illustre wished she could tell the exact number just now, and resolved to count them before coming the next time.

"Granny," said Evangel, "we want to exchange our books for new ones. Would you mind letting us do it?"

"I ain't time to go with you, and I don't 'spect you can manage the key."

"We can get in at the last window,—it is not fastened."

"Well, don't git a fall, and don't soil the books." Her son was librarian, and left the church key with his mother for convenience.

They bade her good bye, and were soon at the old Mill on the bank of the branch of Fabby Creek, that ran between the mill and the church.

They loitered a little in the queer old mill that went by horse power. The horses seemed to dislike the job, for they hung their heads and had to be urged continually to persuade them beyond a slow walk. A young man with a wide, mealy hat, kept shouting and threatening:

"Hup, there! *g-it* up, *git u-p!*" and like expressions that would have made anything but a good-natured horse very nervous.

The old beams and trundle-head creaked a noisy crescendo as the shaft moved round, supplemented by a decrescendo as it completed the circle, with a momenta-

ry cessation as if moistening their hands, when they would begin again, starting in upon the lower tones as before. The miller and the customers were so used to this perpetual "round" which the old mill sang from morn till night, that it seemed a part of the business; they would have thought something had broken or had fallen out of gear, had this Musical Genius in the beams ceased its "noisy chorus" for any reason, whether from an impulse of innovation or an inclination to rest, so completely had they assimilated the spirit of it all.

As the old miller, with his wide rimmed, hoary hat, moved quietly about, catching up a handful of meal and rubbing it between his fingers to see if the burrs were doing their work well, adjusting this or that, filling and emptying sacks, measuring up "toll", &c., his eyes fell upon the two young women. Surprised at seeing two rose-bud faces in the dusty old mill, he asked, in a gruff voice:

"What you want here?"

"We were only looking at the mill," explained Evangel, as they moved back a little.

"Don't you go and get hurt!"

"O, we won't—" began Illustre, but Evangel suggested going at once, and they both said good bye. But Father Good was too occupied with his own affairs, to notice their adieus.

They bent their foot-steps towards the white church that peeped through the green foliage upon the hill. They had travelled over this road many times on their way to and from church and Sunday school, and were familiar with every stump and tree: but to-day was a

"week-day" and everything seemed different. A mysterious silence pervaded the place.

"What would people think, if they should see us climbing through the church window?" asked Illustre.

"What do *we* think? is the proper thing to consider", replied Evangel. "If you think you are doing wrong don't do it. If it will harm you or any-body in the slightest, don't do it."

"Why, I don't see how it could hurt anybody; Miss Emm Teebrane, my teacher, exchanged some books, but it don't seem just right for us."

"Well, *she* got in at the window, and Mrs. Willan climbed in after her chignon one day, and Mrs. Railsback after her sky-scraper she dropped off when shouting, and nobody dreamed of thinking they did anything wrong," replied Evangel.

Illustre was easily convinced that *Evangel* would be doing right, but hesitated still on her own account. Evangel said, as she started to the window:

"You can go back and read *Baxter's Saint's Rest* if you are not 'afraid' to do that, and I will exchange my book, if you will first help me in at the window. Now stoop over: I'll get on your back, open the window and climb in. Then I'll help you in, if you say so."

Illustre submitted. She bent over, saying as she did so:

"The *Pastor's children* breaking in at the window of the church to rob the library!"

"I think," said her sister, breathing hard in her effort to pull in at the high window without hurting the very wavering back beneath her feet, "I think they ought to give *us* books oftener. There's Mrs. Sally

Bill's Cynthia, and Mrs. Sally Thom's Lucinda, who have to spell all their words, yet they get books as fast as we do."

She finally succeeded in getting in at the window, and then pulled Illustre up; her feet slipping off the boards a time or two, causing her to bump against the wall as often. This set them both to laughing, so that the effort was prolonged: but after much grunting and scratching and bumping she succeeded in falling in at the window, just as a horse's hoofs clattered by, and the voice of the rider sang out questioningly,

"*Orthodox?*"

Whether the expression was meant for them, or addressed to some one, or something else, they did not try to guess; but they were little concerned, since neither of them happened to know "the relevancy it bore", and they began at once to carefully examine the rows of clouded-back books of the church library.

"Books, books, books," said Evangel, smacking her pretty lips in delightful anticipation. They chose not the over-wrought autobiography of the last hours of some "divine" who had literally worn himself out in the service of his Master and gone away to get a reward for it, nor of some sister who had left home and children for heathen lands, on'y to disturb their material idolatry with the teachings of an ideal idolatry. They preferred incidents that had sprung entirely from somebody's imagination, unmixed with the actual.

"Ain't it awful solemn in here?" asked the younger sister, as she gazed about. "Look at the pulpit where Pa stands: and the seats where the women sing 'Sweet Prospects.' I can smell their new dresses, can't you?"

Her sister making no reply, Illustre continued: "Mrs. Willan smells like cedar, and *Permelia* Pewlett, like cinnamon!"

At Illustre's suggestion, they both took seats on the "mourner's bench", and Evangel said,

"I like it quiet this way. The *pure* silence is left, and the bad thoughts all gone! Shapes are formed by the imagination of limitation, and if God is everywhere, there is nothing *but* God."

"Hush!" exclaimed Illustre. "You always talk so funny. I don't want ghosts around! let's go."

"All right," replied the other, rising, "we won't have much time for reading this afternoon."

With each other's help they were soon upon the ground again, and had closed the window. As they returned past the cottage, granny still sat at her wheel, spinning and humming with it a low, sweet song, as if prompted by some memory when lullabys were habitual, but in a tender, regretful tone which hinted that there was now no more need of cradle songs!

"Why, you're late! Your Ma 'll be oneasy I'm afeard?" she said, without stopping the motion of her foot.

After overcoming the objections of her younger sister Evangel decided to take the road that led straight through the grave-yard and thus shorten the road home.

They stepped over the low fence at the back of the yard by the big apple tree that stretched its limbs far over the fence and dropped its apples upon the grass inside. They passed under many large and prolific apple trees with here a hint of crimson among the leaves

matching the hue of a cricle of apples beneath; there a shade of lemon tint with the color repeated upon the ground. There were Northern Spies and Limber Twigs, and large, mellow, creamy apples that sometimes burst open when they fell from the tree; and at the farther border overlooking the rail fence next to the woods that sheltered the little grave yard a quarter of a mile farther on, stood a row of Winesap and Romanite trees. Illustre had been trying to persuade her sister to turn back and go home by the way they had come.



“I wish you didn’t have the big head so bad! You *would come* through, and I know it’s the dismalest place on earth! I’m so scared my heart just beats!”

“It’s doing its duty for *once*,” responded her sister with a little sarcasm in her tone.

“Don’t be too funny!” said Illustre reprovingly, “maybe you’ll be scared if you don’t mind!”

“The time to be good is when you are not scared!” returned Evangel seriously.

They were nearing the much neglected spot and could see the tall, flat stone erected in honor of Mr. Fabby’s former wife and infant who departed with her. Indeed the tiny adventurer seemed to have come after her, for she departed with it upon the hour of its arrival. There was an angel in bas relief upon the stone. It had long feathered wings.

“There’s Mrs. Fabby’s grave,” whispered Illustre.

“Yes,” responded Evangel. “I wonder they don’t straighten it up.” Then pointing toward the winged figure, she continued: “Why *do* people make angels with *wings?* *Feathers* on people! I would think they would lose their feathers when they get to be angels—if they ever had any. Of course no bird could fly without tail feathers, and wings would be of little service alone.”

“I wish you would hush. You better be saying your prayers than going on that way! How could anything fly without wings?” replied horrified Illustre.

“Why *angels* are more powerful than chickens, or birds. They can fly without wings! They just move through the air. Besides, it would be unnatural for *wings* to grow on top of *arms!*” she continued, trying to divert her sister’s thoughts from the dreary scene before them. “When I get to be an angel, I’ll just mount quickly up in the air and go where I please, and—

“Unencumbered, free as space  
Without boundery or place,  
Abstract spirit, then we’ll see  
What an angel’s wings must be.”

"Hush—*sh*, I hear something! whispered Illustre, suddenly stopping and opening wide her eyes.

"O, you don't, I reckon, come along."

The slabs were half-hid by shrubs and prairie grass. The latter had escaped the sweeping prairie fires, and had grown rank and tall, and faded in bunches about the ends of the graves. Illustre was much awed, and treading very softly after her sister's steps, almost held her breath while every muscle was tensioned by fear.

There was no sexton about the place. People carried their dear ones to the spot but often did not return to it until they themselves were brought there. Most of the graves were neglected, and the slabs leaning here and there were nestled in the spectral grass. It was only when some new inhabitant was brought with fresh tears and long farewells, that the spot was ever cleared or underwent any sort of adornment. The fence—a cheap one at best—had long since settled into the grass, only showing where a few panels, tougher than the rest, still stood braving the weather and time, to announce to the meager caller that there *had* been some effort to inclose and give the place protection.

The wind rose a little and moved the tall grass, and as the breeze reached them, Illustre gave a frightened cry and sprang closer to her sister.

"I hear somebody! I know I do!"

"Now, behave yourself; will it do any good to act that way? There is not much to hear in this place, and I don't see anything to be afraid of. You can *imagine* lots of boogers if you will; I will not. *I* imagine this is a garden full of sweet flowers; don't you smell violets?"

"O, I would do it if I could, but I'm scared so I can't!" returned her sister.

"Be quiet then, and let go my sleeve," said Evangel. "I'll walk before you till we pass through."

They moved forward a few rods when Illustre again clutched Evangel's sleeve and whispered:

"O, mercy! There it is again! Didn't you hear it?"

Evangel had heard nothing until now. But being almost free from fear, she replied quietly:

"Yes, I do, but I think its an owl. There's lots of them in the woods."

She did not fully comprehend the meaning of the peculiar sound, but felt pretty sure it was nothing that would harm them. The sound did not issue from a tree, but seemed to come from the exact locality of one of the slabs that was almost hid in the tall grass. She had partially succeed in quieting her sister's nerves and allaying her distress when the sound was again repeated and Illustre's fears were again aroused.

"Now keep quiet, Sister; I know it won't hurt us, whatever it is. Come right along."

"How do you *know*, please tell me?" asked Illustre.

"Why, I just feel that way, and always when I have felt that God was everywhere I have been safe. You see if He *is* everywhere there isn't room for anything else, and we have nothing to fear."

The sound started up again, nearer than before. Half fainting from fright Illustre screeched out:

"O, mercy, mercy!" just as something dim and white slowly rose and stood up. The movement was almost imperceptible, amid the shadows, but there was no mistake. Everything looked weird and strange to

Illustre and the twilight shadows seemed to follow upon each other more rapidly than usual. The white bodies of trees past the broken fence stood tall and ghastly against the dark background of the underbrush, and stretched their scraggy branches solemnly upward, holding in their hands bunches of black leaves like flags at half mast, against the sky.

The point from whence the sound issued being near one of the graves that lay next the path and immediately in front of them, made it impossible for them to proceed without coming in contact with the spectral object; and retreat would be impracticable since they had already passed the darkest and wildest part of the wood and they were anxious to reach home to prevent any apprehension. They stood in perfect silence for a few moments. The object, which had gradually settled out of sight, again began to move, wavering back and forth much as vapor does when buoyed by air in gentle motion. Illustre was thinking of some descriptions of the "bad man" (or the man "bad") and the lower realms where demons grinned at people and menaced through streams of smoke and fire! Awful pictures of things she had heard from Sister Janes and others presented themselves one by one. "Perhaps it is the ghost of some unhappy person who had been buried alive and had worked its way up from the ground in an effort to rescue its body and again unite with it." It was Evangel's philosophy that it was unnatural to die and be buried; that Jesus set the example for men to follow, and *let* them crucify him in order to show men how to overcome the condition. (He saw that at that period of man's development it did occur, and He came to lift them to higher

understanding, and past that awful stage of development.) Jesus didn't allow his body to turn *back* to dust, but turned it into free Spirit when he got ready to leave the world and form, after He had finished His course of example lessons.

"O, what *will we do!*" whispered Illustre. "Lets hollow for Pa! Maybe he would hear us?"

"Be quiet!" said Evangel. "If you will wait here I'll go see what it is. It may be some body in trouble!" But Illustre held her tight, too frightened to be able to use good judgment. Evangel mentally concluded it must be some woman who had come to visit one of the graves where a child or some dear friend had been buried, and being overcome by grief had fainted away and was making an effort to regain her strength and go away. Or it might be one who had lost his reason while giving way to grief in such a place! She felt much awed by the situation, whatever it might prove to mean, but her thought was centred upon her sister in her effort to soothe her and subdue her fears so that she herself was not frightened. Much in the same way the reasoning and the spiritual consciousness will work in their effort to subdue and overcome the failings and shortcomings to which the physical consciousness had subjected itself.

"Let's run; come on. Oh *please* lets run," again persisted Illustre.

"I don't want to go back. We will go right along now. It may be a stray sheep. It is nothing that would hurt us, if so, it would have hurt us long ago." She then made an effort to move past the object, with some

difficulty pulling Illustre after her. But Illustre lacked courage to proceed and only cried.

"O, *Lord!*" she exclaimed, framing a prayer. "Please save us out of this trouble!" But there was no belief that her distant god would heed her. Again the creature rose up and moved forward, and then settled slowly back again. Illustre promised God that if he would save them out of this trouble she wouldn't *ever* do anything wrong any more. Again the horrid stories crossed her mind, of ghosts returning after having been forced from their bodies by murder and hurried away before life was extinct, of men and women seeking to help their bodies out for the purpose of joining them again, to properly finish their career, and to save them from the "burning pit" they perhaps could see and into which they might drop at any moment and be lost forever!

They had drawn considerably nearer, but had again paused on account of Illustre's efforts to retreat. "Surely" she thought, "no one alive could make such a noise!"

"Be quiet now," interrupted her sister. "and I will ask who it is," and just at that moment the sound issued forth again; this time it was a long, low wail! Illustre kept repeating the prayer in a whisper, "O Lord, help us! O, Lord, have mercy, *mercy!*" Then the moaning suddenly ceased, and the smoke or vapor, or woman, or ghost shook out its folds, rose up before them and moved slowly towards where they stood.

Without making any sound, it unwound its long arms, swung them out at its sides, and then up and over its head, reaching the white hands high upward in an

attitude of despair, and was apparently about to speak, when Evangel broke the silence by asking:

“Who are you, pray? Tell us who you are, and maybe we can help you if you need help?”

It was getting quite dusky in the woods; still Evangel knew that it could not be more than eight o'clock and must still be quite light in the prairie road. Before she had finished speaking a reply started out from the location of the tall, gray object, not in answer to her question, but in reply to Illustre's prayer. The words came distinctly, uttered in a low, heavy voice.

“Pray for *me!*—for me! O, pray for *me?*” She could now be distinctly seen—for it was the figure of a woman. She wore a black dress, but had a large gray shawl thrown over her. Her hands were now clasped tight, and thus stretched toward them. She continued in the same unearthly strain:

“O, pray, child!—pray for *me!*—Your heart is pure; you think good thoughts; you believe in God;—I don't; I can't any more;—*His back is turned!*” She hid her face for a moment, as she looked upon her past life, and then continued:

“I used to believe when I was like you, but—I stopped praying—stopped for a long time, and forgot God! And now when I pray He turns away His face!” She was trembling from head to foot. “Oh, *He has taken my name off the roll*—for I never hear Him call me any more!”

She shrank back and kneeled upon the grave, and the gray shawl again settled over her in a weird, picturesque way, while Illustre whose terror had by this

time settled into a subdued awe, motioned to Evangel to pray for the woman.

"You do it," she said as she shook her head. "*I can't!*" and Evangel only said to the distressed woman:

"God is here and everywhere just the same. My mother says she is sure of it. God hears what you are saying: He wants you to know that He hears you, and wants you to be saved: I am sure He does."

"Pray, then; *pray for me*, if you think so, if there can be any hope;—tell Him I am sorry I have been bad!—so sorry my heart aches all the time!—so sorry my head is never easy!—so sorry—" Her voice trembled and grew softer as she continued: "I could lie down with my face in the dust at your feet, to hear one word of hope for forgiveness, to receive one sign of pardon and peace!"

"Then I will tell you for sure," answered the child, her own eyes overflowing. "Somebody is here—right here—who can do that very thing for you, and will if *you are willing.*"

The child was surprised at her own effort at expression. She was moved to say things she had often thought of and believed, but being alone in such meditation had never before given expression to them.

"Behold I stand at the door and knock," was father's text a short time ago. That means God is everywhere trying to get people's attention. He is nearer to you than I am and more willing to help you, although I would be *so glad to help you.*"

It was a strange looking group. The pure, white face of the fear-stricken girl whose head now rested calmly upon Evangel's shoulder; the strange woman

with dishevelled hair, white and abundant and falling about over her shoulders, and dark eyes turned upon the face of Evangel, who braced by a sub-conscious knowledge of Truth stood with its light shining forth upon the fast dimming ideals of darkness in the one before her, until the three were silent.

"God is here now," said Evangel very softly and earnestly, as she stood thus for awhile looking straight before her. She was deeply impressed with the truth of the Divine Presence, while the two clung to her,—the one for physical, the other for spiritual support—as if she herself were something Divine. Again she spoke:

"If you will always remember that wherever you are, you will know that you are safe."

"But I have always thought of the wicked one! I have always feared the devil! How can I escape that?"

"That is just the way to do it. Don't give your time to thinking of such things. The devil is imaginary; God is pure Good, and could not have made such an awful creature. I don't believe there is a devil at all. I am happier and better to just think about God as Good. God made us, and we are His own children. Thinking evil makes evil! Don't do it!"

There was a long pause and the child again asked if they could help her any way, saying it was getting late and the folks might be uneasy.

"No, no; I come here often. My baby sleeps there." She had risen and her eyes were staring towards the little mound toward which she pointed. "I thought He might perhaps listen there by her!"

At this Illustre found courage to suggest:

"If Pa knew about you he would go to see you; he

is a preacher, and—" when she was interrupted by the woman's voice.

"No, no, no! I would much rather you would do it. If there is any God,—and you make me think there must be—He will listen to the young. Your father is a man! I have lost my faith in them, though I reckon he means well."

"We will remember you," said Evangel. They then bade her good bye, and as they hurried from the place they saw her gliding past the trees whose tops now lay so gaunt and silent against the sunset sky.

Illustre had almost recovered from her fright, and expressed some regret that the poor woman had seen so much trouble, but requested Evangel to set it down that she would never get her through that way again. She grew quite brave when a little farther on they met Jerry coming after them. He asked in a sleepy tone what made them so late.

"Yer Maw sent me affer yo'."

As he held the lawn gate open for them to pass, he added:

"Some folks at te house."

"Who is it?" asked Illustre, her face brightening at the thought of cozy home actually at hand, and company too, and a good supper after her terrible adventure in the woods.

"Mr. Stem— Stem—"

"Steambergen?" suggested Illustre.

"Yes'm; en', Mr. Montall en' Mawk,—en'—Mrs. Taylor, en',—" He could think of no more, but finished with the bit of information that Dollie had put on her new dress.

"I'll bound for her! She'd wear it all the time, and then wear mine when her's is gone. That's the way she does and Ma upholds her!" said Illustre.

"You don't care for that!" said Evangel. as they were going over the stiles. "You know they humor her because she was so sick winter before last. Doll does like new dresses, bless her little heart!"

"Yes, but she don't half take care of her clothes, and then wears mine out," was the quick response.

"Here she comes with her arms full of papers."

Dollie's hair was flying back, her big, white forehead shining, her dark eyes laughing, her celestial nose elevated and her small mouth helping in the mirthfulness as much as possible. She met them half way down the path, and without any preface to her remarks handed a copy of "The Child's Paper" to each. Then with a skip and a hop turned and accompanied them to the house.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## THE ARREST.—A TRAGEDY, AND ITS OUTCOME.

Descending into the shadows of a lonely road a horseman drew rein and peered into the dense forest upon either hand. The horse was jaded, having travelled at the utmost of his speed until reaching the level stretch of low-lands between high walls of thick wood.

A turn in the road had been reached where descent horse-back was rendered difficult by the projecting roots of a gnarled oak that grew by the road-side. These roots so interlaced as to form a regular descent for foot-passengers, and were called by the school-children, the "stair-steps oak".

The man's listening ear caught the sound of another horse's feet! It always made him nervous to pass through this wood after sun-set, and he spurred his horse onward and had nearly reached the bottom of the "stair-steps" when one of his horse's hoofs wedged itself between two roots and the rider was precipitated to the ground as the horse fell forward, grazing hard upon his rider's foot. The ravine below was at this time entirely dry, and almost filled with forest leaves that rustled lustily at every passing breeze. They seemed to become restless in their low, dark place, but, enlivened by the breeze, would catch hope sufficient to set up a conspiracy of resistance against gravitation. Then they would roll together in a heap, rustle at the tops of their voices and hoarsely whisper "*all*"—as they ran together, and then as they tried to

lift themselves, finish the expression—"heave" after which effort they would tumble down again in utter and easy subjection. They would then lie quite still for a moment as if meditating and then again toss and tumble over and over each other in a kind of roll call review to see whether the efforts of any of them to rise and fly away had been successful.

Finally they became quiet after arranging themselves in disorderly masses,—each one dropping so lightly into place that you could not hear them, and nestling low along the deep, crooked hollow, they fell asleep for the night.

It was at one of these sudden gusts of wind and leaves that the horse had taken fright and made the reckless step.

The man was tall, young and handsome enough, but did not display much heroic fortitude; for he was groaning audibly, and weakly employing forbidden adjectives, apparently for either his own or his horses' edifying, when the second horseman appeared upon the scene.

He dismounted as soon as he reached the Stair-steps Oak and led his horse carefully over the projecting roots, as if familiar with the surroundings.

"What's the matter there?" he asked in a cautious manner as if trying to disguise his voice.

"Give me a little help—will you?" the prostrate man managed to grunt forth, "my horse has fallen upon my foot—the stirrup is cutting into my ankle! Oh!—*will* you pull him off?"

The horse had fallen in such a manner that he could not rise and had ceased making an effort to do so, But

the second man made no sign towards assisting him, and the first, looking up in some surprise, started perceptibly, as a dreadful fear crept over him! There before him stood the man they had hunted so long!—found at last—and at such a time!

He was so terrified he forgot his foot for a second, and tried to make up his mind what would be the best thing—under the circumstances, for him to say.

Trembling from head to foot and held to the earth by the misfortune of the latter, he instinctively decided to not allow his enemy to discover that he had been recognized, and then found nerve enough to say, very meekly:

‘Will you please, sir, pull the bridle that way a little?’

For reply the man said:

‘You’re where you belong, for once, Taffyhorn! Ef the officers would happen along now *they’d* give you a pull! About as many thinks its *you* as me, of late!’

He was mounting his horse as he finished this remark. The pressure upon Mr. Taffyhorn’s foot was becoming intolerable, and he again begged for assistance.

‘Move the horse, only an inch—is all I ask—I was sent to hunt the witch, and ought to be at the pond by this time.’

‘What pond?—The *witch*?’ the other asked in the same breath.

‘Old Mrs. Bleevenevl’s supposed to be drowned, or in danger of doing something desperate. She has disappeared! The whole neighborhood’s out,’ he replied, hoping this would have the desired effect, ‘and they sent me to hunt ’er—somebody saw ’er goin’ towards

the pond, and"—the horse moved a little and he again begged him to give him a little help. "I will do *anything* for you if you will?"

The fugitive here turned his horse about, rode close up to the fallen man, and said briefly:

"I'll help you—on one condition. You have been my worst enemy, Taffyhorn—my first accuser!" He paused a little and then went on: "You are in my power—you! I could with little effort, push this horse and shut your mouth forever! But I would rather not. I would rather help you. The words that old woman spoke to me have haunted me until they have taken possession of me. 'If I can help anybody, or do anything good—that is purely good—I will do it.' I'm a changed man. Taffyhorn; I've no desire to harm you. But you must promise one thing: That you will not let it be known that you have seen me, that you will not mention my name for one month. I have been forced upon this errand by the unquenchable wish to see my wife and child! promise, and you are free?"

"I promise—upon my word of honor."

"Swear, upon your life and soul!" said the fugitive getting off his horse.

"I swear by my life and soul!" replied he, quoting the words suggested.

'Now listen!' he went on, as he stepped forward and grasped the bridle. "If you break your solemn oath and betray me, *both our lives* will be to pay! Do you see?"

He then drew the bridle of the prostrate horse towards him, which, after an effort, sprang to his feet, re-

leasing his rider. The latter then slowly rose and limped to his horse's side.

Both the men remounted.

"Let me go first," the fugitive urged, "and you come on when I am out of sight."

Taffyhorn very willingly waited until he was out of sight, and then, knowing his destination by the direction he had taken, he wheeled about and putting spurs to his horse, hurried back along the road he had just traveled, until he arrived at the residence of the township constable. Here he halted, unlatched the gate, rode up to the door, and called. A heavy set man cautiously opened the door and asked the cause of his errand. The visitor explained in a few words the purpose of his call, and the constable responded after an effort to collect his wits:

"He's a despert feller!" said the mushy voice of Silas Bourd, "you git a possy o' men, summers,—several of 'em—an' I'll make you depity, an'"—

"What?" exclaimed the other, looking frightened at the suggestion, "What's that for?"

"I'm laid up, I'm benrid uth rumatis!—fust time I've ben outen ben fur three days!" he continued, mixing his words as usual, "I can't go—I cant!"

As soon as the fugitive was out of sight, after parting with Taffyhorn, at the Stair-steps Oak he led his horse into the thick under-brush back of his father-in-law's residence, and made his way to the house.

It had been over a year since the little woman had seen her fugitive husband, but she was at the window in an instant when he tapped upon the glass! Quickly she lifted the sash, and it was not long until the hus-

band, wife and child were unified in one embrace. There were some tears,—some tender words,—some lingering caresses; and the wife asked what she most dreaded to ask, “Why *did* you come back here? They’re all watching for you, and there’s a big reward out!”

“Is your father at home?” was the response.

“Yes, yes! he too, is your mortal enemy!”

After a very brief conversation in whispers, there was a sad farewell, and the fugitive so, so hunted by his brethren! was about to depart, when a loud knock sounded at the door! Immediately three armed men entered the room, followed by the father and brother of the little woman.

“Take ’im before he hurts anybody!” exclaimed a voice behind the door at which they had entered.

“My God!” exclaimed the prisoner fugitive, casting a fierce look upon the man who had just spoken. It was Lon Taffyhorn!

“Take your guns out o’ my face!” he demanded, stepping back a little and raising his hand, “be men, will you—some of you? Don’t you see I’m unarmed? Don’t you see you’ve scared my wife into fainting!” he added as he lifted her from the floor where she had fallen in a swoon.

Heaven help the man who has yielded his “righteous judgment”, and given himself to join the mob! As much as men love money, they do things when under the influence of the mob, they could not be induced to do when alone, not if the largest fortune might be theirs in consideration thereof.

The fugitive had been a wanderer for a long time; never stopping long enough to form acquaintances, for

when he found business and began work, a whisper always followed him! The airs seemed to bring intelligence of him, and he had learned the art of being a stranger in a strange land! About the only comfort he ever enjoyed was derived from the little offices of kindness that chanced within his way. He once helped a sturdy teamster to extricate the wheels of his vehicle from the mire, and after the honest man had said, warmly, "I'm much obliged to you," the fugitive had walked on in silence until sun-down with the tears chasing one another down his face!

"If I can help any body, or do anything good—that is *purely good*—I will do it."

Poor Mrs. Bleevneevl had spoken the language of her real self, and it had worked like leaven, as utterances of the real self always do. They had turned this fugitive from the error of his way, and had hid "a multitude of faults." *She* had long ago been forgiven by expiation; but a discourse by a Calvinistic preacher upon "the unpardonable sin" had kept the truth from shining upon her. The man had truly repented and turned from the error of his way; but what of that! His brothers had turned blood hounds and were upon his track!

O crime-perpetrating State! Have you no place of repentance for your rash criminals? No place where they may work out their own salvation in faithful service to the State and to themselves? Have you no reforming discipline to offer the man who in an unguarded moment, and under burning provocation, answers his hot blood in barter of life? Must you turn criminal yourself, and in like manner—excepting that you do it in "cold blood" "with premeditation and fore-thought,"

and without the provoking circumstances!—become a murderer?

The search for Mrs. Bleeveevl continued through the night. Her eldest son had made inquiry of all the neighbors one by one as he called upon them.

“There never was a better mother—ef I do say it—than mine,” he said to Mr. Ahvallah as he stopped at the stile-blocks in front of Oak House, “but she had a good many troubles, and some how, I’m afeard she’s gone wrong in her mind!”

“O, I hope not!” said the minister. “I think you will find out where she is very soon. Don’t you think it quite possible she may be at some of the neighbors?” he suggested. “Possib’y some one sent for her in a hurry, and she had no one to leave word with perhaps?”

“No she didn’t,” replied the dark skinned man. “I never thought of that, but I couldn’t forgive myself ef anything’s happened to mother!” he added with a sigh.

“Why, you’ve been a most dutiful son. I don’t think I ever saw anything like it!”

“Yes, but when Bourd wanted to turn ’er out of the church it made me mad, and I let out the secret that he was as guilty as she was,—I had promised ’er to keep it.—and it hurt her mighty bad!”

The tears stood in his eyes as he spoke. “How did Bro. Bourd take it?” the minister asked.

“O, he looked dumfounded for the time, but said nothing about it at meeting, and only prayed louder than ever!—*He* didn’t care!”

“Do you think Bro. Bourd was the man who so deceived your mother!—Is it possible?”

“O, yes. He didn’t deny it;—but I wouldn’t bother

him,—I ain't got a drop of his blood in my veins!" he said as he rode away.

All day the search had continued. The woman's two sons returned home at night-fall at their usual supper time, but there was no cheerful light to greet them, and no supper by skillful hands prepared!

They talked the matter over and resolved to institute a more thorough search. They had glanced but casually about the place in the morning, and then had deserted the house for the day in their farther search, but they had again returned.

"Let's go together?" suggested the elder brother. "I am all broke up! I believe—that is I—can't help bein'—afraid—somethin' terrible has happened to 'er!"

His brother's face reflected the feeling of awe his words inspired as they went out into the duskiuess towards the stable. They examined the garners, the hay-lofts, and even the fence corners thoroughly, and finally returned and descended the cellar steps.

"Look in that old chest brother, I will hold the lantern for you. Of course there's nothing in that, but we must make this search thorough!"

The lid was heavy and they lifted it with some difficulty. The dark man's face grew pale as he requested his brother to examine inside.

"You look, brother," he said, "I feel as weak as a woman tonight!"

His brother looked carefully inside and shook his head. She was not there, nor could she possibly be anywhere in that house. The boys then decided to go to their nearest neighbor's, and inquire again if any intelligence had been received. They took the path lead-

ing through the old orchard and down by the pond.

In the spring time when the trees bloomed and the three had walked there together, to help at the "quilting" and "house-raising,"—which was always followed by a fine dinner—they had felt very happy and the path seemed a delightful one. But now, with the cool breath of autumn plucking the leaves from the trees and the dreadful forboding upon them, the path seemed desolate enough!

"We are going to meet somebody," said the younger brother as they started out. He put out his hand and checked his brother's steps.

"Where?" asked the dark skinned man, looking down the path before him.

"There; just at the side of the road!—Don't you see?"

The dark man again looked along the path, but saw no object.

"Where?—I see nothing!" he said.

"Just to your left!"—then he added. "They've stopped, whoever it is. Maybe they see us and wait to tell us some news of mother."

They moved forward a little, and had scarcely passed one row of trees when the elder brother exclaimed:

"They've stopped by that peach tree,—who can it be, I wonder?"

They went forward a little and again paused suddenly.

"Light the lantern—wait here a minute"—the brother said.

They struck a light and both looked towards the object.



HER HEAD WAS BOWED AND HER LONG, WHITE HAIR STREAMING IN THE WIND;

It was the figure of a woman! She was seated in a chair under one of the large peach trees. Her head was bowed and her long, white hair streaming in the wind!

“O, mother!” exclaimed the dark man, rushing forward. His brother followed and they were soon at her side. There was a groan of despair as her eldest child fell upon his knees at her feet.

A heavy skein of yarn attached to one of the branches of the tree still tightly encircled her neck.

The “earthly house of this tabernacle” was tenantless! The Inhabitant had gone to seek a more congenial dwelling.

The Soul *must have* a beautiful Temple, and the old one must undergo repairs or be abandoned!

The tender, loving, faithful mother had not learned how that mind may upbuild and beautify body by use of the holy, healing Word;—how to forgive sin—her own sin—and live the redemptive life of the Christ within.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a low, melancholy wind weaving through the trees and tall, dead grasses of the lonely grave yard upon the afternoon set apart for the interment of Mrs. Bleevneevl. This, together with the blanched faces and whispering tones of the few neighbors present, rendered the occasion oppressively solemn and lonesome in the extreme. Bro. Cobb, Bro. Pewlett and a few relatives too awe stricken to weep, the grave-digger and his assistant, two or three curious looking strangers that seemed to have stumbled upon the spot and were looking inquiringly into the people's faces to see who

the bereaved ones were, together with Jerry, Sibyl and the minister's family, formed the audience.

Mr. Ahvallah had come to officiate and had brought his children and colored folks in order that they might be impressed with the solemnity of death and the frailty of human life.

Hence Fabby and his dog had been noticed upon the grounds, but they had afterwards disappeared into the woods.

"The people had waited longer than usual for the rustic hearse to arrive, and had collected in groups near each other to discuss in whispers the probable cause of detention, and to express their wonder over the strange state of mind, and of the tragical end reached by one who had repented and lived an upright life so long!

"It's a mystery to me!" said Bro. Ccbb drily, as he slowly stroked his black beard.

"Now where do you suppose her spirit is?" asked Mrs. Ahvallah, as she glanced solemnly towards the two men who were sitting upon the new earth with shovels in their hands, waiting the arrival of the wagon containing the "remains" for interment.

"Let us hope that she is with her Savior!" said the minister, standing very erect with his hands folded and his eyes cast down.

"She is at one or t'other place, shore," said Bro. Pewlett, solemnly shaking his head.

At that moment a brushing of leaves and a crushing of sticks was heard in the edge of the woods, and the wagon bearing the plain coffin and contents was seen coming slowly up through the tangled weeds and grass. It stopped near the new heap of earth. Then there

were a few solemn words, a most doleful song, which the low winds seemed to take up and carry away as if a part of them, and together became lost in the woods. Mr. Ahvallah opened his pocket Bible and read,

“Verily, verily I say unto you, The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.”—Jno. v:25.

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which *all* that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth.”

“Then dying is a mistake!” rang suddenly through Evangel’s mind. “*A mistake*, and has to be undone! *Of course* it is a mistake, or Jesus wouldn’t have brought people back to life, when he was here; Lazarus, and Jairus’ girl—just about my age ”

But they were not dead, so Jesus said. He said that they were asleep! “And the foolish people laughed at him!”

Another clause which was in the text her father read, was, “the time is coming *and now is*”—

“Yes! if people would only believe it, they could wake these people right out of sleep!” the child continued very earnestly, “and we could have our dear ones again!”

Evangel of Allah was right. It was a deep, hypnotic sleep, caused by race pressure through false teaching and false beliefs: which false attitudes had become so impressed and were so deeply imbibed as to cause the sleep! The condition is the result of the obliteration of faith in Good, and relapse into belief in the power of evil, together with the paralyzing fear of evil, which chills and petrifies, and then slowly disintegrates

body scattering the dislodged particles to the four winds. Of course if the body is literally resurrected it will be the same body in appearance, since the individual mind will furnish the same supply of thought forces to play upon it. (If "reincarnation" were true, there would have to be a new individual each time to produce the new personality for each return.)

At the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus said: "Did I not tell you that if you would *only believe*, I could awake him, and show you the *glory of God?*" (good.)—"and NOW IS!" repeated the voice within "The hour is coming, and NOW IS! *The hour now is!*"

Evangel had grown very quiet. She stood upon a projecting rock that happened to be near the place, her clear, bright eyes taking in the scene, but she was *thinking* far more than observing. The child's cheeks burned a warm red, and her heart beat fast and full, as if extra life had been added.

"*Now is. now is,*" the voice kept on.

"It is such an awful mistake! Why don't somebody *believe* sure enough and not talk so much about unbelief?" she mused. "*I will! I will believe in good for Mrs. Bleevneevl anyhow. Now for faith that will remove the mountain they have heaped, out of her way! She is not dead, she only sleeps. It must be true.*" the young girl urged continually. "*I believe, I believe, I believe,—I know! 'The hour now is!'*" and so her thought ran on, until her mother noticing her changed countenance drew near her and asked the cause of it.

"Why, ma, Mrs. Bleevneevl is not dead."

"What do you mean, child?" asked her astonished mother, looking about her in a frightened way.

“*She is only sound asleep.*”

“You are a strange child,” said the mother, as she turned and spoke to her husband. Others heard it, and there was a strange expectancy depicted upon their faces after that. A general awe prevailed!

“Don’t grieve so,” urged a compassionate voice below. Miss Amanda who had been in the neighborhood for a few days, heard of the tragedy, and had gone at once to the cottage to lend all the comfort and condolence she could to the bereaved son, in whom she felt a profound interest

“Your mother will rise again,” she was saying, “and will be free from care, and”—

“Yes, Miss; but *when?*—after I have been dead a thousand years? *WHEN?*” urged the dark man bitterly.

The voice within again spoke to Evangel: “Did I not tell you that if you would *only believe*, you would see the glory of God?”

“I know,” said the bereaved son, giving Miss Amanda the hand she had reached out for, “I know mother will rise again at the great trumpet of God. Of course all will then rise. But there is no comfort in that to me!”

The great “Trumpet” is but the voice of all the people going up in one great victorious shout when it is *generally recognized* that ALL IS LIFE, AND ALL IS GOD! Of course *all* will then come forth, because all belief in evil will have ceased and Truth will then *prevail*.

It was growing late when they lowered the plain casket. The child’s face lost its color, she grew calm, and more than one watched her face as she stood pale and motionless upon the rock.

Finally disgusted with the scene, she closed her eyes, and when she heard the dirt rattling upon the boards as they began to fill the grave, she pressed her fingers upon her ears to shut out the sound.

"She is *not* dead, *not* dead!" the child repeated as if her faith in the words were perfect! "She only sleeps."

And when the last sod had been placed, the ceremony closed, and the people were about to move away, some bushes parted not far away and Hence Fabby and his dog were again seen hurrying to the spot. But Evangel did not move.

"Wait tbar," Hence managed to articulate, "mother's a comin', an' she wants t' tell yo' somethin'!"

The next instant Mrs. Fabby arrived. The Fabby's owned the lonely grave yard property and lived not far away. Mrs. Fabby was followed closely by her husband who seemed to be trying eagerly to soothe and quiet her.

"Don't put 'er there! Don't put 'er at the foot of our place, I won't have it! Hit's the wust luck in the world! Hence said you'z a"—at that moment noticing that the burial was over, she gave a wild cry and went into a spell of hysteria. It lasted for two or three minutes, during which her husband explained, that her father's people who had a touch of Indian blood in their veins, believed that if an unfortunate man should be buried at the foot of a lot, the man to whom the lot belonged would follow within the year, and that if a woman who had suffered a tragical end were thus placed, then the woman of the house would follow within the year, or if such a child were so placed, one of the children would be sure to die within that time! So the hus-

band remonstrated and urged a change to be made at once to prevent any further demonstration from Mrs. Fabby, whom he declared in the worst of health and not to be kept in suspense. He knew she could not sleep while matters remained as they were, and he was sure she would be laid up at once and have a spell if not a fatal illness he said. So the men were set to work again, and in a short time the plain casket was again ready to be lowered into a grave dug in another part of the cemetery a little distance farther on.

"If you don't mind," said the dark-skinned man, as he stepped forward and held out his hand, "I would like t' take one more look at poor mother?"

It was getting late and Bro. Cobb who had been quietly congratulating himself upon having another good act set down to his credit in the heavenly record, demurred, saying:

"Bro. Arthur, hit's a gitting late, and ef I was you I'd just let 'em go ahead. Hit won't do no good nohow!"

The men began to move on with their work, but stopped at the suggestion of Mr. Ahvallah that they grant Mr. Bleevneevl's request.

A dark belt of cloud had crept across the fast dimming light in the west as the afternoon waned, which blotted out much of the mild glow, and made the blue of the sky lower forbodingly. The top of the casket was lifted and Arthur Bleevneevl moved forward to once more look upon the beloved form of her who had been so faithful and so self-sacrificing a mother.

Mr. Bleevneevl kneeled beside the casket as he cried out:—

“O, Mother: How can I ever give you up? How can I *ever*——”

“Look! will you?” exclaimed one of the men, interrupting.

“The road must have been very rough”, suggested another, “the wagon must have jolted terribly.”

“It was that stair-steps-oak!” a third felt sure.

All eyes were turned that way, save those of Evangel which with an almost awed expression in them turned toward the horizon. The white-robed figure was turned in the casket and rested now upon its face! And, horror of horrors, the arms were extended, and the fingers clutched tightly in the long white hair!

Arthur Blevneevl sprang to his feet, and with the assistance of one of the men, lifted the form gently and turned it over!

“Take her hand and lift her up,” said Evangel, looking towards her father and speaking from her inner self. The command seemed imperative, and Mr. Abvalah took one of the white hands, while Arthur put his arms about his mother’s shoulders and gently lifted her. All the faces present blanched with fear and overspread with a strange apprehension and awe, and every tongue was silent! Was that a gasp? Surely there was some movement! Was she breathing? Yes. The eyes slowly opened; and Mrs. Blevneevl looked upon the faces about her that were now as pale as hers! There was a muffled scream, and Miss Amanda fell in a fainting spasm! Mrs. Fabby’s hysteria returned with redoubled energy, and there were few present who were at that moment able to firmly stand upon their feet! They were as utterly confounded and fear-stricken as any

of the churches on earth would be if the prayers of their ministers should be answered.

Evangel awoke as if from a dream in which doubt had found no place. "It is all *true!* To believe brings back to life. Surely *the hour now is*, forever, and everywhere, if people would only BELIEVE!" she said aloud.

Evangel was the calmest person present. Illustre was crying and wringing her hands, and her other sisters were greatly frightened. Mrs. Ahvallah had been speechless with awe and fear, and the two colored relics of the slavery period, had fallen upon their faces and were begging for mercy!

"It is the most wonderful thing I ever heard of!" said Mr. Ahvallah, a few hours later when talking over the affair with his family, after they had all returned home, and Arthur had taken his mother away alive.

"What made you think, Evangel, that Mrs. Bleevneevl was alive?" asked Mrs. Ahvallah who had been thinking deeply upon the strange developments at the burial place.

"Father, read, 'verily, verily I say unto you the *hour is coming—and now is*—when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that shall live', and then I remmembered the words Jesus spoke: 'If ye *abide* in me and my words *abide* in you, ye may ask what you will and it shall be done,' and then there are several places in the Bible which declare that *belief* will work such miracles."

As for Mrs. Bleevneevl, the doctor was called to the cottage and told the neighbors who had gathered that he had seen many cases of resuscitation from a

comatose state, but that of Mrs. B. was the most remarkable he had seen. The woman was soon as well as usual, and gave her story of how the temptation of suicide first came to her, when she learned that Mr. Bourd held a paper that would possibly bring her Arthur into the hands of the executioner.

(This paper, written before the murder of Jno. Rawham, contained a violent threat to the effect that he would "blow a hole through him big enough to put his old hat through!" and the incensed enemy who wrote it had hailed Mr. Bleeveevl when passing horseback, and quietly requested him to convey the note to Mr. Rawham. Arthur placed it in his vest pocket without examination, and when it dropped out and Hence Fabby who saw it fall picked it up, he was innocent of its contents, and had forgotten all about the paper, until Silas Bourd threatened him with it at his mother's house.)

She said when the thought first occurred to her it was barely recognizable, and she did not fear it in the least. She felt sure that if she had resisted the thought, had said "get thee gone, thought of evil," it would have left her; but at each recall, which was a deliberate act upon her part at first, the thought gained strength, and finally increased in power until it overcame her, and she tried to take her own life!

She said she became conscious after the last clods had been placed upon her grave, when she suddenly realized that she was "*not dead*", but buried out of sight! Then, O, too horrible to tell, the terrible situation flashed into her consciousness with such vivid force as to fully arouse her! She then gave one wild tug at the walls of her narrow chamber, knocked hopelessly upon

its sides and top, and then turned upon her face, tore her hair and lost consciousness!

I do not like to write this; but how many, many people are buried alive! In Truth, all of them! For none die. There is no death. They only sleep and *may be aroused when the cause of their hypnotic condition is removed, and* when man has faith in God alone.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## WAVERLY HEIGHTS.

“The pride too of her steps so light  
Along the unconscious earth she went,  
Seemed that of one, born with a right  
To walk some heavenlier element.”

—*Love of The Angels.*

The spacious parlors of Waverly Heights were aglow with brilliant lights and alive with happy faces and forms.

Waverly Heights with its modern improvements and sightly locality had, a few years ago, been received by Mr. Ahvallah in exchange for old-fashioned Oak House; the groves of the latter affording fine protection for sheep “upon many hills” had induced the former owner of Waverly to seek a trade with the owner of Oak House. So the old stock raiser exchanged his beautiful residence and sightly lands for the plain old farm with its groves.

Change is perpetual. The external world ebbs and flows. Sahara will yet be a watered garden. The plains of the West and their rocky borders are being quickened by the breath of Progress, and the Universe keeps record of every flower that blossoms. But along the slender track history writes of a remote and circumscribed Few, we point out such events as have been the mainsprings of action, plans, and occurrences following after them.

Oak House lost its Maypole-like attractions, and serious responsibilities dropped from the shoulders of the minister's wife. Sometimes at Waverly there were fine dinners for invited guests, but there was efficient "help" and a more considerate, congenial and appreciative class of people to entertain.

Upon this particular evening the young people occupied the east room, a large, square apartment with angle windows, and an ample space between the corner that was cut off for a select library by soft tinted vilure curtains, gracefully draped. The principal color in these curtains imitated the shades in distant foliage, and their borders were richly broidered, and in tone with the furniture of the room, all of which was purchased with an eye towards matching the ultramarine tint in two large vases that rested opposite each other between the two angle-windows. A chair of rich, ultramarine velvet placed not far from one of the angle-windows and facing towards the library, was occupied by a young girl who was engaged in conversation with the youth with "wonderful eyes" and Apollo Belvidere face. The young woman was Evangel Ahval!ah, the last in the line of namesakes, and but recently arrived at the inheriting age. Joseph was now a student at the State University, and Evangel was in her second year at State College. They were upon a brief visit home, and had been talking about their schools. Evangel finally changed the subject by saying:

"I came into the possession yesterday of some property I didn't earn, that did not come by miracle, that was not presented, nor yet purchased for me!"

The eyes were looking at her as if to read the secret in them; but failing to understand, he said:

"I can't imagine it. Maybe you wouldn't mind enlightening me upon the subject."

"No: it is the vases."

These vases were after the Etruscan order, and had descended through several generations as an heirloom, from a remote ancestry.

There was no doubt about this for they had a family tree that reached far back of the American Revolution. A grandmother of the fifth remove had donated them to her namesake daughter, Evangel, when the latter had arrived at the age of sixteen, and the namesake had in turn handed them down to her Evangel.

"Oh," he replied in response to Evangel's remark, and comprehending at once, for he had heard about their history.

"I suppose you are very much pleased with the legacy? They are certainly beautiful."

"I like them of course; but when I look at them I think of the artist who so beautifully harmonized the colors in them. Illustre says she cares nothing about the artist, or how they were made, but regrets that *she* didn't inherit the vases."

"I can't blame her. They are a fine expression of harmony in the mind of craftsman and artist, and any one ought to be proud to win a title to them in any worthy way."

He was again looking at her, and his wonderful eyes spoke more than his lips.

"I could not give them both up! I will permit you to claim one of them," she replied pleasantly.

"Thank you! I would rather have it so. One is sufficient, any way, to hold my wild lily."

She looked up with a question in her eyes, and he explained:

"The lily you gave me four years ago. We gathered it in the field," he said still looking at her.

"O, yes," answered the coral lips, while the hazel eyes looked down upon the vase

"How old are the vases, I wonder?" he asked, noting the touch of embarrassment.

"They are mentioned in the family tree," said Evangel, glad at the change of subject, "as coming from the Pelasgi, who it seems brought art decoration into Northern Italy. The Etruscan vases were the product of their skill. Whether they are really of Grecian origin, revealing, after conquest by the Romans 148 years before Christ, Grecian genius in Roman hands, may be guessed at after a glance at these contemporary nationalities about the time of the Roman conquest. Some of our family have tried to hold that the vases are very old, but father thinks they are only American imitations of old Etruscan vases."

"They look really antique," replied the young man.

The vases held only some drooping immortelles, whose tint patronized the shade of the vilure curtains, and seemed to blend with the ultramarine in the tops of the vases, for a few inches below their upper edges a pale onyx took up the tone, metamorphosing it into a deep, brilliant garnet near their bases, so that when the sun fell upon their edges they sent out streams of crimson, gold and sapphire. These tones were repeated in the meshes of the carpet and hinted at in the borders of

the curtains. Aside from these, the wood work and the furniture, the walls of the room which were finished in plaster paris, and the lace curtains were of a perfect white. They reflected all the rays of the sun, when none of his rays touched upon the vases.

There were a few valuable pictures on the walls, and several in water colors sketched from nature by Evangel. All the pictures were richly but not bulkily framed.

Upon this occasion this room was occupied by gay, light-hearted young people with love-life and light upon their countenances. Virginia, a Grecian-faced, madonna-like girl of eighteen, listened with downcast eyes to the soft words of the black eyed young man with the pale face and the flowing, black mustache. It was the one before whose pleading look the violet eyes had faltered, and to whose low words she now had given heed.

Antoinette had found what all the old novels pictured upon their last pages, the married state; that state of bliss where discord ceases and the pearly gates close because there is nothing more to be said! I would say, however that few have lived as happily, or filled out important trusts more faithfully.

Mr. Ahvallah and Mr. Storms were engaged in conversation upon the school question, and State College, now under the watch-care of the Denomination

Illustre was well developed for her age, and entertained a youth as glibly as if she believed that were her calling. The young man wore a suit of black cloth with a collar so stiff as to oblige him to hold his head pretty high, and which seemed to necessitate a very erect attitude.

"Do you like this part of the country, Miss Illustre?" he asked in a soft tone.

"Why, yes sir, of course I do,—don't *you?*"

"Yes," he replied, looking towards Evangel as he spoke. "Who is that young fellow Miss Evangel is talking to?"

"That is Mr. Montall of the State University, don't you know him?"

"Ah, yes, I know who he is. Do you like him?"

"Pretty well," was Illustre's soft reply.

There was a rap at the back door and Miss Conover and her brother were announced. Miss Conover was in the midst of saying:

"Mrs. Ahvallah, Dollie, Dot, Spurgeon and the baby;—I've said howdy do to all of them, and now,—*well!* just see! here's another room full to say howdy do to!"

Miss Conover had pretty teeth; she smiled and bobbed about while introducing and being introduced, and seemed as merry as a robin in spring time. Miss Conover drew Illustre into the library and informed her that Will Marston—"who was really a good fellow"—was "an awful flirt," and that she'd "better look sharp!"

State College was a "female institution" and any attention from young men was prohibited. The rules were very strict and opportunities very rare, and then only at intervals of a month and a half, could they in any way communicate, when the students were upon their periodical visit home.

The Conover's were near neighbors of the Montall's and the Ahvallah's, the three residences being located

within half a mile of each other, and all three of them suburban to Athena.

"Joseph?" said Miss Conover, who was a "cute" little lady, full to the brim of wit and pleasantry, "arn't you afraid Will will run away with your girl?" (Mr. Marston had found his way to Evangel's side, and could not tell to save him, which one he liked the best of the two sisters.)

"I guess I can't help it if he does, since I have no right to dictate to her."

"It's a case of love at first sight, I believe they say," said Miss Conover's brother, "but Will is always falling in love at first sight." With an air of nonchalance and aristocratic hauteur that showed a little defiance, he returned:

"I don't think she cares particularly for him,—he may for her, —I'm sure I do not know."

He removed his chair to the stand and picking up one of the sketches that lay face downward upon the onyx top, he beheld with some surprise the outlines of his own face. Evangel saw the expression, and asked Mr. Marston to excuse her.

"I want to speak to Mr. Montall," she said. "We are both Sophs, and both members of literary societies."

A shade of dissatisfaction passed over young Marston's face, and a light shone in the eyes of Mr. Montall as she approached him. Marston decided at once that he was desperately in love!

The two found chairs in the library. Evangel had been elected president of the Aede Literary, and there were some forms she did not quite understand. Joseph

explained at length, giving her all the information necessary.

The University and State College were both situated in Athena and not far from each other; the dome of the former sparkled in full view of the dormitory windows of the latter. Upon occasions of a public nature a long line of young girls in college uniform and marching with military step were permitted to visit the intensely interesting precincts of campus grounds and University, where, somehow, without words or innuendo many a pretty girl gave away her heart.

"How do you feel?" asked Miss Conover's brother of Will Marston, raising his eyebrows and assuming an air of solemnity.

"I'm gone; I can tell you that much!" he replied, as he ran his fingers through his hair and then rested his head very thoughtfully upon his hand.

"Now don't say such a thing! Do, pray, Will, don't begin your sentiment this soon!" replied his friend, growing serious.

"I mean it!" he said aside, "I've met my fate this time!—that is if—if she's met *hers!*"

"I think she has!" replied the brother, casting a significant look at the twain in the library. Then after a sharp look at the young man before him, he asked:

"Don't it seem so?"

Will Marston turned his eyes in the direction indicated by his companion.

At the moment Evangel was saying something very earnestly as she looked up into Mr. Montall's face. The young man seemed greatly pleased as he received the tiny parcel she was handing him. Soon after she

brought him his hat and walked with him to the door, when he was taking his leave. As she returned to her nook in the library it was observed that her cheeks were aglow with bright blushes and her eyes sparkling with a new light. Marston who was several years Montall's senior, rose and followed her.

Mr. Marston's eyes were of a peculiar shade and expression. They were bright, or rather staring, and set up like two light-brown buttons, showing a disc of cornea above and below them when in animated conversation. Otherwise he was good looking enough.

"Mis- Evangel," he began falteringly but with a sort of desperate boldness. "I have not known you very long, but I feel I must tell you what indeed you must already know, I—"

"Wait! don't say it," she quickly interrupted, holding up a slender hand. "Listen to me now; don't you say what you thought of saying!"

"Why?" he shortly asked in a surprised but subdued tone.

"Because it would be better not to say it," she replied firmly.

"How can you know that?"

"I am sure it is true," she answered

He thought a moment and then asked:

"May I say it next time I come?"

"No," she answered even more firmly, "never say what you began saying unless I invite you to do so"

"I am at your command, of course," he said with a solemn look. Then after a few cursory remarks he excused himself and retired to his two friends with chagrin and disappointment plainly depicted in his countenance.

Evangel was thinking of Joseph Montall, and the talk over Shakespeare and Bacon. Mr. Marston watched her expression from a distance. He was coveting the owner of the sea-shell complexion of pink and white, the coral lips, and admiring the splendid expression in the thoughtful, hazel eyes.

Evangel's vacations were all pleasant. She was a believer in Nature and flourished like a blooming flower in its light.

Joseph Montall lived near by, and she often had the pleasure of his society.

Walnut Grove church had the same deacons, clerks, and other church officials, and the same pastor as of old. Bro. Bourd still ornamented the amen corner pew; but he had many ailments and was conscious of having accumulated them along the byways of his earthly career by sowing to his selfish desires. He sometimes acknowledged with tears that he had been a wicked man, and though he had long ago cast all his cares upon Jesus, still he carried with him his entire load of afflictions! And instead of warning the ignorant whom he found entering into the same entanglements that had injured him,—instead of saying, Behold me! I am in this condition because I sinned as you are about doing,—do you want my troubles? If not, change your course, for you *must* reap as you sow!—Instead of this he only prayed at long intervals begging like a saint for a sinner, thus making the subject of purity and holiness ridiculous!

Mrs. Willan growing enthusiastic to "save souls", went from house to house making long prayers for the sweet daughters of dear, good mothers who had already brought them up in the way they should go, and who

could not comprehend the full motive of the woman's zealous action. Yet they granted her the privilege of prayer, and gently allowed her to depart. The little book she carried in her bag contained a long list of names and notes of prayers and admonitions to be publicly read at the next General Association, when the name of the heroic "church-worker" would be publicly extolled.

Suddenly, however, her ambition changed one autumn and she removed to the city and opened a boarding-house.

Hence Fabby was the same passive recipient, and worthless character, reflecting the secret thoughts and intents his mother had "thoughtlessly" indulged before his birth.

Bro. Rucker, whose celestial donations continued to widen the family circle continued to live not far from Bro. Cooper, the man of large means and mysteriously limited family.

Bro. Pewlett's three daughters were all "church-workers", all tall, sallow and rough skinned. George was the same wiry, thrown away looking creature as of old. His father still tried to imbue him with the hope of receiving the favor of one or the other of Bro. Ah-vallah's girls. Permelia had almost despaired of getting a husband, but continued to ride horse-back with her father to all the meetings. Mrs. Fabby's Bro. Mart had inspired the said Permelia with confidence in well-doing by "bringing up her creter" a time or two, to the church stiles, and assisting her to mount.

Bro. Short, still manipulating "manufactured" tobacco, expectorated at random in the old way, and reck-

oned his prayers were sometimes heard, though if answered it was in ways least expected.

Whipstock had acquired the habit of abruptly stopping opposite the Old Mill Cottage well whenever she passed that way with the buggy and the folks. on their monthly church-meeting days. And Old Mrs. Good, coming to the door of the cottage, would shade her eyes with her hand and look to see who it should be, then gather up her cane and walk down to the slope to the well, saying as she would near the place:

"Why, dear me! Now git out, git out, and hitch. You must have a cup o' tea arter your long drive. Hits plenty o' time. Hits half an hour yit, an' thars the meetin' house!" she would indicate, pointing to the humble sanctuary on the hill.

Her kind tone usually made them feel inclined and they would turn Whipstock's willing head to the fence, to be hitched, and get out.

On one of these occasions Mr. Ahvallah had been feeling some indisposition, and hoped that driving out would prove beneficial and aid in restoring him to his usual health.

The cup of tea seemed to refresh him, but after the sermon that day his wife persuaded him to return home and let some one of the "licensed" brethren fill the pulpit the following day.

Mrs. Ahvallah was frightened at his symptoms and sent for the new family physician as soon as they arrived at home: but failing to find him she started Jerry (who had become an expert in the business) after Doctor Khillus. Mr. Ahvallah's trouble seemed to be congestion of the stomach, and when the doctor arrived and

Mrs. Ahvallah first gave her opinion as 'to the locality of his trouble—as is usually the case—the doctor felt sure she was right, and hinted, wisely, that his liver too, might also be involved. He left some pills and pellets and went his way, after promising to call the following day. But being detained by an acute attack himself, and though Mr. A. had suffered severely the evening after the doctor had left, still, since he was some better the following day, and there were yet some of the pills left, they managed to get on without calling any one else. He took a sudden turn for worse, however, on the following night and Mrs. Ahvallah greatly feared he would not live till morning.

Evangel, who was away at school, was sent for, and matters looked serious.

"I had hoped she would come, to-day," said the sick man to his wife late in the afternoon of the day they had sent for Evangel. "I always feel better when she is around. But don't look so frightened, Hebe. I feel some better just now. If the Lord spares me, I will lead a better life,—I will better devote my time to his cause!"

"He will spare you!" said a cheerful voice at the door. Evangel was at his side. "You *have* always been good father! How *could* you be any better than you have been?"

"In many ways, my child," he said, holding on to her hand. "I have been vain, high-minded,—and—but I am glad to see you, Honey, *so* glad!"

"If you lack anything at *all*, it is faith in the Omnipresence of God."

"I don't think I doubt that, my child," he replied after a moment's thought.

"I am sure you have more faith than most church people, but what I mean is the faith that realizes God's Omnipresence. If you could do that, you would get well right away."

"Why, my child,—the days of miracles are over."

"I know people think that," responded the girl brightly, "but I have seen several of the college girls get well, some of them immediately, when I told them God was really everywhere and that they believed God was all. You see, I have learned some great things, aside from the regular course."

"I don't think I understand you," returned her father.

"I discovered that by praying and silently affirming that to be which I wished to come to pass in the external, and then thanking God for it, that it came to pass, and that by thinking towards their minds the Omnipresence of God, it so impressed them with the true belief or faith in God, that they knew that they were well. You see when we speak to Mind we speak to the true man, and, also, to the true God, who hears only the true prayer. Now the true God is everywhere: Everywhere must mean inclusive of every real thing. My life is God: All that is not in God is unreal. The word God means literally, Good, and therefore God can give his children only Good. All we have to do is to receive it, and be like God."

Her father was silent for a long while, and then said very cautiously and slowly:

"I believe in prayer and also in the omnipresence of

God, and in His willingness to hear us if we ask right. But we have to be very careful not to be—led astray in our views, since Satan, you know, Evangel, goes about like a roaring lion, seeking unwary souls. I hope they do not teach anything foreign to the good old doctrine of the cross, in your school, my child?"

"O no! the President and every member of the faculty believe in and teach the old way. But you know I cannot accept the position that God is a man,—I have not since I have understood that God is everywhere. A personal God could not be everywhere, therefore God being everywhere is impersonal, while yet one and indivisible. Prof. Wise related an incident of an Indian mother whose child had fallen into the river; the mother raised her clasped hands and prayed,—

"'O, Thou Great Everywhere, save my child!' Almost immediately a canoe sped from under some willows not far away and the oarsman rescued the child when it had risen for the last time, and delivered it to its mother.' At the time it seemed a strange thing to pray to, yet I could not help feeling inspired with the thought of the Great Everywhere Presence!"

Mr. Ahvallah's recovery began at once. His first intention had been to set to work as soon as he was able to try to uproot the foreign doctrine from his child's mind; but he grew better so rapidly under her ministrations that it became quite evident that her way of praying had something to do with his speedy recovery; so he permitted her to take the course she chose for the present, while he pondered the matter over.

One word of Truth will set a thousand errors to flight, and two, ten thousand; and so by the time the

minister had regained his full strength he had also grown in grace and a knowledge of the truth, into a *higher plane of consciousness*. He had promised the Lord to live more faithfully, and right intentions *always* lead the mind into higher understanding. One illumination after another flashed upon him until he saw the clear dawn appear!

Evangel had returned to school, but many long and important letters found their way back and forth between father and daughter, and many earnest discussions took place between husband and wife.

We will not speak of the great struggle that ensued in the "letting go" of the old "forms" and the old creeds and the forsaking of the old way, nor of how the news of his changed views affected his many friends. But the children breathed more freely and ceased to dream about a fiery fiend and the world burning up, and were healthy. They wouldn't borrow any more trouble if God were all and in all, sure enough!

Mrs. Ahvallah who had always held secret doubts about the efficacy or rightness of the doctrine of the vicarious atonement and the power vested in a circumscribed God, only felt sure they had at last found the very thing she had really believed in all along! Yet, being no theologian, she had kept these things in her heart, or had only mentioned them sometimes to Him who is so near that He "hears the young ravens when they cry," so near that He knows the intention springing in our hearts before words are formed to give it utterance! And when she saw that her husband forgot to use tobacco because he had no more desire for it, and was bright and thoughtful in little matters wherein he

had formerly shown absent-mindedness, and when his face shone happier than it had done even in youth, her real attitude became apparent and she rejoiced with the rest. Before this period in her life, nobody had ever supposed she was a very superior woman except in the way of being a fine wife and mother and neighbor. She now found herself able to intelligently converse with the wisest doctors of the law upon metaphysical questions. It was soon discovered by the thinking people of Mr. Ahvallah's four churches that his wife was a highly gifted woman. Many people sought her society to hear from her lips the many beautiful things she seemed inspired to say, and it was not long until classes were organized in two of the churches, and Mrs. Ahvallah was called upon to teach them. She did not "fill the pulpit," but stood before her classes with the conscious light of Truth glowing upon her face, which, since the new enlightenment came was really young and beautiful still.

"Only think of how we have taught the heathen Christ, tobacco, and strong drink!" said the minister to his wife as they were returning after one of her lessons had been given. "I am amazed at the sluggishness of the people! Why I ever cared for tobacco I cannot now imagine; and why you did not forbid its use in the house since the odor of it gave you headache, is now a wonder to me! To think of man, a son of God, over-eating, or of over-indulging his appetites, or using tobacco to quiet his nerves, when the great realm of Mind is so full of glorious treasures of Truth which are ours for the taking, is a source of humiliation and wonder, now since we have come into this great new light of understanding."

“Let us now be satisfied in the knowledge of these great Truths,” replied the happy wife, “and press forward continually in the grace of holiness, forgetting the failing things that are of the past! I am glad we have had experiences, since our *intentions* were for the best; but now we have but to walk in the Light and help others to do the same. I am very happy that I am now able to help in the real work of Life!”



WAVERLY HEIGHTS.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE FAIR BRIGADE AND ITS GENERAL.

—“Walk sober off before a sprightlier age  
Come moving on and drive you from the stage.”

*Pope.*

Three hundred girls in college uniform filed out from the gates of State College and bent their steps towards Church street.

They ranged themselves in alphabetical order, seniors first, preparatories last. They were led by President Creedy, and accompanied by several teachers and members of the faculty.

Near the van of, and next to the self-important seniors, walked Nora Ongenright, a pretty girl, whose countenance expressive of christian forbearance, literally hid from strangers the spirit of pride and self-esteem that lurked in her little bosom. Her companion, a girl with an immaculate complexion and queenly bearing, had, to-day for certain reasons, a fine, delicate blush upon her cheeks and an unusual light in the expressive eyes.

The President of the school, the commanding officer of this very military procession, was a man of fifty-five or sixty years, who looked much older, his hair and whiskers being almost entirely white. He wore a black cloth suit, silk hat, kid gloves and patent leather shoes. He paused at intervals and allowed the line to pass, when he would survey the different sections with a

proud, pleased interest, speaking to them in an undertone as he allowed the divisions to pass;—

“Here we are at Church street my daughters!” he said, opening his eyes meaningly. “You want to put on your best appearance,—this is the point where the University boys come in!”

He mentioned this all along the line just before reaching the street, so that any new girl just entered school might be upon her guard and bear herself appropriately. He then returned with quickened step to the front of the ranks.

“You all look *mighty sweet, mighty sweet!*” he said, as a half smile softened his dignified expression.

A half dozen groups of two, three and four young men, scattered along at irregular intervals, were to be seen coming towards them from the direction of the State University. Two of them made it a point to approach, although no words were allowed to pass between the students and the college girls; the girls were permitted only to bow and recognize any chance acquaintance.

Just as the brigade turned the street corner and began separating for the different churches, the two young men lifted their hats,—such cute, pretty hats, that must have been scented with violets and Spanish Lilies.

They were carefully dressed in University uniform. Every detail was faultlessly arranged, even to each lock of hair, the exact incline of each loop and end of the soft tie, and the beloved mustache—petted and stroked and every hair appropriated and turned to account at their magnetic extremities,—was faultless indeed.

They were such “nice boys;” nearly all the girls

mused, not at all like the dusty farmer boys that took baths only in the creek and didn't care whether their hands were rough or smooth. They always shook hands too, the country boys did.

These two young men passed on and another group came up and managed to fall in alongside the junior section. Evangel saw that the central figure of the group was Joseph Montall.

"What perfect grace!" she thought, "how handsome he seems this morning! What matchless eyes! What a splendid face and form, and how perfectly at ease his manner!" They both smiled and slightly bowed.

The sharp eyes of the commander saw the recognition and when the students had passed he asked as he stepped to Evangel's side:

"Who is that young man?"

"Mr. Joseph Montall," was her quiet reply.

"O, yes; I know his father, a fine old man too." He meditated for a moment and then asked: "He lives not far from you, I believe?"

Evangel nodded her head affirmatively.

"And calls often?" he continued, looking at her and smiling significantly.

"Ask Fa about that; I'm at school now, you see," she replied, blushing.

"I'll have to watch him! These young fellows are awfully sly!" returned the President. "They come to the University, fall in love with my girls, and then get the swell-head. They expand and expand until they are ready to burst with importance! My girls," he went on warmly, "have inspired those young men with greater ambitions and helped to higher attainments than all

the sciences, philosophies, and the fine arts together! This acquaintance of yours is very smooth, very genteel, but I'll catch 'im if he don't mind!"

Evangel only laughed in reply, and they walked on very quietly until they arrived at the entrance of the church. Each young man noted the destination of the particular division in which he was most interested; and as all the sermons amounted to about the same thing—all extolling the greatness of "good" and the preponderance of evil, not forgetting the total depravity of man, thus enticing people to partake of the forbidden fruit, (which is the "knowledge of good and evil,")—he allowed the preference of his favorite girl to determine his preference.

How very sweet and pretty, and how good the girls felt when they were in their pews and found that so many of the University students were within talking range of the eyes.

Little Miss Nervends, the sub-prep with so much frowzy hair and pretty clothes, sat with her sailor hat on the back of her head looking first at the song book she held and then towards "the boys," and then suddenly back again when the teacher's eye would turn rebukingly upon her: then a blush and compromising smile would ensue, and she would be quiet for a second.

Sue Avity, taking in the whole situation, behaved becomingly in conscious contrast, while she held the other side of Miss Nervends' book, and looked down upon the page, very suddenly lifting her eyes and looking very shily at the University students' square. Nora Ongenright—Evangel's partner, class-mate and room-mate, a lovely girl with blue-gray eyes and black lashes

and a countenance as serene and intellectual as any prophetess,—kept her face upon the minister, listened attentively and tried to persuade herself she believed every word he said, while she diligently refrained from more than a half dozen unintentional glances towards the magnetic youths.

The minister said, "Let us pray," and the audience with the exception of two or three girls and many of the boys, bowed its head in prayer. Evangel looked down at her hands and said mentally; "How vast an amount of good might be accomplished if this were indeed prayer! But if the unbeliever's petitions could be fulfilled at once it would strike them all daft with amazement! It is only lip service,—a *form* of words in *form* lips, offered as prayer to a *form* god!—'But, ye are spirit, *if* so be, the spirit of God *dwell* in you'"—

Suddenly a gentle flutter like that of a humming bird interrupted her train of thoughts and heralded the landing of a tiny, folded paper half an inch in bulk, right in Evangel's lap. "Miss Nervends" was the address that caught her eyes. Absently supposing the note had been sent by the owner of the name she passed it back to that young woman without unfolding it. Mr. Creedy had been observing his school from between his fingers during the prayer and had taken note of the whole performance, and when it concluded, his face wore that solemn and threatening look common to him when disturbed by any sign of treachery or disregard of rules.

Miss Nervends read the note. It was from a wiry, dark eyed, black haired youth, and ran as follows:

"My fair one, I feel that I must tell you what my eyes have told you here so often—*I love you—I love you!*

Could I but hear thy *voice*—it is *music* I know. O, for a second with thee to tell thee all I feel! I *must* see you and speak to you! Could I but know thy heart could throb but once for me alone—I would scale the college walls—to hear you say so! Can't we arrange for a little tete-a-tete over the wall—just one—dearest? From one who thinks of you by day and dreams of you by night.”

The President read her face while she read the note, and was almost as much moved by its contents as she was by the contents of the note.

The sermon was clothed in pretty rhetoric and was loyal to the adopted creed. It embodied the oft-repeated lesson of good and evil, the forbidden fruit, and closed with the usual promises of reward to the “saved” and warnings of punishment for the “lost.”

It was “communion day” and a solemn silence prevailed. Evangel heard the words, “Do it in remembrance,” and thought it very strange that the people had to have periodical material reminders of the Perfect One, in order to occasionally contemplate the blessings and privileges of a holy Life.

Again, she heard the words, “He that drinketh unworthily, drinketh damnation”—and an inner voice softly urged:

“O, no, no! ‘He that believeth on ME *hath* eternal life.’” This inner voice had for a long time been saying in her mind under all circumstances and varying conditions:—“This, even this is Truth working out a Divine finale in this particular problem.” It absorbed her thought so fully that all her plans and acts came to be arranged to it.

Very few people have yet discovered or attained to the lofty happiness, the supreme joy of such an attitude.

"I and the Father are one," she had held, even while struggling with the old materialistic dogmas, until light had dawned.

She knew that Jesus came to show us that the perfect way was both possible and imperative while in the flesh, and she had reached the plane where she listened receptively and knowingly to the voice of the Infinite speaking within her.

At the Reading hours upon the following Wednesday afternoon there was a large attendance of the young women. Mr. Creedy officiated, and opening Holland's Kathrina at one of the interlude poems—that of the Phantom Ship and the struggle with the monster;—he read: "And the devil gets never a man man on the hip whom he scares not first or last." One of the girls asked for an interpretation of its meaning.

He said he did not think it had a very profound meaning, but was perhaps thrown in to make rhyme, or as a rhetorica<sup>1</sup> flourish, perhaps, and was similar to the boy's effort who wrote: "The wind blew down the well-sweep. Dad and me put it up: sheep." "What do you think?" he asked, looking at Evangel.

"I think it means, or ought to mean, that the devil has no power over a man who don't believe in or fear any such a creature."

Her questioner looked at her as if she had given him a shock, and exclaimed,

"Can it be possible, my daughter, that you are wandering so far off the right track?"

"No, I have wandered off the wrong track and am

now upon the right. I do not longer believe in Satan, and concentrate all my belief and faith upon God. Belief in Christ saves. Belief in a devil confuses," the girl replied with a bright smile. After another straight look at her over his glasses, he questioned sharply:

"Will you tell me, daughter, why you refused to commune with God's people at church last Sabbath?"

"O, I am not a member," she replied.

"What!" he exclaimed, after waiting a moment, but receiving no reply, he continued; "Why, I thought you a member of our church?"

Still receiving no reply he again went on:

"Why, I think you must be:—I think you told me so!" at which she could not refrain from smiling, but continued in a listening attitude, without replying. His face flushed, he moved back a little, and asked angrily:

"Are you acting this way in mockery, my daughter? If so, I will advise you to pack your trunk!—I cannot have such an example set before my school." When he paused he was trembling from head to foot. She made some effort to explain, when she saw there had been a misunderstanding, but he being somewhat deaf, and that defect being augmented by his anger, she did not speak. He only waved his hand and said she might be excused from further remark. None of the girls dared make an effort at explanation, but cast puzzled looks towards each other and at him, and waited silently until the storm should subside when they might safely speak.

An hour later Nora rapped gently at the President's study door. She had not seen Evangel since they parted in the Reading Room. She had determined not to see her until she had done what she could to clear the mis-

understanding between her dear friend and room mate, and her teacher.

"What is it, Sweetness?" he asked in his blandest manner, as he held the door open for her to enter.

"I just wanted to tell you something," Nora replied in her soft irresistible, childlike voice.

Anybody with a voice like Nora's could not have been otherwise than noble and true.

"Out with it,—out with it,—tell me all about it," he said, looking over his glasses straight into her soft, unflinching eyes, but with a warm glow upon his countenance instead of the thunder-cloud frown he had worn in the Reading Room.

"Why," began Nora, speaking louder than usual, but not impairing the texture of her beautiful voice, "Evangel is *not* a member of any church."

With a surprised look he removed his hand from behind his ear, and then asked,

"Has she got a letter?"

"No, sir—"

"Has she been excluded?" he interrupted, looking alarmed.

"O, no," she returned, "she never has *joined*."

At this information he frowned, drew up his mouth and meditated, looking at Nora the while. Then he slowly turned his head to one side and looked at her in that way, as if surmising whether or not they had all been instituting a plot against him, and finally said,

"Will you go and tell Evangel to come down here?"

Nora was gone in an instant, and in a few minutes Evangel called at his study door.

"You asked to see me?" she queried gently.

“Yes, my daughter, have this chair.” He seated himself in front of her and began, in a business like way.

“I wish to ask your pardon for my manner towards you in the Reading Room.”

“You have my pardon,” she responded simply. He knew it was not what most of the girls would have said: they would have said, ‘O, I have nothing against you to pardon!’ and it stung him inwardly a little. He felt as if he had humiliated himself, when really he had only done the proper thing. He continued,

“Now, I want to know what you meant by breaking my rules at church last Sabbath and so dishonoring your dear father and mother!”

His manner was entirely changed; now there were tears in his eyes, and he seemed very much abused and very sorry for himself. At first she did not comprehend, but it at length dawned upon her that he had reference to the note she had handed to Lily Nervends, and she at once explained.

“I did not read the note, Mr. Creedy, nor guess her intention when she threw it upon my lap. I returned it because I did not care to see it, and because I thought I ought to let her know I disapproved of the act.”

“Am I again to believe all this?”

“I have no farther explanation to make, If you will not regard it as sincere, I would rather be excused at once, if you please.”

“Miss Evangel,” he returned, prefacing his remark with a bit of formality, ‘I would much prefer that you be a little more explicit and open with me: I feel that you do not take the interest in our cause you might take:—that note was thrown from one of the University

students to Miss Nervends! It fell upon your lap, and instead of concealing it and handing it over as contraband to me, you passed it to her! The note was from that pale, lean, black-eyed Noman, who is a scoundrel! Last year he slyly arranged a clandestine meeting with one of the girls, who was weak in the upper story, and actually planned to run away and get married, when one of my loyal students informed me and I prevented it."

He waited a moment, and as there was no reply, he asked rather warmly:

"Now, I would like to ask why you never show any interest in the President of your school?" Again he waited, but there was still no reply, and he continued:

"Upon my return from the Association last week, scores of my girls met me, put their arms round my neck and kissed me, while Evangel Ahvallah stood off like one of those stone pillars out there! Why do you never give your old uncle a welcome when he returns?"

She was evidently making a study of him. His remarks did not impress her favorably and she answered calmly:

"I do not meet and kiss you as some of the other girls do because I do not like to,—I do not believe in it. It is not because I do not like you and wish you well, but it is not my way of demonstration. I am opposed to promiscuous kissing. Now I love Nora Ongenright dearly, but I have never kissed her. I cannot believe it to be a proper way to express a high or a strong degree of affection."

He was looking at her intently puzzling over her position. Then he said:

"Well, then, you can put your arm round Uncle Creedy's neck and *say* you do love him, can't you?"

"No; that would not be my way of expressing regard. You must excuse me. Don't mention such things to me," she said rising.

Was not Mr. Creed's "age" sufficient guarantee of his noble intentions, aside from the fact of his holding the position of President of the largest denominational school in the state? Have not most men who have reached the age of 65 or 70 years so purified their lives, so exalted their daily thoughts and practices as to make them all redound to the glorifying and strengthening of their spiritual manhood, and so as to be strong powers for the protection of all that is pure and right? Are they not readiest and ablest to overcome all false inducements held out by the flesh, and most profoundly earnest in their efforts to teach their younger brethren that only the pure in heart are satisfied, and that the greatest manhood is that which is built up in Christ and which goes forth to strengthen the spiritual man?

Mr. Creedy was piqued! He knew that two-thirds of the school would have been flattered by the attention rejected by Evangel, and half chid himself for having made the apology.

"I have heard somewhere," he continued, also rising. "that a certain class of people or cranks have formed a non-kissing society; I presume you will join when it strikes our town?"

"No sir! I do not join anything. I am one of the great factors of the Universe, and am a naturalized multiple, but I did not *join!*" she replied with a pretty laugh. "All societies and banded sects are the outward

expression of selfish ideas. I am sure it is but weakening the muscles of moral fortitude to sign temperance pledges. People must be strong through noble principle and not by pledging to *somebody* else! Would you have your son join a society for the prevention of theft and the reformation of thieves and take the pledge, and wear a badge of temperance in theft? Would he be any the less liable to steal?"

"You don't mean to say you would dispense with all church organizations?" he said, still astonished at her position and wondering why, in the two years she had been connected with the school, he had not before noticed how superior she was; and then he ceased to wonder at the independent attitudes she had so often taken in class recitations.

"There is something better than churches or sects," she replied. "Churches may be still necessary and even useful in some communities—all movements have their place and mark each tidal wave a little higher—but they will be neither necessary nor fashionable in the higher civilization. A man will not have to be taken into the church and bolstered up on all sides to keep him good! When once a man is pure enough in heart to see God, the sight is so beautiful, so happiness-giving he never turns his eyes away. In Truth, there are no back-sliders.

"The world is a great Brotherhood. Any body that cuts itself off from the rest, passes its little hat and circumscribes its charities and benefits to its members only, inevitably becomes narrow, uncharitable and hemmed in by a fence that is barbed and high. So that to them progress, which must forever trend upward,

higher and broader at each step, becomes a non-progressive tread-mill where the workers stand still while the years go round!"

"What will you do with great leaders like your father and Rev. Storms, who have done so much for the world already? Have them go home and go to plowing?" he asked affecting half-humor, but with profound interest in what she was saying. He liked to draw her out, watch the scintillations of her young mind and learn of the thoughts that were ushering in the young generation. He had given his classes some solemn talks upon the awfulness of the questions then agitating the East, and had warned them of the evil future just before them! But Evangel replied:

"The world will be a much broader field for them. Great leaders will have better opportunity to co-operate, and enhance natural improvement, and a better understanding of the Righteous Law of Life, as they together advance upward along the Great Spiral Path of Human Progression. Great souls are not now held by narrow bands. The world calls for them and they go forth to help others up to their own lofty plane. These men and women who refuse to be bound in any shackles mount upward faster. The man, you see, who joins a sect must be held by its prescribed creed: so that the most ignorant, and the man of genius, must both abide within the same circumscribed limits."

He had been entertained, and to an extent pleased at the insight into her real depths, but believed that as to *religion* she was adrift, and so felt it his duty to attempt to re-establish correct principles in her mind. He had become very sincere, even solemn.

"You believe in God, my daughter?"

"Yes, sir;—that is all I do believe in." Noting his look of incredulity she continued:

"I made up my mind, long ago,—when I discovered that God was not limited, but everywhere—to believe in only God."

He looked at her apprehensively and said,

"You do not believe in a devil then—nor evil—I reckon?" he added with strange emphasis. "Nor yet reward and punishment! Your Bible does away with all that?"

"These things came of a wrong use of the beautiful faculty of the Imagination," she answered. "I will not waste time on them as the 'orthodox' world has been doing. Belief in Truth makes Truth manifest; belief in Christ saves; therefore I believe in Truth and Christ. God is Real Substance; Satan is an imaginary being; the mirage of desert thought:—the myth of mind. It is only an imagination of an opposite to God, the real Substance, and is shadow only. The man who can imagine shadow is Substance, can also imagine evil; and has capacity to carry out such imagery in acts! Such people have deliberately entered the shadow plane and have not the light of Truth shining upon their understanding!"

Mr. Creedy seemed to have something to say and Evangel paused.

"I'm afraid you are treading upon fearful grounds! O, my daughter, I beg of you not to throw away your soul upon such things! I, myself have had to *force* my mind to hold on with an iron grasp, or—or—I would have been lost! O, I have had such doubts!—dark! dark!

dark. I pray you never to wander off from the faith as I have, at times!"

She saw he did not understand her, but did not wonder, and only said as she was about to leave him:

"When I was a little girl I hated the old man in the clouds who killed our friends in spite of 'prayers,' and who made good people sick to punish them! It made me rebellious when my sister tried to make me afraid to do bad for the reason that God would punish me if I did. When I was older and did not believe Good could punish anything I was happier and better. Now I rejoice in the knowledge that 'God is Life and Light and Love and that Truth is God and everywhere, all wisdom and all power.'

"I must go now. If I were teacher and you pupil I would say: Recognize *Truth*, and let each Spiral Whorl of your life be higher than the former. This is the true and natural evolution, the true progress.

"The tread-mill path is false to Truth. It is our duty as well as our pleasure to evolve."

As Evangel bowed and left the room he thought she seemed more like a buoyant bird of Paradise indeed, than a student of the school! Her eyes had said even more than her lips.

For half an hour he sat meditating upon this interview.

"When, overcoming, wisdom's ways are got,  
'Tis an affront to those who have it not."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## THE HARVEST.

“The tissues of the Life to be  
We weave with colors all our own,  
And in the field of destiny  
We reap as we have sown.”

*Raphael.*

It was Evangel's last year at college. During the first session great stacks of ideals had fluttered to the ground; they began falling when she had first caught sight of the college building, although it had been remodeled since Antoinette's school days' glowing descriptions. A new wing, tower, several gables and steeples, and two or three arches and door-ways had been added. Her childish fancy had built a towering dome whose summit pierced the clouds, and whose pinnacles sent out gold and silver sparkles in the sunshine. She had dreamed of many rows of balconied windows, capped with Tudor hoods; of grand Gothic and Roman arches, parapet and pinnacle overloaded with gorgeous carving that was all half hid by a golden haze and mellow mist, that at dreamy intervals showed glimpses of colossal images, window tracery and rich facades to the enraptured vision of the beholder; of immense porticos of chaste Tudor Gothic design; of giant white stone pillars supporting white ceilings and matchless walls. Her airy castle was ornamented with columns and pilasters rising grandly above each other all in pure, Grecian Corinthian, and surmounted by decorated pinnacles. In

it there were elaborate libraries and delightful pictures. The people had nothing to do but investigate the grand and beautiful things of God. She had thought of just such things.

But having entered upon the Great Spiral Path of Spiritual Evolution, she loved the even upward trend so well that its study lifted her above the reach of disappointment. Her life was illumined.

Illustre had entered school at the same time, but went at once into a protracted homesickness that refused to be healed until she was permitted to return home at the Christmas holidays. Once at home all thoughts of returning to school were expelled from her mind. She said she would continue her studies at home, but before the winter was over she and young Conover had fallen profoundly in love.

Antoinette had broken a dozen other hearts by marrying young Conover's older brother, and had also defied the supposed claims of the brethren upon their pastor, for they had confidently designed his daughters for their sons.

Virginia too had united her fortunes with the little man with the searching black eyes and flowing mustache, who had inspired many girlish poems. Dear, sweet Virginia! It took her seven years to get her eyes open to the fact that he was only a little man very similar to other little men, and not a seraph.

Not long after the time when Mr. Ahvallah had grown in grace unto a higher plane in the Great Spiral of Life, and about the time Evangel was reading a paper upon Spiritual Evolution to a large audience in the chapel at State College—a paper which opened a flood

of light upon most of the people present—her father and old Whipstock might have been seen halting before the gate of Silas Bourd's cottage.

Mr. Ahvallah entered the front room. It contained an old weaver's loom, a lot of rusty chairs, a table, a bucket and gourd on a corner shelf, and a lot more of the most dismal looking things deposited in the most uncomfortable disorder. The absence of that tidiness and orderly arrangement of things so indispensable in a small house scantily and unartistically furnished, characterized the solitary room in which Silas Bourd had for many weeks been confined upon a "sick bed."

Dr. Khillus had muttered something about "general debility," "chronic rheumatism," "catarrh and deafness," "dimness of vision," and a few other things concerning his physical condition. His bowels were obstinate, his liver was torpid and his kidneys were inclined to perpetuate Mr. Brights' unenviable reputation.

The woman of the house had been released from her thralldom and gone forth some years ago.

Many children had been born to Silas Bourd, nearly all of whom had likewise "departed" in very early infancy.

Mr. Ahvallah had come in response to an invitation and proceeded to inquire into the attitude of the brother's mind, as to whether he had consolation amid his physical disabilities, and whether or not he might be receptive to a higher presentation of knowledge. If possible he hoped to dislodge some of the rubbish that had been so deeply imbedded in his character.

Mr. Ahvallah had always been a conscientious man, performing his duties according to the best he knew in

behalf of his fellow man, and now felt that he could not be satisfied until he had displaced some of the worn out rubbish of creeds and feelings and replace it with the deductions of truth.

“Is your mind at peace, Bro. Bourd, amid your bodily afflictions?” asked the visitor as he took a seat by the humble couch.

The sick man replied that he had not had the peace of mind he would like to have;—that his prayers did not seem to rise higher than his head; that he had been disappointed in nearly all he had undertaken in life. He seemed to feel very gloomy indeed.

“Last spring I’s took down with rheumatiz, the very day after gettin’ the promis o’ one o’ the finest young woman on earth to marry me,” he grunted out plaintively,—“I’d a done better ef I’d a had a good wife, Brother. I’d”—

“You should not look to such things for happiness now, my brother.” interrupted the minister. “In thanksgiving and praise for all the blessings you have received, you should look to God for your happiness, married or single.”

The man shaking his head solemnly, responded:

“There’s no use talkin’ about marryin’ no more, Brother Ahvaliah, you don’t understan’ how it is. My rheumatiz hangs on, an’—an’ my manhood’s gone, Brother!—I—might us well be ded! I’m *no ’count*, I ain’t!—I”—

“My dear brother! manhood is in spirit and truth. You must say like Job, ‘Though Thou slay me, *yet* will I trust in *Thee!*’ in God your Father. The prayer of faith saves,” urged Mr. Ahvallah.

Again he shook his head and said mournfully:

“Prayin’ don’t do me no good. I’ve prayed an’ prayed, and got wuss all the time! It us after prayin’ for a special blessin’ that that other trouble come!—Dr. Khillus says I’ll never git my man-hood back agin!” and he broke down and wept heavily.

Mr. Ahvallah saw by this time that the tenor of his thoughts needed revolutionizing, and that he must be purified before the right attitude of mind could be secured. So he made reply:

‘I am sure your prayer has been literally answered, Bro. Bourd.’ The man looked at him in astonishment, but the minister continued: “You asked for a special blessing:—now you remember you once told me about the uncontrollable nature of your besetting sin. God has answered your prayer and removed the temptation. You can now be your own master and rise to the altitude of your true spiritual manhood in Christ. What men in the common parlance have called ‘manhood’ is not manhood at all! It is beasthood. Your affliction is a purifying fire that is for the purpose of removing the false notion from your mind and setting you free from sensuality.”

There was another pause, and then Mr. Bourd broke the silence:

“Brother Pewlett’s daughter’s a mighty fine woman.”

The minister was sorry to hear him return to the old subject without giving a thought to what he had said, but asked:

“Have you been married more than once?”

"No," he answered hesitatingly, as he looked down at his hands. Then he slowly added:

"My troubles have all come through my inordinate affections, Brother!" and his eyes again filled with tears of self-pity.

'But we must remember that it is our duty to keep temptation from us, and'—

"My affections were sich," he interrupted, speaking in a peculiar, querulous strain, "but I'm no more account now!"

Mr. Ahvallah meditated a moment about how much "store" the ordinary man sets upon his sense-appetites, and then replied earnestly and impressively:

"Man's extremity is God's opportunity! Man is tempted when he is led of his own lusts and enticed. *'Let no man say when he is tempted that he is tempted of the Lord; for God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth He any man.'* It was not true affection that caused you to stray, but the lusts of your flesh."

"I'd a done better," he again began, still following his repining thoughts, "ef I'd a found me a good wife arter Liza died. But she lingered so, an' 'er doctor's bill was sich, peered like I couldn't git cloze to wear no wheres!"

A look at the dismal eyes caused the visitor to feel keenly that the washing of regeneration was already begun and was the thing now most imperative. "Be thou willing, O wayward mentality, to become *clean*," was uppermost in his thought.

The very demon that had shattered the man's body had now deserted it. All that remained in its place was a dull belief in its animating power, and a wish for its

return. But there was no more that it could do since the fuel of its fires were burned out.

During his stay in the room Mr. Ahvallah had been allowancing himself to only half breaths on account of the impurity of the air in the room, and had been turning over in his mind the thought of how little the man had gained in all the church services of the past years! How little Truth had been glorified, and how very little this poor lamb had learned of Truth! Nay, his very presence was an offense and stumbling-block, at which many had faltered and which perhaps none had overcome!

“Is this a MAN?” he mused.—“Man is an expression of God’s image! A BEAST?—The Spiritual ego has *dominion* over the beasts. Beasts are governed by a righteous instinct which no temptation ever leads them to abuse! A VEGETABLE?—They are the voice of inspiration from the inorganic soil; caressed by the air and kissed by the rain and sun, their life is devoted to high praise of the good! A ROCK?—rock is the foundation of material structures and is not moved by conscious abuses!”

Colors unduly mixed mar pure white, while all the colors proportioned and blended according to divine and Lawful order, produce pure white. God is positive substance. Evil is a name for an imagined opposite to positive Substance. Since God is all, man must not compare evil with good, for he cannot mix the two and live. He must not *know*, or try to know good and evil comparatively. It is the forbidden fruit. Man must have a knowledge of good only. We cannot learn truth

by studying falsehood. It must be learned through Truth, clean and alone.

“Is this man before me then only a shadow of Reality?” continued the minister’s reverie,—“shadows know nothing of positive substance! This man knows, but he has tried a knowledge of the other also. He has shadow and substance so mingled in the web of his thinking that it ferments in perpetual war upon his body! What he has held in mental solution and ripened into active performance these many years, is now come forth upon his body, the house-top of revelation. Verily, Nothing is hid that shall not be revealed!”

Mr. Ahvallah’s reverie then fell upon his old sermons—how little they had really accomplished in such cases; and a keen sense of their inefficiency came over him. It amounted to a feeling of disgust, and for a moment the disappointment at results deeply affected him. But in the silence of the moment the voice of conscious purpose spoke.

“I have been conscientious. I gave them the highest and best I knew. If I had not taken the steps I then took, I might not now be able to point them higher. Surely it was the next step necessary for an exceedingly unenlightened and materially minded people! But it was a slow step: a lingering, faltering, fearing, doubtful step, feeling in the darkness after Light.”

Then his thought dipped into the future, and he reasoned:

“I will not abandon this unenlightened people, who ignorantly partake of the forbidden fruit every day!

“I will work more faithfully. They shall be lifted

up and see the light of higher Truth, and yet be given a true impulse heavenward.

“The sin-sick ones who are tied down with the cords of their evil thinking, and their fears, which are manifest in their bodies, shall have the heavenly message conveyed to them.”

Mr. Bourd had fallen into a gentle sleep. He aroused by-and-by and remarked that he could not see why he had to suffer so much.

“My dear brother,” Mr. Ahvallah began earnestly, “you know we are taught that we must reap as we have sown. We have misunderstood the meaning of Christ’s teaching, and the real purpose of the atonement.

“Christ came into the flesh to teach us how nearly man is like God, and to show us the way to manifest the power of the Father. We have followed in form partly, but have failed to grasp the spirit of his ministry and works.

“He did not come to take the *results* of our sins upon Himself, as we have before understood, but to show us how we must overcome results and so rise above the plane where such things are possible to us, and continue to grow more and more perfect.

“I want to make clear a subject I myself have but recently correctly understood. I feel somewhat responsible. Men suffer because they are not true to Truth.

“They fail to be Christ-like *because* they believe other things than God. They ‘sow to the wind and reap the whirl-wind.’ You are now suffering on account of your belief in evil *as an entity*: a belief you indulged so continually as to carry it into effect in your actions. You have practiced that which you knew to be wrong.

under the false impression that another would bear the results whenever you should decide to repent and throw them upon his shoulders. This is wilful disobedience, sin against the Holy Spirit and being actually unpardonable, they"—

"If I've got no savior, then I'm lost!—There ain't a grain of hope outside of Him, I've done enough to ruin my soul if Jesus don't bear my sins for me!" interrupted the invalid.

"It is absolutely necessary, my brother," continued the preacher, "in order that you rise to a higher state and happier, that you pay these debts yourself. If another could pay them for you, you would not rise above them nor cease to incur them, but would continue to fall lower and lower in the scale of being. Now the pure in heart see God, and we should grow in grace daily until we attain the Perfect Life.

"The sins you have committed are many of them wilful sins, and are therefore unpardonable. Being unpardonable, you must *pay* the debt. Do not blame another; do not ask another to carry your load. Be reasonable. You are now reaping the results of your errors. Lay off your 'coat' and reap them like a man!"



"LAY OFF YOUR COAT AND REAP IT LIKE A MAN."

The minister had spoken gently and deliberately, giving his words ample time to be understood, and to take effect. He continued:

“Now, I would not have you believe any longer that you are vile, a worm of the dust, or an unclean heart. Thinking thus has made you what you are!

“Think of your God-created Self. You are really a child of Infinite Purity, and ought to be more like your Father! You”——

Sobs here checked the minister's words for a minute or two. When the man became again composed, the speaker continued:

“Your Father is the King of kings. You must claim your birth-right and attain unto its inheritance. Your Father is Perfection; you should be *like* Him!—Now, I am going, as I have an important appointment to fill. I will help you to pray in the right way, and you must be present at the next meeting, and hear the new sermon on the Atonement. You need a good cleansing bath. I will send a man to assist you, you will be better then. Take what I have said as from God, for it comes from the Spirit of inspiration, as on the Lord's day, on the Isle of Patmos the Word came to the seer of old. Inspiration is as much a fact to-day as it was 1800 years ago, if we only bring our selves to be fit subjects for its impersonation. Good bye, and God bless you.”

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## ATONEMENT.

And the glory which Thou hast given me I have given; that they may be One, even as we are One: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made Perfect in One; and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved Me.—Jno. xvii:22, 23.

The chapel was full to overflowing with curiously interested spectators. Every pew was filled, the aisles were crowded and the door-ways thronged with eager people.

Bro. Bourd's chastened, thoughtful face was there. It had lost in flesh and color, but its owner had gained in wisdom and was ready and waiting for higher Truth. Bro. Pewlett was among the multitude, and the other members, asking mentally, "are yo' right shore yo' won't be sorry fur the change?"

Many turned away because they could not get within hearing of Mr. Ahvallah's voice as he presented the subject of the Atonement in the new light as seen from a quickened and illuminated understanding. In presenting the subject in its true character, he proved it to be the chief Pivot of *turning* from the shadowy belief of evil engendered by erroneous conception of the meaning and purpose of Atonement into the Light and Liberty and the real At-one-ment of children and Father. There was perfect attention when Mr. Ahvallah read his text and then began:

"Since man, who was created perfect, became alien-

ated from that Perfection, an atonement became necessary to restore him to his natural state.

“The Plan of the atonement has been for ages misunderstood.

The subject has been made a difficult one, and has lingered in infant steps, awkwardly and slowly awakening to human comprehension.

“Men have quibbled about small matters, and have been divided on the question as to whether the ransom were paid—to God or to Satan. Much time was given to argument. St. Augustine and others decided that the devil considered Jesus a greater conquest and more than equivalent to all the wicked, and so received him as the price. Athanasius maintained that the ransom was paid to God. God had threatened the wicked and must fulfill His threat: and yet, it would be unbecoming in an all powerful and righteous God to allow his purpose in man to be so frustrated by cunning intrigue of the devil; and the only expedient he had left was that of incarnating and sacrificing himself, and thereby to maintain the truthfulness of God. He considered that this delivered men from bondage, justified the Law and settled the devil’s claims.

“Anselm who held that mere *creatures* could not atone for sin against the Great God, ought also to have seen that if such were true it would be just as impossible for this ‘mere creature’ to *fatally* sin against so great a being. He held that God alone could satisfy Himself. The Son, by giving His guiltless life as a ransom, placed the Father under obligations to the Son, to forgive his brethren.

“Luther, in his search for Light, arrived at the con-

clusion that *Faith* justifies man, because it appropriates the merits of Christ. But faith in what? Faith in a good man? Faith that Jesus was the Son of God? What merit could there be in that to us if we failed to recognize that Life within ourselves and know ourselves *also sons of God?* Luther concluded that righteousness is imputed—not to them that have *become righteous*,—but to them that believe *Jesus* was righteous.

“To believe that another man was the Son of God, and that he had died to satisfy God’s wrath on all who would recognize that he did it, was the real platform assumed by Luther.

“Would such a belief free men from sin, or free them from the effects of it? Surely if a bad man can cast the evil effects of his guilt upon another, he will be inclined to continue in iniquitous ways, since he depends upon the carnal and sensuous for his pleasures.

“Calvin thought that the kind of death, that of a God-man, was the only thing that could save man from the *curse* of sin. He thought that if man had remained pure, he would have been too small a matter for God to recognize without the perfect mediator. His idea was to meet infinite sin with infinite punishment, which my dear friends, would not be atonement!

“All these mixed notions about God and man and the way of atonement, arose from the belief in a personal God of limited power, and clogged with man’s caprices and passions.

“Jesus, in truth, was His own redeemer, through the appropriation of God-given power. He expected men to go in the way he pointed out, acting and believing after

their own great inherited power. 'Ye are one' with the Father, 'even as I am one' with the Father. He overcame environments. Man too must overcome!

"The Law of the Divine deals in measureless love with man, and sees to it that he works out his own salvation, step by step, unto the full manhood of Christ.

"The wide promulgation of the doctrine of *vicarious* atonement is the *chief thing that has held man under the bondage of much faith in evil and little faith in good so long!*

"The misconception of the purpose and method of the atonement has continued,—through the zeal of lecturers' ambitious of wielding the most engaging topics of the time, topics whose scope for eloquence best set forth their powers of oratory—far into the illumined 19th century. Men, themselves unenlightened upon the real import of the great 'sacrifice,' had little trouble to instil a hazardous interpretation into the minds of unenlightened and pliant audiences, who accepted the unindorsed opinion of another, upon a vital point which both agreed they could not fully understand.

"Battling also with external things in a meager, materialistic age, they believed that inspiration days were over and that all direct communication between the Father and the child was cut off. The common people have lived in a weird hope of help from an image God, remote, revengeful and difficult of access, who might and who might not show mercy and favor, and who could be reached only through his *incarnate self* as receiver and bearer of man's crimes and propitiator between man and his *not incarnate self*. They received this teaching from ministers supposed to stand between them and God.

“They were taught that a look would save; that willingness to throw the burden of their sins upon Jesus would relieve them of the bad effects of their blackest crimes.

“The doctrine of vicarious atonement has been so fundamental in all church teaching that they have all considered this a test of orthodoxy. The Greek church, the church of Rome, the established and dissenting Protestant churches—all rest the sinner’s only hope of salvation upon the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ. So widely has speculative theology missed the real meaning of the mediatorial work of Jesus, that, contrary to their teaching that man may shift the results of his wrong deeds upon the shoulders of another, it is true that *the whole mission of Jesus Christ was to teach man how to so grapple with the results of the mistakes he has made as to render them stepping-stone upon which to rise above and* OVERCOME THEM HIMSELF! Thus he becomes not a dependent, but wise and strong in his holy sonship. Jesus’ method of imparting or teaching this great and most important lesson was by His own EXAMPLE as well as by precept.

“It is passing strange that man should remain so long in darkness concerning an example so clearly given.

“He came for the purpose of teaching man that he must show forth his real nature and that only. Being created by a perfect God he is by nature perfect, and must dismiss the idea that he is an unclean worm, whose only hope lies in believing that *Jesus* was perfect. He must claim perfection himself, unto the fullness of growth back into the perfect life.

“ ‘And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ,’ or until you attain unto this perfect way in which he walked, *blameless*, in body and mind. The body must be a perfect temple fitted for a perfect inhabitant.

“Salvation is reached through mastery of conditions and environments. The Perfect Incarnation came to show man it could be done—*must* be done—and the *right way* to do it.

“The only way possible to redeem men who have separated themselves, in belief, from God, is to *remove that belief* by denial and self-sacrifice, if need be, coupled with affirmation of highest truth. They thus *overcome the effects of their errors*—reaping what they have sown, and returning to the perfect, sinless state through belief in the Christ in man. They thus *make the Atonement by recognizing the ONENESS OF THE JESUS AND THE CHRIST IN THEMSELVES*.

“Then, and not until then is reconciliation reached.

“For a righteous man to pay the debt of a sinner would not remove the obligation, but would double it, since by his act of assuming the debt, he places the sinner under obligation also to the one who pays the debt, so that the sinner owes both the Law, and the righteous man.

“Nor would it be just for innocence to suffer for guilt! Besides, Innocence could not suffer, if suffering is caused by sin, unless it could take the actual guilt of the sinner, which condition would then render suffering necessary and a natural process on his own account.

But since in all examples we have been able to find, suffering for the guilty has not proved efficient in purifying or healing the sinner it follows that the guilt was not transferred to the innocent, and therefore the innocent could have nothing to occasion suffering and could not atone for sin.

“There are but two ways of removing obligation: First, by paying the debt yourself: Secondly, by forgiveness of it through repentance in such a way as to lift the transgressor in understanding above the plane of the possibility of again assuming such a debt. Such forgiveness as the latter is but the discontinuance of both sin and sacrifice, and does not actually blot out past transgression but nullifies its further progress in effect.

“*Sin continued in cannot be forgiven!*”

“Man is under obligation of debt continually assumed!

“Unpardonable sins are those which on account of our having consciously committed them in the light of knowledge, must be atoned for by reaping the harvest. ‘Whatsoever a man soweth that *must* he also reap!’ No pardon could lift this obligation, for God is not mocked!

“‘Whosoever may blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, has no forgiveness to the *age*, but is exposed to Aonian judgment.’

“Then the reaping which lifts *permanently* above the temptation to again commit such error, nullifies, or cuts away further chastisement, but not till then.

“Since we must present both body and spirit whole, as one, as both *spirit*, and blameless, to call the body ‘vile’ is blasphemy against *wholeness*, (for blasphemy

here means to speak evil of,) and being unpardonable, it must be atoned for.

“To pay a debt removes all obligation whatever; but in the moral code man had better first know what is to pay before assuming such a debt.

“No real sin (intentional) can be pardoned by remission, since Justice is a perfect balance. An added weight that tips the balance unduly cannot by justice be tolerated for an instant, even in the smallest degree.

“Man cannot get rid of the consequences of any error *until he grows in grace and the beauty of holiness, until he rises above the plane or phase in his existence where such errors were possible to him.* By purification only and by regeneration *that will render the error and its temptation powerless, can he rise above the unpleasant effects of such error!* It must be overcome some time, and in just that way.

“The thoughts and intents of the heart of man are telling records written in the soul. Let us be wise and shrink not from what Truth would reveal. Does forgiveness blot from our minds the memory or the pain of an intentional wrong in this existence? Is it not well to know the true way of rising above the supposed necessity of shouldering upon our immortal consciousnesses such unpleasant and lasting responsibilities? Wisdom is above temptation.

“The weak and foolish partake copiously of that which the Wise refuse to touch. To commit conscious error with a view towards transferring the results of such error to some one else, without a clear understanding of whether such a thing be possible, and if possible, the manner in which it may be accomplished, is unwise!

“Varying have been the speculations of school-men upon the subject; slowly has the world evolved into the dawn of its true import; slowly the Socinian idea pulled its feet out of the quagmire of doomed methods and claimed the attainment of Oneness by man’s moral energy, making Satisfaction necessary to the forgiveness of sins: slowly has this evolved step risen to a higher still, drawn by invincible Law, showing man the dawn, the light, the plane of conscious unity, showing him that in his *conscious knowledge* is regeneration, recognition, atonement.

“It has seemed necessary before audiences composed chiefly of the common people, to dwell largely upon the Sufficiency, rather than the Efficacy of the Atonement, touching broadly upon the Sufferings of God Incarnate, and depending for point and force and effect upon descriptions of his agonies! and by that method to induce men to repent of their sins through becoming sorry for God. But this kind of sorrow, like this kind of repentance, has proved short lived and inefficient.

“There is but one way of reconciliation and perfect balance, and that is by *overcoming* all temptation and inclination to err, through recognition of Truth, of unity with the Father.

“In regard to forgiveness of sins, there may be small errors, those committed in ignorance, that it would seem ought to balance with Justice through labor or sacrifice. But is it true here? Does the innocence of little children we meet free them from the troubles brought upon them by other people?

“If results were evil, this would not be just. But

all results are beneficent and 'every difficulty is an opportunity.'

'In willful errors the law is:—'But whoever may blaspheme against (speak evil of) the Holy Spirit, has no forgiveness to the age, but is exposed to aionian judgment.' (The Greek word here translated 'Judgment,'—'damnation' in the old version,—is *transgression* in the Vat. MSS. It is a Hebraism of a Greek expression, and strictly means *the retributive result of sin*. 'Damnation' is a mistranslation.)

"There were many things for man to learn at the time the Perfect Example made his appearance in the flesh! Men had so far forgot God as their Source, as almost to cease to believe in Spiritual power, and were looking to other sources for power and assistance. Priests and preachers were the mediums through which men might know of the Word of God. Herbs and minerals were believed in as curative powers and freely employed for the removal of the results of error. Many kinds of false gods were inaugurated, and power and might attributed to things more helpless than themselves! So is it also to-day.

"The true way has been plainly pointed: Let us take up the lesson for a moment,—the lesson so clearly set forth in the *example set* by Jesus for us. It is the ONLY WAY to reach the at-one-ment:—

'Jesus went about doing good. He healed all sickness by his *word*. He cast forth evil shadows by his command.

"He comforted the sorrowing and rebuked the erring.

"He blessed the meek, the poor, those hungering after righteousness,—*blessed*, and cursed not.

“He voluntarily passed through death *in order to show man that it must be overcome, and the way to do it.* This was the last *enemy* to be overcome. But there was another great lesson to be shown forth—the most important lesson of all, for it was the crowning exhibition of power and proof of the righteousness man must attain to, as did the Perfect Example—THE OVERCOMING OF THE IDEA OF LIMITATION:—power to dismiss the lines of limit that make form, to dispel the body into Spirit at Will, as in transfiguration, and to return again, if need be.

“The true Atonement will bring to man this power of transfiguration—of which it has been said: ‘We now see darkly, but then face to face,’ as did Jesus, Elias and Moses. ‘Then will knowledge increase’ and wisdom cover the earth as the waters do the seas.

“‘I am the way.’

“‘By me if any man enter in, he shall *go out and in* and find pasture.’ But to climb in through the wall of catastrophe, or through the shadow of tragedy, ‘the same is theft and robbery,’ since there is but one right way. That class must be resurrected from their error, try again, and make their exit in the right, the *only* way.

“‘*I and the Father are One,*’ was the *seal* of atonement between the Jesus and the Father. This is what man needs. But to claim the opposite—to claim *division*—is to put himself in an attitude to *need* atonement. Another *cannot* atone for us. Another may show the way, but we must ‘*be it*’ ourselves, and thus make our own atonement.

“The unpardonable sin is willful. The atonement must also be willful on man’s part. To purchase heaven

for a man and put him in it, would not be just, would fail to make him happy, or '*at-one*': nor could he thus become a self-made man in Christ. To instruct men that they may selfishly indulge their wayward propensities while secretly reserving to themselves ignoble intentions of shifting the results of their wickedness upon the back of Innocence, is corrupting and encouraging to viciousness, to say the least! A weakling's acknowledgment before his church, that he 'sins' and 'knows he sins every day of his life,' is a narrow and unmanly thing.

'As we have said, *man is thus under obligations* still of debt continually assumed. But such men have been the chosen ones to present before a world, eager upon the search for the Right Way, the heavenly message thus clogged and blackened. The atonement can never thus be reached!

'It is clear that—for those professed followers of the devil, to extend unclean hands to men who are sincere in their search for light and truth, urging them to 'come forward' to *them*, and, by uniting with their creed to openly accept a *proxy* to do the suffering for their unrepented, imperative and protected sins,—is to *prolong* the way of repentance at last, for all that are thus deceived! To feel one's self the 'vilest of the vile,' has been held to as a cardinal virtue!—The greater the load brought for the Innocent to carry, the better:—which idea *encourages* the manufacture of other loads, to be, at intervals, held before the multitudes as a rule of life!

'The difference thus left between the church-man and the man outside is, the one has *accepted* an *innocent person* to reap his harvest, while the other reaps his own. The man who does not belong to a sect, does not

try to baffle Justice. while the other not only expects to tip the perfect Balance in his favor, but boldly acknowledges he is still engaged in the manufacture of *more* for Innocence to bear.

‘Not that he proves his ability to do so now, for he is in spite of his efforts continually reaping the results of his deeds—subject to all kinds of ailments and mental disturbances—but *hereafter*, when he shall have harvested home the last load upon the shoulders of Innocence he claims he will then be free from temptation, happy and glorified! When *thus* the next mansion of the Father is reached, will he not ask of Abraham,—or some one who has ‘worked out his own salvation,’—to please send some one to his deluded brethren to inform them of their mistake, so that they may not have still to reap the results of their *deeds in the flesh* without the *implements* suited to flesh deeds! To tell them they must *be Christs*, or *live the truth themselves*, as did Jesus for example, if they would avoid the *mistakes of unholiness*, profaning the place with their abused nakedness, not yet able to wear the garments made for the inhabitants of the more glorified realm!

‘Jesus’ life was perfect because he manifested his God-self—the Christ-life.

‘He was the *perfect Son of God while also* the perfect son of man. Thus broadly showing that all sons should be *perfect*. All sons of men should be sons of God. Recognition makes it so! Belief in *ungodliness* is the only propagator of ungodliness. This false position has always arisen in the individual mind where externals first present themselves as centers of power. At such point it is *natural* for thought to look *outward*. It is a natural

process for active thought to go forth; but, in its vibratory mode of motion *it must return* to the true Source for all *supplies*, or like a ray of light cut off, it ceases to give forth light.

“There is actually no power in any external thing or ceremony. Power lies in Undivision, the Universal, through which man lives and acts. He has his being from the heart and center of the great Everywhere-without-exception-Spiritual-Realm.

“The *misconception* concerning the Atonement that has been the mainspring to all frauds, strikes, wars, divisions and injustices in Christendom, is giving way to the true understanding of the Atonement *Jesus came to teach*. His ministry was to show the *unity of God*, or that all men are like their Origin and of Its essence.

“Idea of difference must be removed—through sacrifice or suffering, if there is resistance to the drawing of Divine Law.

“Knowledge of the *letter* of Scripture and all material investigations belong to the initiatory stage of religious research. The visible being most tangible is most easily accepted by inferior or undeveloped minds. The novelty of externals holds his consideration instead of the Invisible for which it stands.

“Christ, our Real selves,—the Perfect Son of God,  
—and

“Jesus, our temporal selves, the perfect son of man,  
ARE ONE.

“*This is the knowledge that will purify the heart and lift man consciously to his natural plane!*

“THIS IS THE ATONEMENT.”

## CHAPTER XXX.

## COMMENCEMENT.

"It is the Soul that sees. The outward eyes  
Present the object, but the mind descries;  
And thence delight, disgust, or cold indifference rise."

*Crabbe.*

It was commencement day at State College, and never had morning dawned in greater loveliness.

The college building was a massive structure of stone, finished with the style and elegance of a private institution. Seven spacious parlors were thrown into one, thus affording a grand promenade over rich carpets and by handsomely decorated walls. The rooms were connected with the chapel, a large, semi-circular room, capable of accommodating an immense audience. All the apartments were brilliantly lighted, showing to best advantage the magnificent carvings and frescos.

Seven graduates were arranged upon the platform in the college chapel. The governor of the state, several congressmen and some others from the state capital occupied the right wing of the stage; these together with the men and women of Athena, including the University students, constituted the "fair women and brave men" who formed the audience.

The class had adopted a beautiful uniform combining both the elegance and grace peculiar to the simple costumes of mediæval times. A long, flowing robe of pure white silk caught up high at the waist and folded

round in a graceful flow of drapery fell in with other graceful folds that reached to the floor. The oriental sleeves, full and flowing, and the bodice cut low at the throat, and edged with narrow point lace, made altogether a graceful and attractive graduating dress. The style was not like the Roman toga that was worn in the early empire, nor was it the purely Greek costume, the one of which we write being "dress" about as much as "drapery" and therefore prettier than either. Grace had been studied, and pose of fold, and the effect of both elegance and simplicity had been secured.

Grecian costumes have never been surpassed. They are far more expressive of poetic feeling than those of any other country in any period.

But this drapery dress proved far more becoming to some of the class than to others.

Nora Ongenright, a beautiful girl in her every day dress, looked like a way-worn puritan pilgrim in the trailing, swaying white silk, and under the blanching effect of the momentous occasion. For others it seemed impossible for them to become naturalized citizens in the angelic garb, after so long and arduous a struggle with books, hard-wood desks and Gradgrind "facts."

Nora had one of the sweetest voices on earth; but nevertheless, was a stranger to the first principles of elocution. She had written a beautiful essay, but at the first it was rendered through constrained emotion, in a voice too gentle for the stage. Strangers scarcely believed her talented.

Before she had passed over three pages, some one in the University corner was heard to clear his throat as if trying involuntarily to lend her his assistance.

Upon looking up Evangel Ahvallah saw Joseph Montall intently watching Nora. He caught Evangel's look, or rather Evangel's look caught his attention, and at the moment of recognition, he said mentally,

"You lend her your voice," and in her answering look Evangel replied, "I will."

Nora seemed at once to gather inspiration. Her voice grew quite distinct as she became inspired with eloquent feeling and proceeded to render her thought convincingly. When she had finished and was returning to her chair there was an unusual round of applause. Nora seemed almost startled at this, and felt that somehow she had been assisted by Evangel, as she sat with head erect and eyes cast down, her face suffused with a pretty blush of pleasure.

President Creedy had thought Evangel stubborn in regard to her choice of a subject for her graduating essay, because she had refused to write upon the one assigned by himself. She chose her own subject; and when she walked out upon the platform with the manuscript in her hand, and the faultless folds of her dress swaying obediently so as to best display the perfect figure, she seemed more like a living Greek model posing for queenly effect than a school girl of modern times, and Mr. Creedy was very proud of her, but a little startled at some of the glowing new thoughts presented and the vociferous approval of the audience.

At the levee in the evening after the close of the exercises and the awarding of diplomas, there were many new arrivals and many beautiful costumes with flowers and perfume for the entertainment. It was a time long to be remembered. The parents and friends

of fair daughters were buoyant with admiration and expectation as they watched the sylph-like forms gliding about,—the ultimate of sweetness, the crown and glory of the race.

Illustre Ahvallah was one of the most notable examples of beauty and style that evening at the levee. She wore a dress of the palest pink seen through white silk gauze. It was a departure from the college uniform, but like it in being low at the throat, and edged with delicate *point d'esprit lace*. The sleeves reached only to the elbow, and exhibited two of the prettiest arms that ever peeped through lacy folds.

Illustre was exceedingly fond of gay company, and had entertained much for a girl of her age. While Evangel was at school she was the eldest at home, and had a score of lovers at her feet, and almost as often she had fancied herself in love. She was fond of dress and had many friends and admirers, so that when she found herself alone with so much as a whole afternoon, the moments became irksome and she wished the lonely hours would hurry on. All her intellectual culture ran to music. She was a brilliant performer on the piano.

Some enthusiastic professor had more than once urged her father to put her forward in the profession, but he had declined, saying he preferred to have his children with him when they were out of school.

In one of the three balconied fronts Evangel had taken a seat to look out upon the familiar scenes she was about to leave perhaps forever. Stately evergreens and forest trees that the night attempted to make somber were touched up by a soft moon and the light from many lamps. The sky and the pale stars looked down

benignantly; and there was nothing in them which did not speak of sacred love and harmony, as the face of the fair young graduate turned toward them.

A tiny note was handed to Evangel. Mr. Marston begged for an interview, "if she would do him the honor." Mr. Marston had imagined himself much in love with Evangel, and had been striving for an opportunity to speak with her ever since he had listened to her excellent paper in the morning, and had been decorating odd corners with his living stature from whence he feasted his eyes upon chance views whenever she happened to pass within the range of his vision.

Half an hour later they were in the cozy Library window nook outlooking the college campus. He was a long while arriving at what he wished to say; but when he had finally made known the object of this interview the young woman, in some surprise hastily made reply:

"I am not in that line of thinking, Mr. Marston, not at all."

"Then, I am lost to ambition and to everything that is worthy. I can never be——" he began dejectedly.

"You can be all that you need to be without me. Listen to me," she said as he bowed his head upon his hand, "*You* do not love *me*, any more than you love others. You really love God: and you are not old enough or perfect enough to make a selfish matter of your sentiment. Seek Trust first, and Justice will come to you. I am nearer right just as I am, and I do not care anything about your sentiment. We are brothers and sisters, and have no business fostering partial preferences and jealous appropriations one of another."

Mr. Marston drew a long breath, as if a burden had rolled off his shoulders. Evangel continued:

“In two weeks I will be in Munich pursuing my studies. I will not stay long at one place nor study hard, for I must take England, Italy, Germany and France all in one year. It is my next step in the Great Spiral Path. I wish I might urge you not to linger in the lowlands! Onward!” she repeated, “upward, never halting, but joyously push onward, after your brightest, purest thinking.”

She rose and left him, saying that she would send some one to fill her place.

Illustre, the white and pink loveliness with light-brown curls, who had been promenading with Mrs. Governor Topman, seeing the vacated chair, left that lady and fluttered down by Mr. Marston's side. There was a rebuke for her sister in the lovely eyes, and a blush upon the soft, pretty face as she said:

“Ain't she cold, Will?”

Marston looked at her, and “all the current of his being set to her” as he looked. What irresistible charms!

They were soon in the midst of a refreshing tete-a-tete. What mattered it if the words were soft and meant little when coming from such lips as hers. O, shapely mouth and pearly teeth! The soft pink of her dress, the softer blue of the clear, bright eyes, seemed the cause of the change Evangel's words had brought upon him, and he said in a subdued tone:

“Yes, but she claims to be my sister; and sisters are usually severe,” and he looked into the pretty face be-

side him and look, *she* glided into the vacant place in his affection.

In ten minutes more Mr. Marston was master of ceremonies at Illustre's feet—a thing he would not have dared to do before Evangel's dazzling eyes. But when once there he was inspired with the usual things to be said. Illustre enjoyed it, and her glowing cheeks and radiant eyes revealed the fact that there had once more occurred in the annals of human history a rehearsal of the old, old fable.

He had thought he loved before this, but *now* he was sure he loved with a love never before known in that bosom of his! It was eternal! Nothing could ever cause him to change. He repeated softly:

"O, the heart that has *truly* loved never forgets,  
But as truly loves on to the close;  
As the sunflower turns on its God when he sets,  
The same look that it gave when he rose."

He could never be contented without her love. He could not, indeed, live longer, without her love and her presence. It would cause him to exterminate, evaporate, or do some other desperate thing.

Evangel and two others passed at the critical moment and he looked at her. He still held Illustre's hand and Evangel's words came to mind. He repeated mentally, "Press onward, after your highest, purest thinking", and when her glance met his, he dropped his eyes.

Illustre had always admired Will Marston, but until this evening she had never thought of him as a lover.

However, before the close of the entertainment, there was a newly plighted troth, and two hearts trying to beat as one.

Many fine things were said that night. When University students and College young women meet, the occasion is usually an interesting one.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## THE LEVEE.

"Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears—and stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony."

*Shak.*

Evangel and Joseph had found chairs in one of the balconied windows. Their meeting, though formal, and undemonstrative was graceful and full of moment; but observers saw nothing beyond the superficial.

"This is a great time, Miss Ahvallah," Joseph Montall said.

"Yes. All such times are propitious," came the earnest response.

"*This* time, to me, is great," he continued, looking straight into the soulful eyes with those wonderful, searching eyes of his. She did not reply, and he continued:

"I've been thinking of you, and of myself and of the world. They have become poetry and judgment to me. I have felt so lifted up, it seemed almost like transfiguration, for I dismissed all form."

Evangel was pleased, and invited him to go on. Joseph Montall had developed into an Apollo, with the grace and unpretentiousness of a beautiful child. This combined with splendid characteristics and the vigor of manhood, made him the wonder of ambitious parents, the envy of the vain, and admiration of the true and upright.

"I have not spoken before this evening, because I felt the power of a mind-talk going on between us."

"That is the proper medium of communication," she replied deeply entertained. "We may in certain ways continue the use of vocal or kindergarten expression; but vocalizing is slow and unsatisfactory, while mind words are unerringly true. The beauty of it is they cannot deceive. They are at the Fountain Source where *intention* is no longer to be traced. It is the plane reached where 'nothing is hid', but all 'revealed.' The vocal organs were meant for music: figures of speech in the primary stage of development. The vocal powers should be kept in clear and brilliant tone, the vocal organs never over-strained or neglected. But vocal words never did express our thoughts. They only indefinitely signalized and tried to explain."

There was a mental assent, but what the *eyes* said we have no *words* to tell, so I will employ telepathy and thus impart his message to my readers. (Tell me, do you catch it?)

Evangel gave a mental answer, and then said:

"A few minutes ago I heard Illustre answering affirmatively some love declarations. I knocked at the door of her real self, and when her mind admitted me, she told me mentally—right during their verbal conversation—that she loved all people alike, loved them as one. She said it was her limited self trying to express her unlimited self, and could not do so perfectly *until able to become it*. Being limited, she could express only limited ideas. That is why she talked love to *one*. 'You know *I* am one with the Father who is all', her real self continued. 'My life is Universal Substance,

and I love all, myself included. My personality is trying to do this: *being limited it manifests love in a limited way* ”

“When Illustre’s real self ceased speaking, I said: ‘Take care of your poor personality and do not abuse it as some have done. It is to be known by you as formulated Spirit Substance.

‘There is no lawful marriage on the physical plane. So-called law is license given, because of the hardness of your hearts to understand!’”

Young Montall had graduated with honor at the State University bearing off several prizes. He had been called the ‘foremost intellect’ in the school, and mentioned as ‘the talented son of fortunate Mr. Montall.’”

His companion was thinking of the perfect physique before her, and wondered what high ideal his mother must have held before his birth. He was perfectly self-possessed and never swerved from the decisions of his better judgment. Most men think they have to *experiment* in order to learn wisdom, when they might observe enough in the experimenting of others, who recklessly scatter illusory “oats” only to find a harvest abundant enough to occupy all their years in the laborious reaping, and which is often so severe as to preclude the possibility or power of sowing for another harvest!

Joseph Montall’s voice was as gentle, his words as reassuring as when he and Evangel had declared a preference, and everlasting love for each other when they were only children.

“How splendid you are to-night, Joseph!” exclaimed Evangel, speaking like a child, and looking as unso-

pohsticated as when she was her father's "old head on young shoulders".

"I am as I should should be," he said, without ostentation. "I am Life; an expression of Eternity."

"So you are," she replied, with a countenance that was beaming. "How beautiful it makes people to *know* this.

They were looking at each other saying far more mentally and expressing more by way of happy looks than by words. Personally they were superior to both Venus de Medici and Apollo Belvidere, let lovers of high art rave as they may. For no sculptor of the past has ever possessed the *inspiring knowledge of imperishability*.

Winckelmann's splendid analysis of the Apollo Belvidere, made the soul shine in the expression; and the ear is such a test of skill, he made it—in the Venus de Medici—his guide in judging of a genuine antique. But the best model of Greece, was that of a physical man who *had* a soul—thus did the Greek carve his gods. But *now* our best models are *Souls having physical bodies*. Man is the image of Divinity. His body is the temple of Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit is God's breath in us, and man is the Ark of Testimony of the Lord of Hosts. "The body of man," says Novalis, "is the only Temple in the Universe." Man is the Revelation of the Almighty and is Divine. Body, soul and spirit, according to St. Paul, must be *preserved, blameless*.

The youth and the maid were such models. They knew they were immortal, and knew that their first step lay in the direction of *spiritualizing their bodies*, and of teaching others how to come out from under the race

curse of the flesh. It must be spiritualized so that it can not know catastrophe.

In order to accomplish this, one must first cease partaking of the "forbidden fruit." The forbidden fruit is the "*knowledge of good and evil*." Evangel and Joseph had with an eye single to Truth, pursued only the *good*, and were upon the charming road of contemplation of the True, the Beautiful, the Right, and were free from fear.

"We have been so preoccupied, so separated personally, by our pursuits, that words such as we have just spoken are beneficent beyond verbal expression. They are great! I cannot tell how great. I am drawn toward you continually," said the young man.

"That is because I understand you. Very few people are on our plane of thinking, though we are so young. All people ought to be high enough to so understand. They would be happier and progress would be easier," came the reply.

Joseph had been looking at her while she spoke. Then, as if giving expression to some of his more superficial thoughts he said:

"You are going abroad with the class. If your return were not indefinite, I would go with you, with your permission. I may not consent to so long a separation."

"We will not be separated, we will communicate. We will think the same thoughts. If I discover a finer diamond than you have found, you will thus at once perceive it too. We will be inspiration to each other. We will mount together along the Great Spiral Path."

"But I would much prefer your continued personal presence. Evangel," he replied very earnestly

“So would I your presence. But, reaching forward toward the highest that is within us individually, I cannot now tell, if ever, when that may be. I may return earlier than I at present intend; it depends upon what I find that may be accomplished by staying.”

“Every step we take, even in the physical,” responded Joseph earnestly, “is momentous. Our voluntary ideas are immortal. I know that all true greatness is of God. Our minds are harmonious, and I am sure we have superior judgment and power *united*.”

A blush overspread Evangel’s beautiful complexion as she replied:

“I cannot now decide upon a consummation so akin to the ways of the old world we have left. *All my actions must be impelled by the best intentions of my heart!* People have been closing their eyes, their judgment, while taking pledges and rushing into physical unions upon the most trifling incentives: the cast of an eye, a graceful movement or a ‘taking’ smile decides it, and with no present consideration of the future, and no thought beyond present possession! And when the novelty is gone with the one, another may be as desirable which shows that what they had called love is not Love, for Love is utterly imperishable! *We see behind the masks*” Evangel continued, “and understand why men and women stop short in their happy lives and turn their thoughts into the shadow of life, which is the *contemplation of evil*.”

“I see many happy faces here, many couples that seem happy,” he made answer, as they looked over the brilliantly lighted apartment adjoining. She called his attention to one of them.

"Do you see that couple there by the pillar the cupid's are decorating? Well, *they* are trying to make people think they are happy, while they really despise each other! They have two daughters here in school—bright, pretty girls—who would not room together! They too, despise things a good deal. See, he fans her, and she smiles at him: that is because she was engaged once to Mr. Dunaway there under the gas, who glances that way to see if they seem happy. Now see that important looking little woman the Governor is talking to. She and her husband talk beautifully about the Higher Life, and they are agreed upon it. O, they are charming people. They live not far from us. Do you know them?"

"My parents know them. He told my father they were fonder of each other than they were at first. They are not church people, do not advocate temperance movements, but practice temperance from principle, and are very upright in their lives. They say that the only way to cause 'evil' to cease in the earth is to teach people not to *believe* in it. Their near neighbors say they make everybody happy around them."

"*Free* people are *true*," returned his companion. "People must be free. *Each one is a whole individual*. I am one entire. I need nothing to complete my perfect self but perfect recognition. The same is true of you. The period of being lived by the times is ended. The time of thriving in earth and declining in reproduction—as the weeds and as the beasts, is far spent and the dawn of complete manhood and womanhood is here."

"It seems to me," Joseph said, "that under the present general pressure of race dominion upon the oth-

er side of the question, it would be well to portray to them the perfect ideal of a perfect union."

"Few would understand us," quickly responded Evangel, "and the lesson would be lost. It *seems* that it would be more pleasant to unite our lives and settle down cozily together; but in so doing the great, advanced lesson we may inculcate would be lost to the people. Our lovely friends would go right on in the steps the race has so sadly declined under,—shortening their earthly career by giving out the bloom of womanhood and the strength of manhood in reproduction, and incorporating the blood of short-lived beasts as food. I used to wonder why so many children were born of poor and ignorant parents, while the offspring of the wealthy and talented were so few in number. But I now know it is because they need reproducing. The fifth generation will show great improvement over the present. Thus the ignorant poor strive to balance with the higher class. You, Mr. Montall, are a splendid man, and reflect your Perfect Self. You are equipped for the enlightening and uplifting of the race. Now tell me;—are you a blunder of the Almighty, that you require reproducing? Do you fall short of the glory of God? If so, would you glorify Truth more in reproduction? Is every reproduction superior to the producer? Would you concentrate your power, or would your forces be scattered—which is reasonable? I say you are ready now, fitted now, for man's highest calling. Go forth. I will help you. I will work by your side. Be perfect. Live on."

"Beloved one," replied the young man, "I know that great men and women have married and been hap-

py and useful. And I know that it has been through greatness of mind and bravery of purpose rather than through the peculiar relations which, in themselves are not the source of lasting joy or peace, that happiness has been attained. People see too late the beautiful possibility while being held in the same race thralldom that environs even the unmarried and overshadows their thoughts and actions. The latter have been the targets of race judgments. Who ever thought of whether Jesus were married or single? The race thought had no power over Him. If a wave of false mental attitudes had swept towards Him it would have melted in mid-air before reaching the impermeable aura of the Holy Life. See what great things he accomplished. Such must be the quality of *our* thinking—for we must become like him since He came to show us what we must be in our lives. Man must know that mind is God and that God is all before he can arrive at highest results."

"People must *practice* what they know of Truth. Very few married people act from spiritual standpoints, in their every day lives," said Miss Ahvallah. "Let us look at the subject from its old stand-point. How many love God, or the race, or Truth, better after they have turned their faces and interests towards each other and their backs upon the world, in a struggle against it for food? Let the world answer. Let the mother whose interests have been for many years covered up in the office of reproduction, tell, Ask of the sixteenth century man who wished wives, like almanacs, were renewable every year. Ask of the young wife who clings to higher ideals after her husband has thrown off his mask (the poor fellow didn't know he had one on) while he

spurns her cherished notions, and fails utterly to sympathize with her in the burdens his selfishness imposes. And the unfortunate husband deceives himself further by thinking he would have been happier with a kitchen-loving wife. Viewing the subject from the true side, great and illuminated will be the time when spiritualized people only become united in marriage. They will then indeed be 'holy bonds.' "

"Miss Ahvallah," called a voice not far away, "when you are at leisure, I want to present Gov. Topman," said the President of the school, as he and that gentleman passed, arm in arm, before them. She at once excused herself, rising and stepping forward, when the two were introduced. Mr. Topman bowed very low, and then almost as low when Evangel presented Mr. Montall.

Mr. Topman offered her his arm for a promenade.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## A GLANCE AT THE PATHWAY OF PROGRESS.

Idea is self-existent. Things and events are the pictures its activity paints. Ideas are First Truths and spring directly from Infinity. Intuitive consciousness is the open driveway between the limited and circumscribed, and the great Universal Realm that is FREE from encroachment of lines or surfaces in Idea. Idealization and the stated and perpetual realization of highest ideals is EVOLUTION. For man to reach perpetually forward towards this ideal, high, central and powerful, gives him an impulse and an inspiration which nothing but a recognition of that which has always been could impart.

The great panorama of external forms is but the passing reflection of the acts and attitudes of mind as they touch upon the mirror-plane of limitation in its effort at reproduction of that which has always been.

Man is thus enabled by the diffusion of right thinking to greatly enhance his progress, and by keeping the plane of the reflecting mirror square with the ecliptic of Spiritual Being, may so successfully receive the true Light as to both absorb and reflect its whiteness to all that are within and without. But dogmatism in the mind makes individual progress circuitous, and is the element which has been the instigator of all protracted crises along the line of right development. The delinquent then have a double work to perform when the

chariot wheels of civilization move on and leave them clinging in old ruts; for they must gather energy, and with harder labor following in the dark.

The world grows in grace and in knowledge of Truth. Old methods like old territory wear out and must be supplied by new ones. When Egypt was worn so threadbare the inundations of the Nile could no longer inspire it with productive energy, her sons might all have become embalmed like their mummied brethren by refusing to comply with the spirit of evolutionary Law marching ever westward. Athens in its turn, and Rome whose golden age had "ruled the world", Paris and London have in due times, evolved from out the observed Law along the line of march.

The progressive prayer and song of the ancient Cymri has reached perpetually onward unto the Divine power, in the culmination of the clean and splendid ideal of the nineteenth century. From the days when Druidical worshipers clad in white and ornaments of gold, celebrated their mystic rites in forest groves, stimulated by a first vague belief in the Soul's immortality, to worship subordinate deities—because in that stage of development the cultus of demigods and angels was more attractive than the religion of the Invisible and Intangible One,—from those days to the time of emancipation of mind into the light and knowledge of its supremacy over all formulated symbols, what a march of events! What a series of occurrences covering the period from Cæsar's Britain to the White Dawn of twentieth century America!

Grand has been the march of Mind from the days of ancient Babel with its material methods for the struc-

ture of a tower that should reach to heaven, to the Spiritual methods of the present time. (Swedenborg prophesied that the condition of perfect harmony, or heaven, would be found in the latter half of the nineteenth century.)

From the time far back in the Azoic age when the rock earth ground out its solitary problem in *granite*, preparatory to the formations upon which the fossiliferous rocks of the Silurian and subsequent ages have been planted, in but *mineral expression of life*, to the days when *water* became the wonder-power in mechanics, and on, to the period when *steam* was employed to move the heavy engine and displayed new wonders still, until man—inspired by the magnificent *lightning's* flash—caught up the zigzag thread and harnessed it, tame and obedient to his intricate and splendid plans, proving thus far that Power lies not in the apparent and ostensible, but in the invisible and the imponderable. From the most ponderous to the most imponderable has been the spirit of the march through the ages, ever upward and onward unto clearer Light.

Next in the progression line came the Science of *Ethics*, through whose perspective dawned the White Light of the Son of Righteousness. And even now the illumination of *Spiritual Life* is visible over the East and the West.

Ancient temples of the Druids, oak groves inclosed by a circle of stones, the circle symbolizing God, and the serpent attached representing the Divine Son—were the scenes of the most superstitious, passionate and malicious practices! Superstition is a thing very sub-

tle and penetrating to mentalities upon the more animal plane and it worked upon the nerves of ancient Celts, transmitting a tincture through many generations even down to modern times. The Druids worshipping under the charm of a snake's egg were as zealous in their faith and feeling and held their doctrine as dogmatically as does the pledged hero-worshipper of our own glad time. They were perhaps as certain their religious creed was right as is the most devoted adherent to the doctrine of Vicarious Atonement to-day, and fought as desperately to maintain their forms and ceremonies.

Stagnation proves to be the astonished halt before the dawn of the evolving NEW, after the effort and passing of the inefficient OLD.

We must consciously pull our steps from the crystalizing Sodoms of yesterday and *press* onward towards a Higher Ideal. The faithful are forever arriving upon mountain tops whose heights are crowned with beauty and glory. But all ages should be golden. In intellectual history the brilliant reign of Edward Third, ushered in with Chaucer the real beginning of English Literature. This made the fourteenth century the crowning epoch in the history of Europe.

The glow of declining Feudalism and chivalry melts away into the brilliancy of the Revival of Letters and the Protestant Reformation, the momentous transpiration which duly culminated in our modern art, science and letters. It took thirteen hundred years for Druidism and its superstitions to relax their hold upon the Old for the advanced ideas of Chaucer, who was called the "abstract and brief chronicle of his time".

“But they, converted at his wise lore,  
 Wepten ful sore, and gaven ful credence  
 Unto his word, and cryden more and more,  
 ‘Christ, Goddes’ sone, without difference,  
 Is verray God, this is al our sentence,  
 That hath so good a servaunt him to serve;  
 Thus with oon vois we trowen, though we sterve’.”

When Almachius, that heard of “This doynge”  
 wished to see and question he again asked,

“I axe thee,” quod he, “though the it greve,  
 Of thi religioun and of thi byleve.”

In her reply,

“Of whens?” quod sche, when sche was i-freyned,  
 Of conscience, and of good faith unfeyned.”

The foregoing extract from Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, is an example of the stage of literary growth of 1300 years from a condition but little superior to barbarism.

After a lapse of two more centuries following the age of this “brilliant” poet, the long silence reopened into the new glories that ripened in the brilliant age of Elizabeth and the immortal Bacon. His revolution in philosophy was the herald of that department in literature, the splendid Drama, which stamped itself upon the narrow cultus of that day, widening their intellectual paths and giving a new impulse in the upward trend of the Infinite Spiral of Human Life—expressing through parents incapable of writing their own autographs, the crown of the age and of literary genius—the everlasting Shakespeare.

Ascending the Spiral Whorl, and following in evolutionary development, Pope rises upon the next sunlit

summit; and Addison; and "Lady Mary"—"the most brilliant letter writer of the period."

Next appears a line of novelists:—Goldsmith, Defoe, etc., and historians, theologians and politicians:—Hume, Blackstone. Gibbon. Johnson and Burke.

In the dawn of Romantic Poetry—the very apex of splendid illumination—came the flower-bedecked muse of Moore, the Childe Harolde of the immortal Byron, the herculean exploits of Scott; Shelley, who believed that the two evils of superstition and despotism were the things to be destroyed that Paradise might be realized, and who said aside to the Skylark:—

"Better than all measure:  
Of delightful sound,  
Better than all treasures  
That in books are found,  
*Thy* skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground."

Then came the tender, reflective and lyrical-dramatic poems of Burns, and a long line of American poets:—Longfellow, Holmes, Lowell, Whittier and Bryant whom all know so well. These are glimpses along the line of march from the days of Chancer to the beautiful development gracing the days upon the consummate summit of the Present Time.

The Spiral Path is the definite, unchangeable course of Divine Law in which Truth, like an irresistible magnet forever draws all things unto Itself.

Is this the final culmination now that we have discovered the Immortal Path that broadens and beautifies as we ascend? The "old way" was a circle with an yawning gulf at the end of the round, into which men dropped after one mad whirl, because they were taught

to believe in imperfection and failure. The pit into which they fell had no bottom, so that with such faith they continued thus to fall. It was not a spiral with landings here and there in which to tempt hope, or imagine a return to light, but a wild, impulsive, headlong tilt through outer darkness. What a travesty upon God whose tender and loving hand searches the mountain tops and desolate declivities *until He find* the wayward one and gathers it, no less than the "ninety and nine" to His loving Heart.

The best is not yet. And still the Highest for each age if truly reached is the very apex and crown. They together form the Royal Steps toward the golden gates of Harmony.

The glorious "round" of praise rises as it completes a circuit upon a higher spiral with broader prospects and more engaging facilities. There is a new Word of God, or exhibit of High Praise, at each grand evolution in the Life of Mankind.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## ABROAD AND AT HOME.

“Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away, . . .  
Breadths of tropics’ shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.  
For she dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be,  
There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in Universal Law.”

*Tennyson.*

All preparations were complete. The graduating class at State College were ready for their tour abroad with President Creedy and wife. Lily Nervends who was not a graduate, was to accompany them. In order to withdraw her from the flattering attentions of Mr. Noman who had already stolen many interviews, in which he had pronounced himself dying of love for her,—her parents had arranged to send her abroad for a year. Lily was an only child of wealthy parents. They had spared no expense in their efforts to give her a finished education. She was to begin a course in music in one of the best schools in Germany. But Miss Nervends had pined and opined that she would be drowned at sea or die of home-sickness.

Young Noman had increased his daily supply of cigars, and was growing nervous and cadaverous as the time approached for her departure!

Illustre and Will as Mr. and Mrs. Marston, were among the number. There had been a grand wedding, at which Mr. Creedy had officiated. Illustre believed

in wedding tours and had prepared to celebrate both occasions by joining the company and going with the class.

"How delightful 'twill be Love, 'rocked in the cradle of the deep' together," the young man had said while standing by her side in her father's library just before starting out to the carriages. He had nestled Illustre's pretty head upon his breast and gently patted her cheek.



ILLUSTRE.

"O!" exclaimed the beauty lifting her head from its lawful resting place. "Don't say that dearest. I do hope the ocean will be as still as glass all the way."

"It will make no difference to *us* dahling; see how firmly I can hold you in these arms," he replied illustrating his words by example.

Illustre bloomed out in fresh beauty and Mr. Mars-ton gathered new dignity in the first weeks of their new life.

Joseph Montall accompanied them as far as New York.

While waiting in the union depot the girls fluttered to the windows many times to see the trains going and coming, and they wondered how so many could make connection just at the appointed time and with so few mistakes.

"*Has* the agent given us the right ticket?—Why of course, or Mr. Creedy would say something," thought Miss Bigby as she noticed the abstracted look in the agent's face. Nora Ongenright felt sure all was right this time. She had relatives in Scotland who would give herself and friends a warm welcome.

It was exactly six-fifty o'clock when the Burlington pulled out, and the seniors were actually upon their journey.

"I feel *good*," said Miss Sue Avity looking forth from the window as the cars rolled along. "I like to go fast when there are no horses or mules to make tired. Motion in the fresh air is delightful," she continued while the breeze fanned her face and she looked dreamily ~~o~~ upon the summer landscape.

"Motion is produced by power," said Miss Bigby, who occupied the seat by her side, "and power is silent. I think it wonderful."

"The idea of power leads to the idea of cause, and causation is intelligent. Just think of that," Miss Avity added looking round with young graduate importance upon her countenance.

“Don't you mean *Intelligence?*” queried Evangel looking back with an approving smile. Joseph and Evangel sat just in front of the two girls. Miss Bigby suggested that they turn their chairs and “lets all talk about it.”

“Motion,” began Miss Bigby, “is produced by power and the cause is silent. Power acts from without on unorganized matter. Mountains and rocks are built by accretion. Organized things build up from within, as the plant. The power of physical locomotion is from within. Man having intellect, sensibility and will, is self-active.” She cast a questioning look at the two before her, and Evangel said quietly:

“Power is universal, yet invisible and not knowable.” She looked at her companion questioningly and he immediately replied:

“We know universal Power only through its manifestations in us and in the external. We know individual power through our own souls. Power and manifestation are two different things. The glittering spheres of falling rain and the rushing mountain torrent are drawn by a silent force called for convenience gravitation. It is an outside power. The lily moves within itself and aspires into blossom. The rose blushes in the fullness of its young life and unfolds its petals in sweet airs. It lives, feels, loves, rejoices and praises. The power of locomotion is innate in the birds and fishes. But it is the same power exactly in them that is in us. Power manifests in widely different ways through different channels. There is but one Power. The language we use to express the abstract idea of power is drawn from the realm of the concrete, and always will be so long as we

are limited creatures We will always be limited so long as we hold limited ideas."

"Do you hear that?" said Mr. Creedy to his wife after silently listening to the conversation. "Miss Ah-vallah's ideas have thoroughly permeated the entire school."

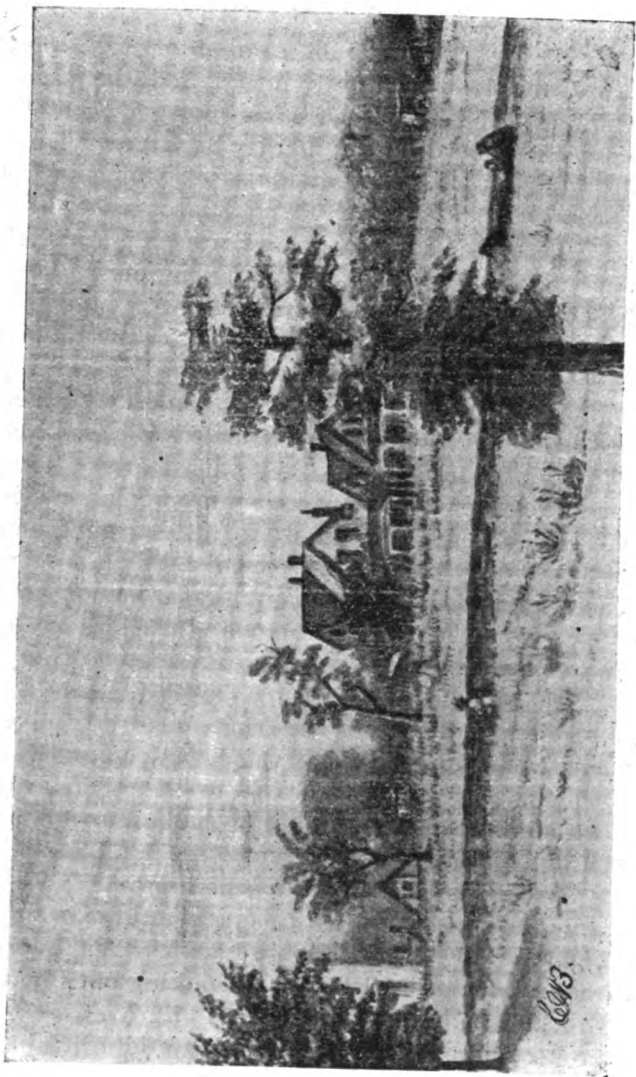
"O, I reckon not," drily interposed Mrs. Creedy. "I expect you've given her ideas too much attention."

"No," he returned half impatiently. "I didn't know she had ideas until a few months ago, and then discovered it by chance. She is bright as a new dollar, and don't care whether you indorse her or not. She is so positive everything draws towards her."

The Burlington duly arrived in Chicago next morning, and after breakfast and after visiting in carriages the most important places in the great city, they took the Pennsylvania line to Philadelphia. It was then they began to realize that they were actually going abroad.

Going to Europe has thrilled many a brave heart and inspired it with new energies. Scotland, Germany, Italy, and before we return, the city of London, about which Chas. Dickens has told us so much.

They were flying rapidly along amid green fields and cultivated lands. What variety, and how pleasing this panorama to young girls just after a term of hard study in almost "solitary confinement" within college walls. Here an undulating field of waving grain almost ready for harvest is neighboring a deep green clover field across a thread of fence scarcely visible between the two. These in turn have barely time to introduce themselves when a billowy forest glides into the space so quickly vacated by the sweet clover. Now an orch-



CULTIVATED LANDS.

ard, exhaling the fragrance of apple-blossoms; they near it abruptly, dash recklessly into it and the sweet airs, slicing off a southeast section as they go. But the perfume of the blossoms has hardly departed when a huge barn appears with contented cattle grazing on the tender grass beyond, and a farm house gable with red flues "bosomed high in tufted trees." A patch of garden and a country lane, both cut on a bias; an oat patch, and a cottage nestled in a wide field where a young man plowed and a young woman dropped corn. Feeling a lack of something in their lives the two had married and forgotten their longing in their battle with the exigencies of the hour leaving the need unfilled. They labored that they might make their bread and ate their bread that they might labor and make more. And raised a family to take up the same unmeaning treadmill round after them.

Scenes changed before any could grow monotonous and dropped from the panorama much as the bits of colors do in the Kaleidoscope. The great stretch of Alleghanies with their mysteriously changing peaks and ridges and soft purple declivities that fixed themselves and then moved round again as the cars sped on, were but subsidiary occurrences to the great ultramarine depths ahead, although a grand old mountain system and a sublime picture in themselves.

John Brown's fort there at the junction of the three states, and then Johnstown's fatal bridge.

"*Philadelphia*," cried the brakeman, when everybody already knew it, and had been looking out for the city of Brotherly Love for half a day.

After a few hours' stay, filled up with delightful ex-

ploration, they sped on toward the great metropolis on the harbored bay.

While the train wound about in the suburban towns of New York City as if trying to find the great heart of it, Miss Nervends sat demure and silent. She had never been so far from home before, and while the rest of the company gave everything an interested glance her nerves remained unstirred for perhaps the first time in her life.

They duly arrived in New York City. It was very early upon the third morning after that they all drove out toward Bowling-green Anchor-line Ticket office to procure tickets for the ocean passage, to make sure their luggage was all there and to avoid the general rush later on. Day had just fairly dawned and they had several hours in which to drive about the city. Mr. Creedy proposed a call at the florists. Mr. Creedy's carriage led the way and was followed by the rest of the company—all but Joseph and Evangel who had a carriage all to themselves and had preceded the others. Joseph had already procured an elaborate bouquet for her. The two left the carriage with the driver and walked to an elevated spot from whence there was a fine outlook.

"This is a great reflection from the realm of Reality. What a fine atmosphere. See that delicate zone of purple and gold and vermilion welding earth and sea together," he said pointing towards the ocean. They were both looking seaward.

A clear, sweet depth of rosy haze rested along the horizon above the bay, melting into the soft blue above and into the dull ultramarine of the sea, as if its pur-

pose was to buoy ships and lend them life and phantom coloring. Rounding the bay from one point to another about equally distant from their point of observation there sped a dainty white sail. They looked long in silence at the silken creature that moved so smoothly as it glowed and thrilled and made love to the great metropolis on that day of days. It stood upon the center of the horizon, its pretty sail filled with the softest tint of gold and purple balm amid sweet airs and magic coloring, a thing so dainty and so inspiring it seemed lifted above the common level, and glided more like thought or idea when making a delightful tour of the abstract.

"I will remember this forever," Evangel said in the softest whisper. "I will never forget the beauty of the picture before us nor the glory of the absolute that inspired it. How good is life."

"Our Life is God. I have much to accomplish before you return home, but in loving God I love the thoughts of Good which are the angels of God;—I love the evangel—the messenger of God to me. Thou art my Evangel of Allah, incarnate," he continued, turning to the young woman.

"I would be the Evangel of Liberty to all that are in bonds," she replied earnestly, and then quoted:

"The Evangel of *Freedom* is calling,  
The music is borne from the sky,  
The chains from the bondmen are falling,  
The jubilee morning is nigh.  
Now goes forth the mighty Evangel,  
And hastens the spirit to free;  
For Liberty's beautiful Angel  
Hath come from the Father to thee.

“The stars in their glory are shining;  
The race of oppression is run!  
And slaves into heroes are springing  
For love binds the nation in one.  
Christ comes in the Liberty-Angel;  
He hastens the spirit to free,  
And speaks through the holy Evangel;  
That comes from the Father to thee.”

“We are both messengers of Good, Joseph. Let us both go forth with the great power upon us of transforming the world that is yet in darkness. Let us proclaim the Truth for it is Truth that makes free. The joy that fills my heart must be the joy of others. All the earth shall hear. Then will be a glad time, and wisdom and light and happiness will cover the earth and there will be no more crying, no more darkness, no more trouble or care, for we will ascend with grace and ease along the beautiful Path of Life.”

His real self was now fully aroused.

“We are one in thought and feeling,” he said, “our communion shall be spiritual, We will teach the same Truths.” Then turning to the ocean he continued as he extended his hand:

“Look how calm it is! But listen to the promise of power in the gentle lapping of its waves against the shore. There is an awful significance in that restless sound.”

They were both now looking seaward, their thoughts going out together.

“All the pictures men have painted by brush or pen, as that great one of Byron in his splendid worship poem to the sea, gives scarcely a hint of the vastness of the great liquid mass,” continued Joseph. “It buoys men

upon its billows like motes in summer airs, and is itself in turn lightly lifted in the hollow of the Hand that is formless and abstract,—measured, timed and given set bounds. Thus far shalt thou go, O, sea; the time to HAVE DOMINION is come and man is greater far than thou.”

Evangel had drawn near while he was speaking and stood by his side.

“See how your thoughts widen with gazing upon the symbol of vastness. You recognize your greatness: you claim your birthright.”

“It is not I, apparent,” he replied, “but the Greatness that is within me. It is my Real Self. The colors and the music and the mathematics of the world external are the signs of the perfection of abstract ideality. They are mottos over the door-ways of our intuitional phantasy, and when we have been thrilled by the symbol we travel upon the magic chords back unto the inner Reality, to the source of their revelation. Some great souls in lofty moments see Truth upon either side, and teach that since the Picture is right the reflection must be right. The Ideal realm is the realm of Power and all possibility. It is the manufactory of all conditions, and its wheels are forever flying. If the fantasy turns backward, fantasy must be reprovèd; if forward, it will cleanse the outer temple that has been shadowed by erroneous conceptions, and will wash out the flesh as a linen garment.”

The white-sailed boat bloomed like a white flower whose unfolding petals cadenced in harmony with its coloring: first, soft, dreamy, distant, and set in minor chords; then nearer and more definite. They felt the

music and the rhythm and caught the key-note of the thoughts and of the heart-beats. They could smell the sails and sweet airs, the odor of Spanish Lilies and Myrrh and Aloes, and as it touched their faces its cadence murmured:

“When thought is *pure*, flesh is pure and sweet. All things are patterned after the Invisible Word. Only the Word of Good has *creative* power.”

And as they stood and mused upon the glory, a Silent Power within filled them with a consciousness of being all Divine. It lifted them with grace, like powerful wings, and the voice continued:

“Look upon the ends of the earth, the limit of man’s idea, how rich it is.”

“Yes,” responded Evangel mentally, “this is an expression of the *Wisdom* of the race. The Law of Truth is served, and it transmutes all thinking into the White Spectrum of harmonizing Purity. It is the Balance-wheel of Spiritual Law.”

“My Life is God,” Joseph said in mental response.

“Yes,” came the answer, “God is your greatness and my greatness, the greatness of the ocean and of all things. Being the product of Greatness we must be great. Recognition of the Omnipresence of Truth every hour makes its transcendent Whiteness apparent to our understanding.”

They were standing near each other. Evangel put out her hands and Joseph took them. She looked at him with her love-lit eyes as she said:

“I have a great work before me in the East.” She spoke with great earnestness, her eyes saying many things while the warm, rose-petal lips slowly framed

the words:—"And you will disseminate our beautiful principles in the West. And thus will we Unify the Orient and the Occident, and make them One in Spirit and in Truth. And when all shall be harmonious here, a yet broader field will open to our enraptured vision!—I the Evangel of Allah in the East—you the messenger of God in the West."

"Yes; our work is one in purpose and in Spirit. We will thus ascend the Great Spiral Path side by side, Evangel of Allah."

"Yes," was all her reply. And Joseph turned his face toward the West and was gone.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I feel as if I should faint," said little Miss Nervends as the party returned from their floral excursion. "I never was so far from home and I feel as if I never should see—" The rest of the sentence was lost in a whispered sob.

They were soon all in their carriages and upon their way to Bowling-green Anchor-line depot. As soon as they came within sight of the steamer, Miss Bigby rose, sprang out of the carriage and ran toward the ship.

"There she goes up the gangway and everybody is laughing," said Mr. Creedy as they were all getting out. "She's the last one I had expected to see excited in that way,—humph!"

But when they were all upon board, and selecting good localities from whence they might waive their adieus to those on shore, they forgot Miss Bigby's momentary excitement, in the singular appearance of a strange young man who at that moment came rushing

down the wharf, pale from quite a different kind of excitement, and waving his arms in a desperate way just after they had taken up the gang-way.

"Who on earth!" exclaimed one of the men.

It was probably some one who had lingered at breakfast with friends—for he was in full dress, silk hat, kid gloves, white tie and wild olive perfume. And when the shipmen kindly lowered the gang-way and allowed him to come aboard, and as he passed like a remnant of a ball or private box party, many of the people whose eyes were red from weeping, smiled involuntarily as he hurried past them on his way to the state-room.

"Well! upon my soul!" ejaculated the President as he perceived who the man was. "*Has* that fellow got as many lives as a cat? Now I was certain we left him in Athena!—but somebody did tell me they had seen him in Chicago."

He knit his brows a moment and then said:

"How Mr. Noman got from *there, here*, I can't tell, *I'm* sure. I wonder if Miss Nervends knows."

When the great ship cut herself from the shore and began her contest with a world all liquid, all hearts became silent. And when she was fairly turned and actually starting, a general murmur of farewells rose over all. Even the music which on board a great ocean steamer greatly relieves the burden of anxiety, was now hushed until the last farewells had been spoken and the last handkerchief had fluttered out of sight on shore and ship.

The people and the ship are lifted upon the bosom of the great mystery which men in lack of particular knowledge call "the deep." Like the great unexplored

realm of mind which, because not yet defined and its depths laid bare, they call "unconscious" mind. There is no unconscious mind. Mind is forever awake and alive and self-willed, and because conscious mind cannot compass and know all of Mind at once is no argument that it may not know it in part.

Out in the swell of the ocean! Everybody on board who has not been to sea before becomes inspired. The one who has been to sea before and knows its ways and turns is warned by its cradle motion and prepares for emergencies. Forthwith he slips off to the state room, opens his steamer trunk and arranges his wearing apparel as carefully and as thoughtfully as any anticipating mother gathers the folded garments together convenient for a new incarnation.

Yes, they are in the swell of the ocean, and the people are on deck—not to write poetry about the sea, but to soothe the rising tempest within.

Illustre's husband had brought out the chair which he had procured at the wharf, but as she was seriously affected by the motion of the vessel, they had it returned and restrapped to the trunk.

"Come, sister," said Evangel in soothing tones, as she took Illustre's hand, "come and see the ships; they are gorgeous."

"Don't talk about ships," pouted Illustre, "this one is quite too much for me. I wish I had staid at home."

"Oh, don't think so. A look at those sails would do you good, come."

At that moment a pale, gaunt form emerged from one of the state-rooms. Mr. Noman had been forced upon deck to unburden himself of sea-sickness. He was

haggard and despondent, and his eyes turned as indifferently upon Lily as upon the other two.

"O, Frank!" exclaimed little Miss Nervends, "where have you been keeping yourself all this time?"

"Anywhere I could,—below most of the time," he replied without apology for abruptness or lack of interest.

Evangel had left Illustre for a moment; but Will Marston called for her, saying the poor child was very sick, and that he had found it impossible to procure anything for her relief. She had told Evangel in a profusion of tears how miserable she was, and that Will's presence even had become distasteful to her.

The Colossus was bound for Glasgow; but steamers headed that way seldom land at the dock on account of the tide rising in the Clyde. The tide being in their favor upon this occasion, however, the Colossus sailed bravely up Anchor-line dock at Glasgow.

The company was met by Nora's uncle and were driven directly to his palatial residence.

President Creedy and class remained but a few days when they left for Manchester.

Sea-sickness had seemed to somewhat cool the burning love between Mr. Noman and Miss Nervends. He wrote home for money to return on, and Miss Nervends remained to take the course in music.

\* \* \* \* \*

One year passed. Many mighty works had been done through the simple Word of Truth. Multitudes had listened spell-bound to the purifying and uplifting lessons of Evangel the messenger of Good. It was the

Christ Doctrine, in its purity, unchristened, uncreeded and unselfishly imparted.

To teach *pure truth* for love of Righteousness is the greatest of all work.

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” It is more blessed to *shine* where light has been unknown and let fruition freely flow than to selfishly chase the world of particulars down and grasp at unsubstantial pageants one by one.

The Leaven that leaveneth the whole race had been introduced in many towns. London, Manchester, Birmingham and many places throughout the East had *heard* the Word and its energy was at work.

Many times had Evangel talked with Joseph face to face, while he instructed immense classes in the West.

Many a sweet letter found its way to her parents and friends, who were by them stirred into new and holier energy.

Illustre and Will had returned and nestled down in the pretty home which had been a bridal present upon their wedding day. Many children found their way to the couple that had been so loving, and though Illustre's cheeks and lips lost their freshness, the church people said she was more religious, and her great love of dress turned somewhat into motherly love for the helpless little ones who were a discipline to her pride.

Mr. Creedy and the others had duly returned to State College with several new recruits

Light shot an arrow through the boards and rafters of Mr. Ahvallah's church. It came chiefly through timely precept from their pastor after severe reaping of results of ignorant erring on the part of some of the

flock. Few changes had occurred. Permelia P. and Mrs. Fabby's brother Mart had unconsciously agreed to try the reproductive plan for whitening out their discolored ethics. Bro. Cobb stroked his beard and said he "ruther'n ten dollars" Bro. Ahvallah hadn't changed his views. On meeting days when no other hymn was started, he set out upon "Amazing grace" without any visible movement of lips, or eyes, or beard. Mrs. Sally Steambergen-Bleevneevl, her husband and her mother-in-law lived happily together at the old homestead. Mrs. Bleevneevl had been a new woman since Mr. Ahvallah's new sermon on the Atonement, and "old things had passed away" forever. She said she of all people had need to look forward steadily, and she loved the practice of keeping her eye "single" upon the mark of the prize, which is the Highest Ideal of Truth, Life and Beauty. And as her carriage rolled along in the rich, mellow sands of the old farm land on the way to Mr. Ahvallah's church—for she had renewed her membership—her thoughts were of the happiest kind, dwelling on the great truth of the Omnipresence of Good and Good alone. And when Miss Sally laughingly touched her husband's cheek and said, "He's jest my ideal of a husband," Mrs. Bleevneevl smiled and said he looked younger than he used to, and that she herself was only sixty-five "*years young*" after all, and that she enjoyed great peace of mind. Fly had been promoted and now drove Mr. Arthur's team.

Hence Fabby became son-in-law to Silas Bourd, but his wife wearied of him and deserted him after a month's probation.

Mr. Pewlett gave up his plan of capturing one of

the minister's daughters when Illustre married and Evangel remained abroad; and George set his little heart upon Ferriby Short, who was four years his senior and taller by half a foot. Bro. Short still attended church, but found it difficult to change all his "views" at once. He winked his small eyes rapidly when trying to comprehend how Good could be the only Power in the universe, and usually found a niche for a God of his own creating to direct his prayers to.

One fine afternoon Nora Ongenright entered her uncle's elegant library where Evangel had been in silent meditation for some hours.

"Would you like a jaunt with us in a lug-sail boat?" Nora asked, as she approached and took Evangel's hand.

"Yes," came the reply, "I will be glad to." They were soon all in readiness and the family were driven to the wharf. An old sailor who was managing the boat put up the sail, and Nora, her brother, their parents and Evangel were soon upon a four mile's sail and return. The breeze was contrary but the sky cloudless. It took them two hours to reach the little town at the foot of Cairn-cliff their destination, where lived some friends they wished to visit. Winding up the side of this cliff was a path with flowers growing upon either side until near the terminus, when level rocks succeeded in their place. Nora and Evangel ascended this hill together until the flowers began to give place to rocks, when Nora paused and asked her companion if she wished her to continue the ascent with her.

"No, Nora dear," she replied, pausing and looking at her, "I have thought so continually upon Life and its universal and everlasting pulsation, of Truth and its



THE LAW OF LAWS IS PERFECT, AND A JUST BALANCE HIS DELIGHT.

eternal Perfectness and power, of Love and its all-absorbing, all-healing, all-healing, all-purifying quality, that I am lifted off the earth with transport."

"Your countenance shines, Evangel; if you were not the perfect expression of physical Health I would say you are already a spiritual being," returned Nora, somewhat startled.

"We are all spiritual beings, you know," suggested Evangel.

"Yes, anybody would believe that after listening to your last course of lectures. I never was so impressed in my life," interrupted Nora. "But I will return for you, brother and I, as soon as they are ready to go home. The stars are coming out now," she said as she turned to descend.

Evangel continued her way in the pure evening twilight until she had reached an eminence which overlooked the bay and town. She was in an ecstasy of high praise and love of the Perfect Way.

"I and the Father are one," she repeated many times in glad recognition and realization of the truth. The stars looked on from their beautiful, expansive arch above her, but a Whiteness that would have dazzled earth-beclouded eyes, shone about her, and she beheld unspeakable things: the White Unity of Truth and Love in Life, Freedom, all possibility and power, in the vast open field wherein is the glorified vision. It is the beautiful Shekinah, the White Spectrum wherein all things are transfigured and are Pure White.

"How beautiful is this new realm!" was the thought spoken near her. "It is the Holy place wherein nothing impure can enter. This, Evangel, is transfiguration.

'Eye hath not seen, flesh ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the physical consciousness to know the things ready prepared for the glorified.'

"Yes," came the soft response. "I have been here often before and have looked for you, dear Joseph, for I was sure you knew the way. How grandly beautiful; how transcendently gladsome the harmony of this state!"

This is happiness, wisdom, peace. This is understanding; this, *Eternal Love*. The physical metamorphoses into the Spiritual, and the *Illustre* and the *Evangel* of Life are *One, and the same*. Here are *we* one indeed; here united. All is One," replied the glorified presence of Joseph Montall. To them there was now no space no time. They were truly free. They had overcome the shackles of *form*, had "subdued the earth" and now "had dominion."

Out of the grand symphony of the Universe proceed all musical tones. In pure White the composite colors are each and all mathematically proportioned. White is the primary of all colors. In the universal orchestra no note is out of tune and Harmony reigns.

"A perfect Balance is the Lord's." The Law of laws is perfect, and a just balance His delight.

THE END.



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