

# ZELMA, THE MYSTIC:

OR,

White Magic,   
 Versus Black.

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BY

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*"Were half the power, that fills the world with terror,  
Were half the wealth, bestowed on camps and courts,  
Given to redeem the human mind from error,  
There were no need of arsenals or forts."*  
—LONGFELLOW.

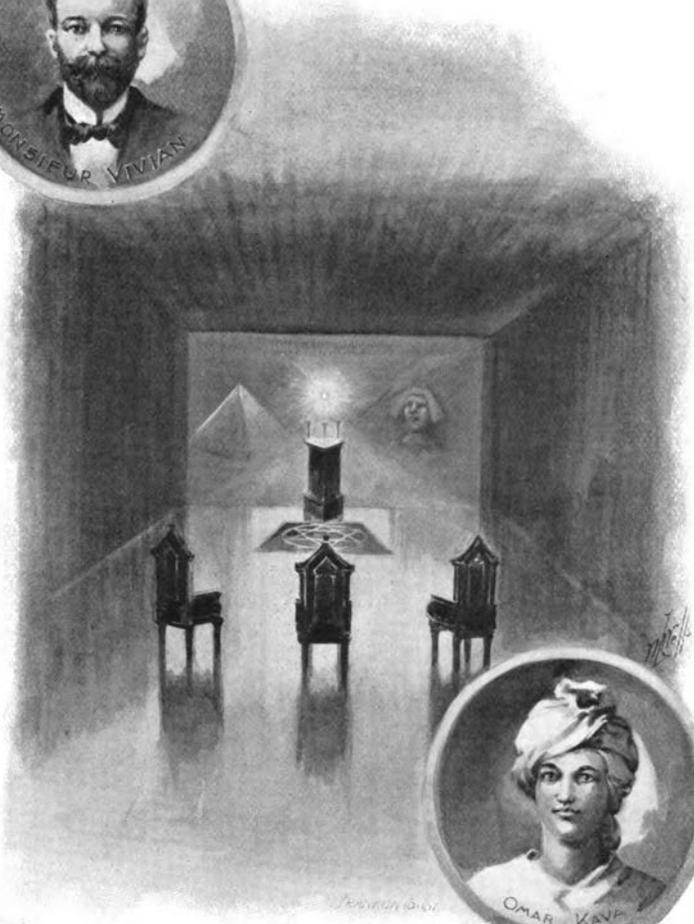
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Zelma, the Mystic.

**To my Beloved Wife and Children,**  
**WHOSE FAITHFUL CO-OPERATION AND LOVE HAVE HELPED TO**  
**KEEP THE FIRES OF INSPIRATION BURNING,**  
**Is this Volume most affectionately Dedicated.**





## P R E F A C E.

To clothe in story form a train of philosophic teachings, with a view of drawing the line between the confusing psychical happenings of our day, and the truly mystical observances of him or her who has the gift of prophecy or healing, is one of the foremost purposes of this book. In our day of awakening, Occult Science should be practiced as well as studied. When we lay hold of the hidden forces, we need to handle the wires with discretion, lest the earthy man shall meet with fatality amid the maze of counter currents, contradictions, and half understood doctrines of right and wrong. It has occurred to me to attempt to make practical some of the graver truths of Occultism through the aid of fiction. Should the reader not experience the fullest satisfaction, possibly some wiser pen may ere long be moved to do the work over again. I confess to have found it no trivial undertaking to adapt and make plain to the popular understanding, that which has hitherto been given us in symbols and abstruse essays intended only for the initiated.

That every obstacle in our daily lives can be successfully met and overcome, is already looked upon as a fact by the prophetic seer,—met, not by an exercise of the finite will alone, but by a knowledge of,

and obedience to, the Infinite Law. That law is silent, and into the silence, therefore, must we go to invoke the self-help needed to combat the lower forces. The time has certainly arrived for a better understanding of Magic, both white and black. The former, as alleged in the story, is invariably the victor in the long run; the latter, being largely the product of the elementals, and therefore negative in effect, is impotent when met by a firm step, an unflinching eye, or a wordless retort. White magic is spiritual strength made manifest; black magic is its opposite, all of which is proof positive that a "survival of the fittest" is assured us in more ways than one.

When occult truths shall be more commonly applied to public affairs, the pathways of both legislator and teacher will be less devious and thorny. I have aimed to make this plain, as well as to impress upon the inventive mind the necessity of cultivating the inner or spiritual insight, as a means to success.

I have also desired to have the book mechanically and artistically correct. The full-page illustrations have been procured at a large expense, and I trust they will be looked upon with pleasure and profit. Too much credit cannot be given the artists who have joined their interests with mine to make the venture a success. In this connection I have deemed it wise to employ only the best of talent, even though the number of plates should be less.

With these few explanatory words, I herewith submit my offering to a critical public for better or worse, and cheerfully abide the verdict that shall follow.

A. M. T.

## CONTENTS.

	Page
I. A Face in the Mirror .....	9
II. Dead, and yet Alive.—A Revelation.....	17
III. The Millionaire's Trouble.—“What do the Psychics Say?” .....	25
IV. In Zelma's Library.—Child Ownership....	38
V. Dolphin's Wisdom.—A Child's Love Offer- ing .....	47
VI. Domestic Awakenings.—“The Love that Keeps the Anatomy Going”.....	55
VII. Lucky Cable's Warning.....	65
VIII. Story of a Dream.—“You have now Entered the Kingdom of God Literally”.....	70
IX. Improved Conditions.—A Modern Brother- hood of Wisdom.....	77
X. A Timely Look of Decision.—“Better Leave Him Alone, is my Advice” ....	90
XI. The Coming of Vivian.—A Flow of Soul..	96
XII. Weary of Life.—Saved by a Word of Love	109
XIII. A Child of Love.—Unsavory Literature...	121
XIV. A Public Surprise.—Mrs. Fessenden's Call- ers.....	127
XV. Maurice's Story.—Zelma's Munificent Offer	142
XVI. The State Official.—“Why not Call it a Work of Love?”.....	150
XVII. A Message of Sorrow.—“She will Live!”. .	160

XVIII.	A Counsel of Love.—The Elementals.....	175
XIX.	Josephine's Philosophy.—A Word from the Seer.....	189
XX.	A Criminal Brother.—Good for Evil.....	200
XXI.	The Mysterious Vision.....	211
XXII.	A Soul to Soul Conference.—The Coming Philanthropist.....	221
XXIII.	In Maurice's Workshop.—The World's In- ventions.....	231
XXIV.	Mrs. Fessenden's Success.—A Spectator in Court.....	241
XXV.	A Latter Day Agitator.....	251
XXVI.	A Mysterious Message.—Esoteric Vibra- tions.....	264
XXVII.	The Newspaper Interviewer.—Two Phases of Philanthropy.....	279
XXVIII.	In the Council Chamber.—Public Interest Awakened.....	298
XXIX.	Love and Ethics.—A Message to Maurice	308
XXX.	Two Letters of Merit.....	321
XXXI.	Love, not Marriage.—The Secret of the Model Discovered.....	331
XXXII.	The Trial Test.—An Impromptu Love Scene.....	343
XXXIII.	Hastening Events.—Passionless Love and its Reward.....	353
XXXIV.	The Second Coming of Vivian.....	362
XXXV.	Looking Forward.—Suppositious Letter from a Twentieth Century Citizen.....	378

# Zelma, the Mystic.

## CHAPTER I.

### A FACE IN THE MIRROR.

IT WAS one of those merciless nights, blustering, cold, and dreary. Around the great city's blocks the winds whistled with freakish moanings, and shifting snow drifts were forming hither and yon, only to be lifted, perchance, by some caprice of Boreas and dashed against curbstone and railing, or into the faces of such belated footmen as chanced to be out. The frost upon the store windows was so dense that only a little light crept through. Signs swung and creaked mournfully. Like spectres from out the night occasional trains of cable cars would come clanging down the street, then after a moment's battling with the storm would disappear with rumbling haste.

It was a night long to be remembered. The low places of vice were thronged with shivering, half-starved victims of chance and improvidence. In one of these places in particular high carnival was being held. The thumming of several stringed instruments filled the loathsome atmosphere with weird, amorous music—atmosphere already blue with tobacco smoke

and profanity. It was when this babel of madness was at its height, that the door of the saloon swung quickly open, admitting a gust of snow and wind, and a tall, thinly-clad stranger. Nobody seemed aware that another was added to their number. Nor was there a soul present who knew that Donald Treat, he of a once prosperous family, had actually crept into this den of infamy to keep from freezing. Hungry, homeless and penniless, it was a fact that he had, indeed, reached the bottom rung in the ladder of human existence. From the mirrors behind the bottles of liquor shone a glittering, deadly light, resembling the lustre from the eyes of a serpent. Though benumbed and suffering, Donald turned his face away from the sickening sight. Shaking the snow from his clothes he sought the radiator to warm himself. The music thumped on amid ribald songs and laughter. Great God! had humanity even come to this? or has it always been the same?

A query of this sort came into our hapless friend's mind as the music and jest continued to fall upon his ears. When his system began to relax a little he grew dizzy from weakness and despair. He crossed the room and stood facing a large mirror set into the wall. At himself he looked steadfastly for a moment. Could a man like him have fallen so low, and yet be thus keenly conscious of it? In his moment of distress he breathed short gasping breaths of misery, for it was true that the inner man had at last revolted. Sinking into a chair, he moaned aloud.

"Great heavens! what am I to do?" This he murmured under his faltering breath. His were the words of a soul in the direst of trouble—a soul which prays but once in a lifetime, and then to some unknown source of infinite aid.

Presently he seemed to lose himself and to forget his surroundings. A filmy vapor had begun to steal over the mirror. Powerless to move, he stared at his shadow more intently than ever. Silently the grayish film grew more dense, and at last his own form disappeared entirely. Soon there came a slight opening in the center of the mist. A halo of light seemed to be hidden within, and in another moment a face of maidenly beauty formed itself in the aperture—eyes full of compassion, smile as if from heaven—what could it mean? It may have been a mere trick, some clever piece of legerdemain. However, the face appeared for a moment only. Slowly it began to fade, after which the filmy vision grew less and the mirror cleared again.

Beholding his shadow once more, Donald discovered a smile upon his own pale features. For a full minute his being seemed filled with a radiant warmth. He did not even hear the carousal about him, but dared to hope that the face might appear again. But in this he was disappointed, though he sat through another whole minute of dumb expectancy.

At last his hope began to recede, and the gibbering discord of merrymaking returned. Then the misery of his lot seemed greater than ever. An ap-

partition, indeed! Had he been awake? Surely he could not have been sleeping.

In an instant more there began to be scuffling among the inmates. A fight was brewing, oaths flew wildly about, and a tumbler struck the wall just above where Donald sat, and fell crashing in pieces about him. The rioters began surging toward the front entrance. Rather than be mixed up with the affray, Donald made a hurried exit, and once more braving the storm strode rapidly down the street, whither he knew not.

The cold was intense, and the snow, like specks of crystal, cut mercilessly into the flesh. At last, like a hunted fugitive, Donald paused in dismay. Love of life is prone to drive one to desperate ends. Must he beg, and so crown his wretched existence with disgrace? Almost at his side had approached a well-wrapped individual, whose beard was white and long, and in spite of the sombre light Donald saw that a pair of penetrating eyes were fairly looking him through. He imagined he felt a protecting atmosphere about the man, which caused him to move up more closely to him. The stranger was the first to speak.

"Terrible night!" he said, drawing his beaver collar more closely about his ears. The peculiar softness of his voice made his words seem like those of an archangel, and gave Donald courage to speak his one word of supplication.

"Yes, terrible, and I am freezing! God have

mercy upon me, for I have no home. Can you not help me to a lodging place until morning?"

Then came a brief moment of hesitation, and Donald felt sure that the stranger stood smiling before him, though he could see very little of his features. Had that smile a tincture of benevolence, of charity and tolerance for a brother who had sunk so low as to beg? Like many another critical moment in the life of him whose fate depends upon the word of another fellow-mortal, this one seemed to Donald painfully real. The driving snow enveloped him in its clutches as would a night-fiend, and sent a new shiver of apprehension over him.

"You may come with me; I will see what I can do for you," said the Good Samaritan at last, fairly leading Donald toward a cable car which was just then approaching the street crossing.

It took but a moment to enter the car—that moving, heated palace for beggar and prince alike, only so that either has the necessary five cents to pay his fare—and in his penury Donald scarcely dared look up, but rather sat like one abjectly waiting for what might come to him. His hunger was secondary, and his thirst may have been a burning one, yet he silently suffered himself to be and remain the mere object of charity that he truly was.

At the end of their journey Donald was obliged to trudge through the storm for a block or two more, scarcely a word in the meantime passing between him and his protector. Presently they came to a

high wooden gate which opened from the walk, and which, when unlocked, led into a covered passageway to a house of solid brick masonry. Here at least was the bitter cold shut out. A single light revealed a broad, oaken door, which responded readily to the touch of Donald's guide. A breath of welcome warmth greeted the new comers, and Donald shared it gratefully, though still in silent obedience to all that was passing. They seemed to be standing in a dimly lighted corridor, but a single pressure upon a button in the wall and a sudden glare of light was flashed upon them.

"Now, my friend and brother," spoke the elder to Donald, "you are at least safe from the storm, and you shall be given a place to sleep and food to eat. Let me look into your face and you into mine. Are we not brothers indeed?"

To Donald this seemed much like a dream. Slowly and deeply abashed he raised his eyes to the speaker and basked in the warmth of his venerable features. What a wealth of simple good will did he find pictured thereon. The words just spoken had in them a depth of tone most surprising.

"Yes, brothers if you will," he said, slowly and with feeling. "But can you call a man brother who will beg?"

A silvery contented laugh followed this inquiry. "Wait and see," urged the elder, producing a small piece of metal from his pocket, the end of which was covered with chamois skin. By the side of a certain

door was a small, half concealed disk, made of stout skin like a drum head. Upon this the elder tapped with the instrument, thereby producing a peculiarly mysterious sound, which was scarcely audible from where Donald stood.

Soon, almost as if by magic, the door swung noiselessly ajar, and Donald was bidden to enter what seemed to be the house proper. But here a terrible experience awaited him. Some mighty pain instantly seized upon his body, and he grew faint and fell lifelessly into the arms of his protector. By this time an attendant stood ready to act. He was of a dusky race, nimble in his movements, and wore a turban upon his head. Without a word they bore their charge to a couch and began the work of restoring him to consciousness. Donald's eyes were set in their sockets, and the pallor upon his face made him look ghastly as death. As soon as possible they had him removed to a bed and hot applications placed about him. They chafed his limbs and body, until at last there came a slight color to his cheeks, and he began to breathe more regularly. This much accomplished, the elder attendant withdrew and left the unfortunate man to be cared for by the servant.

It was nearly midnight before Donald had revived enough to speak. At first he was bewildered and appeared to be in great bodily and mental pain. His eyes wandered aimlessly about, then up at the kind features of his attendant. At the latter's bidding he

swallowed a little hot porridge, then relaxed into a deep sleep, and in time breathed quite naturally. At one o'clock the servant quietly withdrew, and once more was Donald Treat alone. Alone? yes, but with the good fortunes of a prince attending him, even in this hour of his uttermost degradation.

## CHAPTER II.

## DEAD, AND YET ALIVE.—A REVELATION.

WHEN Donald awoke a bright sunlight was stealing in at his window. Strange indeed seemed all this, and had he awakened in Paradise he could not have been more surprised. The room was large, richly furnished and warm. A glance without revealed the fact that it was yet bitter cold, for thick frost borders still clung to the window panes, and through these the sunshine came glinting like yellow liquid studded with crystals, all the more lovely because of the dark clouds which soon thereafter began filling the heavens.

Donald was too weak to recall to mind much of his night's experiences. So amid his doubting he fell asleep again and slept until near the middle of the forenoon. When he awoke this time he beheld his elderly friend sitting near him busily reading. His first words to Donald were cheery and full of encouragement.

"You have rested admirably," he said, drawing his chair up nearer to the bedside. "Your pulse is a little slow as yet, but quite regular. You must have had a severe experience in the storm last night."

Donald looked searchingly up at the speaker. "I do not understand—" he began, then stopped as if from very weakness.

"Put that aside for the present—we will talk of that later," cautioned the elder, touching a button in the wall.

Soon the servant of the night before appeared with a tray of food and drink. This he sat down upon the stand with a gentle smile of good will, then silently left the room. With his own hand the elder raised Donald's head and bade him sip more of the porridge. Then he laid him down and spent a moment arranging the bed clothes about him, after which he resumed his reading.

How quiet seemed the house! The atmosphere was pure and finely tempered, and the tints upon the walls were full of the most harmonious blendings. It was fortunate for Donald that all was thus serene. Any conflict of physical effort might have been too much for him. His next awakening was late in the afternoon. By this time he felt his strength returning. From sheer impulse he reached forth his right hand to his protector, who stood beaming good-naturedly down upon him.

"Gratitude? ah, yes; but you have little need of that. Try and get all the rest you can; you are doing splendidly."

"But one word, please," entreated Donald, feebly. "Tell me to whom I am indebted for these kindnesses."

“To the Father in heaven; we are merely His servants under orders. My name?—yes, I understand. In this house I am known as Zelma, and my associate is Omar Kava. You are at least among friends; try and be content with that until you are strong enough to know more.”

Donald smiled his thanks and looked still wearily about him. He who had called himself Zelma was a man of striking appearance. He might have been seventy-five years of age, and he seemed like a person who had retired from the world of materiality to dwell only in the spiritual. His hair was long and as white as his beard. He sat and stood erect as would a man of forty, and his words were squarely spoken, yet tempered with an almost feminine softness. To Donald he seemed the embodiment of wisdom and content. Why indeed had his lot been cast with one whose life seemed so far above his own?

Not until the following day did he receive any direct light upon the subject. He had by this time grown strong enough to be raised in bed and to talk a little. Thus far the care he had received was the most attentive. Both Zelma and his helpmeet seemed able to anticipate his every need, and now Zelma had seated himself to have his first talk with his patient. He began in a most singular manner.

“You have asked me where you are. Well, I will say this, that you—the man whom I met upon the streets two nights since—are dead, and about to enter a new state of existence.” This he said with a

smile of winsome assurance. "But do not start—let me tell you more. There is but one death known in the universe, and that is the casting off of the old. The true birth is not dying, but only a renewal of life. I do not care even to learn by what name you are known. Out of the stellar space have I been given the name you are henceforth to be called. I have studied the numbers of your orbit, and have found that your name is Maurice. Does the sound of it please you?"

Donald nodded, but looked confused and still questionably at his counselor.

"Well, sir, I will first tell you about your transition into the newer life. You have doubtless been for a considerable time a victim to drink. Why? Because you were under the ban of what we call the elementals, or astral shades of men who have died as inebriates. On your habit of indulgence, and on that of thousands of others, do the horde of elementals live, and so living prolong their existence until overcome by a superior will power. Your fall has been complete, and yet still desperately have they led you from den to den where the carousals of their earthly votaries were the fiercest. You were in torment, and yet on you they lived, else they as entities would have lost their being by annihilation.

"Now, then; you met me in that forlorn condition—all ordered by the Most High, of course—and I befriended you. You entered the confines of this house, and what happened? The moment the first

threshold was crossed, every malignant astral was torn from you, and the shock being a severe strain upon your nervous system, you were of course prostrated. *They* could not come into a house like this. You have indeed been saved from a most inglorious fate. Have I made this plain to you?"

"It is quite beyond my comprehension, though I understand your words. You say I am dead. Am I not yet on earth?"

"Most fortunately you are—even on earth where another chance at life is to be given you. But you have left the old existence forever. You are a man among men, and you will I trust be given a work to do when the proper time comes. Had you been left to freeze upon the streets you doubtless would have been cast headlong into the world of demons, and you might have had to fight your way in darkness an indefinite period of time. But it is a fact that you—the real man, the ego, the eternal being that you are—have not fallen, but have only passed a single experience of suffering, and thereby earned a place nearer God. I perceive that you are a born psychic, and the sorrows you have undergone have been excruciating. Now all that is passed. He who goes the lowest will on the rebound rise the highest. This is the law of the cycle in which we live. So from now on think of yourself as perfect, for the Maker has created no other; as redeemed, for no soul is ever lost."

By this time a glowing light had come into Zelma's

eyes. His smile was most potent and his words had grown even more persuasive and pleasing. Donald had listened attentively, but all that had been told him sounded so remarkable, that he had been able to comprehend no more than a portion of it. Yet words so earnestly spoken, and from the lips of one seemingly so wise, could not have helped, in his weakened condition, but leave a new and strange impress upon his mind. This made him long to hear more of the new and startling philosophy. But Zelma deemed it best to tell him no more at present. While dwelling upon what he had heard, Donald's experience in the saloon occurred to him, and he was moved to ask his counselor about it. Might there not have been something supernatural in his vision? Zelma smiled and said :

“The face you saw was that of your dual self.”

“But it was a woman's face—”

“True; that may all have been. The plan of creation as revealed to us is dual; at least that is man's perception of it. In order that life shall be expressed in the material—life as we know it—there needs to be the positive and the negative, the inner and the outer, else creation could not have been made manifest. God endowed man with both the masculine and the feminine principles, while in the absolute of course there is no sex. When you have attained to your final rest, you and your other self will be forever united; you will be one—one with God and all that is, and sex life will then have disappeared. The

smile of sadness given you from out the mirror was but a ray of heaven to bid you live and hope. That higher self has only been grieved and depressed, not dragged down into the depths in which you have been sinking. Why, sir, your redemption as I now behold it gives me a wonderful happiness, and my love for mankind has been strengthened a hundred fold. Yea, live, my brother, and teach others to live, and the life eternal shall be yours. You are to be a victim to the habit no longer. You need only to nurse the enfeebled body and be patient, and I will endeavor to point out the way to you as best I can. But remember, the salvation of no one man rests with the word or act of another. You must *do*, and *be*, and thus acquire the power that is rightfully yours."

How strange seemed all this! and yet was there not the quality of truth contained within it? By the time the conversation ended there had come to Donald a distinct inspiration of holiness. Who of us have not felt the glow of the healing power creep over our beings in moments of great concern? A man with high spiritual possibilities may become a prey to the lower life, and a common phrase with us is to say, "What a pity!" and though we would not associate with him for a moment, how little do we know what redemption may be already in store for him, which, when it arrives, will set him on a pinnacle quite above us. Such things should make us merciful to say the least.

A tear trickled from the patient's cheek and fell

upon his pillow. Zelma noted this with an almost feminine tenderness, for his talk seemed to have aroused within him a token of perfect soul sympathy. Picking up his book to read, he sat for a time enjoying the peaceful presence which pervaded the room. There is an unspoken language which ministers to the spirit in times of quiet. Zelma's thoughts may have been thus happily real and soothing. His placid features certainly betrayed signs of some such inner realization of rest. When his charge had at last dropped off into a quiet sleep, he drew down the shades at the windows and went quietly out of the room.

## CHAPTER III.

THE MILLIONAIRE'S TROUBLE.—“WHAT DO THE  
PSYCHICS SAY?”

BUT should we not know more of Zelma? In the midst of our crowded population there sometimes exist men of God—men, we mean, who are units in their individual freedom; who exist, not because mankind has found them out, but because they are units, merely. Let the atmosphere grow dark with discord, red with crime and intrigue, and the gifted man stands upright and loses not himself for one moment. Harm cannot reach such beings, be they known or unknown. We have had prophets in history, we have prophets to-day, and society endeavors to place such men and women above the commoner kind, especially if their words endure; yet the truest seer is wont to wear the plainest garb, speaks to us in the simplest terms—why? Because he draws from the spiritual world that unassuming power which craves neither following nor applause.

Shall we say that such a man was Zelma? Let us draw nearer to his inner life, and feel if we can the gentle heart-throbs which guide him in his chosen work for mankind. His house was large, and each

room was tastefully filled with unique and comely furnishings. It had been many times proven that no person ever entered this house except for a righteous purpose, for the little disk in the entry-way protected the inmates from all others. This was so carefully attuned that a call upon it, if made by a person whom Zelma wished to see, or one whom he could in any way benefit, certain vibrations resulted ; all other calls remained unheard. True, only the frequenters of the place knew of this secret mode of summons, or had been told to avail themselves of its use. But the simple device had become imperative because of the many demands made upon Zelma's time. Thus only the awakened souls, or those suffering ones who longed for light unselfishly, ever cared to put themselves to the test. All this, of course, tended to refine the house to an almost sublime limit. Even the domestics were trained to occult powers, and from choice were self-sworn to secrecy.

When Zelma withdrew from his friend's room he strolled leisurely over to his library, where a bright fire was burning in the grate. Just as he seated himself in his easy chair, a gurgle of laughter fell upon his ear, and an answering smile flitted across his features. Immediately thereafter a romping, mirth-loving girl some seven or eight years of age came tripping into the room. With naive freedom she ran up to Zelma, and putting her arms about his neck implanted a kiss upon his lips. Her eyes were sparkling with youthful vigor.

"Now then, my dear Papa Grandsire, what do you think?" she began, climbing upon his lap and placing her two hands against his cheeks. "What do you suppose Prince has been doing? Bad enough, you know, for a pug dog to be a pug dog; but of all things! Prince actually pulled every pin out of mamma's cushion, then looked up at me and barked. I think it was just impudent of him; don't you? I've a mind to make him go without his supper."

"Better give him another cushion of pins to experiment with," spoke Zelma, affecting a gentle seriousness.

"Would you do that?" and the maiden seemed much interested in a decision so unique.

"Why not, my pet Dolphin? Dogs, like men, have the propensity of performance. Deny them this and they will mope and grow aged."

"But Prince is a vagabond—he's cute, I know, but he is so mischievous," pondered Dolphin, brushing back Zelma's locks with childish innocence. She did not even try to weigh her grandsire's philosophy, except to say:

"I believe I'd mope anyway if I had to be a dog always," and she laughed and squared herself about facing the fire. Then she grew serious a moment. Some thought seemed to be forming itself in her youthful mind.

"Say, Grandpa?" she began again.

"Well, my dear."

"That sick man over yonder; is he getting better?"

"He is some better to-day. To-morrow I will take you in to see him. Now tell me, Dolphin, which is most to be pitied, a person who is sick or one who has no one to love him?"

"But I would make him well and then love him besides," declared Dolphin, a shade of deeper seriousness coming into her eyes. "What makes you say such things, Grandpa? Sick people are always loved, aren't they?"

Zelma smiled and looked searchingly into his child's eyes, then patted her cheeks lovingly. The quality of her wisdom had transcended his own.

As serious souls are wont to do, both he and his granddaughter fell to thinking, but were scarcely conscious of the silence, however, so harmonious were the blendings of spirit which surrounded them. Presently a low, tuneful vibration seemed to pervade the presence, and both listened until it had died away. Then, as on many times before, they kissed and Dolphin glided out of the room. Soon the library door opened, and Omar Kava stood bowing his respects to his superior. On a tray in his hand lay a card, which, after rising, Zelma read at a glance, "Adolphus Gilbert, Jr."

"You may show him to the east room, please, and say that I will join him presently."

At the fire in the grate Zelma looked intently, as if to collect his thoughts. In the ruddy glow he could at times recall distinct memories of each of the lives of his brethren, particularly those who were in

the habit of paying him frequent visits for consultation. When he had stood thus for a full minute he betook himself up-stairs to a room which had been set apart wholly for his guests.

In this room Zelma found awaiting him a modestly dressed gentleman of urbane manners and refined bearing, who arose and shook hands with a considerable degree of friendliness.

"I dare say you have need of a cosy corner in which to warm yourself; it is yet very cold outside," remarked Zelma, drawing a chair up to the grate.

How exactly suited to his surroundings were his benevolent voice and unaffected ways. One might presume upon the slightest acquaintance with him, that he had quite thrown off all distrust of the world, and had settled down to enjoy the good of everything, of everybody, and to smile at the best as it became manifest about him. His caller was by no means a man of this description. He could not have been much over fifty, yet he was quite gray, as if from premature care and anxiety. His quick glances about him showed him to be a man of somewhat eager temperament, but one whom a life of luxury had made anything but contented. His words were exact and denoted a full measure of refinement.

"Yes, it is cold," Mr. Gilbert replied, though he spoke a little absently. When comfortably seated he remained silent for a moment, as if in meditation. "Well," he began at last, and raising his eyes to Zelma, "have the regions of the inner life been turn-

ing cold as well ? or is it only my own lack of the spirit of warmth ? You must perceive that I am as yet anything but pacified."

Zelma was smiling when his caller began, but now he shook with a sort of tolerant laughter, which carried much weight and meaning with it.

"That is quite as it should be, my dear brother, at least for the present. You must remember that Rome was not built in a day. Indeed, your cause is progressing finely if you have light within sufficient to perceive the darkness about you. The first step toward a spiritual upbuilding is to learn to feel ; next, to see ; and next—mark this fact, please—is to *know* ! But you were to keep me informed of the news from the other source. What do the psychics say ?"

"What do they not say ?" murmured Mr. Gilbert, looking Zelma squarely in the eye. "As if life itself was not enough for mortal man, they are invoking death as one of the terrors we are soon to realize. Why, sir, they have it that my daughter is to die ; and to add to the solemnity of the thought the child's mother believes this latest invention of theirs, and I am as usual powerless to intercede."

"Mrs. Gilbert believes it ?" questioned Zelma, thoughtfully. "Does her belief take the form of quick contagion, or is it of the stolid sort ? Is she inclined to question at all ?"

"She seems for the most time to be enveloped in a shroud of fear and with a sort of mad delight takes

to herself the direfulness of all they tell her. Her fear seems to be a growing one."

"That follows very naturally what you have said to me before," mused Zelma, after a moment's hesitation. "You remember I once explained to you what such association with the astral world will do for one. But I see no cause for alarm. You are only to stand upright, and relief is sure to come to your family in its own good time."

A beam of hope came upon Mr. Gilbert's face. Somehow his inner self seemed ever to be made strong by a mere word of encouragement from his friend. It was a fact that in this house he found a rest no other place afforded. With his millions he could not buy one moment of real consolation; here he could get it without money and without price. To a man even of his understanding this might have been one of the many unsolved enigmas of life.

"But let me explain farther," spoke Zelma, after a moment's pause. "It is like this: we draw that to us which we think most about, until, if our thoughts be fearful, our existence frequently becomes a sort of unceasing nightmare. Why, sir, we can actually take part in a robbery of our own house through fear of being robbed. Why not? The lowly creatures who commit crime are very largely under astral domination. Should you or I dwell long upon the subject of some neighborhood robbery, thus working ourselves into the habit of fear, we in time become direct associates with the thief who steals into our

bed chambers at night. Associates? how? Why, in thought, to be sure. The robber is drawn to us as naturally as the magnetic needle turns to the north. And yet, people will read and re-read the records of crime in our daily papers, and cringe with dilated eyes lest it be their turn next. In their ignorance of occult law, they go about putting extra bars against their doors, build prison-like fences about their premises, and imagine they are shutting out the burglar. Instead of this they even invite the ruffian to enter. Every time a man of wealth loads the tell-tale pistol and places it beside his bed, he is giving notice through the telepathic stratas of the astral zone that he has something worth risking life and freedom to obtain. Then, when a daring robbery takes place, the world is startled to learn that so much as a clue to that man's wealth could have been surmised."

Here a pause of several moments followed. Mr. Gilbert knitted his brows and looked still earnestly into Zelma's face.

"And yet am I not to escape these troublesome elementals?" he asked, at last.

"There is always an escape open before us, no matter what is the depth of our grievance. Pain is never immortal; love is eternal," replied Zelma.

"Yes, but in a case like mine," urged Mr. Gilbert, with some concern.

"The happiness of a universe awaits you, sir, even in your home."

"But must I yet be scourged by the refining effects of discipline, that discipline you so often refer to? or have I already passed through the night of darkness?"

"I will see," and Zelma reached across his table for a small jet mirror which lay half concealed in a pocket of black velvet. Into this he gazed for several minutes. "Yes," he said, at length, "you have passed the rugged frontier, but you are yet to pass over what seems to me to be a bridge with one plank missing. This plank must be replaced before you can cross. Ah, I see; your old life has been lived to completeness. What would you say to a new earth life; would you care to live it? The resurrected man knows no compromise with evil. When the old self has been buried, body and spirit are out of harm's reach. Indeed, when you have risen—" here Zelma lowered his voice almost to a whisper—"then *she* will feel thy strong arm of might, thy unshaken faith, and through him whom she knows as husband shall she be liberated from every semblance of fear! Do you understand me?"

"I think I do, and I am fully in accord with your motives in telling me this. I have long since grown sick of the excesses of society and the shams of popularity. The life I have lived has lost its flavor, and should the way open to me—well, would one dare to estimate the value of a new life even here on earth?"

"Then you feel the pressure of necessity?" implied Zelma, with earnestness.

"To such an extent that should the way open to me I believe I could serve the Master in utter banishment of all that the world calls enjoyment. I have suffered until it seems at times that I can suffer no longer. Tell me if you can, why do I suffer?"

"You do not suffer in reality. It is but the element of inharmony which disturbs your personal aura. The ego within is free and above mortal suffering, and is beckoning to the lower man to be free also. How can this be done? By banishing externals; by acquiring that wealth of spirit which made Christ's life lovable. Is it not worth the while?" Zelma asked with a smile of extreme friendliness.

"But this dross we call wealth; what ought I to do with that?"

"Aye, there's the rub. Some have helped to build colleges, to found homes for the aged, to ease the pains of the lowly, as if the human family were one without distinction."

"Yes, such things have been done," mused Mr. Gilbert, half to himself. While he was speaking Zelma let his eyes wander back to the crystal. A studious look soon fell upon his features. His caller had ere this learned that at such times some important message might be expected. At length the seer's lips moved, and he said, very slowly at first:

"Listen; I think I have a revelation for you. A plot, such as the world would call dangerous is being laid about you. The truly emancipated soul would but laugh at the veritable puppet show, but it is a

plot to overpower you and rob you of your wealth and of the freedom of your person if needs be. The scheme is well advanced, and artifices are being employed which promise success; but mark me well, the plot will fail, and you will pass through the ordeal unscathed. Yet as I see it, there is no time to be lost. You should prepare yourself to conquer, come what may. First of all you should declare your will to be that of the Most High, and then all the hirelings of satan cannot touch you."

In spite of these warning words Mr. Gilbert smiled quietly. What powers of man or devils could harm him now? Evidently he felt as secure at this moment as if surrounded by a king's bodyguard.

"How shall the case be met?" he asked, merely.

"There is but one way, by the power of non-resistance. The spiritual law recognizes no other factor of strength. Do or say nothing to prevent an attack. Three times each day repeat the sentence, 'I am One with the Existent.' Do this, and come to me in another week; I shall then have more to tell you. Heed none of the messages which come from the lower astrals, for they at best are weak and contradictory. Put your faith in no man's word, not wholly in the words I have given you, but consult the inner temple of wisdom. When a course lies before you, pause and look within. Remain silent and wait. If your course is the right one, a certain glow of comfort will fill your heart. Then you are right, no matter what man opposes you."

Still added consolation seemed to come to Mr. Gilbert, and during the brief interview he appeared almost to be growing younger. His was a soul which, having passed the earlier ordeal of transition, could perhaps taste the elixir of life with impunity. At this juncture Zelma arose, saying :

"I have a gift for you which I will hand you now, I think," and with a quiet air he crossed the room to where a small wicket opened into the side wall. From an inner drawer he drew forth a cedar box, and after unlocking this he took therefrom two medals about an inch in diameter. One of these he gave to his caller. "That," said he, "is a very old and valuable keepsake, taken long ago from a tomb in Egypt. Its vibrations will surprise you. For fifty years no person other than myself has touched it, or even seen it. You are to speak to no living soul about it, but keep it ever about your person. Say some simple mantrim over it when you retire, and you will do well to wear it about your neck during the night. That is all. I can now vouchsafe for your welfare."

"But am I not to thank you for this, even?" asked Mr. Gilbert, rising as he spoke.

"Better omit any thoughts that savor of obligation. As you go higher there will be no thanks to be spoken to anyone. The great Brotherhood to come will, I think, have discarded many things which are now deemed matters of courtesy. I expect no thanks from others and therefore never offer any. Why

should we ever expect return for that which it is our pleasure to bestow ?”

This Zelma said with a tenderness of speech which carried a double meaning with it: It was evident that the interview was about to end, for Mr. Gilbert was already putting on his wraps. When he was ready to depart, Zelma grasped his hand with a hearty warmth.

“Come again in a week, please ; good evening,” he said, in simple farewell. At an opportune moment Omar Kava appeared and showed the caller to the street.

## CHAPTER IV.

## IN ZELMA'S LIBRARY.—CHILD OWNERSHIP.

IT WAS a dull gray winter gloaming, an oncoming night when the furies of a fitful three days storm made Chicago's almost deserted streets seem still cold and dreary. Though it was but five o'clock, darkness had already set in, and the firelight in Zelma's library was doubly comforting. Beside his yellow-shaded lamp he sat and gazed dreamily at the bed of embers in the grate. The unusual tension to which his spiritual nature had been subjected that afternoon had brought a far-away, deeply tempered lustre into his rich blue eyes. He sat alone and listened to the storm. When the elements are thus agitated we can think with greater rapidity. Before Zelma's vision there arose a wonderful future for American progress. Ours seemed to him a land of the richest promise. The cycle just closing seemed like the culmination of an era of conflict. The lesser or material man has held sway because of the people's devotion to personality. With the dawning of a new day will begin an era of individual freedom, of spiritual insight rather than brute cunning. He who





“EVENING CAME, AND STILL HE SEEMED LIKE ONE ASLEEP.”

shall plot to wrong a brother will be self-condemned, and there will be no need of courts of law to inflict the punishment. Nature's edicts will be obeyed by common consent rather than by compulsion. The power of love will be the unfailing secret of human advancement, and heaven on earth will be a fact rather than a prophecy.

Zelma's thoughts ran deep, and at last his eyelids closed; he seemed to have fallen into a light slumber. For a time he sat thus unmolested. Evening came, and still he seemed like one asleep. After a further time there emerged from behind two heavy curtains a rather tall, yet singularly graceful woman of perhaps thirty-five. Her chin was square-set and dimpled, and on her cheeks were the evidences of perfect health. With gentle tread she approached Zelma's chair, where she stood motionless for several seconds. On her face was a smile of unqualified devotion. Her dress was plain, but such as gave to her bearing a certain hint of queenly dignity without affectation. Presently Zelma's eyes opened and a smile crept to his lips.

"Ah, it is you, Josephine. I felt that someone was drawing me back to earth. Have I been absent long?"

"It is yet early evening, father. I thought perhaps you were lonely," and with these words Zelma's daughter drew forward a stool and sat familiarly down by her parent's side. Zelma stroked her temples lovingly.

"It was another of my measureless journeys into unknown space," he murmured, with an evident feeling of reverence. "Beautiful beyond description was all I saw, and heard, and felt. People call these visitations dreams. To me it was most intensely real in every detail."

"Tell me about it, please," requested Josephine.

"Well, at first I seemed to be standing by yonder mantel, and yet I saw myself sitting here in the chair. There seemed to be two of us, but the one I recognized as the real self seemed about to go upon a journey into an unexplored region. A bright halo of light came directly over the mantel, and resting upon a snow-white divan reclined your mother, as plainly as I ever saw her while living. She spoke to me and I moved toward her, when all at once we seemed to stand in a quiet grove beside a running stream. Here a bevy of beautiful maidens came and sang songs, each holding a wand with streamers dangling at their ends. To me it seemed intensely lovely. But it was not long before the earth seemed melting away beneath us, until at last we appeared to be floating amid clouds of silver and delicate purple. Your mother talked to me, but try as I may now I can not recall a word she said. I did not seem to hear with my natural ears, but her words and the singing of the maidens somehow blended together in a most perfect unity of sound.

"It seemed perfectly right for me to be there, though I remember giving a thought to my earth

friends, and wondered what they would say when they should find me gone. I heard accompanying music which was full of delicious harmony, peculiarly real and inspiring. There came echoes from the deep abysses about me and from among the great rolling mountains of clouds upon which we were drifting. It seemed as if we journeyed an immeasurable distance, for the speed we were going was beyond my comprehension."

"And you were happy even while going away from us," remarked Josephine.

"Yes; but it was not such happiness as we earth people feel. Here our senses are appealed to, and we are gratefully happy because we are made comfortable thereby. But when journeying in yonder clouds I felt without realizing that I felt. It was an enjoyment beyond comparison of course, but I simply existed as a part of the Eternal, as if to be a part of it was a matter of course. Even now I can fancy that I hear the ringing voices of the maidens and see their smiling faces, so deeply was I impressed with the experience."

Here Zelma paused and gazed dreamily into vacancy. He seemed desirous of recalling some forgotten circumstance from out his vision. How subtle was the very presence which surrounded father and daughter! In spirit they were one. To no other ears could Zelma have related his story and had it so well understood. Even the silence was livid with happy thought-voices.

"Then it was I who called you back to earth," Josephine said, at length.

"Well, when the singing was at its height, something seemed to draw me away from the beautiful scenes, and for a time I drifted through clouds and fitful beams of sunshine, until I began to realize that I was coming home again. Just how it all happened I cannot say, but when I began to awaken I seemed somehow to realize that I should look directly up into your face. Never before have I journeyed so far into the unknown. It all seems somewhat wonderful to me now, but while on my journey there appeared to be nothing unusual about it."

"Only wonderful to our earthly senses," remarked Josephine, still thoughtfully. "I think this must be a day of active thought force," she added. "Since morning certain ideas upon the meaning of life have come to me, and more than once have I doubted them. The true claims of kinship have troubled me most, and I have felt to ask you if you believe a child, for instance, really can belong to its parent; if we can claim any ownership over our children in the strictest sense. As Dolphin's days go by I miss her childish ways, and a woman seems to be looking at me from out her eyes. My heart falters when I behold her speaking for herself, thinking for herself, and already taking her place in the busy world of causation. If she was given me as my child solely, should she not be wholly subject to my guidance and discretion?"

“Verily, my dear,” quoth Zelma, “thy musings have indeed been most interesting. Those same doubts used to come to me when you were in your teens, and you would often set at defiance my most painstaking counsel. Then I could not understand it; now it seems plain to me. No, earthly kinships are in fact superficial. Our children are dropped into our arms for the time being only, and for a wise and sacred purpose. If we corral them with exacting restraints of love when the eager, youthful spirit shows signs of breaking away; surround them I mean with a positive discipline and just guidance to the exclusion of their own wishes, always, we are apt to belittle and dwarf their growth of soul. If, on the other hand, we look wisely upon their inclinations, and consider them souls who have lived before and who have treasured-up wisdom of their own, possibly greater than our own, we can help, not only to unfold their maturing natures, but to make them our companions in the broadest sense.”

“Then, truly, to what ends have we parental love?” questioned Josephine.

“If our loves are unselfish, we can give the child its freedom most naturally; if we love it selfishly it is apt to grow up a dependent. Observe if you will the average mother. All the animal expressions of intense love are innate within her. She lavishes her care upon the child and lives every hour in the one thought of doing for it. Remove the child from her sight one day and she is frantic at the loss. Is it not

plain to be seen that the little one's individuality will be very greatly obscured by the purely objective feelings of its mother? We wonder why our children get sick. Should it be any wonder, when we fairly smother them with devotion, on the supposition that we *own* them; that of all children on earth *they* are to be the most protected and cared for? To me it is not at all singular that so many children die. Parents not only stifle them with heavy wraps and heated houses, but with too much selfish kindness. We see thousands of neglected children grow up in spite of their untoward circumstances, and frequently do they become individualized men and women. I cannot think that we own our children, in the light that the world regards ownership. Like plants, they must have the freedom and the sunlight in which to grow, or there will be a corresponding loss of energy. Only at stated hours do we care for our plants; between those times we think of them but rarely. Children can be raised much the same as plants."

"Since Dolphin's papa passed away she has been my one comfort and solace," again murmured Josephine. "If what you say is true, she has been such for the time being only. The question has occurred to me, whether I ought to think of her as an allied soul, or as still a mere child."

"I should give no thought to that. As the months pass she will grow in aptness, and perhaps will ask questions that may set you to thinking hard. Answer her as one boon companion does another, in

perfect confidence. A mother can fix a thought in a child's mind as can no one else. I would encourage her originality, for the unhampered soul grows fondly and approaches nearer in spirit to our own inner, truth-loving selves than though we heaped precept upon its little self daily. Yes, an allied soul must she become to us all in time. It will be interesting to note her stages of growth. Her speech must be free. If her best thoughts are kept secreted, she may become diffident and uncommunicative. Let us love her fondly, but slowly relinquish the claims of ownership to her own keeping. Self-reliance will round out her life as will nothing else."

"I think I understand," reflected Josephine. Her words were rich with parental love. "Thoughts like these have been coming to me, but I have not known what to do with them. It may seem unnatural of me, but I have imagined that I should so mould my thoughts that I could see the child go away from me forever."

"Exactly. In spirit we never separate. Between persons who love rightly there is no going away. In spirit we can be with a thousand trustworthy souls in one and the same moment. Why count earthly or heavenly distances at all? I find as we grow older our farewells are less cordial. In fact, a farewell and a greeting seem superfluous, almost. Our loved ones do not go away, because in spirit we are one."

"It has been hard for me to define true selfishness as well," reasoned Josephine again. "Is it not selfish

to do right, merely—I mean, are we not apt to enjoy the comfort which comes from right doing? To me it would seem a sin to work for a comfort which thus appeals to the senses.”

“Well, sometime we will cease looking for results,” smiled Zelma. He was greatly interested in this talk, which had come about so naturally. “The future man will *do*, then, instead of counting on the result, will do again, and thus acquire the habit of forgetting results. This, as I see it, will be one of the first rudiments of unselfish living. But speaking of Dolphin’s ways, she can scarcely ever be more a woman than now. She has moments of most mature wisdom—a wisdom of the heart, to be sure—which one can but reverence. She is an old soul, and her work may be one of great moment to mankind. The coming generations will produce many a mystic.” For a minute Zelma ceased speaking. “Yes she is a lovely child; inside, I mean,” he added, fondly bending and kissing his daughter’s lips.

In the silence Josephine laid her head upon her beloved parent’s shoulder and from her eyelids fell a few stray tears of true womanhood. Only the sound of the snow and sleet coming against the window panes broke the hallowed stillness.

## CHAPTER V.

## DOLPHIN'S WISDOM.—A CHILD'S LOVE OFFERING.

The experience through which Donald Treat had passed was indeed a singular one. His loss of vitality had been excessive, hence his recovery would be necessarily slow. It was no common transition, such as might have been occasioned by an attack of nervous prostration, but it was the negation of the lower astral hindrances by the higher forces, and this, too, without a moment's warning. While he lay for the most time in comparative peace of mind, he would have moments of great depression, when a full remembrance of his former life would flash over him. Nature is queerly lenient with the suffering mortal. However serious our condition, only at times do we receive the full force of her discipline. Between such times we seem to rest, that the mending of the mental and physical structures may go on. But as Donald grew stronger he dwelt more upon his unfortunate lot. He wondered if life had indeed any specific meaning for him; for, a dependent now, what might a man without friends, or health, or money expect to become in the future?

The stealthy tread of Omar Kava and the smile of patience upon his dusky face soothed and comforted Donald in no slight degree. The man must certainly have been of Oriental birth, for his words were few and somewhat broken. Yet he continued to anticipate even the slightest wish of his patient.

The following day was cold, but full of bright winter sunshine, which came gratefully in at the windows and again filled Donald's room with cheeriness. He had just awakened from a slight drowse, when the door leading to an adjoining room opened softly, and Zelma appeared, closely followed by Dolphin, who tiptoed cautiously in with a childish diffidence. She seemed full of innocent expectancy, and approached the bedside wearing looks of anxious longing. When her eyes met those of Donald's she flushed with a sensitive modesty. Zelma led her persuasively forward.

"This is Miss Dolphin, another member of our household," he said to Donald, smilingly. "And this," he said to Dolphin, "is our sick friend, who is also one of us."

The patient reached for Dolphin's hand. The velvety softness of her flesh was like that of a babe's.

"Well" said Zelma, "have you rested to-day? I can guess you have. I had promised Dolphin she should come in and see you, and now I trust you will both profit by the new acquaintanceship. I want to leave her here for a time while I go upon an errand into the city."

Zelma's patient smiled and seemed doubly grateful for the kindness. A chair was given Dolphin near the bedside, and after a few other commonplace remarks Zelma withdrew. From the first Dolphin had scarcely taken her eyes from the patient's face. He whom we shall henceforth prefer to call Maurice—out of respect for those who had befriended him—was not unmindful of the attentiveness of her gaze. He seemed to realize the true depths of her nature, he knew not how. His first words were therefore laden with feeling.

"They had told you of me," he inferred in a kindly tone.

A smile overspread Dolphin's features. "Yes," she said, merely, while two pretty dimples came upon her blushing cheeks. Then a rather awkward silence ensued. Maurice fingered the bedquilt a moment, at a partial loss what next to say.

"Do you feel to pity a friend who is sick?" he asked, at length.

"Mamma says I ought to love everybody always, and everybody who is sick besides," Dolphin declared, her words, though somewhat prolix, rolling out with extreme fidelity.

This brought a pleased look to Maurice's face. "Well, you and your mamma have my thanks for such kindness. I scarcely feel worthy of it."

"Why not?" queried Dolphin.

"Oh—" and Maurice laughed wearily; "if I was worthy I would n't be here, would I?"

"If you had n't been here where would you have been?"

"Where would I have been? The Lord only knows, my child," and his smile of cheerfulness vanished.

"But the same Lord loves you who loves me." insisted Dolphin.

"I suppose so. You must know more of such things and of heaven than I."

"Never been to heaven once," declared Dolphin, leaning over to examine a trinket upon the stand. Maurice looked amused. "Do you know what grandpa thinks?" she asked. "Grandpa thinks we are in heaven now. Did n't you know that?"

"Oh, yes, that may be so. We ought to think so, I presume. If we are in heaven now it saves all the trouble of going there. It is a long journey for some."

Again Dolphin turned her questioning gaze full into Maurice's eyes. She seemed to be carefully weighing his words. "Prince, he's my pug dog, can't go to heaven; he's bad," she said, flatly.

Maurice smiled in still deeper amusement. But it takes a child to dexterously turn a subject, and Dolphin had spoken as she thought, of course.

"He must be very bad, indeed," he remarked.

"Do you know why I don't believe you are bad?" she asked, now quite seriously. "Because men who are real bad have shaggy eyebrows, like giants."

"I hope your good opinions of me will last," as-

sented Maurice, once more laughing at the child's figure of speech. Dolphin fondled the pretty topaz which hung about her neck, and for a moment or two looked silently at it. This gave Maurice a chance to study her more deliberately. He believed he had never seen a more womanly heroine of truthfulness and virtue. Her expressions of countenance were mature, though her words were immature. Such children are interesting from birth.

"I like your name very much," said Maurice, again breaking the silence.

"I like Margaret best. It seems as if I was Margaret once, only they wanted me called Dolphin. Dolphin is a fish, you know; and why couldn't my name have been Margaret?"

"Why does it seem as if that was once your name?"

"Oh, 'cause; it seems so, that is all. Didn't you ever think you had been someone else once?"

"Did I ever dream it, do you mean?"

"No; didn't you ever think you were, for sure?"

"Not that I can remember now. I understand you are not yet eight, and of course you must have been your mamma's little girl always; weren't you?"

"Oh, my, yes, I suppose so," and Dolphin drew a long breath as she spoke. What a singular child did she seem to Maurice. Her lips, which were cherry red, seemed almost to speak when they were indeed silent.

"Did you ever read about Robinson Crusoe and his man Friday?" he asked, taking the lead for once.

"Mamma has read it to me, but I like history best. I don't think they were a bit nice to cut off Queen Mary's head."

"But that was a long time ago. Nobody's heads are cut off nowadays."

While Maurice was speaking Dolphin drew a picture from her pocket, a picture of a polar bear upon an iceberg. This she held up facing him. It was a handsome lithograph of very pronounced colors. He hardly knew how to frame his comments to interest his little friend. So he said at random :

"Do you know why polar bears are white?"

Dolphin thought a moment. "So the hunters can't see them and shoot them, I guess. I don't think it is right to kill the bears ; do you ?"

"Some day there won't be any more white bears, maybe," commented Maurice.

"Where will they all go to, do you suppose ?"

"The hunters will have killed them off."

"Humph ! Well, I hope they'll all go to heaven. Prince is going to heaven, perhaps ; mamma says so."

"Then he isn't so bad after all."

"He's only mischievous, but he can't help it, I suppose."

Here Dolphin fell to musing, and her listener closed his eyes as if he had grown weary from the talk. Soon Dolphin placed her picture upon a chair, and resting her chin upon both hands, looked long and earnestly at it. When she raised her head she seemed to have evolved a thought of her own.

"No," she said, rather fearlessly, "I don't think it is a bit nice to shoot the bears. If God gave them warm coats of fur and put them away off there on the cold icebergs, I do say it is a shame to go and kill them ; don't you ?"—this just as Maurice, much amused at the child's reasoning, opened his eyes and turned them full upon her.

"Why—really, I had never thought of it just that way," he said, quite considerately. "It does seem a little cruel, I will admit."

Seemingly satisfied with this, Dolphin grew seriously silent again, and her listener fell once more to studying her. He wondered why it was that all children love animals. They love the humblest pets of the woods, while the grown-up worldling makes them either prodigious pets or their natural enemies. To Maurice there seemed at least a virtue in being a child, and he was already becoming quite in love with his little counselor. Almost in answer to this thought Dolphin said, after folding the picture and putting it in her pocket :

"If I love you as much as I do Prince, do you suppose you will get well ?"

Maurice smiled, but strove to treat the subject with the utmost seriousness. Dolphin seemed full of much righteous good will, for a pretty color had mounted to her temples and her winsome look was one of extreme sincerity.

"You are very good to mention it," he said ; "nothing would sooner tempt me into health and happi-

ness than that, I am sure. I have had no little friend to love me since—" here he hesitated. There were no words with which to finish the sentence.

"Well," said Dolphin, now very explicitly, "I love Prince, but he never gets sick like big folks. I guess because you are sick I can love you most—maybe. Then when you get well I know you will love me. Isn't it awful to have to lie in bed all day?"

"Rather hard, but I think I will soon be out."

"I do hope you will," and Dolphin once more weighed her remark with leisure. "Grandpa is good, and so is my mamma, and Prince has got just the cutest little ribbon around his neck, and Christmas I hung up my stocking, and what do you think? Six little candy mice got into it some way. What did Santa Claus bring to you?"

"I guess I must have been out when Santa Claus called," answered Maurice. Who but a child could think of so many pleasant things at once? There was indeed a tinge of happy realism in his little friend's prattle; and could he but put aside the past forever, how bright might the future yet be for him. It seemed as if every day brought its revelation. Why indeed had he never lived before?

## CHAPTER VI.

DOMESTIC AWAKENINGS.—“THE LOVE THAT KEEPS  
THE ANATOMY GOING.”

THAT night when Mr. Gilbert entered his own home on Michigan Avenue, he took with him much which Zelma had told him. His hope was strengthened, his confidence in the fidelity of Natural Law was for the time super-abundant, and a warm pulsation of human love pervaded his being. Sitting complacently down in his own library, he enjoyed the moments of reflection and repose which so often come to the spiritually awakened. He recalled his friend Zelma's peculiar ideas upon wealth ownership. Who are the rich as viewed by the mind of a Mystic? Can earthy substance, that which the multitude is seeking, and which is known as wealth, be used to soothe the unsatisfied soul into positive rest? Riches, indeed! Of what do they consist? Houses, lands, stocks, stores, and the much abused lucre. Are all these legitimate holdings in the broadest sense? Yet civilization demands a premium upon effort, upon talent, and continuity of purpose. Then should not the kings of commerce be entitled to their acquired accumulations, with which to push their crafts fur-

ther out into the sea of trade? Who can fix the exact legal rights of any one individual? Ought we to look for a solution of money-rights to him who has acquired a spiritual wealth, and who can live above material ambition? Possibly it may take the practical, muscle-loving reasoner to discuss economic questions—such men as are the stirring factors in the world of finance. Greed may exist, it is true, but explorations into unknown countries have been made for greed alone. Suppose the surplus wealth of our land should be turned into a fund for the relief of the suffering; who would have the wisdom to direct an impartial distribution of it? And yet, what folly to multiply the millions of him who has enough.

Into Mr. Gilbert's musings came thoughts like these. To be consistent he strove to call to mind some recent example of public beneficence. What of the great University of his own city? Was not this a most deserving outcome of liberal giving? Had its donors ever before tasted the life-giving effects of generosity, or was this their first voluntary participation in it? Possibly Zelma, his one whole-souled friend and adviser, had given him the real clue to the mystery of ownership. Found schools, relieve the suffering, build homes for the aged—yes, and what might a man who owned his millions do were he so disposed! It was a fact that never before had he given the matter serious thought. While meditating thus he smiled without knowing it, for a new and novel feeling was creeping over him. Soon,

however, a remembrance of Zelma's warning flashed into his mind, and for an instant he recoiled in fear, lest the troublous predictions might be true. Yet the sensation quickly passed for just now he was living in an atmosphere of seeming security. It is not always the fact of danger which disturbs us; it is the fear of it lived many times over which taxes our nerves. Mr. Gilbert therefore soon conquered his one moment of apprehension; for, could a man who contemplated the endowment of colleges, or the relief of the poor, find time for idle fear? And yet, there was his family, proud in a sense, exacting, and followers of society. Would they consent to a division of his wealth to aid the downtrodden?

From his pocket he took his watch, and opening it, looked long and wistfully at the picture on the inside of the case. It was that of his little Myra when she was a mere rosy-cheeked miss, scarcely more than a babe. He had loved this only child with all his soul. Could any number of millions buy or destroy a fraction of a father's love? Love, love—yes, but his had been a love for a mere infant whose sweet yet utter dependence had made her doubly dear to him. Now Myra was about to enter society, a girl grown tall and full of the youthful spirit of imagery. What wonderful changes will a few short years—years of struggles and forgetfulness—bring about! Would she, he thought, the romantic music-loving, fashion-chasing Myra of to-day look calmly on and see her rich papa found universities or build

rescue missions? The very thought had its shadows of doubt.

How far removed was this one richly furnished library from the wintry cold without. The heavy drapings alone deadened the noises of the wind, and the heat of the furnaces was even and enjoyable. Servants held themselves in readiness at a moment's call, and what more might a millionaire care to add to his bodily comforts? In a moment of sublime silence Mr. Gilbert closed his watch case and took up a book to read. But he seemed not alone. Some new element of kinship must have invaded the house during his absence. He could shut his eyes and look within, and pleasant thoughts would come freely to him. Once he thought of Zelma's gift. He drew it from his pocket and gazed fondly upon it. He held the medal between his two palms and felt its peculiar vibrations. Its emanations were as distinct as if it had been charged electrically. Here was a direct evidence of occult law, one suited to the most ordinary sense perception. It was not a feeling that disturbs, like that produced by some unseemly hint of magic, but a realization of added rest and security. At length the sensation ceased, and he put it back into his pocket and gave himself up to his reading. Thus he sat until early evening.

In the midst of her husband's reflections Mrs. Gilbert entered the library and seated herself by the table. He lifted his eyes to her like one awakening from a dream. She was a woman with deep

lines of care upon her face. Her hesitating, somewhat delicate movements suggested a temperament of fear. Her voice was low and given to trembling. Mr. Gilbert smiled as he remembered smiling in early wedlock, but his companion did not seem to notice this. She seemed to have something of a serious nature to say to him. Raising her eyes slowly she regarded him at first in silence.

"I have consulted the Doctor," she said, without further remark. Then, hesitating, she let her glance fall a moment. "He says Myra has no organic trouble as yet, but he thinks she may be given to spells of momentary excitement, and may need careful guidance to avoid fevers and malaria. But even the Doctor may not read her case correctly. Her ailments may be too deeply hidden from him." This last she added with a painful look of doubting.

"I dare say the Doctor is measurably right, my dear, as doctors go," soothed Mr. Gilbert, still smiling his assurance. "Myra is young and full of vigor—call it a proneness to excitement if you will—yet I look upon her as about as well as the average girl just out of school. Fevers and malaria have never troubled us in the least, and I do not think they ever will. Now, Sylvia, I have an idea worth mentioning, at least. I have had several revelations come to me to-day which have set me to thinking. I take it that we have been too much given to moping. What do you say to disowning the past and beginning anew? I feel to-night like

looking forward to what comfort there yet remains for us, and of living more cheerful lives all around. It is a fact that I have forgotten to live, almost, under the stress of business and money-getting. I feel sure it isn't too late to bury all fear of what is to be and live above it. Don't you believe it possible?"

Mrs. Gilbert's face took on a more troubled look. What could have prompted her husband to say such things, if, indeed, he was yet possessed of all his mental faculties? Had not the psychics very recently told her that away back in the family of Gilberts there was once a very pronounced case of insanity? Instead of taking hope her heart seemed to sink within her and tears came into her eyes. Now she would need the counsel of the invisibles more than ever. What, indeed, ought she to do in so dire an extremity? It was some moments before she could trust herself to speak.

"I do not know, I am sure, why you have ceased to live," she at length found words to say. She was sobbing with her kerchief to her eyes.

"Well, for me to affirm my faith in life even now; what do you say to that? Positively nothing can hurt us—nothing, nothing," he affirmed, using the words his friend Zelma had so recently given him. But unlike his own case, the affirmation seemed to pass without effect. His wife appeared still deeply bowed in her imaginary sufferings.

Mr. Gilbert felt the futility of words, so he ceased talking, and, as his wife was sitting near him, he laid

his hand gently upon her arm. This was all the act of affection which seemed available just then. A long time had it been since he was a lover, and his memory of kindlier attentions somewhat failed him. He sincerely hoped her tears were those of joy and confidence, rather than fear. He could never easily separate the one from the other, women are so apt to weep.

Presently the library door opened, and she who had been the subject of their conversation, entered. Miss Myra was distinctly handsome in features, and her bearing was that of ease, though there was a slight pallor to her skin and a certain lack of energy in her voice. Beyond this she would pass fairly well for an average child reared in luxury and refinement. Scarcely heeding her parents she went directly to the bookcase, where she seemed to be looking for some missing volume.

"Papa," she called, "do you know what has become of my book on Anatomy?" Mr. Gilbert turned thoughtfully around. "Three of us girls have compositions to write for the Gibbons contest, and I have chosen anatomy for my subject. Do you suppose I can win the prize?"

"Why, indeed, child—yes, to be sure. Anatomy and physiology were your strongholds, I believe. But come here a moment, my dear, and let me look at you. You can begin the essay a little later."

Miss Myra looked around with her hand still upon the bookcase. What could her parent mean, really?

Was he about to chide her for some omission of duty? But she found her Anatomy first, then came forward and stood obediently beside him.

"I want to see just how tall, just how old, and just how womanly our child Myra has grown," soliloquized the father, taking his daughter's hand and drawing her down to him.

Still somewhat in doubt Myra kneeled and permitted the almost forgotten caresses which her parent seemed anxious to bestow. Mrs. Gilbert looked on a little queerly, as if such fondness was not without its lack of adaptation. Myra appeared for the moment to enjoy the attention, which for some time past she had missed almost wholly. She had learned to consider a money-getting parent as a duly qualified adjunct in the household; more than this she seldom looked to him for any specific notice. It was true that to Mr. Gilbert it seemed much like awakening after years of slumber. Yes, she had grown up, gone to school, had graduated, and now—well—

"Do you know, my dear, I am certainly proud of you," he said, drawing Myra to him and implanting a kiss upon her forehead. "Once you were only a toddling babe; after that you wore school dresses, and now—just think of it!—almost a woman grown, and the wisest of us know very little how it has all come about. In the Gibbons contest do you expect to explain how babes become women without their doting papas knowing it? how they grow tall and what goes to make bone and muscle? or do you

mean to digress a little and explain how girls go off in flurries over essays, and millinery, and fine dresses and carriage drives, and hair crimping and jewelry and forget their papas quite, except—well, except now and then when a check is wanted to go shopping with—I say, is my little Myra's head wise enough to explain all these?"

Myra's eyes had grown large with wonderment. "Really, papa, I think you are too bad," she complained, laughingly. "Prof. Manning says girls are half angel and the other half only human. Were I all human I know I could never forget my own papa and mamma," and with this she put both arms about her father's neck and kissed his smiling lips, then turned and laid her head fondly upon her mother's breast.

Altogether it was a pretty picture, and a most impromptu one. Dove-like, inexperienced creature was Myra, as quick to forget an attention as she was to respond to it, perhaps, but none the less the child of him who once worshipped the toddling babe as he would an idol. It truly seemed to Mr. Gilbert as if the renewing life he had brought from his venerable friend Zelma belonged as much to his family as himself. Possibly his days were yet to be lengthened and made holy by the fabled elixir of love—that love, perchance, which, for having slept, might yet awaken and bid him know more of life.

"Well, well," he said, as Myra, after the first caresses were over arose and stood again at his side;

“your papa can scarcely understand it all, but it must be now as it ever has been, I suppose. Girls, like the boys of some men, get wills of their own, then a stray idea or two to set them going, and then they become men and women by the mere turning of a hand. Another kiss, my dear. There, God bless you. When you write your essay, just put in a paraphrase or two about the love which keeps the anatomy going. Capital idea, that; it might be the means of securing the prize.”

Even Mrs. Gilbert's face took on a momentary look of cheerfulness, when, with a merry laugh of youthful freedom, Myra went flitting from their sight.

## CHAPTER VII.

## LUCKY CABLE'S WARNING.

A low frame building in an unfrequented part of the city—shutters closed, and the passage to the basement but dimly lighted; a small, hovel-like room where sat four men gathered around a table, two of them smoking, but all speaking at intervals in carefully subdued tones. A fifth member of the group lay stretched upon a grimy cot, his head bandaged, and deep marks of suffering were playing about his parched lips. From a smoky oil lamp came dim rays of light, scarcely sufficient to reach to the farthest corners of the room. It was evident that the subject under discussion was no paltry one. Occasional oaths flew about and frowns would now and then cover the determined faces. A daring robbery was being planned.

Tap, tap, tap, came a sound upon the silence, and the voices were suddenly hushed. One of the men arose, and going to the door removed a bar from across it and swung it cautiously open. With a brusque air a well dressed, florid faced man entered, and hurriedly laying aside his overcoat, advanced

unceremoniously and took his place at the table. Though he spoke not a word at first, his manner seemed most officious, and his four associates regarded him with tentative glances. From his inner pocket he took a paper, upon which was a profile and some writing. This he laid out upon the table, after which began a low-spoken, fragmentary talk, while the minutest details of the scheme in hand were gone over. At last all seemed to have become familiar with the contents of the paper, and the owner of it leaned back and gave a grizzly look from man to man.

"That is the whole of it, boys. Shall we swear ourselves to-night, or do you want a little time to think about it?"

Not a breath was heard. Each man looked stolidly down and waited.

"Big thing, you see, and it's all planned and well planned," he further urged. "Gad! but do you know there is not an hour to lose! Come, now, who is the man to clear the decks?" Still an unbroken silence. "I say, who is the man to do it? The whole scheme is without a flaw, and the sooner the game is bagged the better. There may be a million in it, but quick money anyway if the old gent turns up missing. See?" and a fiendish smile curled the speaker's lips. Evidently he was of that type of gentry whose habit it is to employ the lower gang to do the meanest part of the work.

In a moment or two the silence had become op-

pressive. The speaker still waited for a response with set lips and a determined eye. At last a smile of decision lighted the face of one of the men.

"Hist!" spoke Skit Brady, in tones of settlement; "d'ye pals all listen ter me. To-morrow night at twelve's the hour. Moody Brant gits me the tools to the Avenue an' waits—jimmy, an' drill, an' the bundle o' keys. Whin—"

Tommy Knuckles slapped the table in approval, and Skit stopped talking and gave him a comradely grin. The hypnotic gaze of the stranger became at once riveted upon Brady, who seemed an easy victim to his power. So the bargain was made in a mere giffy of time.

It seemed to have been the custom of the sextet never to swear fealty to a cause unless every member was sitting at the board. Doc Whittlesey, who did but little talking, and who seemed a trifle more genteel than the rest, arose from his seat, and going to the couch, shook Lucky Cable into waking. The sick man groaned, but permitted himself to be raised to his feet and led to his place with the others. A deathly pallor rested upon his solemn face. Into the chair he dropped with a lifeless thud. Instantly thereafter he started nervously, like one in fear.

"Boys, yer makin' a mistake!" came ominously from his lips. In a twinkle every eye was turned upon him, and every face was a study. Moody Brant was the first to speak.

"The pal's a wanderin' agin," he said, a little doubt-

ingly. Lucky's a been mighty sick, I reckon. But 'ere we air—let's put 'er through, anyway. Come, Lucky, brace up won't ye?"

The sick man turned a withering gaze upon the speaker. A look of desperation had come into his pupils. His voice was becoming husky.

"D'ye hear me?—the game's up!" he hissed.

"Lucky, what is the matter with you?" urged the Doc, nudging the sick man coaxingly. "It's big money this time. You're not yourself a bit; but cross hands with us now and then you can lie down again."

Lucky's eyes slowly wandered over at the Doc. Then he nodded once or twice and let his head drop upon the table. Questioning glances went the rounds and a deeper silence ensued. All seemed to be waiting. In the midst of the suspense Lucky raised his head and seemed to be staring into vacancy.

"I'm a givin' it to yer straight, boys, an' the game's up. The devil's a been a tellin' on ye. Don't ye dare tap the job yer on to, not onct; d'ye hear?"

Like a person electrified, the newly-arrived stranger had arisen and stood staring demon-like at the speaker. Who could dare question his scheme for a single moment?

"I say, my dear fellow," again cajoled the Doc, forcing a smile, "you have been dreaming. It's a big haul and a safe one at that."

But Lucky seemed deaf to all persuasion. He only continued to repeat his warning. As his talk

went on every face became blanched, and every listener hung breathlessly upon his words. The well-dressed stranger still stood with compressed lips and eyes filled with subdued rage. In time Lucky's voice changed to a low and grewsome monotone.

"They're a tellin' on us, an' every mother's son o' ye'll git the sentence! Walls like these 'ave a thousand ears, an' they're a listnin' now. D'ye mind them varmints a standin' over there? They're a grinnin' at ye now, an' a knowin' every word yer a sayin'. Ye can't keep no secrets from them as 'ave ears. There's a thousand on 'em in this room this very minute!" A glittering light had by this time gathered in Lucky's orbs. The bandage upon his head, together with his sallow skin, gave him a look most pitiable.

But in the terrible silence, and at the instance of the still speechless stranger, every hand was crossed Lucky's being forced to take its place with the others. Before this was accomplished, however, the sick man's head again dropped upon the table. The oath was taken, and all but Lucky responded. Yet this omission seemed to have been expected. Doc arose to help Lucky back to bed. He shook him once, twice, thrice. He bent over and listened for his breath. Then he felt for the beating of his heart.

"Boys," he said, straightening up and speaking huskily, "are you prepared for the worst?"

Not a response was heard. The truth was all too apparent; *Lucky Cable was dead!*

## CHAPTER VIII.

STORY OF A DREAM.—“YOU HAVE NOW ENTERED THE KINGDOM OF GOD LITERALLY.”

MAURICE, sitting propped up in bed, was relating to Zelma an experience he had passed through the night previous.

“To me it was the quality of earthly happiness magnified a hundred fold,” he said, smiling with extreme pleasure. He was surprised at the ease with which he could recall the incidents of his vision. “I seemed to be in a room circular in form, at one side of which sat an aged man, whom I afterwards learned was called the Master, and who was dressed in a beautiful and spotless robe of white. In a semi-circle about me sat twelve persons of both sexes, dressed also in white. All heads were bowed in silence. The light in the room faded slowly, until there was a semi-darkness. In the immaculate presence I felt my grossness as never before. I could only bow my head and wait. I wondered if these people were meditating upon my past, or whether they were sitting in judgment upon my right to a happy future. I felt abashed, and longed to hear a word spoken, for the silence was becoming oppressive. At last an

effulgent light began to break just above where the Master sat, and as it grew I became correspondingly lifted in spirit. After I raised my eyes, imagine my feelings when she of my former vision appeared, wearing the smile of an angel. I could not take my eyes from her an instant. We seemed somehow to talk, and her words to me were gentle and inspiring.

“But in time she seemed to pass from my sight, and the partial darkness again filled the room, though soon the whole of the surroundings became light again. The Master began some solemn words, and I listened with feelings of reverence. Then the others joined, and a prayer of some kind was repeated in chorus, and so happy was I then that I seemed to say the words with them. I could have sat and felt the enjoyable vibrations for an age, the melody was so perfect and uplifting. But the chant soon died away, and with one accord all present raised their heads and seemed to be looking at me, for I could all but feel their glances. It seemed strange to me, that after the face appeared in the cloud of light I lost all sense of grossness, and seemed to be in harmony with everyone about me. When the Master arose and walked toward me, I met his gaze with not a thought of fear. He placed his hand upon my head and said some words to me in a language I could not understand. Then I was bidden to arise and all the others did the same. From out the very presence seemed to come beautiful strains of music, far sweeter than any I had ever heard. In the mean-

time one of the twelve came forward and placed a robe about me, and when this was done the music ceased. After that a chant was given in concert, and all heads were bowed in perfect silence. Soon I felt myself fading out, the forms of the others became indistinct and I seemed at last to become as nothing. I remembered no more until I awoke and found the moonlight streaming into my room. Around my bed a glorifying peace seemed to be resting, and I lay awake a long time living over the happy memories. It was all indeed very beautiful," murmured Maurice, a look of tenderest compassion stealing over his pallid face. "Can you tell me what it all means?" he asked of Zelma.

Zelma was by this time smiling his perfect understanding. "You have now entered the kingdom of God literally," he replied. "It was your initiation into the higher life. Again were you brought face to face with your higher self; and when a mortal has experienced this his entrance into the real heaven, not the conventional heaven of old, is assured. The trouble with most men is, they lose sight of the inner and more refined ego so long that it can be said that they nearly separate the two indefinitely. But some calamity befalls them, the grosser man is thrown down, and during the severest part of the trouble he gets glimpses of his better and higher self as you have done. Some who meet these experiences live better lives; others forget and fall back into the old rut again, and the angel within must await the com-

ing of another and severer transition. Your case is one of total transition, I believe, and you can never go back again," assured Zelma, with a look of hope most strengthening to his patient.

Maurice's countenance had grown bright, and for the moment his feelings of dependence entirely left him. He felt that no task was too great for him, for his powers to do seemed limitless. Zelma guessed all this, so he said further :

"This intensifying of the vision, whether it comes to us in our sleep or when we are awake, means vastly more to us than we can surmise. The religionist feels it at his revivals, and the chela in his solitude, and we all take it on when our last moments on earth arrive. It is the promise of immortality, of the kingdom of God from which no man escapes ; and were we to live continually in perfect accord with that higher self, we would become as giants in strength and fulfillment. But in our indolence and love of sense life we are prone to gratify, then gratify again, until hard lines of secret dissatisfaction come upon our faces. Then we go roaming the earth for rest, for that balm which will soothe the perturbed and weary spirit, when, in very fact we have the secret of rest wholly within us. Some expression of bodily disease has fastened itself upon us, and we search the earth again for some root or herb to heal the pain, but even nature's haunts offer us no relief. Think of the futility of all this loss of effort, when the little germ of healing is constantly within

our reach, were we but able to discern it. To be well is to be approximately harmonious. To be saved is to be purified ; to be purified is to be saved. All the world needs to-day is a more commonplace saviour, one whose deeds and sayings are not contained in any one book or ritual."

"Each man his own saviour, possibly," smiled Maurice. "Is the redemption of the body to be included with the soul?"

"If the body is under wrongful domination—and of course it is if there is suffering—it, too, must be cleansed and regenerated to insure the salvation of the soul. You, for example, could no longer have continued in your downward course. Yet you were not to perish. Your destiny called for some heroic change. A little incident frequently turns us wholly about, and we call it fortune or misfortune. It is neither. There is a fixed law, and that law when understood reveals the way to us without the discipline of bodily suffering. He who can live is called an awakened or enlightened soul. We have been taught that such mortals have not existed since the ancient eras. This is untrue, for there are thousands such to-day, but the material minds do not discover them. They are rarely known because of their quiet works. In this age of noise and personal pretense, political strifes and the race for wealth we little dream of the numberless spiritual truths which are now neutralizing the popular currents. But when the crisis comes, the gifted one calls his powers into

use, and the people stare about them in wonder. Very frequently, mind you, this same prophet who speaks, or the healer who heals, drops quickly from sight, perhaps never to be known again. When the next crisis comes, some other and perhaps vastly different magician appears and does his work. Thus the cycle is lived—lived, understand me, under a law as fixed as the universe and as palpable to the seer as is the food he eats. Is it any wonder that men become dazed, go mad with the fever of speculation, or drink of poisonous beverages, or are burned in the crucible of the passions, when they have not the slightest knowledge of true spiritual acquirement? Our city, for instance, is thrown into a panic by the discovery of concerted schemes to rob and pillage the people. The mind of him who discerns is calm and undisturbed. He sees good even in the outbreak. Uncover volcanic heat and the lava bursts forth, but after this comes a calm ; why? Because it is the law. No discord is ever eternal. If there is an outbreak it is necessary, else it would never be.”

“What of war?” suggested Maurice. His own vision was becoming quickened, enabling him to learn with rapidity.

“The strifes between nations are still less to be feared,” Zelma replied. “I will venture a prophecy right here, that there will never be any more great wars upon earth. The new cycle forbids it. The race is becoming too refined and too agile in the handling of life-destroying implements. Men are

becoming too wise to fight, for with new wisdom comes the discovery that men can be killed in droves where they were once killed singly. This fact is pictured upon the minds of the warrior, and the law of sympathy forbids the wholesale slaughter. There will be pretentious calls to arms and diplomatic assertions of outraged honor ; but have you not noticed that in recent years international troubles have soon been adjusted ? All this is proof to me of the undertow of the better life which I have explained to you."

"There have been moments when I have had such thoughts," said Maurice, reflectively. "Usually they have escaped me and have amounted to little more than impressions, as if I had dreamed them. Now as you speak them it seems as if I had heard them before."

"True, very true ; I do not doubt it. Every perceptive mind must in some way get glimpses of the truth. These usually appear, however, during some period of great concern or moment of exhilaration. But once find them real, classify them, live and practice them—in brief, understand them through the means of concentration and right living, and have we not a power indeed at our disposal ? Not a power to terrify and destroy, but to use for the good of one's neighbor, be he ever so humble. Once exercise this power, and strength a hundred fold comes to us to act again when occasion demands it."

For two whole hours was the talk prolonged, for this was the first soul-to-soul conversation which had

taken place between Zelma and his patient. Hence much more was gone over than we have the space to record. Is there not healing in such moments of rare interchange between mind and mind? How many a drunkard might be restored to manhood by this self-same exercise of brotherly love. But what of the popular temperance advocates? On the outer circumference we see them standing and ranting at the evil, and praying loud that it be abated. That there is a center, a root, they never dream. It is the evil they are fighting, and they fight it from habit. Will they never see deeper into the needs of him who has fallen?

## CHAPTER IX.

IMPROVED CONDITIONS.—A MODERN BROTHERHOOD  
OF WISDOM.

MR. GILBERT'S next visit to Zelma was a most fruitful one. The two men had seated themselves in the east room as before, and Zelma had for a considerable time held the wrapt attention of his guest.

"It occurs to me that you have given last week's revealments but little anxious thought," Zelma was moved to remark.

"As regards the proposed robbery, whether true or not, I have felt to give it but little thought, certainly. I might have worked myself into a state of nervous fear—I presume I might, but I did not, as you have surmised. Possibly the danger by this time is past."

Zelma closed his eyes and bowed his head a moment. "There is a cessation in the plans somewhere," he said, "but I do not discover just why. At all events, there seems to be no prospect for immediate action. When we have attended to the divine welfare our personal safety ought to be assured, as I see it. This is the just law of compensation when put to practical use. It is the basis of religion; for does not the religious advocate who works with an

unyielding faith have the greater following? The reason is, that those who are the least controlled by things objective best control the universal Prana. That Prana once controlled, there can be brought into being the most absurd or the most benign sectarianism, a sectarianism so mighty, perhaps, that it will dominate the public weal for a long period of time, or until it loses its hold upon the subtle force which gave it birth. After that comes change. Sectarianism goes the way of all dogmas, be it ever so popular. I find change in everything; without it we would become as mummies in the crypts."

"Have the elementals you told me of last week any considerable hold upon the universal force supply?" enquired Mr. Gilbert.

"No, not a lasting hold. They occupy the negative spheres, the reason why they can be overcome by him who is awakened. Through non-resistance and an unruffled faith we can be rid of every external influence, either in or out of the flesh. Men who scheme to rob are cowards, else they would not steal into our houses by night. As tools of the elementals they are weak and vacillating. To hold one's self positive at all times will virtually prevent the commitment of a theft, however ably planned. Some circumstance, some set-back, presumably accidental, perhaps, but none the less certain, befalls the evil-doer, and the trouble is averted. It is our compromise with so-called evil that opens the way to the work of the lower elementals."

"It may be a lack of prudence, but I seem to have lost much of my tendency to fear," explained Mr. Gilbert. "Life seems to have become what it was in childhood before I learned to fear. It is a fact that I feel measurably secure against any foe, and there is novelty in that."

"Then can you say, even now," asked Zelma, "that to live is to know, and to know is to be transformed outside of and independent of any belief? You speak of prudence; it would certainly be a lack of prudence did you harrow your nerves with useless forebodings."

"Well, I can say this much: life for me has taken on a new meaning, if I may so express it. That meaning has but recently dawned upon me, and is of such magnitude that it is as the light of the sun compared to the night in which I seemed to have been groping. It may appear a little singular, perhaps, but I find myself as much unable to see my way now because of all that is visible to me, as I was before. I would like to have you tell me where one is to begin to live."

Zelma smiled and seemed more than gratified. "Begin by waiting for the inner voice, the only reliable exponent of the soul of man. If we wait and do not become anxious to discover all there is at once, we thus go into training and can accomplish much. Time cuts no figure. Merely appropriate that which comes to you unbidden. The Atlantians of old knew well the secrets of acquirement—those

self-same secrets we are striving to discover to-day. Imagine an eternity before you—time for growth, for extended research and the attainment of Nirvana when we have passed the rubicon of knowledge. How patient indeed can one become by the mere contemplation of eternity! This life is but a link in the great chain of lives; why look upon its trials with labored seriousness?"

"You have said our trials and experiences are mutual, whatever station in life we may occupy," remarked Mr Gilbert.

"Yes, mutual—one universal family with not a member missing. I think as you go deeper into your philosophy you will be drawn to the thought of the common welfare of mankind. You will be the gainer when you have become fully conscious that every man is your brother and entitled to the same light as yourself. Universal brotherhood must become a fact before the world can be fully enlightened. Then unity of thought, of purpose and motives can be blended most profitably. This has been demonstrated by actual test. For example: we have in our midst the Hermetic Brotherhood, a rehabilitation of the Sacred Order of Wisdom known among the Atlantians many thousand years ago. It has been discovered that much can be accomplished by comradeship, concentration of motives and silent coöperation. At a given hour each day the members of this Brotherhood concentrate their thoughts, not for the good of each other, but for the good of all mankind. The

petty self is abjured and the great whole is considered in unison. Think you these people are in a hurry to reach the goal of existence? By their very lack of haste they move forward steadily and without friction. It is the essence of power to be allied to the Supreme Will. And while I think of it Mr. Gilbert, I believe you will do well to practice concentration as do the Brotherhood. Begin at once. Suppose you let the ills and the triumphs of a restless world pass unheeded for thirty minutes each day, while you fix your inner eyes upon the eternal whole. Swami Vivekananda says: 'The powers of the mind should be concentrated and turned back upon itself, and as the darkest places reveal their secrets before the penetrating rays of the sun, so will this concentrated mind penetrate its own innermost secrets.' You and I have need of, and do in fact hold a rightful share in the whole universe. Then ought we to lack faith in the good of life? Certainly not. Our wisest teachers bid us go forward with the majesty of kings attending us, and our own simple selves can be hindered by naught. This is to me the secret of faith. Without the habit of concentration I can do nothing to advantage."

"Ought I to seek admission to the Brotherhood you mention?"

"When you feel prompted—never before. When you become fully conscious of an adequate love for all creatures; that that love can be enkindled and be made more effective by association with kindred

souls who are your equals by the will of God, then join them ; the way will be opened at the proper time if you but await the summons patiently."

"For the past week I have pondered much upon the mysteries of wedlock. Can the love of man and wife be renewed by devotion best, or by this same faith and non-resistance?" further questioned Mr. Gilbert.

"A delicate thought for the wisest counselor ; you will yet find it such," replied Zelma, closely knitting his brows. "Our conceptions of marriage have been crude and unsystematic. There have been the ownership clause and the love clause in the ceremony, one opposed to the other when put into practice. How can we have the hardihood to assert ownership over the being we love? God is love, and one's mate is a part of God, and is at least entitled to self-mastery. An independent spirit excites our love, while a dependent mortal dispirits and annoys us. Your companion is mourning the fact that your love seems less demonstrative than in early life. You were married and have doubtless lived in the thought of body ownership, which is the antithesis of true living. As a consequence her strength and faith in life are failing her. Had she remained positive, and had she been a person who could live her life separately, she would to-day, I dare say, have been rid of fear. But as I told you last week, I believe this will all right itself in time. You can only afford to be of good cheer, and the outworkings of the universal law will

do the rest. I do not think your conceptions of marriage will be the same from now on. Experience teaches us new truths daily."

"It is hard to say just what our conceptions of the marriage bond were," smiled Mr. Gilbert. "We had plenty of love to begin with, we toiled together, met obstacle after obstacle, and overcame much we could neither of us have done separately. To-day we seem as much driven apart as if we had never been man and wife. There certainly is a solution to this one problem, but what is it?"

"It is well that you thus put the question," answered Zelma, wisely. "When you ask you of necessity polarize toward a desired end. Thus polarizing, positive knowledge must certainly come to you in secret, even if you do not get it from others. In your silent meditations ask why that love has cooled, and wait in perfect resignation for the answer. In that answer a way may be shown you to reclaim your domestic happiness. Do not think to discover the truth through the psychics, the fortune teller or the mind reader, the intellect, the senses or the reason, but get it through the very love principle which prompts you to ask for knowledge. All truly gifted souls of the past have been great lovers. They have loved their calling, their God and their fellow-men; else they would never have achieved distinction. Marriage is a sacred trust when rightly interpreted; wrongfully lived it is at once a folly. Just at present your companion is listening to pretenders. The

astral shades delight in this thing, and when once an unfortunate becomes a prey to their machinations, they rarely depart until driven out by heroic means. Yes, unless all tokens fail me, you are to be given the power with which to work a change for the better. It may be white magic against black, but the former wins every time in the ultimate. Recognize only the absolute, unchangeable. Do not recognize the elementals, even though they strike at you with the fury of demons. You are the master, they are without power when wisdom is in the ascendancy. When dealing with others and the impulse comes to retaliate, think twice, and wait. One word withheld will yield two points of courage. A host of so-called messages from the spirit world can not avail you as much as one moment of absolute freedom—freedom from personality, freedom from self, or freedom from all love of mystery, which is but a false god that ignorance is chasing everywhere as it might a phantom. There is nothing gained in contemplating the marvelous. All latter-day phenomena is purposely wrapt in mystery; why? Because those who seek it love it; those who love it invoke it, of course—nineteenths emanation from the aura of the very ones who seek to call up the dead out of selfish desire.”

“Ought I to be conscious of this power when it arrives?”

“Not in the strictest sense. The word will be spoken, some event will take place, and the love principle will reveal itself, perhaps, during a rare

instant of time. True power never comes heralded in advance."

"Life may be looked upon as more a puzzle than a triumph," Mr. Gilbert murmured, a little absently.

"To some it may; but to meet its intricacies, its contradictions and vagaries is the one lesson we should all learn at the outset. We get woke up to a set of theories, and they seem all in all to us. We live on for a time, and lo! we have discovered we are all wrong. Why had we not the truth to begin with? One may as well ask, why is the bud not a flower, the larva not a butterfly. Each acquisition of knowledge is cumulative. We should so live to-day that we can welcome a new truth to-morrow. This would make our progress more stable, for by so living the scales drop from our eyes readily, and we marvel not at all at our advancement. It is the bigot who, in the first blush of his discovery proclaims to the world that he has found the secret of existence. The true philosopher waits—time enough to proclaim the fact when it has been proven by other facts."

Thus ran the conversation for something over an hour. The interview had been highly profitable to Mr. Gilbert, who, because of his years of severe training, saw readily what his inner self must already have evolved, and which needed only a suggestion to confirm. Possibly the interview might have been further prolonged had not the mysterious summons of a newly-arrived guest fallen with delicate vibra-

tions upon the silence. When he arose to take his leave, Mr. Gilbert grasped his friend's hand in the deepest of gratitude.

"You have my thanks many times trebled," he said in tones of simple truth. It was a fact that he had once more become filled with the spirit of rest and self-confidence. Zelma's only reply was his usual simple farewell.

After leaving Zelma's house, Mr. Gilbert's feelings might have met with no decided change had it not been for a couple of circumstances, the first of which occurred when he was entering his own premises. While ascending his front steps he met a woman whom he had seen in company with his wife several times of late. Under the porch light he scanned her face, which was partially hidden behind a veil. A pair of dull gray eyes looked out at him, yet evaded his questioning glances. A moment later she had tripped hurriedly down the steps and disappeared in the darkness. Mr. Gilbert's feeling of loathing for the moment gave him a struggle; but recalling the seer's words of counsel he strove hard to cast it aside, then with his night latch let himself in.

Of late when he entered his parlor his way had been to walk leisurely over to the grate and bow his head in meditative silence. After this he would raise his eyes and repeat mentally a short mantrim given him by his mystical brother, then take his seat and go calmly over the events of the day. Why, indeed, was he so seldom greeted by his wife and

daughter as in years gone by? The secret of his connubial relations was becoming a mysterious one. Possibly Zelma had not fathomed it wholly. Great heart-beats of love would frequently fill his bosom, but she of his early life seemed ever absent at such opportune moments. Many a man and many a woman have been powerless to bid the halcyon days come back—days of early life which, in very truth are no more than half lived because of the never-absent longing of youth to know the future; and yet the future has little return for the expectant wayfarer after all. Why do not the younger minds live by the way regardless of either past or future? Still, so used to being alone had Mr. Gilbert become that his own thoughts were often company for him. Invisible ties between himself and those gone before, and ties equally strong between himself and friends in the flesh were becoming stronger each day as new light came to him. It is not that the congenial friend and neighbor must be present in body to give us companionship. When the world learns this—learns the efficacy of thought communion—we will be as prone to smile in the solitude as during a face-to-face chat with a friend.

But Mr. Gilbert's reverie was destined not to remain long undisturbed. On his table lay a letter which he discovered while picking up a book to read. It was addressed to him in a bold hand, and in one corner of the envelope was the card of the police superintendent. Not without some misgivings he

tore open the envelope and hurriedly scanned the written page. First a look of incredulity came over his features, then a flash half of indignation, but at last he crumpled the missive in his hand and fell to thinking. A portion of what he read had been like a whisper from out the darkness. The plot against him had been partially discovered, and here was a warning sent him to be on his guard. Some soul less informed than he might have taken the warning with alarm; but, profiting by the wealth of wisdom contained in his elderly friend's advice, he did not so much as betray a shadow of fear. Is it not one-half of the conflict to find one's self fortified? Mr. Gilbert, after his first moment of reflection, was never in his life more unmoved.

## CHAPTER X.

A TIMELY LOOK OF DECISION.—“BETTER LEAVE HIM ALONE IS MY ADVICE.”

BUT no sooner had Mr. Gilbert opened his book to read than a caller was announced. Raising his eyes he beheld Lemuel, his colored servant, standing before him with a tray, upon which lay a written card. Taking the card with a somewhat absent air, he read the name of “Rev. Carl Brody, Secretary City Missions,” etc., etc.

An amusing smile played about Mr. Gilbert’s lips as his eye ran over the name. What individual with motives more foreign to the recent drift of his thoughts could possibly have called to see him? Ordinarily he would have asked for a postponement of an interview with a stranger, but so much above things mundane had he been living of late that he felt like welcoming most any human shadow, of whatever kith, kin or profession. So he requested that the visitor be shown in at once. Quite contrary to his expectations, however, he found that in appearance the stranger did not bear out any too favorably the suppositious piety of his calling. His hair was a somewhat coarse auburn shade, his eyes,

though they contained a measure of keenness, were small and restless, and these, taken with his unshaven chin, denoted a temperament quite unlike the average minister. Notwithstanding these observations and his intuitive dislike for the man, Mr. Gilbert dismissed his servant and requested the caller to be seated. After a few remarks upon the weather the conversation began.

"You are no doubt in sympathy with our cause, and perhaps would listen to a request for funds in behalf of the public charities," the stranger said, with some smoothness of speech.

"I seem to be wholly unacquainted with your work," smiled Mr. Gilbert. "I am not, however, in the habit of contributing to public charities."

The caller's glance seemed to be tinctured with anxious study. "I suppose I ought to explain matters a little," he said, taking a paper from his pocket. "Here is a list of some who have subscribed," and he held forth the sheet. Mr. Gilbert took it somewhat indifferently, but while glancing it over it seemed to give off an impure magnetism; so with little hesitancy he made free to return it, saying:

"You will need to excuse me, sir, but I do not feel in sympathy with your request just at present. I will keep your card—"

"You will not contribute?" interrupted the man, while a few hard lines became visible upon his face. "Do you mean to tell me you will not contribute?" he repeated.

"I intended to be so understood. I will keep your card and when I have time will think the matter over."

The way Mr. Gilbert said this was suggestive. His speech seemed to cut short any opportunity for discussion, or to admit of a repetition of the request for funds. He seemed wholly unmoved and non-aggressive, while the stranger, whatever may have been his motives, appeared more like a person who had forgotten the lines of his rehearsal.

"Have you any further business?" Mr. Gilbert asked, finally.

At these decisive words, still measured and fluently spoken, the stranger looked hard at his host a moment before he replied. "I guess there is nothing more—not now. You seem to have settled the matter. I see there is little use to argue with you; but you may yet find that it is sometimes a matter of profit to now and then assist a charity when the chance is offered."

By this time there was a slight curl of sarcasm in the speaker's tone, but instead of further words Mr. Gilbert continued to wear the same settled look of composure. With his customary shrewdness he seemed to be looking his caller through. The man soon began to yield, and with an attempt at seriousness took time to fold the paper and return it to his pocket. In a moment more and with a quiet air of authority Mr. Gilbert arose and touched an electric button. The servant appeared promptly at his bidding.

"Lemuel, please show this gentleman the door," he said, with a furtive waive of the hand.

Instantly the man's countenance changed to that of dogged persistence. He cast a sharp look up at Mr. Gilbert, then one at Lemuel, as the latter, a broad-shouldered type of negro, stood bowing his respects to the command. All that passed after this seemed more like a semi-pantomime for not another word was spoken. Half deliberately the caller arose, and buttoning his coat about him, turned toward the parlor entrance. Here he stopped, seemed to hesitate, but at another gentle bow of dismissal from Mr. Gilbert he turned again and followed the servant in servile obedience. When the street door was closed Mr. Gilbert called his servant again to him.

"What do you think of him, Lemuel?" he asked.

"Indeed, I dunno, sah," answered Lemuel, his eyes full of wonderment.

"Well, please say to further callers to-night that I am engaged," and with this Mr. Gilbert sat down and once more took up his reading.

A trio was moving slowly down the Avenue. One of the number, with hat drawn down over his eyes, was listening to the other two in sullen silence. The man on his right seemed to have the most to say.

"Hang it! Sandy; what d'ye propose to do now? Just give us the cue an' we'll git onto yer racket. You say you saw the old feller an' talked wid 'im?"

"D'ye want ter own yer scary of 'im, or what?" urged the other.

Still the man addressed as Sandy spoke not a word. Under the gas lamp he at last stopped, when his companions peered anxiously into his face.

"Blast me ef yer the same chap since the night Lucky Cable passed in 'is checks. But I say, man, d'ye want ter tackle the job er not? We're in it ter win or the game's up. Ye didn't think we was no spring chickens, did ye? Come, now, spit 'er out."

The man addressed took a quid of tobacco from his pocket, then fixing it firmly in his mouth, made as if to speak.

"I'll tell you what, my pals, I'm undecided, that's what," he said, with a doubting air. "The minister dodge didn't work, though I let him have the best I had, and all that. But 'twas too gauzy, and the old gent saw through it in a giffy. I'm no knock-kneed simpleton—you know that—but when a fellow runs agin a look like he gave me there isn't any time to go fooling. You don't either of you know what I am talking about, and you never will. But I've got to have time to think it over. See?"

Saying which the speaker, with his two hands thrust into his pockets, took his way once more down the walk, continuing as before in dogged silence. His companions followed closely beside him. The cold was intense, and the well lighted windows along the Avenue gave ample hints of the warmth within the palatial residences. Before another block had

been passed the two pals were again talking glibly, though in guarded undertones.

"Didn't Hicks say it was a rich haul, an' didn't he offer us a big divvy ef we'd bag the game?"

"Certain he did," put in the other pal. "Hang the luck, anyway, boys; who's afraid? I say we oughter git there somehow to-night; that's me."

For a considerable time the silent member submitted to the rambling talk, but at last and with a gesture of impatience he stopped, and touching one of the men on his shoulder, said:

"You'd get hold of the business end of a hornet—do you understand me now? I say there's the devil in the old man's eye, and he's in for us chaps with hot shot. Better leave him alone is my advice; now do you get it?" The other two winced and exchanged glances. "That's straight goods and no squealing," he added, emphatically. Then drawing his coat collar more closely under his chin he turned his face toward a side street. "Fact is, boys," he said, "I'm going home; good night," and without further word he strode away, leaving his confederates shivering in the frosty air.

## CHAPTER XI

## THE COMING OF VIVIAN — A FLOW OF SOUL.

By the uninformed it may be asked, whence came Zelma's wisdom, his powers to impress others, his great love of fellowship and wise discrimination concerning the affairs of men? It is but natural that minds living in the external should ask, for by asking alone comes light. Light is desired by the most clouded vision, and is in a greater or less degree acquired by all races who seek it. Zelma's life had been one of sacrifice and an untiring concentration toward the good. We do not need to review the history of one so much a master of himself. Suffice it to say that the writer, having been privileged to know some of the innermost secrets of Zelma's household, it may be meet that the reader should share to a certain extent this knowledge also.

Material environments are at first necessary, within which we must build the spiritual temple on earth. Before this chapter closes we purpose that it shall be better known why a house so large should have been placed at Zelma's disposal. The tradesman who reared it builded better than he knew. The busy

world about it to-day but little dreams what a mighty force for good is contained within its walls. It has long since become a center for the Brotherhood to gather about, where the spiritual forces, first correlated in the silence are given out in silence—forces that to-day are helping to mold human thought and action everywhere. And yet Zelma's house was but one center of the many in which the Magi speak during the silent watches of the night, while thousands in the outer world are sleeping the sleep of the unawakened

Beside the other rooms used for holy purposes, was one called the Temple of Silence. It was oblong, with only a single opening, that a door leading from a small entry-way but seldom used. All light in the daytime came from above, through corrugated glass; at night it was lighted by a system of electric bulbs so hidden from sight that there seemed to be emitted from everywhere a glow of diffused rays, which were made to reveal themselves only in such parts of the room as it was desired should be illuminated. At the east stood a triangular altar, upon which were three cressets. By means of skillful handiwork this end of the room was made to focus itself so as to guide the vision to a brilliant hanging crystal which, when the room was darkened, was all that remained luminous. Slanting out from the globe was a picture of the Sphinx upon one side, and that of a pyramid upon the other. Immediately above and beneath were pure white tablets of stone, upon which were

traced in shadowy letters several mottoes of the Egyptian sages. In the center of the room, lying before the altar, was an interwoven rug, the figure upon which was the universal pentacle—the double triangle and the circle and the cross. The main side and upper walls were covered with a pale green fabric, put on in plaits; in itself suggestive of silence. The floor was of wood, painted a pure white and polished. Other insignia, like the serpent girdling the tree of knowledge, the altar of fire and the dove of peace, were portrayed in easy reach of the eye, all emblematical of Rosicrucian lore, the occult sciences and the Wisdom Religion.

In this room no words were ever spoken, other than those to be read upon the walls. Only three persons had thus far ever entered it, save upon two occasions each year. These three were Zelma, his daughter Josephine and Omar Kava. On the same floor with the Temple was an ample lavatory, so built as to admit the fullest rays of the sun. Whenever the members were to enter the Temple, they first repaired to this room, where they laid aside all clothing, after which strict ablutions were had. Then they clothed themselves in robes of spotless white, the hoods of which nearly covered the wearer's face, this last to signify that all personality had been effaced. Sex was eliminated by the similarity of the robes. Is it not easy to determine from whence came the power of Zelma's household? There was in the Temple at all times a seeming of absolute peace, the

vibrations of which were so seldom interrupted that to think therein was to be lifted in the silence above earthly things and into that fabled realm of light which gives lustre to our dreams.

The two exceptional occasions above named, and when more than the three persons were admitted to the Temple, were the first Wednesdays after the full moon in January and July. At the time of our story the former date had arrived. A stranger from a foreign country was to come upon his biennial visit, the same as he had done for several years last past. This person, whom we will call Monsieur Vivian, was a brother adept from France. His office was to travel from one Brotherhood center to another, as agent, or dispenser of the means whereby each center was maintained. The day, or night, of his coming was regarded as one of holy contemplation and rejoicing. He had never yet failed them, for not only the day but the exact hour brought him invariably to Zelma's door.

Evening had come apace, and Dolphin had early sought her room, where Josephine had read her a fairy tale, until sleep had closed her pretty eyelids. It was an hour of rare expectancy. Only the chosen three knew of the appointment, the room of Maurice, the sick man, being so far removed from the living household that he would need to know nothing about it until morning. Omar Kava was busy arranging the dishes and silver upon the hospitable board which ever awaited the coming of Monsieur Vivian.

No advance word was ever sent by him, but so certain had it become that he would arrive at the appointed hour that no thought to the contrary was ever entertained.

Nine o'clock and the three sat down to meditate together in silence. It was a moment of exemplary faith which years of well doing had engendered. But their united thoughts had no more than centered themselves than a long, low vibration crept through the silence like a friendly whisper. Still with trained deliberateness did Omar Kava arise to answer the summons. A few minutes later he returned, followed by the Brother. The hour had indeed brought him thither.

Monsieur Vivian was a man of medium stature, with short black whiskers, a truly occult eye full of graphic tenderness, and his temperament was one which denoted a busy life. As he entered the parlor after having removed his outer clothing, his face lighted with an extreme yet quiet sense of pleasure. He took the hands of his friends and pressed them with humble brotherly love, then as on former occasions all bowed their heads and recited a mantrium together while they were yet standing. This done, Omar Kava at once withdrew to complete arrangements for the supper.

"Well," remarked Zelma, "the months have again rolled around and the world seems to be moving in its customary grooves; what new planetary signs have you discovered since you were last with us?"

Are we not about to enter the new cycle in very fact?"

Monsieur looked wisely down a moment. "The star of the night will soon fade in the daylight of a new era of activity, and our brethren of the cult may be among the chosen victors of the hour. There has been little of consolation during these many years of selfish conflict, but I believe the dawn will open to us a new world of ideation and discovery. It shall be as peace after an age of causeless warfare."

Josephine heard, and a beaming look of womanly interest covered her beautiful face. "The victory shall be as the second coming of the Christ spirit," she remarked, in simple tenderness of words.

"Yes," added Zelma, also in tones of an abiding love, "it is I think to be a fulfillment so complete that the sun's rays shall fall upon a race which has been crucified and made whole by the workings of unerring law."

Monsieur smiled his assent in silence. "And of the child Dolphin?" he enquired; "is she still a daughter of much promise?"

The mother's heart gave a leap of gladness, but she only nodded in response. The questioner needed no further answer.

Supper was soon announced, and the four sat down to partake of the feast, in the preparation of which Omar Kava had taken especial pride. It consisted of the simple products of nature culled from the fields rich with life-giving elements. Flesh food was un-

known in Zelma's household—only the cereals, vegetables and fruits which a wise Father has so abundantly furnished, were ever admitted. It was a feast indeed. Zelma and his daughter sat opposite, as did Vivian and Omar Kava. The entire repast having been served, none of the other servants were in attendance.

It would have been usurious for Zelma to have related to the visitor even a brief account of his recent work. He seldom cared to speak of it to anyone. Hence the time was taken up mostly with the narrative of Vivian's travels in foreign lands.

"It may not be amiss to say that some of the crowned heads of Europe are becoming able occultists," he remarked, in the course of the talk. "Their retinues of distinguished ministers and scholars are also discovering that real power is not acquired by the building of navies or by resort to arms, but that the mastery of mind invokes many secret forces which do not need so much as proclaiming to the world at large."

"I had surmised as much," replied Zelma, with a smile of fondness. "War must ere long become impossible; that has been my belief for many years."

"What nation or people would dare engage in deadly conflict with a knowledge of occult law behind them?" suggested Vivian. "The new century has much that is most promising to offer in pursuits other than war. The recent marked discoveries in science are but an index to what is to come. Multiply

these, and have sitting in every ruler's chair a mystic worthy of the cult he has mastered, and must there not be a millennium awaiting us? Never need we for a moment falter in our work, for to live, even, in this chosen age is a most coveted privilege."

"What have you to say of our own land?" asked Josephine.

"America is already rich with the sweets of the coming era. Every time I cross the continent I feel the improved vibrations of love and honored fellowship. One does not need to search far to discover growth on every hand. I have long since looked upon your cosmopolitan mixture of the races as a sign most favorable. The coming into your midst of foreign blood enriches your store of energy to a wonderful limit; else you would, with your hurried progress, become fine-spun and impracticable. All of the older nations are suffering from an isolation from the world. Retirement and exclusiveness is well enough in its way, but when a nation follows and encourages it, it gets lifted into the ether of idealism to a harmful degree. The same also with a person. One can tower heavenward and yet keep his feet firmly planted upon earth—of the world and for the world, so to speak. Your people are doing this, I think, and for this alone you will be destined to become in time the most practical and energetic nation upon the globe. To be sure, the politician and seeker after wealth have periods of tipping the ship of state almost to the danger line, but I see

gain even in this. These lower phases must be lived out, not suppressed as they have been in other lands. Even in the veriest fields of tares are to-day springing up stalks of ripening grain laden with untold nutriment. Liberty of speech means much to a people whose goal is the freedom of the ego."

"And yet it is the cults of India which the people of America need," remarked Omar Kava, with a smile of tender wistfulness. His broken speech was much in contrast with that of his friends.

"Yes, and since your philosophies have reached the fertile soil their value to mankind has certainly increased. Could India and America, for instance, experience a practical amalgamation, scourges and famines among our Oriental brethren would surely disappear. It is the admixture which prolongs life and urges us a step farther forward toward the incoming of the Universal Brotherhood. That in the future greater interchange will be sought I do not question, and thus will the vision of the Orient indeed be realized. The older nations have been kept back by the gross materiality of the younger, it is true, and we have been at war over terms and interpretations, but the Prana that has been stirred everywhere over the earth has been one and the same. Now we are beginning to know that there is but one Deity, one universal cause for all good, and one end to which all mankind is destined. Such revelations will most certainly make us brothers, when we have compassed their breadth and unvarying truths."

"Ah, yes, my dear Vivian," spoke Zelma, with feeling; "such is the tendency of all modern thought in both science and religion. As we come nearer together our discoveries and attainments are sure to increase many fold. Past history is full of the people's love of power. Statesmen have sought it, the jealous lords have loved it, and kings have used it without stint upon their subjects. Popes have centralized their forces to preserve the standing of the Romish church, while the English church gives us a history of great concentrated power; but in the future—" here Zelma spoke with added emphasis—"the new church is to be clothed with power unparalleled!"

"I believe it," responded Vivian.

"Yes, a power that shall live in the very silence, and that will tincture men's acts with the milk of human kindness rather than might," continued Zelma, still more earnestly. "For, is not the recent gathering together of the occult forces prophetic of this forthcoming change? Electricity is here and is already subservient to the will of man. This is but power gathered out of the silence. An Edison is born and new discoveries are given out. Knowledge is added to knowledge; what power is there more subtle and enduring than this? Why should we not combine this influx of wisdom with the oncoming religion, that it may become less abnormal and better suited to the needs of humanity?"

"It will be done, most assuredly," agreed Monsieur,

"Well, then, if this be true, to whom of earth's people shall the new power be entrusted?"

"To those who prove themselves worthy. Each student shall be entitled to such knowledge as he draws from out the akasa of the universe. That will be his personal right—his individual rights shall belong to the people. There will be no pope, no dictator with royal preferences, but the masses shall know many self-rulers who, rather than become as slaves to mere intellectual growth, shall be advocates of a heart religion suited to the needs of all. Then do you not see that the Christ spirit can enter in and make us lovers indeed? It is no idle dream to say that already we have marked evidences of man's regeneration, if we but rightly study the signs of the times."

These words were freighted with great significance, and coming from one whose life had been full of experiences, the truth they contained could not be overlooked. We would be pleased to quote more fully from the talk, but a lack of space forbids. For more than an hour was the feast enjoyed—a royal feast indeed, when we consider the unity of thought of those who participated. Josephine for the most time listened and learned much, while Omar Kava, who said but little, seemed to absorb every syllable that was offered.

There was to be an hour of meditation in the Temple, but before this was begun, Vivian took Omar Kava aside and placed in his hand a cheque

for the money he had brought them. A more faithful servant than he had never lived, and Monsieur trusted him implicitly. This completed the business portion of Vivian's visit. As soon as was practicable each member of the group prepared to enter the Temple, clothed as upon former occasions in the robes of the Brothers.

When they were at last standing therein, all lifted their eyes heavenward. First the glories were repeated, after which they took their respective seats. Stillness reigned supreme, a sublime, consoling stillness. The lights were turned low, thus leaving only the luminous globe visible. Seated as they were in a semi-circle, each member's gaze was readily fixed upon the crystal. The word "Light" had been chosen for meditation, which each repeated mentally. What an ideal presence was there being invoked in the name of peace and unity? It was not a seeking for novelty, such as the astral world has to offer us, but a concentration for the purpose of knowing the will of the Silent Forces, the principles of the Universal Law, which the forthcoming race will be called upon to study in secret.

As the moments passed, the globe became more effulgent with the light of the inner vision. What each person may have seen therein was never alluded to in speech. One may have seen the Brothers of the mountains gathered in conclave in some far-off land; another, perhaps, may have seen some symbol of Truth wreathed in the colors of the rainbow, while

another might have been shown some word of good cheer, or a mere flame of mellow light burning upon the altar of the gods. By keeping all these secret the delicate vibrations were never disturbed, which made further revealments in the future possible. Subject the knowledge thus attained to the adulteration of words, and the silence will yield but little that can be relied upon. Like our best thoughts which we are so often powerless to express, so must our most secret discoveries in the occult remain ours forever. This is the unalterable law and use of silence.

Again we ask, can the world wonder at the depth and breadth of the power which had been concentrated in Zelma's household? Yet it was the power of the glorified, not that magic which, in the domain of Self, consists of spoils and petty artifices.

Until the early hours of morning, and after the others had retired, did Zelma and his guest confer together. Their words were low and earnestly spoken, for there was much of importance to be planned for the next half year's work. But at last their talk was finished and both retired to await the early dawn. Only a few hours of sleep did Vivian secure, however, for daylight had scarcely begun to streak the eastern sky when a train for the West bore him out of the city to still other centers beyond.

## CHAPTER XII.

## WEARY OF LIFE.—SAVED BY A WORD OF LOVE.

AT NOON the next day there came a letter to Zelma which bore a strange message indeed. It was from a lady whom he had met and counseled some two years previous. She was then a woman of society, with lovable ways, the wife of a man of the world, and gifted with a magnetic personal presence which but few possess. She had lived a life such as society has to offer the great soul which is destined to shine for the day then pass into obscurity. The letter carried a burden most distressing. Its magnetism would have chilled a person less self-centered than Zelma, who, after he had finished reading it, sat for several minutes in debatable silence. He could not at first bring his philosophies to bear upon a piece of news so startling. To let his sympathies run would have been indiscreet, and to have denied a sorrowing spirit aid would have been little less than cruel.

The letter recounted the honors which flattering admirers had accorded its writer. How in the mastery of the moment she had been as one lifted into

personal power, where, with sensuous lips she had tasted freely of the tainted elixir. Her life had been childless, save for the children of love who had gathered about her and called her blessed. She had met scores of admirers and listened to their praises with apparent indifference, while her soul drank still deeper of the sweetened drug. The end came and she was wrapped in widow's weeds. Where she once shone others perhaps as attractive as she were now shining. Friends had fallen away, her palace of imagery had been shattered, and what could there be left her now but death—that dark river of Lethe into whose waters so many a tired soul has plunged as the last mad act of a mistaken career. As if the hand of a suicide might palliate its own offense by a confession to one so near to God, she had, with tears of remorseful despair, written this letter to her old-time friend and adviser. Could she not through him find partial forgiveness for taking her own life in this hour of utter darkness? Before another sunset she hoped her struggle would be over. The missive was unsigned, and but for the lettering in an upper corner Zelma would scarcely have known who it was from.

Could anything have come about to stir him more profoundly? Duty at once spoke to him and bade him act with promptness. Accordingly he arose and prepared to go to the home of his friend. In another ten minutes he was on his way. It was an almost cloudless afternoon, and the sun shone upon the glinting snow in prismatic colors, while the great

boulevards were everywhere alive with the scores of fashionable turnouts and the ceaseless music of sleigh bells. Into the faces of many Zelma looked and read their innermost secrets. Some of whom he saw were dead and soulless, mere shadows of men and women, going through their long-since obsolete performance called pleasure.

His ring at the door of one of the elegant south side residences for a time brought no response from within. Every shade was drawn and an atmosphere of sadness seemed to lurk in every nook. How strange that a warming sun like that which rode the heavens should fall upon a house so bereft of cheerfulness. Dozens of homes in the neighborhood betrayed evidences of life and enjoyment, but this one—well, would Zelma be able to so much as gain admittance, even upon an errand of unselfish mercy? He waited for several minutes, when he heard the bolt turn in the lock, and a moment later the door swung ajar. A middle-aged mulatto woman stood before him and took his card. When bade to enter he seated himself in the dimly lighted parlor. To a sensitive soul like his there was a presence in the house most dispiriting. A chilling dampness with a taint of age seemed to prevail, vastly in contrast with the genial warmth of Zelma's own fireside. There was no resounding to the words that were spoken, for the heavy drapings had deadened the acoustics, while the large portrait of the dead husband which stood upon an easel, and which was draped in heavy

mourning, seemed more like the memory of a marrowless man who had lived much in the material. The books upon the table had become soulless from neglect, and the former spirit of all else seemed to have flown into the shadows of forgetfulness. Still, true to his faith, Zelma endeavored to hold himself positive so far as he was able, that he might not lose the incense of love and charity he had brought with him and which he hoped to bestow upon another.

In the midst of his musings he heard a low-spoken word from the servant.

"If you please, sir, missus will see you in her own room," she said.

With a ready acquiescence Zelma arose and followed the servant up stairs. Everywhere the same barrenness prevailed. The sun's rays were shut out from the windows, and in his friend's own room there was little daylight visible. She who was once known as the gifted and charming Emily Fessenden sat, half reclining upon a sofa before a grate in which burned a dull, unresponsive coal fire. Her once beautiful features were pale and dejected, while a fear like that of one betrayed looked out of a pair of large eyes, around which dark rings had formed themselves. She did not arise when Zelma entered, nor did she bid him welcome. Laying aside his overcoat and hat he drew his chair up beside her, still without speaking a word. He readily understood the irresponsible state of mind into which she had fallen. Sitting thus he mentally demanded of the

Most High such help and guidance as he should need. Thus was he able to preserve a perfect peace within. A sob was all he heard. His own and the sorrower's souls seemed quick to blend in mutual oneness. His was not a pity which wastes itself in words, but it was the charm of a silent language more potent than pity. It was the love of one human being who had suffered and lived for another who had but just reached the depths of suffering. Sob after sob soon fell upon the silence which otherwise remained unbroken. Then there came a calm as if the sufferer was resting. Like one groping in the dark she at last reached forth her hand, which Zelma took with kindly reverence. Soon she seemed like one in sleep. Zelma gave thanks and brushed away a tear from his own eye which he could not keep back.

A half hour was thus spent in silent communion. It was all indeed a revelation to Zelma. Before his vision passed one by one the events which had made up the life of his friend. It was a past dotted with moments of regret, even in the midst of her many social triumphs. Is it not the destiny of some to climb to greater heights than others that the downfall shall be attended with deeper pain? Great souls have led many a menial army, only to bite the dust in despair when the shallowness of victory is discovered.

While Zelma thought his friend slept on. A comforting halo seemed gradually to fill the room. Once a faint smile flitted across the sleeper's face—some

dream, perhaps, to heal her shattered memory. She may have been young again and living once more amid the scenes of her early childhood, or she may have been face to face with her dual self, while the universe of planets and time stand still. Who could not have been soothed in moments thus real and fraught with spiritual rest?

Finally Zelma began in low-spoken tones a few kind words—sentences fit for a child who had wearied of its school. There was a peculiar gentleness in all he said. Mrs. Fessenden, who had gradually awakened, listened, but made no response. As the picture of a regenerate life was slowly unfolded before her, she breathed like one who was willing at least to live for a moment in absolute dependence, as would a child in its mother's arms. When her counselor ceased speaking she opened her eyes and gave him a long, studious look of appeal.

“And if I choose to live?” she asked. Her voice sounded like that of one whose spirit had been long depressed.

“But you need to live—there is everything in the wide world to live for. Do you not see that, having passed the ordeal of the lower life, you are all the more fitted for the higher? Think of the thousands who have not the courage to live. You would not care to consign your soul to an uncertain existence among the astral legions, when all that you hold most dear is left behind you. To me life is sweet; to you it is equally as dear, could you but understand its

meaning. Ah, yes, live my dear friend of earth, and thy days shall yet be crowned with peace and happiness."

"But the barrenness of the past has been terrible," said Mrs. Fessenden, clutching at Zelma's hand with a tighter grasp. "I have not lived; I have suffered even when the world was envying me my reputed happiness. When left a widow I strove to shut myself in with my bereavement. Then I could not sleep. I saw rivalry among those who had been my friends, and I could but turn from them in disgust. When the bonds of friendship have been thus debased, is there left a just cause to live?"

"Most certainly there is. Friendships are of human origin. Our one mistake is the dependence we put upon them. The emancipated soul can and does stand alone. While he mingles with an open heart among his fellows, there are times each day when he stands aloof from every earthly tie. Such a being distrusts no one, for he sees beyond all human frailties. Think you an illumined soul prefers the uncertainty of death to the sweetness of an obedient life?"

"Can one stand alone—alone?" implored Mrs. Fessenden, with her wrapt gaze fixed upon vacancy.

"Alone with one's God—yes, why not alone?"

"I cannot understand. I had supposed one's motive of life was the acquirement of many friends. To a true companion one can confide one's innermost thoughts."

"To Him who gave us life can we best confide. Then we are indeed at rest," persuaded Zelma.

A new light that moment became visible upon the sufferer's features. What if these words were true? What if there was yet a balm in Gilead, an elixir outside of and beyond the finite conception? Encouraged by his own words Zelma continued:

"When we rear our earthly temples we forget that the glitter of the jewels therein are still of earth. When we awake to a realization of this we cry out in despair, and think of life as a sham as well. What next? We then become negative and admit into our aura the elementals who crowd the negative sphere—astrals who sap the life we have so unwittingly thrown down as false. What then? Why, our first thoughts are of oblivion. Our impulse is to fling away our one opportunity to live, and seek to find surcease in death. But think a moment. Why hurl our benighted selves in among that horde of malignant beings? Why not wear our scars of the past and enter still a better life on earth? In brief, why not rise above self absolutely and thereby forget our sufferings? It is the self, positively the self that suffers. Every known sorrow is proof that we are thinking more of ourselves than of anyone else."

With a hesitating movement Mrs. Fessenden sat upright and seemed for the moment to catch a glimmer of hope. Some unwelcome presence seemed to have forsaken her. Then from out her hollow eyes she stared questioningly at her guest.

“Let me draw a mental picture before you, please,” he said, taking added courage. “Suppose that with what means you have at your disposal you were to open your house to some work for the common good, or arrange to teach the world somewhat of the truths you have so dearly learned. Or, suppose you were to have in view some other and perhaps untried work for the redemption of those who have fallen and who are the despondent ones of earth. I opine that your first act would be to put aside those widow’s weeds, for they only serve to draw the elementals closer about you. Then without regard for public opinion you would begin by letting the sunshine into your house. With your great breadth of being hosts of the truer, humbler lives would soon hover about you and call you blessed. Think you there would not come into your heart, made warm by the glow of renewing life, a happiness too sacred to be envied? To me such a mission would seem divine, for its simplicity alone would be proof of its sacredness. Why make our existences complex by our own self-wills, when there is a Will overshadowing us with a light that bids us live indeed?”

Zelma’s listener had again bowed her head in silence. Her bosom heaved with feeling, and it was evident that the dual natures were struggling for supremacy. The first sentence which broke the air filled her friend with a thrill of gratitude.

“And may I, can I live to attain all these?” she cried, rising and pacing the floor with sudden dignity.

"Certainly; you have the universe with all its wealth to draw from. You need but to become fairly awake to the love which a grateful world stands ready to bestow upon you and after that nothing will again tempt you to let go of yourself. Positive souls find eternal kinship even in the solitude."

"And I must stand alone!—alone!" she repeated, going to the window and peering out at the light of day. As if this were the first ray of sunshine she had seen for years, she bent forward and felt its golden warmth. How pale and yet how grandly just did she seem, standing thus between life and death, every moment becoming less conscious of the sorrows which had weighted her down.

"Heaven grant that you may not be alone; others may be glad to do the same as you," murmured Zelma, prayerfully.

At the sound of his voice Mrs. Fessenden turned and looked at him with absent inquiry. He met her gaze with the steadfastness of a saint, while she stood like one struggling with the knotty environments of the past. Soon with hands locked behind her she cast her eyes upward. Zelma's heart was overflowing, and he sat and breathed with her in silence. He prayed with unspoken words as would the Samaritan who sees God in the trees, or who talks with angels by the wayside. Possibly a lost soul had been reclaimed from out the ashes of the past! But further words soon forced themselves to Zelma's lips.

“You will not be alone—certainly you will not; others have tasted the same cup of bitterness, the same sense of longing and barrenness of life. Some have risen and conquered; others have fallen for lack of faith. One has but to look up and discover in the sunbeams the promise of heaven’s first love in all its purity. Shut your eyes to this and the night is indeed dark and lonely.”

By this time the speaker’s words were tempered with accents of deepest sympathy. His hostess still stood with her face turned partly away from him, and with her body swaying to and fro. At last her adviser ceased speaking and all became still. Zelma secretly felt that this was a fearful moment—a moment of barter with the fates, in which a human life was at stake.

At last his listener turned slowly about and their glances met. A strange sad smile was creeping to her lips, while the tear stains were yet upon her cheeks. Presently, and with the impulse of a child she dropped upon her knees and hid her face upon his lap. A wail of bitterness escaped her, but Zelma believed this to be the last echo of her retreating sorrows. When her grief had at last spent itself and she had grown once more calm, she raised her eyes and basked in the quiet fondness of his gaze. What a vision was this for Zelma! The smile which had at first touched her lips had now covered her entire features. It was the word of a forgiven child which was struggling to escape her. When Zelma became

conscious of this a deeper thrill of hope went coursing through his veins.

“Can you—will you live for the welfare of those who suffer? for those who are deserving of life, but who know not God or His ministering angels?” he asked, now in words of saintly tenderness.

The instant of time which followed was almost harrowing to contemplate. Had Zelma asked more than an even measure of justice? Whether he had or not the suspense was none the less significant. Now the word of a truly penitent soul seemed about to escape the sufferer’s lips. But a strangely real and humble smile preceded it.

“Yes, with heaven’s help will I stand alone and live for those who need me!” she vowed in solemn speech; and like one who was indeed alone she still knelt and lifted her eyes in prayer.

A soul without her past sufferings could not have put such accents into the promise. Though Zelma did not respond in words, a wave of thanksgiving swept over him such as he had never before experienced.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## A CHILD OF LOVE.—UNSAVORY LITERATURE.

How subtle indeed is the power of love! It may turn aside the hand of Death, or it may hush the wail of the infant at night. When Zelma sat alone in his library that evening he pondered long upon the experiences of the day. A strange duty had fallen to his lot. He believed he had never before been so deeply moved to act in an emergency; and yet, can we ever fully realize the magnitude of the powers we dare to invoke in times of need? Suppose one's gathered forces should be used against a creature of earth, one who perchance is momentarily weak and irresponsible; would there not come to us out of the unseen an aid equally as potent? It is a strange yet apparent truth, that one's powers to do good or evil are drawn from the same source of supply—from the same first cause or original manifestation of force. Whether a child laughs or cries, the same set of emotions are brought into play. We can be as a saviour or as a fiend, for it is magic white or magic black, wholly as we make it. Then can we wonder at the cunning of him who sets himself at

work to do a wrong? First the evil doer centralizes his will, full of hypnotic suggestion, and if an act of sin be committed it is called the work of the devil. Is it not rather the work of him who has acquired a secret power—a power identical with that which inspires the saint to offer up his life for the sake of principle?

Coming back to the thoughts of his friend, Zelma imagined what might be the quality of her grief. Who but a would-be suicide knows the depths of suffering? There is a chill of sterility which gathers about the desponding one as black as night. Reason is warped and the heart is dumb and aching. Just preceding the act the sufferer stands alone with his God. Earth's memories are blotted out and a prayer for oblivion is uttered, perhaps unconsciously, in the direst of despair. But does the soul find oblivion? The seers tell us that it is the intensest quality of life that follows—life that must battle against the clouds of doubt and darkness, perhaps for ages. Better by far that the sorrowing soul becomes a creeping thing upon earth than a victim to a haunted conscience in the great beyond. The tendency to self-destruction sweeps over a city like an epidemic. We hear of one case and a dozen follow after. Then there seems to be a lull. Does it need a seer to tell us that out of the astral regions comes the whisper of temptation to him who desponds? Yet let the despondent being become aware of this truth and he will rise above it; without it he yields with the weakness of those who

have preceded him. For the suicide there is no law save the law of conscience. When this is violated the victim himself closes the door of appeal to a higher court.

Thus it was Zelma's habit to find a practical application for each truth as he discovered it, else his work for mankind would have been less effective. To-night he saw with a clearer vision many things which had seemed obscure to him. It was indeed an hour of rest as well as meditation. Eight o'clock had not yet arrived when his musings were interrupted by the entrance of Josephine and Dolphin, who, as on many similar occasions, came silently in and took their seats beside him. Dolphin carried in her hand a paper filled with coarse wood cuts and titles which were bold and printed in very black ink. She had found it wrapped about a parcel which had been sent to the house.

"Dolphin has been amusing Maurice this afternoon by reading to him," was Josephine's first remark. There was a mixed expression of mirth and realism upon her face as she spoke. Dolphin had drawn her stool up very near her grandsire, and resting both elbows upon his knees was looking gravely up into his face.

"About robbers," she said, very seriously.

"And was Maurice entertained, my dear?" asked Zelma.

"Oh, yes, I guess so. When I got to where they had a duel he went to sleep."

Zelma fondly stroked his loved one's pretty cheeks. "What did you do then?" he asked.

"I read it all through to myself; and it was awful how those robbers got killed. One crawled away into a cave and died all alone," and the child's eyes hung heavy with pity. "But say, grandpa?"

"Well, my dear."

"Something that last robber did I don't quite understand. Nobody was with him, you remember, but the story tells how he talked some dreadful queer things just before he died. Now, how do they know he said such things?"

"Oh—but the story is not true at all. It was just assumed to be true" explained Zelma, hesitating a little before he could find a fitting reply.

Dolphin's eyes fell a moment. "Then why couldn't they have printed what they knew really did happen, and then *assume* that to be true?" she asked, exerting her wisdom to the utmost. "Look at that great big hero with the dagger; do you suppose he will ever get killed?"

"Does it say he was the hero?"

"Yes; and they put him in a lion's den the same as they did Daniel, and he killed two of the lions and married the princess besides! I guess he was a hero; don't you think he was?"

Zelma smiled and exchanged glances with Josephine. "Let me read another kind of a story to you, my dear," he said, arising and taking a small volume from the book case. When he sat down again

Dolphin laid her head upon his knee and listened. It was one of Andersen's fairy tales, and was full of weirdness and many extravagant happenings. While it could not possibly have been true, there was a deep undercurrent of the flavor of truth running through it, which seemed to please Dolphin's extreme honesty of self. So interested did she become that presently the story paper slipped from her fingers and fell upon the floor. Zelma's tone of voice, soothing and pathetic, made the narrative seem most natural in all its queerness. A sigh of pity heaved from Dolphin's bosom, and she listened with a model faith, much as if she drank in through her sympathies its motives only. The story was long and Zelma read it through to the end. Glancing down at his child he saw that her eyelids were closed. Josephine discerned this also, then looking up she nodded her understanding. Their little Dolphin was fast asleep.

Down at the gaunt pictures in the newspaper did both Zelma and his daughter look with studious eyes. Tiny fingers of innocence had carried the sheet about that afternoon, while the little head had been troubling itself not a little to reconcile the circumstances of an improbable work of fiction. It is indeed true that the writer of a sensational novel has the power of a Hercules to thus taint the susceptible minds of our youth. As we have before stated, we believe it to be the identical force or universal expression of force that glorifies the saint, only it has been misapplied by the writers themselves.

"Still, can our children always be kept from a knowledge of lowly things?"

"I think it would be impossible," Zelma replied, thoughtfully. "They should be so trained in the principles of love and self-reliance that they shall have no affinity for that which is gross. Dolphin's respect for the good and true may cause her to reject all such literature in the future. If not, some counter suggestion only will be needed to alienate her from it. Non-resistance, coupled with simple demonstrations of the truly beautiful, is all a child of tender years requires. After the years of discretion have been reached the child is self-taught. Make the better side the most attractive and it will win every time."

Still frequently did these little discussions drop in between Zelma and his daughter, each of them fruitful of added love and wisdom. Life, it seemed, was destined to unfold itself to them in such everyday lessons of simple fact. It needed but the proper vision to find a ready adaptation for them.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## A PUBLIC SURPRISE.—MRS. FESSENDEN'S CALLERS.

Yes, it was true that Dolphin had become a frequent visitor to her friend Maurice's room. None can realize the depth and breadth of a child's nature as does the invalid. She would seem to come in when his hours were the darkest and when old memories were the most troublesome. She, as much as any of the others, gave him thoughts that were new and original. He seemed to be learning anew the simple lesson of love, and that, too, from a child, the one lesson which, because of his downfall, had suffered a serious neglect. By this time he was able to dress himself and recline in an easy chair most of the day. His strength was returning only slowly. Into the mirror he would look and marvel much at the change. Some new being had been born into life, out of whose eyes a conscious soul was beginning to discover the light of day. He read much, and his talks with Zelma were frequent and enjoyable. At night he would fall peacefully asleep, and at each new dawn could see that he was a little stronger and one day nearer his much hoped-for recovery. He

almost hourly wondered in what way he could repay his friends for their kindnesses. Indeed, do not our debts of gratitude toward others many times outlaw before we are able to discharge them? Well, the hand that works cheerfully needs but little reward; the summing up all appears in the final rendering, wherein not a figure is added wrong.

We are told that it is the unexpected that happens; and the annals of the following week contained at least one proof of the saying. The daily papers were full of it, and the clubs were discussing it. How a woman once a leader in society as Mrs. Fessenden had been, could, in the face of a critical public, come out from under the shadows of her grief and begin a work wholly for the world, was an enigma. There is no happening too abnormally strange for a mystery-loving public. Was the lady bidding for fame? or was she not posing as a martyr? or, was it only a dexterous move on the part of one who had buried all hope of life, to win a fortune which a dotting people might care to bestow upon her because she was a woman? Or, indeed, why did she elect to cut loose from the established rules of conventional charity, without some slight recognition of bygone methods?

The word had gone out that she had, or was about to open a School of Modern Home Ethics. She, a creature who had lived not wisely, was to teach! What had she to teach? All these questions were discussed for a time very liberally. The public prints, alive to the tastes of their readers, pictured the lady's

misfortunes in all their various settings, until, amid the hurry of rumor-chasing, her proposed venture seemed to be almost wholly lost sight of. It was true, however, that her enterprise was to be a decidedly original one, in that it was to be a school of unpopular rather than of popular education. It would seem that when a mortal enters a new life alone, with the entire past obliterated, and with its opportunities for redemption to be crowded into a few short years of physical breathing, there is apt to be a decidedly original flavor in all it undertakes. Not only that, but to a soul thus truly emancipated from self, popular comment is of little moment.

Thus the guessing of Mrs. Fessenden's motives went on more or less spasmodically for several days, but like other doubtful things that have come and gone, their fullest details remained undiscovered. The sober minds would have said that she was aiming to do the world a simple kindness. And yet credulous people looked askance and smiled, and seemed to decide that the lady's recent unhappiness was all that was worth talking about. Of course they were aware that other homes had been wrecked in dishonor; Mrs. Fessenden's condition of mind had been brought about merely by the loss of her husband and a tendency to morbidness which sometimes follows a death in the family. With public opinion thus critical and outspoken, it is not strange that the popular verdict was against her, and that it was most convenient to believe that public charities never

could be rightly dispensed by one whose popularity in the fashionable world had paled. So the seal of disapproval was set upon her movements from the first. She should at least have begun her work when in high favor with her multitude of admirers.

But let us brush this spider web of gossip aside and go back to our story. We think it was truly evident that Mrs. Fessenden had been born again; then why should she not inherit the kingdom of heaven, according to holy writ? There seems to come a time in the earthly existence of every mighty soul, when to live or not to live is a toss-up at best. Zelma's counsel had had its effect, but the real assistance had come from the inner centers of the sufferer's own being. The teacher can suggest, but the wayfarer of our planet must seek and find alone and without counsel. Then how cheerfully does the illumined soul cling to the newer life when its real sweetness is discovered!

We have said that Mrs. Fessenden's plans were original. She had resolved to open her house, first, as a home for woman whose genius was unrecognized; secondly, to teach girls coming into womanhood the ethics of maternity. Neither of these, however, appeared in her first announcement, hence the great variety of rumors that had been set afloat. Her purpose was to follow no existing standards, either as to morality or intellectuality. It was to be a school merely for that which the busy world has tacitly decreed as unpopular.

Yet notwithstanding the forgetfulness of the general public, certain penetrating minds heard and were thoughtfully silent. Among these was Zelma's esteemed friend, Mr. Adolphus Gilbert, who, as we may readily surmise, had recently had the welfare of mankind at heart in more ways than one. About the third day after the news came out, he resolved upon making another visit to the seer; he wanted to get his opinions upon the subject about which so much had been said. It was a fact that he felt a wholesome sympathy for the project, to say the least. Accordingly he went directly to Zelma's house, and was gratified at finding him quite unoccupied and in the best of spirits.

"Yes, my friend," replied the seer when the subject was broached, "the leaven in the bread is working, depend upon it. I have just been reading a comment or two upon the subject myself. Some curious attitudes do the papers take, really."

"But will the lady succeed?" Mr. Gilbert enquired.

"I do not care to entertain either a hope or doubt as to that." Zelma said this with a smile of easy deference. "We get an inspiration to do an act, and if we do it, there our interests end. The motive has been framed, the thought has been set afloat, and like other thoughts that have gone before, it must do its work somewhere. I never look for results. This gives one a half more time for rest and to prepare one's self to do again. We need only to be satisfied that the act is a just one and impinges upon no other

person's rights; if we perform it unselfishly there must at least be the element of success in it."

"True, I believe that," reflected Mr. Gilbert. "And so far as I can judge I believe the project will live—somehow a feeling comes over me that it will. Some such plan would be my idea of public beneficence. We need to strike at the root of things. For myself, I would like nothing better than to give the work Mrs. Fessenden has undertaken my fullest endorsement."

Zelma smiled to himself, but not a word about the part he had taken in the lady's affairs. He was never known to betray a trust however slight.

"I think you will find that she is one of us," he said, merely. "And did you ever notice," he continued, philosophically, "that when an expression of divine law begins to be operative, minds which are sympathetic are drawn closer together? I mean such minds as are particularly adapted to the work to be undertaken. This you will find is true in our national legislation. Statesmen go to congress and resolve upon some phase of reform. If that reform has been ordered by the law of necessity, other constituents draw near and offer aid. Soon a very powerful battery is formed, ostensibly out of minds strong in certain convictions. As a matter of fact the popularity of the measure is a direct outgrowth of the vital needs of a people, and not the product of individual minds. Let the measure be a selfish one, carried out wholly on party lines, and it wears itself

threadbare in endless debate and comes to naught. I believe all great reforms are ordered for us in advance, and he is the most powerful legislator who first discovers it. Such conditions of progress being at all times uniform, social reforms are begun and carried on in the same way exactly. Mrs. Fessenden may have touched a truly sympathetic chord, the vibrations of which many must feel, for such is the unwritten law under which the planets move and human kind exists."

"Her ideas of independence seem to be all-sufficient," remarked Mr. Gilbert. "She has doubtless given little heed to the popular verdict."

"What a talkative world has to say need not make the slightest difference. The lady's motives are without doubt sincere ones, and if so the popular verdict cuts no figure whatever. Once let it be made manifest that certain phases of our civilization are to be, must be, and are the result of a fixed law, then popular prejudice will have ceased entirely. To minds that are truly great there is no popular verdict."

"Yes, I understand; such reasoning would represent the esoteric side," conceded Mr. Gilbert. He spoke with fondness, for it had pleased him to find that there was likely soon to be one new and distinct accomplishment in the school of modern thought. The more he conversed upon the subject the more feasible did Mrs. Fessenden's plans seem to him.

"While a school is never a school until the growth of a people makes it necessary" further reasoned

Zelma, "the rank and file of those to be benefitted must on the whole be self-taught, so far as the real education is concerned. Schools are but mirrors in which the pupil sees a reflection of the outer individual; the inner self needs no mirror, for it casts no shadow. The teacher's work is initiative, but the self-training is more imperative because it represents the real instead of the unreal."

Very much in line with Zelma's philosophies were these words, and also such other remarks as came up during the interview. The talk proved a feast of good things, as usual. It was true that before Mr. Gilbert left the house he had taken Mrs. Fessenden's cause much at heart. This fact, however, he did not fully make known to his host, who, with his own gift of insight may possibly have divined as much. For the first time since his acquaintance with Zelma he did not so much as allude to his own domestic affairs. It may have been that he, like hundreds of others, could find little place for personal troubles in the broader outlying vision.

Immediately upon reaching home, and as soon as he was seated in his library he opened his desk and penned the following note:

MRS. EMILY FESSENDEN

Dear Madam:—It gives me extreme pleasure to learn of your proposed work in behalf of a needy humanity, some of the particulars of which I find in my morning paper. Though we may not all have

the faculty of perceiving our exact duty at once, we can at least lend a helping hand by endorsing the good deeds of others. I have been several times impressed of late that one of our city's greatest needs is a school such as you propose. I believe it should have a foundation so broad that all possibility of sectionalism shall be debarred; this would bring it in fullest accord with the growing liberal sentiment of the age. In other words, it should be for the people and of the people in fact as well as in name. Doubtless all this has been fully resolved upon by you and needs no urging on the part of anyone. Rest assured, however, that if my humble efforts to help further your cause are needed, you are entitled to them at any time. Again permit me to express my gratitude to you in behalf of a needy public, and believe me your friend and well wisher,

ADOLPHUS GILBERT, JR.

After dispatching the letter Mr. Gilbert for the first time truly realized the satisfaction of one who gives aid to a worthy cause. What, then, with the legions of minds who were at that same moment planning to secure a liberation of soul—planning secretly and by the aid of magic of every name and nature to discover some royal road to content, even though sorrowing humanity is to be left to shift for itself? Certain uninformed persons go to the psychics and believe they invoke the spirits of the dead to further their ends, and the wily speculator pockets his gains with a chuckle, yet no lasting peace of soul

results. Why? Because the demands of a common fellowship exist and are ever with us, and peace of soul means the abandonment of self-love for the higher attributes of an ideal tolerance and helpfulness. It was indeed Mr. Gilbert's wish that Mrs. Fessenden's plans should succeed. The sincerity of his wish ought to have been equally as potent as his words. However, he felt sure he had done no more than his honest duty in writing the letter; and with his far-seeing mind so long trained to business, he believed he could predict for the enterprise a much wider scope than its founder had anticipated. This we believe is frequently the result of a unity of minds.

But let us depart from the flesh for a time, and in spirit follow the letter to its destination. When the door of Mrs. Fessenden's house opens for the carrier, let us slip noiselessly in and look around. We are astonished at the change. The sunshine is streaming in at every window, every remnant of sombre draping has been taken from the pictures, the fires in the grates burn with a ruddy cheerfulness, and an atmosphere of comfort reigns where before had been the chill of spiritless languor. The servants step with a quicker tread, and we find the perfume of flowers in every nook. Madam Fessenden herself, busy at her library desk, is robed in a gown of modest though cheerful shades, and while we see traces of her past sufferings upon her features, we behold thereon a thoughtful, settled purpose to us most gratifying.

But Mr. Gilbert's letter came not alone. Madam takes the package of mail and opens the missives one by one. We see her smile occasionally as she reads, and she seems every moment to be growing younger in years. Can it be possible that there are so many warm hearts in a single city?

When Mr. Gilbert's note is opened she first glances at the signature. With a quickened interest she raises her eyes and reads the letter through. For a minute thereafter she sits and stares into vacancy. Was it not at a reception Mr. Gilbert once gave to some distinguished nobleman that she met so many attentive admirers? The house was thronged; a countess was there; she it was who gave her such unqualified attention, as did the nobleman also—yes, yes, that was at Millionaire Gilbert's house; and now—indeed! were her best ambitions to find favor among the wealthy as well? Here are letters from matrons, from christian ministers, from mothers bowed in grief for the loss of daughters untaught in the better life, yet few, very few from people who are called aristocratic. The bold business hand of Mr. Gilbert is distinguishable in every word of his note. The emanations it gives off seem most agreeable to her. Though the note is one of many of like tenor, in it Mrs. Fessenden finds a sort of willing comradeship she cannot define. This may have been owing to the friendly thoughts Mr. Gilbert had sent her after he dispatched the letter.

But the reading of Mrs. Fessenden's correspon-

dence is just then interrupted by a caller. She glances at her watch ; it is two o'clock, the hour she had advertised to receive applicants for teachers. She is in want of two thoroughly qualified assistants to help teach the ethics of maternity. A middle-aged woman, wearing eye-glasses and a smile of assurance is presented by the servant. Her face is powdered, her jewelry, though there is considerable of it, is becoming, and her form is laced to a fashionable elegance. Mrs. Fessenden's heart sinks within her. Is this person pretending to pose as a sample of American motherhood ? Yet she seems to stifle her heartbeats and proceeds to business.

"What are your qualifications, please," she asks.

"Two years of physiology, one of anatomy, and a year in a technical training school."

"Have you children of your own ?"

A peculiar smile wreaths the lady's lips. "I have never married," she says, with a mere hint of pride. "Your advertisement did not state—"

"No, I did not mention what qualifications were necessary ; I left that to the imagination of the reader. I will, however, take your name and address in case I wish to correspond with you hereafter."

This interview seems unduly short, but evidently Mrs. Fessenden has thoughts which she does not divulge. Not many minutes after caller number one departs a second one is announced. This time there appears a woman with a florid, energetic face who

might have sometime been a matron in an asylum. Her credentials are quickly enumerated.

"I am a widow with ten children, three of them married, two at work at their trades and five in school. I am an advocate of old-fashioned methods and remedies, have had every shade of experience worth mentioning, and am fifty-two years of age."

'Your nativity, please?'

"American by birth, but of Scotch descent."

Mrs. Fessenden seems a little perplexed. The next thing is to ask for references. With a ready business tact the caller hands her a list of seven. For some little time the applicant's personality seems to overshadow Mrs. Fessenden; and yet, a woman who has reared ten children successfully, all of them living, and she still able to earn enough to keep five of them in school, is certainly a person to be revered. But—and Mrs. Fessenden looks somewhat helplessly into the caller's face—would not her extremely practical and zealous nature give the school a seeming of amplitude rather than of culture? The best she seems able to do is to take her name, which she does, and the applicant departs, evidently satisfied that she has made an excellent impression.

The third applicant is a person vastly unlike the others. She is a genial, placid old lady, with grey hair crimped modestly above her forehead, and is to all appearance a woman of refinement. Mrs. Fessenden evinces new hope and gives her a smiling welcome. The caller sits down and adjusts her glasses,

and seems most amiable and mannerly. She listens to Mrs. Fessenden's questions, and as good fortune would have it, they are all satisfactorily answered. Then the caller puts a question of her own.

"With what religious faith is the school to be affiliated?"

"None whatever; it is to be wholly non-sectarian. The utmost liberality of thought is the only motive thus far considered."

Then a queer, half pathetic look comes into the caller's face, and she smiles with considerable effort.

"I am sorry," she says, "but I think I will not apply. Our minister would not approve of it, I know."

"Very well," and Mrs. Fessenden arises to dismiss her, but evidently not without a pang or two of genuine regret.

Then she sits down once more to her letters and awaits the coming of further callers. Here were difficulties at the very outset; will she need to succumb to them, or not? As we are present in spirit only, we can but look sympathetically on in silence, and marvel at the wiles of human nature. The warmest heart must of needs beat in vain for a world in hopeless bondage.

As she sits and reads the missives we withdraw from her presence as quietly as we came. Had we been denizens of the flesh we might have been moved to shed a tear or two in her behalf. As it is we go away with some very sober opinions about things in general. There may be gospel in everyday

righteousness, but must it be ever hid beneath the cloak of respectability to make it genuine? The niceties of virtue have many queer-minded followers. We have regarded human liberty as the bulwark of conscience. So have others; but whether spirits of the air or mortals with the five senses of the flesh, we do revolt when it comes to hair-splitting. Every nearly perfect person has at least one monster weakness.

## CHAPTER XV.

## MAURICE'S STORY.—ZELMA'S MUNIFICENT OFFER.

A MONTH passed quickly by. On certain occasions during these weeks Maurice had confided to his friends much of his past life that was exceedingly interesting. It was on an evening while they were all seated in the parlor that he told them the principal story of his career, and the occasion was one of those rare events which are so apt to drop into the lives of sympathetic souls without motive or previous planning. To Maurice it seemed indeed a happy culmination of his recent troubles to find a group of four living beings so deeply interested in his welfare, and so willing to listen and so charitable for his past as they had thus far understood it.

"Yes, there is even more I have not told you" he said, reflectively. He had hesitated as if loath to reveal the entire facts, even now. "If you wish it I can tell you why I was tempted and how I became a victim to the lower life," he said, finally.

"We shall be most happy to hear it," spoke Josephine, with a woman's ready sympathy. Zelma regarded Maurice enquiringly, and Dolphin, young as

she was, seemed to instinctively join in the wishes of her elders, while Omar Kava expressed an equal interest and paid the closest attention during the recital.

“Well, I was reared by a widowed mother, who died before I became of age. Some three years before her death I had been apprenticed to a firm in this city whose business was the manufacture of electrical appliances. I seemed to have been an inventor from birth, and during my boyhood I started to build many a model, but would throw each one aside under some impulse of a newer thought which would seem to come to me unbidden. When the time came for me to engage in actual construction under systematic training, I entered into it with a spirit of much enthusiasm. In my youthful haste I fancied I saw hundreds of new uses to which electricity might be applied, but whenever I would attempt to tell others about them they would go from me instantly.

“At last I stole away into my mother's attic to build a model alone. I believed I saw a way to procure electrical energy by simpler and more direct methods. I would work nights until I would fall asleep in my chair, only to awaken again and perhaps continue my work until long after midnight. I loved the secrecy of my methods, for this gave me a wider scope in which to let loose my imagination. My mother seemed little aware of what I was doing. She had become very poor during her widowhood, and had her hands full to help eke out our scanty exist-

ence. So in the loft I dreamed and worked, and suffered many disappointments, yet still alone; for had I made known my hopes to anyone else I fancied they would leave me outright.

“It was during one of my fits of despondency that I met my first temptation to drink. I had worked long and earnestly and believed I was nearing success. I had conceived what I supposed to be a new principle in motive power. One evening I put my model to the test. It refused to move. In my disappointment I sat and brooded over it long and earnestly. Whatever might have been the difficulty I had not the heart to try to discover. In my despondency I stole down the back stairs and went out and walked the streets, where I could nurse my disappointment alone. Even this brought no relief. Once I halted before a saloon, and by this time, having grown somewhat reckless in spirit, I sauntered in and like the others about me I drank. But the liquor burned my throat, and I hurried home and went to bed. No friend of mine ever knew of that first drink, for so in the habit of keeping silent had I become that I had even ceased to make a confidant of my own mother, who certainly never could have dreamed what sore afflictions I was bringing upon myself.

“For a long time I felt mortified to know that I had yielded to a temptation so dangerous. This was a sufficient safeguard for me until my mother died. My grief for her was a silent one, and to some I must

have seemed like one dazed and indifferent. I was forced to go back to my work in the shop in the midst of a sadness unspeakable. Some said I was morose, and my former companions were learning to shun my company. Then came another terrible temptation. A saloon was opened next to my boarding house. I soon formed the habit of spending my time there for want of other diversion. Then I drank occasionally because there was no one to give me a warning word. First I began moderately, then I persuaded myself to drink for some fancied bodily ailment. In the cup I seemed to find an exhilaration similar to that which had colored my dreams of invention. I imprudently accepted this as a substitute, and soon neglected my model entirely. After that I worked on each day as did the other mechanics beside me, seemingly of but little account to anyone."

Here Maurice paused, and covering his eyes, found himself unable to continue. His heart seemed deeply touched and his throat filled and choked his words. Several minutes passed thus, and all sat and waited. Finally he rallied and finished his narrative with downcast eyes.

"You can easily surmise the rest. Without a single relative living so far as I knew, I was indeed alone and in a friendless world. At last I lost my place. Then I spent what little means I had saved in trying to bury myself in some longed-for oblivion, I cared little what it might be. I could have welcomed death, only I somehow clung to life instinctively, while all

the time the habit was becoming more and more my master. I have no more to tell—you have heard it all," he said, abruptly. Again he covered his eyes and began a second struggle to control himself.

How ominously silent remained his hearers. Little Dolphin had crept to her mother's side and had entwined both arms about her neck, where she had listened with a childish love and pity. Zelma alone was unmoved. His smile was that of one gifted to see above and beyond the travail of human suffering. He had several times given to Maurice his opinions upon the so-called wrongful propensities which are charged against the man or woman who falls, and these may doubtless have encouraged Maurice to relate as he had a full history of his life. It was a very evident fact that he and the seer were coming into the most friendly relationships, for Zelma had never for one moment doubted the real dignity of him whom he had befriended.

"Well," said Zelma, at last breaking the silence, "we will not need to revert to this again. Let us all try and bury the past and learn to look forward to the future. We should be thankful that our lessons have been as fruitful of wisdom as they have. I find there is much to be gained by looking upon human experiences as necessary to the growth of the soul. Others have made, apparently, the same mistake. Genius is apt to become enslaved to idealism, and is impatient of the commonplace. He who, from pure ambition, seeks to attain what others have not,

even though truly inspired, very frequently allows his anxiety to override his caution. To be at peace and look not for results, but to follow contentedly the part one is fitted to take in life, is best. Haste is a very common fault among artists, novelists, and others. Being idealist, they must blindly tread the uncertain soil of earth, with their eyes fixed upon the firmament. The inventor, dealing much with the material, frequently draws too lavishly upon the knowledge being transmitted to him, as if this life were not a mere dribble of eternity. If during this vital exhaustion some false stimulant is resorted to, a new but only a seeming inspiration is for a time invoked. Could the genius but wait, and banish all thought of the work for a time, the light he would need would be flashed upon him when least expected. This is what we call working in the spirit, a habit which has moved our ablest masters to deeds of excellence. To resort to drink is to surrender one's self to the meddling elementals, and at last the fall is inevitable. The brain gets fatigued, the body craves rest, and we need by all means to await the coming to us of a new supply of inspired thoughts—legitimate thoughts, not those of pretenders, such as the use of stimulants invoke from out the darkness. When we banish all limitations of time, and live in the Absolute, we can have anything we set our minds upon. This has been to me a truth of limitless value."

Could any person have interpreted more ably the happenings of Maurice's troubled career? It had

been a severe struggle for him to relate his experiences, but now he felt many times repaid for having done so. So rarified had become his spiritual senses, in keeping with the harmonious unity of his surroundings, that all he needed was the suggestion, merely. He had already learned that the value of a teaching lay in the use he might thereafter make of it. It was true that before the little group broke up that night, their united friendships had become more firmly welded than ever.

It was after Maurice had retired that Zelma came to his room and read to him from a volume of ancient lore, which treated of good and evil and their exact relations to each other. This served to throw still added light upon the subjects at hand.

"And besides," said Zelma as he closed the book, "I have something more to tell you. It is in the nature of an offer." He was leaning with his elbow upon the bed and was speaking low and in comradely tones. "I believe that as an inventor you can yet fulfill your mission. What would you say to opening a laboratory in a remote room in this house, and permit me to fit it up for your use exclusively?"

"I would deem it the grandest privilege of my life. Can you afford to do it?"

Zelma nodded with a smile that was intensely comforting to Maurice. "I have some rare works on chemistry, alchemy and the natural sciences which I can place at your disposal," he said further. "If you care to accept my offer I can assign the room to you

as soon as you are able to begin your studies. It is best that your physical self shall be fully equal to the work. I can but feel that this is to be your chosen mission for the future."

"I would be a thousand times grateful—"

Maurice did not finish his sentence, for a mere shadow of dislike had crossed his friend's features.

"We have little to be grateful for when the exact laws of causation are being obeyed," Zelma said, with a modifying smile. "I think I have a standing recognition of your gratitude," he added, soothingly. "In another week we can have quarters ready for you in welcome. We will then try and find what the future has to offer us. Good night," and the seer pressed Maurice's hand and then turned and quietly left the room.

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE STATE OFFICIAL.—“WHY NOT CALL IT A WORK OF LOVE?”

IT WAS not Maurice's fortunes alone that had improved. As we look in upon Mrs. Fessenden after our brief absence, we are made at once to realize how completely a house of mourning can be turned into one of use and accomplishment. The lady herself was growing once more beautiful and new friends were hovering about her from every quarter. Her largeness of soul seemed to have become apparent in the same degree as before, except that her former love of public cognizance was wholly lacking. This gave her a new and rare type of beauty which is difficult to describe. There was that inexpressible grace to her movements and tone of refinement to her speech which touch one deeply, and yet in a way still indescribable.

Without going into a detailed account of the difficulties she had met in securing teachers, suffice it to say that after a score or more of applicants had come and gone, two truly acceptable candidates had at last presented themselves. And they had both come from unexpected sources. One was a lady of

wealth who had also outlived the period of self, a graduate in the school of universal experience, and free from conventional habit. She had offered her services without price, and her personal gifts, having been fostered in the love principle, were proving themselves to be most genuine. Mature in years, with an unimpeachable character, and a wife and mother, what person better qualified could well have been secured ?

The other assistant was a vivacious, soul inspiring yet deeply religious woman of attractive ways, who possessed a native, unassuming insight into vital truths, all of which qualifications she seemed to have inherited naturally. She was, in brief, one of those women whose sterling faith in the good is not so much expressed in her words as in her movements. To the youthful mind she was both a power and an inspiration, while to her elders her presence was sustaining and coöperative. She had come from the humbler walks of life, hence she had been made no poorer in spirit by material wealth. A few such people seem to be born this way, the same as gems are sometimes found hidden in the mother earth.

There was already a constant coming and going to and from Mrs. Fessenden's house, and maidenly cheeks were made to glow with the knowledge that was being dispensed therein from maternal lips. Mrs. Fessenden turned her own attention more to the recognition of her sisters whose worthier capabilities had been overlooked by a busy world. Some

working girl may have been an undeveloped musician, or another an artistic prodigy, but both toilers, perhaps, in down-town stores for no more than enough to sustain life and preserve their virtue. Indeed, there were many who stood sadly in need of assistance, and the work gave promise of being a limitless one. This was strongly evidenced by the number of letters which came to Mrs. Fessenden daily. Every public benefactor has like experiences. Since she could befriend only a limited few as compared to the whole, she was obliged to subject each applicant to a careful test before admitting her. This duty alone was becoming an onerous one. Verily, is there not work for him or her who cares to work? How lamentable, then, becomes the fact that there are people this day who are growing old waiting for the years to pass, or for some new or novel enjoyment to tempt their outer senses!

With an abundance of satisfaction did our venerable friend Zelma look upon Mrs. Fessenden's philanthropic endeavors. He was already wont to make frequent calls upon her and in his humble way to offer her his counsel. One day he called in time to witness a most interesting scene. Among the callers who came that day was one Rufus Schurz, a statistician, whose office it was to collect certain social and material facts for the use of the State. He had introduced himself, had been kindly received, and with the air of a faithful servant had seated himself, pen in hand, ready to receive and write down any infor-

mation concerning her work which Mrs. Fessenden might have to offer

"Now, in the first place, as to the indigent class," he said, with orderly speech. His sheets, with regularly printed headings lay upon the table before him.

"We have no indigent members," suggested Mrs. Fessenden. Zelma sat a most interested listener, and smiled agreeably at the aptness of his friend's reply.

Mr. Schurz elevated his spectacles and looked puzzled for a moment. "And yet yours is known as a charity school," he maintained.

"Not in the least. Charity is not our motive.

"Philanthropic, then?"

"I hardly know how to answer that. The new faith of true brotherhood recognizes none of the old motives of reform. We give our time and attention to the work because it seems just, and we aim to serve the rich and the poor alike. Such a cause thrives best without a name. It might be styled philanthropic without resort to charity, perhaps, if you choose to thus use the terms together."

"Yes, I see," and the agent of the commonwealth stroked his side-whiskers while he glanced over his columns of headings. "My duty is to classify each particular work correctly, but your undertaking certainly does seem a trifle unusual. I find here a column headed 'perfunctory education,' another 'ethical evolution of the sciences,' and another 'undemonstrable research in physics.' Might not one of these be suitable for your work? In statistical records we

need to be very explicit. Or might we not give you a place under the purely benevolent classifications?"

"Why not call it a work of love?" enquired Zelma.

A peculiar smile began playing about the agent's lips. "A very good idea, sir, but we have no such column in the list," he said, running his forefinger once more carefully across the sheet. "But perhaps I can discover a way to classify your work in a moment" he said, turning again to Mrs. Fessenden. "You say it may be philanthropy without charity and it must be benevolence without discrimination, for the rich are to be taught without price the same as the poor."

"Exactly so, and in accordance with the later conceptions of right doing."

"Well—now let me think a moment," and Mr. Schurz made a truly creditable endeavor to bring order out of confusion. "Suppose I put you down in the miscellaneous column? To undertake to open any new department as your methods would suggest, might necessitate an entire re-organization of the bureau of statistics. You will kindly remember that information regarding the dependent classes has been for many years obtained upon these old and respected lines. This of course does not set aside the fact that there are newer and later ways of serving mankind coming to light yearly. Yours may be one of them in very fact."

"We do not ask for credit even then," smiled Mrs. Fessenden.

"Still, 'credit to him to whom credit is due,'" murmured the agent in soliloquy. He seemed a just man if not as capable as some. He took out his handbook and read a paragraph or two of law to himself, then looked wisely up at his listeners. "You see my point, I presume?" he asked.

Both Zelma and his hostess nodded.

"I think I understand," spoke Mrs. Fessenden, after a moment's hesitation. "Possibly you may have called a little early, for our work is as yet largely experimental. Our hope has been to avoid past methods, or past pretensions to surface benevolence, by substituting in their stead a religion of the heart for an everyday following. This you will see places our work quite outside of and above statistical reach. Methods such as ours may be too variable to be depended upon. I have a belief that the humanitarian in the broadest sense is accountable to nobody. The old school would call this heresy, perhaps."

"The stand you have taken is a peculiar one, to say the least," meditated Mr. Schurz, as if still hoping to reconcile his duties with the speaker's words. But try as he might, there seemed to be no precedent in law or in reason upon which he could predicate a conclusion. Upon this occasion he ought to obtain a most valuable piece of information for the State's use, but the rigid columns of printed headings stood much in the way. Had the compiler provided a section headed "The Survival of the Queer," he

might have returned therein a very deserving account of his labors. As it was the evidence thus far offered seemed wholly lacking in adaptation.

"I think I can see where the discrepancy lies," remarked Zelma, coming to the rescue and with ample deference to his hostess. "Public charities, as such, are not charities in reality; at least they are not so looked upon by the new school of idealists. First, you must have paupers. These we do not recognize as having an existence. A person without so much as a shelter may carry with himself the wealth of an apostle, and to discover and give due credit for this are the duties we are assuming. I can readily understand that to enter such credit upon the books of the State would necessitate some very radical changes."

"Better to make no account of it whatever," suggested Mrs. Fessenden.

Still Mr. Schurz twirled his whiskers in serious contemplation. The scope of the subject was indeed quite beyond him. However, there seemed to be one remaining hope, so he asked:

"Have you, then, any facts concerning charity work in general? Any information you can give me will be thankfully received."

"I might give you one fact," smiled Zelma.

"Please to name it," and the agent made ready to write it down.

"That the code of public giving and doing is sadly imperfect and one-sided. Too many give for the

praise they get in return. Could the opening sentences of the sixth chapter of Matthew be faithfully studied and carried out, there would be little need of statistics or charitable precept."

Instead of writing a word the agent sat a moment in suspense, while a smile of happy incredulity again broke upon his features. "Do you wish that to go in as a fact, or as a conviction merely?" he asked.

"It might have little weight as either; but it is as much a fact as anything we will be able to discover, I think," Zelma replied.

"The Sermon on the Mount I believe forbids any ostentation whatever," reasoned Mrs. Fessenden. "When we give of the best of our thoughts, many other thoughts immediately come to us, and so we are constantly made stronger and have more to give. I think it is much the same with lending material aid. The liberal person seldom gets any poorer in purse, but when the miserly man gets robbed of his wealth he loses his soul along with it."

"So they say," speculated Mr. Schurz. He had laid down his pen and sat staring at the figures in the carpet. There seemed much of genuine wisdom upon his face. "But to be frank with you, and speaking unofficially, of course, I am at a loss to conceive how a state law can be a law and have any great amount of soul in it," he said, very generously. "Like statistics, laws are considered dry and profitless in themselves, and go quickly out of date. It takes a creature with plenty of soul to be able to keep up with the

procession. I do not mean by this to cast any undue reflection upon the state government, of which I am a part and parcel, but your remarks have revived a thought or two in which I have more than once indulged."

"And yet it is the soul of justice that our law makers are striving for," said Zelma. "No legislator ever puts forth a measure but he feels in some degree the benefit it is to work for the people. That we call the soul, or the essence of the law. Now, the more soul the law-maker has the more the law will have, of course. If it be a provision to relieve human suffering, it must contain something beside mere prohibitive words and phrases. There must be in it a responsive love such as moved the Saviour to heal and teach without appeal to the popular will."

Mr. Schurz shook his head in doubt. "Ordinary, homespun statutes founded upon christianity, do you mean?" he asked.

"Certainly; Christ makes no exception in his code of right and wrong; why should we?"

At this juncture the agent glanced commiseratively up at Mrs. Fessenden. Evidently he was getting into deep water. A smile at first tempered his glance, but upon second thought he gave vent to a gurgle of friendly laughter.

"That is altogether too profound for me," he said, giving up the chase at last and gathering his papers together. "It strikes me that when it comes to scriptural doctrines it is prudent for the statistician to

draw the line. There may be no fact more apparent than that the code of public giving is imperfect and one-sided; and yet I think it time to draw the line when it comes to mixing statistics with religion. You see the conservative man is always consistent" and he laughed again with generous fealty to his listeners. "You understand the position occupied by a public servant, of course," he added, cheerfully.

"Certainly," replied Zelma, also smiling his compliments for the gentleman's aptness of speech. It was all too evident that public beneficence, as administered from the statute books, was but illy matched with the simplest of the latter day cults and heresies.

There seemed nothing left for Mr. Schurz, after he had exchanged a few other pleasant thoughts, but to take his leave. Personally, not officially, he may have happened upon a stray thought or two worth thinking about later on. The best of us must pick up our information, if not our wisdom, thus casually.

## CHAPTER XVII

## A MESSAGE OF SORROW.—“SHE WILL LIVE!”

IT MIGHT have been a week later, and during the morning hour of meditation in the Temple of Silence, that the attention of each member present was arrested by a summons from without. This, as Zelma afterward remarked, was the first time the vibratory effects of the disk at the door had ever reached the Temple proper. Just previous to this some remarkable changes had been taking place in the crystal, discernible to all. First there had appeared a peculiar shadow resembling pale moonlight. This covered the entire globe. In the midst of this there appeared what might be described as a steady but soundless waterfall having blue-green tints, and above this hung two weeping willows. Rightly interpreted the scene was suggestive of sadness; so that when the summons fell upon the silence it conveyed a somewhat sombre message to those who listened. It was yet early in the day, and no visitor was expected, hence the summons seemed all the more significant.

It was not long before the exercises were completed and Zelma, as soon as he had changed his apparel

went below. The caller was none other than Mr. Gilbert. The gentleman's features gave tokens of some deep sorrow, and observing this Zelma led the way quietly to the east room, where he closed the door from all intrusion. With no formality whatever Mr. Gilbert sank into a chair like a man bereft of all physical and mental endurance. Zelma, forewarned as he had been, strove to maintain an attitude of peace and tranquillity. His first words were lowly spoken and fraught with purest spiritual accents.

"And another link in the chain is being forged, and the heart of him who loveth is troubled as it would seem beyond repair," he said, very slowly.

Mr. Gilbert glanced slowly up, and for a moment or two basked in the look of kindness which he saw in the seer's eyes.

"Yes," he said at last "the night has been black with some terrible happenings, and the morning has brought us little relief. Can the self-sacrifice of one troubled soul be ever wholly wasted?" Zelma listened, but said not a word. "Wasted, I mean, when the shadows become filled with the work of demons rather than of angels?"

"Has any loved one left this life from thy household?" questioned Zelma. Mr. Gilbert shook his head. "Then while life lasts there is hope. Let us two concentrate our minds for a few minutes together. Let us hold as our thought, 'The message of Love eternal,' and if possible become lost to all that is gross and of earthly origin."

Saying which Zelma bowed his head and covered his eyes, and his caller did the same. For several moments they breathed together, and it seemed to Mr. Gilbert that their very thoughts blended as one thought—a message of love indeed—for his heart-beats became less violent with every second of time. At the close of their meditations, and while the effects of the brotherly sympathy were yet upon him, Zelma arose and with hands clasped behind him and his eyes fixed upon the floor, he said in low, assuring words:

“The conditions seem truly serious. You will please state the happenings and I will find what impressions I get; then we can be governed accordingly,” and as Mr. Gilbert spoke Zelma paced the floor with eyes still downcast.

“The climax,” began Mr. Gilbert with some effort, “came in the very midst of our pleasures, as the world understands pleasure. A large circle of fashionable people had filled our parlors upon the occasion of our daughter’s eighteenth birthday. Everything gave promise of a complete success of all our undertakings. Our daughter, into whose youthful being seemed to have entered the spirit of intense enjoyment, was in raptures. There had been music, and songs by noted singers, and a supper, all the result of much elaborate painstaking.

“After supper our daughter was to sing and play a difficult part from an Italian opera. The event was one of great expectancy. Every eye was fixed

upon her as she sang, and I, too, for the moment became lost in contemplation of her skill and the truly lovable echoes of her voice. But her mother sat and stared at her with a vision seemingly blank and unresponsive. Her constant forebodings of the past had evidently unseated her reason. As I discovered this my enjoyment became suddenly chilled with a feeling of apprehension. If our child's performance could not arouse her to a consciousness of appreciation, what hope was there left for us? Of late she has seemed more like a walking and spiritless shadow. Her acts have been mechanical, and some deep sorrow seems to have settled itself upon her. I had put forth every effort to make the occasion a success, in hopes of arousing her to life again, but when I realized my failure to do so my feelings were indeed turned to bitterness. It may have all come about by my sudden revulsion of feelings, for in an instant the child ceased singing, and with an alarming cry of pain fell in a lifeless heap upon the floor."

At this juncture in his narrative Mr. Gilbert made a determined effort to control himself. Zelma still listened without a word.

"Of course all was confusion, and loving hands bore her at once to her room and a physician was summoned. I followed, and for the time must have lost my self-control completely. Our child was as pale as death, and her breath came in gasps, and sudden spasms of pain passed over her in quick succession. The company of course broke up, and at

twelve the last guest had departed. All had been shocked, and there were none but expressed the deepest regrets at our misfortune. My wife appeared at first to manifest a stolid indifference for what had happened, but when we were at last alone with the physician a better realization of the truth came gradually to her. Then her sobs of helpless grief were truly touching. What to do I did not know. Until daylight our child remained in that terrible state, and I fancied I read in the physician's face a doubt of her recovery from it. When I left the house to come to you the child's mother had wept herself into a state of utter helplessness. Her indifference has changed to an intense realization, and the fear of things that have been foretold her so long seems to have met its fulfillment at last. If our child does not live must it not be a fulfillment indeed?"

The question sounded forth upon the silence, but received no response. Zelma still paced the floor and seemed to be earnestly weighing his thoughts. At last he paused, and fixing his gaze upon his friend, said:

"I believe it to be a case of hypnotic confusion. Your child is doubtless something of a sensitive, and was moved largely by the minds of those about her. Had you been better informed in occult knowledge you would not have taken your wife's pitiable state into account. Her condition amounts to a practical obsession by mischievous elementals. Your reversal of feelings must certainly have been the first cause of

the conflict, and to me it seems almost a miracle that your daughter's life is spared. However, let us go farther into the matter. Let us sit once more in concentration, and then I may be able to reach some conclusion. We will take this time the thought of 'The Universal Will,' and earnestly fix our minds upon it to the exclusion of all else," and Zelma seated himself again, and for a full ten minutes not another word was spoken. In the meantime Mr. Gilbert's breathing became still more regular, and he felt a strange hint of assurance stealing over him.

But when Zelma arose his face was a study. He seemed to be living in some abstract state which forbade further words. It may have been possible that the case was more serious than he had supposed. After several strides across the floor he seated himself and once more bowed his head in thought. After a time he looked up with still a friendly anxiety.

"To me it is indeed a strange combination of counter forces," he said, speaking as one gifted with a renewed spiritual insight. "In any event I believe your child is under hypnotic influences. The mother must have thrown some spell of magic over her, because of her overstrained and unfortunate condition. Her grief is indeed intense, and she has doubtless made a misuse of the forces she has invoked. That alone is unfavorable, as all our mistakes are apt to be in times of mental excitement. We do know, however, that in the absolute all must be right. That truth is never to be lost sight of."

With this Zelma again took up his pace across the room, like one who had assumed a difficult burden. Presently he stopped before his friend and laid his palm upon his shoulder. For a moment he felt tempted to speak some secret word of the Brotherhood, but in this he hesitated. A smile of intense sympathy lighted up his face.

“Would you like me to go to your daughter?” he asked. A grateful look came instantly upon Mr. Gilbert’s features. “Then let us make haste; I will soon be ready,” he added, turning about to leave the room.

Now truly hopeful, Mr. Gilbert arose and stood waiting for his friend. A few minutes later they were on their way, but as they went thither scarcely a word was spoken. Zelma seemed shut from the outer realm of sense life, while his companion had doubtless ere this learned the value of silence.

It was when the two entered the palatial residence of Mr. Gilbert that a strange sensation came upon Zelma. It was a stifling sense of oppression, as if caused by a heavy atmosphere filled with burdening conditions; and so unexpected was this that for an instant he was forced to draw back to get a better control of himself. This was his first visit to his friend’s house, and now that he had come in the midst of trouble he realized all the more the counter influences that had been at work therein. When seated in the parlor, however, and after Mr. Gilbert had gone to his daughter’s bedside, he quite suc-

ceeded in controlling his sensations thus suddenly aroused.

It may be supposed that Mr. Gilbert entered his child's room with an expectant heart. The mother sat brooding in a farther corner, like one thoroughly dazed and exhausted. The patient lay in the same unconscious state, and her breathing was labored and irregular. A nurse sat near the bedside with folded hands, and she answered the father's anxious look with a shake of her head. Mr. Gilbert's first act was to induce his wife to go with him to an adjoining room. She suffered herself to be guided thither as would a helpless child. When she was again seated he knelt at her side and looked imploringly into her tear-stained face.

"Sylvia!" he said, "I want you to calm yourself and listen to me. I have brought help and counsel, and perhaps the Father in heaven will yet deliver us from this terrible trouble. Do you understand me, my dear? I have brought a friend to help us!"

Mrs. Gilbert looked down upon her husband at first with leaden eyes.

"We must be strong, Sylvia, and live in hope. Do you not see that I love you still, and that your sorrow is mine, and that we are yet man and wife?"

"Did you speak of love?" moaned Mrs. Gilbert in confused accents. There was bitterness in every word, and before her husband could reply she seemed to grow suddenly fearful and grief-stricken again. "Can anything save our child!—our child!" she

wailed aloud. "Our child will die!—she will die! and then what will there be left us?" she began in piteous, rambling words, and at the same time bursting forth into tears of lament and seeming remorse.

"Yes, I spoke of love, Sylvia. Our love has never for one hour been less than at this terrible moment." Saying this he put his arm about her and kissed her forehead. "Sylvia, I say! let us both be strong and take hope again. I have brought a friend with me who can tell—well, possibly he can say whether Myra will live; indeed, I truly believe he can. Let us hope at least while life lasts. He is here—down stairs, and I want you to listen to what he says. Will you try and face the ordeal with your husband? your lover? Can we not be once more strong in this moment of our trials?"

While Mr. Gilbert spoke his wife took her kerchief from her eyes and looked for a moment into his pleading face. A gleam of the old love seemed to pass between them, and like one who had been a long time absent she appeared to yield and partially to arouse herself. But the next instant she relapsed into her state of weeping, while her body swayed to and fro.

"But they have told me our child will die!—they have told me—"

"I do not believe it, Sylvia—I cannot believe it. She will not die!" and as if forced to say it Mr. Gilbert spoke with all the eagerness he could summon. Then he waited for her grief to subside a

little. "Will you do this?—will you come with me to Myra's bedside and hear what our friend has to say? He is a true seer, and God may speak to us through him."

"How can he tell us more than has been told to me?" sobbed Mrs. Gilbert. There was a pause half of forgetfulness in her words as she waited for an answer. Her eyes were burning with a fever almost of delirium; but that she had replied at all aroused a sudden hope in her husband's breast.

"How can he tell us more, do you ask? By the will of Him who rules the heavens. He is a man of God and not of the spirits, I assure you. Through him I am led to believe that all will be well and that the laws of compensation and justice never go amiss. Will you come with me now?" he pleaded, in tones of redoubled earnestness.

Several minutes of indecision passed, during which time the weeping woman grew more calm and was able to speak with less vehemence. "I will go," she said, at last. "If our child is to leave us it can add nothing more to my misery. But—" she exclaimed quickly, and with returning fear—"if she is to die—"

"She will not die, Sylvia," repeated Mr. Gilbert, speaking in a voice that to himself sounded strange and distraught. "Lean upon me and we will go to Myra and send for our friend at once."

With half forced willingness Mrs. Gilbert suffered herself to be led back again to her daughter's room. The nurse was sent below and in a few minutes re-

turned, followed by Zelma. At first sight of the seer Mrs. Gilbert gave a slight start and grasped her husband's arm apprehensively. But Zelma had come into the room with face calm and beaming with unconscious love. His movements were deliberate as he approached the bedside. Without a word he looked long and wistfully at the patient. In the meantime, and while father and mother stood at the foot of the bed, Mr. Gilbert's arm encircled his wife's waist, while her head lay feebly upon his shoulder. The nurse stood a little apart and watched the scene with curious eyes.

As the moments passed a fever of expectation seemed to kindle in Mrs. Gilbert's eyes. Her gaze became fixed upon Zelma, in whose glance she must have discovered some new element of life. Her tears were dried, and, having now raised her head, she stood looking steadfastly at him, as if his eyes were the poles of a magnet. Something in his benign manners seemed to give her a momentary hope; yes, a hope which might the next moment be dashed down by a mere word from his yet silent lips. The suspense was becoming a trying one. She breathed quick, gasping breaths, and now stood bending forward as if eager to listen. Must there not have been some subtle faith entering her being during this extreme moment? Still, all was silence. At this juncture Mr. Gilbert was standing with his head bowed as if in meditation, much as he and Zelma had been wont to commune in times gone by. It was

true that the tide of sympathy which passed between them was a most reverent one.

It was a supreme moment when Zelma at last raised his eyes as if in prayer. This seemed only to increase the mother's eagerness to know the truth. She leaned still farther forward and watched his moving lips. No, he had not yet spoken audibly. His eyes had closed and he seemed wholly lost to his surroundings. Across the patient's face would flit evidences of inner pain. What mighty forces must there have been at work during these terrible moments! In the very midst of the suspense Zelma turned his head and with open eyes looked calmly at his friends. On his face was now pictured an almost saintly look of compassion. Soon a loving smile crept over his features. He seemed to have invoked the truth from out the very silence.

"*She will live!*" was all the sound that escaped his lips.

As if some threatening spell had been suddenly broken, Mrs. Gilbert gave a scream and fell in a swoon into her husband's arms. The reaction seemed to have unnerved her completely.

With the aid of the nurse Mr. Gilbert assisted his wife to the couch, upon which he laid her tenderly, while the nurse applied such restoratives as were at hand to bring her back to consciousness. Zelma remained unmoved. He was watching the patient with a deepening interest. Her eyes had slowly opened, and she was looking up at him in partial bewildered-

ment. But the look she saw seemed to comfort and assure her, and at last a smile came upon her lips, now pale from languor and suffering. Soon again she closed her eyes in seeming repose. Presently she opened them again and looked enquiringly up at the watcher.

"Where is mamma?" she asked, with childish candor.

Now partially restored to herself, and upon hearing her daughter's words, Mrs. Gilbert sprang to her feet, and running to the bedside, clasped her child in her feverish embrace. Sob upon sob came from her as she kissed her lips and cheeks. Zelma had quietly retired to a farther side of the room, where he sat with head bowed upon his hand. Mr. Gilbert, also with tears of thanksgiving, had knelt and taken his child's hand fondly in his own.

It was a scene strangely vivid and real. In time the mother's sobbing changed to a solemn moaning. Myra, now conscious that some serious ordeal had been passed, stroked her mother's cheeks lovingly, and at the same time glanced up at her father in smiling recognition.

"What does it all mean, mamma? why are you not pacified? You see I am yet with you," she said, assuringly.

Mrs. Gilbert's only response was to cling more closely to her child, and to indulge in new outbursts of weeping. It seemed no time for words. Out of deference for their friends, Zelma and the nurse

withdrew, Zelma returning directly to the parlor. A few minutes later Mr. Gilbert came down, and through his tear-stained eyes gave his friend his fullest look of thanksgiving.

"Were the conditions such as you thought?" he enquired, sitting down beside the seer.

"Yes, fully so. Other conditions, still more complex, may exist; I am inclined to believe that such is the case. However, the worst needed to be realized, and it is well that the climax has been thus promptly met."

"It seems strange to me that such ills should have been visited upon us," murmured Mr. Gilbert, half to himself.

"Had we all the inner vision there would be nothing strange, or unseemly, or unjust in any of these outward happenings," reasoned Zelma, still with exceeding kindness. "Because of our limited visions we deem such experiences strange; in fact, they are the most commonplace results of karmic law—the mere working out of cause and effect. This the advanced mind construes as discipline, merely. When we compute the value of what we learn at each stage in our careers, the pains we have undergone seem most paltry. All creation is thus subject to the law of use, divinely planned."

Mr. Gilbert listened now with an open heart, and the words he heard were truly comforting to him. "And you believe no serious consequences will follow our daughter's prostration?" he asked.

"Now that the illusion is past you need have no fear whatever. She will rally quickly, I think; but you will need to still adhere to the faith absolute, for only by your past prudence have you thus far become the victor. I am impressed to say, that should Mrs. Gilbert be willing, I would like you both to pay me a visit soon when we can talk the matter over at our leisure."

"Thanks; we will try and avail ourselves of the pleasure as soon as Mrs. Gilbert feels disposed. I can scarcely realize the extent of the assistance you have rendered us; perhaps this will never be possible," and Mr. Gilbert's words dropped to a serious and friendly undertone.

"I do not understand that our fullest appreciation of all that occurs is necessary," smiled Zelma, rising from his chair. "However, we can discuss the subject some time later on. As I find my time is limited, I think I will now need to return home. I will only say that since much of what has taken place in your home transcends my knowledge of occult law, I shall need to try to evolve from out the silence a better understanding of its meaning. In the meantime, and until you call, please report any unfavorable changes should any appear."

Mr. Gilbert had learned the true intent of the seer's words so well that there was no need for him to do more than press his hand in trustful silence. Thus understandingly they parted, assuredly more united in spirit than ever.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## A COUNSEL OF LOVE.—THE ELEMENTALS.

WHEN Zelma betook himself homeward that day he went thither in a mood most thoughtful. It was high noon, and the wintry sun, still riding low in the heavens, shone but dimly through the cloudy mists, while the icy walks and pavements were fringed on either side with the frozen remnants of the recent snow storms. It seemed to Zelma as if every added lesson he chanced upon was the severer one. This being true with the world everywhere, how often do we note the fact that when one point in our wisdom getting is gained, the field beyond us seems to expand and grow wider and more unconquerable to our finite vision. Yes, how far indeed is the finite mind from a comprehension of the infinite! It may be truly said that such a recognition of the limitless beyond does, or should at least, bid us be children forever—children of a Father whose love is as boundless as is the wisdom that awaits us in the future ages.

It was when Zelma felt the spirit of impatience to know or to acquire stealing over him, that there

would almost invariably come into his mind a certain favorite quotation from *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, which runs something as follows: "Things are so much perplexed and in the dark that several great philosophers looked upon them as altogether unintelligible, and that there was no certain test for the discovery of truth. \* \* And since we have nothing but darkness and dirt to grasp at, since time and matter, motion and mortals are in perpetual flux, for these reasons, I say, I cannot imagine what there is here worth minding or being eager about." So quaint were these sayings, that to the peace-loving Roman stoic did Zelma frequently turn for consolation. His simplicity of self charmed and soothed him, and he found many of his words of wisdom most singularly applicable even to the present hour.

That evening, and before retiring for the night, he went to a small shelf in his library and took therefrom a candle, and in dreamy contemplation lighted it and for several moments thereafter stood before his burning grate almost wholly lost in thought. But at last he turned about, and going to the stairway began his ascent to the third floor of the house, reaching, finally, a sort of attic located directly above the guests' room in the second story. With a slender key he unlocked the door, and stepping inside shut and bolted it behind him. The feeble rays of the candle seemed weirdly in contrast with the light out of which Zelma had come. A rude, unpainted table sat in the center of the room otherwise unfurnished.

The walls of this secret chamber were unfinished, and the floor was wholly without covering. It had now been many years since any person other than Zelma had entered this room. Here it was his wont to come and meditate upon the seemingly mysterious problems set before him. To-night, and the moment he entered the room, he felt in the exclusive presence a warmth not of earth, but of some fabled clime beyond. He sat his candlestick upon the table and by the side of it humbly knelt and bowed himself in silent prayer. As the moments passed he heard living messages, which seemed to be given him from out the solitary presence, and his vision became more than ever subservient to the masterful Will to which he longed to bow in eternal submission. The day had brought to him some new and strange experiences. Why had they thus come to him, and why had he been unable to satisfy himself as to their fullest meaning?

It may have been a whole hour before light came upon these questions. Then he arose like one exalted. Casting his eyes heavenward he breathed an oral prayer of thanksgiving; then picking up his candle, and pushing back the bolt in the door, he went out and leisurely descended to his own room, where he retired with soul now wholly without trouble or doubt.

On the third day after Zelma's visit to his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert called together to see him. Because of what had passed, it was a meeting some-

what strange and attended with peculiar thoughts in the minds of them all. But Zelma's quiet and truthful manners soon overcame the diffidence of his guests. Mrs. Gilbert seemed changed, though she had not wholly recovered from the effects of her recent experiences. Mr. Gilbert's hopeful look was to Zelma an assurance that much that was most favorable had come about. He was quick to discover a relationship between the two as man and wife which far exceeded his expectations. This was certainly most gratifying to him. When they were seated in the guests' room, Zelma said, deferentially:

"You may doubtless have guessed why I wished you both to call. It would have been impossible for me to have said when I was with you what I am now prepared to say, had I then the time to spare. These after moments of meditation often give one much added light."

"To avail ourselves of your invitation to call is a privilege very acceptable to us both," remarked Mr. Gilbert. Mrs. Gilbert seemed already to be studying the seer with considerable interest.

"It gives me the utmost pleasure to have you call; and now that we are to confer together I trust you will both pardon any seeming frankness on my part," replied Zelma, also smiling his wishes. "When it is known that no subject alluded to in the hearing of our guests is ever repeated outside, I think we shall all feel a better freedom to speak plainly and without reserve."

"We feel that we owe you an apology," remarked Mrs. Gilbert, speaking with some delicacy of feeling. "The complete abandonment of ourselves to our troubles may have seemed trivial to you."

"Not in the least; I rather believed it proper that you were yourselves so completely. At such times I am given better use of my own individual freedom, which is necessary in all true work of the spirit. Your trials were to you truly an affliction; in my estimation they were but stepping stones to things above your past environments. I am impressed with the thought that the vibrations between you as husband and wife have changed for the better. Am I not right in this?"

Mr. Gilbert looked to his wife for a reply. "There is a change, and for the better we hope," she said, smiling as her gaze met that of the seer's. "We can scarcely understand it all, and we have been planning to have you give us some of the light we need."

"I can only suggest, as I have heretofore told Mr. Gilbert. All permanent knowledge comes to the inner self in secret. It is voiced to us from the great invisible, unknowable supply. We are self-taught only in the degree that we go to the center and work our way out toward the circumference. But first let me hear of your daughter's condition. She is better, of course?"

"In a fair way to a complete recovery, yes," replied Mr. Gilbert. "Nature has indeed been most lenient with us."

"What if I should say that you have been most considerate with yourselves in recognizing the edicts of nature?" laughed Zelma, seemingly much pleased with what he had heard. "However, to understand why we live, how to live, and to what ends we live, are to me the threefold purposes of our stay upon earth. Experience is and ever will be the wisest of our objective teachers. But before we go into the subject too deeply, I wish to speak of a matter I have heretofore neglected, and that is to ask what are your places in the Zodiac. The way I have read your lives, I have surmised that you may not be the best of planetary mates. Now, Mrs. Gilbert, your date first. In what month were you born?"

"In the month of September."

"And the day?"

"The tenth."

"Ah, yes, the sign of Virgo. Thus far my conclusions are confirmed to a nicety. Yours is the middle sign of the earth triplicity, that nocturnal sign which represents the hidden fire of our planet. Your deductions are too apt to be drawn from the material side of things, and not enough from the spiritual. And yet, since people in this sign rebound quickly from reverses, you have, I think, but little to fear. The Virgo peoples' resort to artificial means of restoration not infrequently leads them to take such counsel as appeals mostly to the outer senses. While in this sign many fixed characters are found, much dependence is placed upon the externals, and at times

they are relied upon entirely, and deceptive advice many times listened to and erroneously followed. Now, Mr. Gilbert, your date, please."

"August fourth."

"Indeed! a complete explanation why the recent conditions have existed in your home. Yours is the sign of Leo, the heart of the Grand Man, or macrocosm. It is the middle sign of the fire triplicity, and governs the heart and blood of life. As a companion for one born in Virgo, Leo is not the best. The Leo person is deeply emotional and very intuitive, and loves to dwell in the inner perceptions; and when such a one has learned the full efficacy of silence he becomes most invincible. However, it is not for me to go into the study of the Zodiac with you, for you can search out the truths of the science at your leisure. I will merely revert to one fact, sometimes overlooked by teachers of the occult, that the unfavorable tendencies of any of the signs can be fully overcome, and a complete unity of two souls be effected by right living and strict compliance with spiritual laws. Leo usually weds best with a mate of its own triplicity; Virgo with Virgo or with Libra, and so on. And yet you two, with the experiences already yours, can, and I think you will, in time assimilate once more in harmonious union. You have doubtless grown apart from a misappropriation of the love principle. Such a happening as you have just passed through, a moment when your two natures were bowed in a common grief, was an occasion

well fitted to awaken your slumbering loves. Do you both realize the truths of these teachings?"

"So far as our knowledge extends, which is not far," replied Mr. Gilbert. "Are most unhappy unions the outgrowth of inharmonious temperaments?" he asked.

"Not always. The most enviable union, and one in which the birth signs are most favorably chosen, can be very soon sacrificed upon the altar of lust and sense indulgence. I think the majority of unhappy marriages are of this sort."

"I think we ought to make known to you," said Mr. Gilbert, "that before coming here to-day it was fully understood between us that we were to ask you to give us your best explanation of our late experiences, particularly as regards our dealings with the psychical influences. I think we are quite prepared to know the truth."

"Possibly you may have yourselves solved the problem in part."

"Only in part, really; much of it seems mixed and contradictory."

"Well, then, Mrs. Gilbert, to your past conditions only will I need to allude to-day," began Zelma, giving her his fullest gaze. "Though it pains me to say it, you were without doubt under the dominion of mischievous elementals, those chance beings which inhabit the zone just outside of the material earth. Certain persons about us, who style themselves messengers of the spirits, have uncautiously become allied

to these influences, and, to further their own ends, mostly, have become willing tools for the astrals, which are ever seeking, by preying upon the weaknesses of the human will, some earthly experience or gratification to help prolong their existence.

“These shades, or shells, cast off by people who have lived upon earth, represent the negative sphere, and therefore have limited lives. The spirit of the person has gone on, and these astrals, when the people who have died had strong earthly attachments, or who may have committed crime, live for longer or shorter periods in semi-darkness, and, being very near our planet, become at times most formidable in their united powers to control the sensitives who will yield to them. Thus it becomes plain to us why people with strong individualities have no affinity for the soothsayer. So prevalent is trouble in our midst, that those who are cast down become eager listeners to the vagaries of the elementals, and are led to believe that what they hear are messages from the dead. Nothing can be farther from the truth. It is pure magic, whether in the keeping of an honest or dishonest person. Magic, whether white or black, is within the reach of all in some degree, and many persons who yield to the importunities of the lower astrals are particularly expert in the latter.”

“It is not necessarily so with them all, then,” implied Mrs. Gilbert.

“No, not with all, for some of the worthiest persons

have become victims of black magic, but it is usually presented to them under the guise of friendly counsel and sympathy-lending words of one kind and another. A most deplorable type of control is where the sensitives believe they are chosen to take on the griefs of others, and suffer for them. Think of the avalanche of misery one could thus bring upon himself, and all, perhaps, with the kindest motives possible. Such cases, though rare, have been known, and show to what extremes human absurdities can be carried. The well disposed class of sensitives seek to do good through the invisible forces, but when it comes to the surrender of one's physical organism the result in the end is much the same. The experience to some is so new, and we might say so infatuating, that very frequently no amount of persuasion can be brought to bear to undo the wrong. At last, as we all know, the sensitive becomes reduced to a minimum of personal freedom, and all because of this one unguarded affiliation. Some weakening habit, like a resort to stimulants, is a very common result. Think you the spirits of our loved ones would seek to bring about such grievous conditions?

“When at your home the other day I felt that there was some phase of the truth I did not fully understand. Since then I have meditated upon it, and I think I have some added light to give you. It relates to the many-sided subject of insanity. This malady I believe must be largely of astral origin. I have often asked to know the reason why our insane

asylums are overflowing, and why the demand upon public protection for the insane is constantly on the increase. It now occurs to me that a greater part of those whose reason is dethroned, are obsessed. Had your experiences with the psychics gone on you would, without doubt, have been thus afflicted also. The atmosphere of distrust and fear which had invaded your home had already partly done its work. This truth, complex and improbable as it may at this moment seem to you, is now quite apparent to me. You see I speak plainly, yet none the less sincerely; for as I look back upon the many unfortunates who have visited me, I can now understand why the majority have been inclined to insanity, even though many of them have been people of rare worth and standing in society. Imagine, then, how unavailing to crowd these victims of the elementals into mad-houses already overrun with astral influences of the most pernicious sort!"

This last Zelma spoke with extreme unction, for his spirit was already becoming warm and responsive. His vision was becoming clearer and more in touch with the Absolute. Mrs. Gilbert seemed almost spell-bound at what she had heard. Could it be possible that she had thus placed herself at the mercy of influences so manifestly harmful? In the congenial atmosphere of Zelma's home, what better conditions could have surrounded her to make her feel the realisms of true living as her husband had felt them? The depths of truth contained in their mutual friend's

words, the bountiful offerings of his unselfish love, and the integrity of person with which he approached and comforted them, were much in contrast with the sombre counsel she had so frequently obtained from the psychics. There were no forebodings indulged in to arouse the fears of his listeners, though he had spoken his worst in all sincerity.

“Mark, then, the unerring law of compensation after one member of a family has espoused the cause of true spirituality,” Zelma went on to say, after a moment or two of thought. “Mr. Gilbert has, I believe, acquired a goodly hold upon the latent forces, and by an adherence to the law of non-resistance has given these forces faithful credence. A startling ordeal comes to you, and you are rudely awakened from the hypnotic sleep which I believe had been thrown about you by the aid of soothsayers and pretenders. In a moment of agony of soul the veil is cast aside, and like a flash from heaven you discover the love of your companion to be real, but also just awakening, perhaps, from a sleep of inanition. In an extremity he had come to me, and in spirit I went to the rescue. The spell was about you, and only a higher power could cast it aside. I came, and saw, and peacefully and without personal effort sought to invoke the will of God in behalf of yourself and daughter. You had, as I say, thrown the spell upon your child, and had no relief been afforded she might never have rallied from it. The doctors would have called it heart failure, perhaps. It was nothing more

than a spell of black magic cast upon you both, in direct conflict with the higher spiritual forces which have of late sought entrance into your home. It was white magic against black, but the odds were in favor of the latter until aid could be had from another source. So you will observe that we are not always cognizant of the contentions going on in our behalf. When the lower forces gave way to the higher, to the love principle or Christ spirit made manifest, every elemental was cast out perforce, and then there was instant hope. Until then your skies were indeed dark and troubled. But the time for action did not come until your child's life was in peril. Looking upon the matter with the broadest vision, have we not just cause to be grateful?"

Not a word followed these remarks for several seconds. It was a most impressive silence, during which, and in an instant half of forgetfulness, Mr. Gilbert reached and took the hand of his wife and pressed it involuntarily, as if living for the moment in a remembrance of his early love. Stray tears began to gather in Mrs. Gilbert's eyes, and soon she wept as would a child at the discovery of some unhappy reality.

Possibly there was no reply to be made to such a portrayal of things which, after all, would need to be verified by time. Suggestions thus seriously offered certainly deserve the best of proof. Each human soul must find it alone and without the guile of persuasion from others. So, preferring to leave for the

present the facts he had thus tersely given out, Zelma gradually led his hearers into channels of thought more cheering and which reflected less upon the past. It was a significant moment in the lives of his friends. His logic as he proceeded continued so simple in itself, and so peculiarly suited to their needs, that it would seem that the fullest reparation was being had from every unpleasant incident in their lives.

At the close of the talk Mr. Gilbert exchanged glances with the seer. Both seemed grateful beyond measure. It was evident that Mrs. Gilbert preferred to say but little, so deeply had she been impressed with the revelations given her. She seemed more desirous of returning to her home where she could better and more satisfactorily give vent to her feelings which the interview, now nearly two hours in length, had engendered.

## CHAPTER XIX

JOSEPHINE'S PHILOSOPHY.—A WORD FROM THE SEER.

INTO the house of Zelma had been attracted a new light of the tropics. Maurice, with all his love of invention quickened many fold, was drawing to himself the ruddy sunlight of a new inspiration. If his ambitions had before been fervent ones, his present confidence in himself might now be called intensely potent. His laboratory was unique. Upon one corner of the house stood a six-sided projection, built tower-like, and the room Maurice occupied therein was largely surrounded with windows. A rectangular room led off from this, which was more properly called the workshop. This too, was well lighted and pleasant. In the sexanary room were his chemicals, lenses and other microscopic apparatus, for experiment with liquids and ethers. In the workshop were delicate edge tools, a collection of material and a work bench. Apparatus for measuring, for computing and accurately recording his experimental theories had been most generously placed at his disposal, along with a fine collection of books, old and new, treating upon nearly every subject known to science.

With an excellent light by day and plenty of light by night, might not such a haunt be looked upon as a dream by him who seeks to wrest from Nature her hidden secrets ?

As congenial souls are wont to be drawn together by invisible ties, it had been the lot of Josephine to look upon Maurice's abilities as an inventor with a more than common interest. None had, therefore, approved of the proposed arrangements with more zeal than she. More than ever could she now look upon her father's wisdom with that delight which one gifted soul shares in common with another.

Several times of late, and since Maurice had related the past incidents of his life, he and Josephine had had chance visits together, and often when quite alone by themselves. During these talks she had discovered much of the powers of analysis which were latent within him. Evenings, when Zelma was busy with his callers, he had formed the habit of seeking the library, where Josephine would read to him, and he to her ; then they would discuss the various everyday philosophies which would present themselves. She saw with womanly eyes and heart, and her wisdom gave him many agreeable surprises. Though he had been slightly diffident at first, he was not long in feeling quite at ease with one so entertaining and tactful.

"It has always seemed a little singular to me," Josephine remarked one evening, "that our poets, inventors and the like, are so frequently lacking in the

quality known as greatness while they live, but are made figure-heads of greatness afterwards."

"While they are with us they are merely human. After they are gone it is easy to make deities of them, I suppose," commented Maurice.

"Then a monument and their immortality is assured," laughed Josephine. "These so-called acts of appreciation certainly seem very queer to me, since I do not believe in monuments, medallions, memorial windows or parchment testimonials of any sort," she added, with model frankness. "Father's views of personal greatness are much the same as mine. I often wonder how our dead friends must feel with tons of granite holding them down to earth. I would rather be wholly unknown to the world; one gets away from the earth easier."

Maurice looked surprised. He could only smile his admiration for her fearlessness of logic. "I have never looked at it in just that light," he said; "but when one thinks of the universe as a whole the plaudits of this life do seem a trifle insignificant."

"They do, certainly; and if we fasten the spirit to earth by memorials wrought in the material, I believe we do that spirit an injustice. The past has built a Westminster Abbey, and has entombed within it the bodies of its illustrious dead, but future generations, aware that the thought which goes with the act is the most potent, will hardly dare build another such a prison house. Our memories, too, are frequent hinderances to the departed friend. We are apt to think

of him as he seemed to us while living. Pictures only intensify such memories. A photograph, for instance, depicts the friend as we last saw him. We all change, and we must certainly change still more after we leave this life. Still the photo, along with our memory, remains unalterable. If our friend had the qualities of a saint, and deserved absolute freedom, does not our old-time vision of him, acting upon our minds psychologically, help to fetter him to earth? Were it possible for photography, when the person photographed grows old, or saintly, to provide a picture that would change from year to year, or from life to life, as we are supposed to change, I believe that would be a help rather than a hinderance. Think of a person looking upon a likeness of himself as he appeared in some former incarnation. There would certainly come a tremor of queerness over him most pathetic."

"You would say that it is the unknown philosopher who succeeds best in leaving his personality behind him," inferred Maurice.

"Yes, and his individuality, acquired through a life of rugged experience, rises above earthly attachments, because he is nowhere statued in bronze or stone or pictured upon canvas. You may perhaps have noticed the difference in the ideal heads of Christ. This must be owing to the various degrees of mystical development among the artists. It would not be possible for earthly genius to depict a Saviour with the full after-glory of nineteen centuries in his

face. For this reason the palette and brush must at best be crude and be subject to the artist's personal restrictions after all."

"Still, will not the Saviour's head remain an ideal-ity to be still better portrayed in years to come?"

"Yes, but how much better had we each an ideal of our own which we might feel, rather than see. The really spiritual man or woman of the future must be the one who can see and feel the dead as they are, not as they once appeared upon earth. When the sixth sense prevails there will be, I think, little need of pictures of people. What if photography, or photography and electricity combined, were able to give us occasional glimpses of our departed friends, the same as pictures are already being transmitted to a distance by wire? Would not that be in direct line with our past accomplishments?"

Maurice smiled, now almost incredulously. "I believe it would be," he agreed, however. "The average mortal ought to be ready nowadays for anything inventive genius has to offer, recent discoveries have taken us so far beyond established facts. The X rays were looked upon as wonderful at first, but now we already consider them commonplace. But about your ideas of attachments; what quality of attachments do you think retard the spirit most?"

"Those devoid of love, those acquired through power, and those which are the result of our erroneous habit of hero-worship. An attachment between mother and child, for instance, is unselfish, and

therefore of the spirit. The hero-worshipper sets up an image or idol and bows down to it with heathenish obstinacy; and while his own soul grows smaller thereby, his hero or heroine grows larger and more famous to his belittled vision. Our popular education is full of this. To me a hallowed memory without material expression is best."

"Yes, yes, and total forgetfulness would be bliss outright," came a voice from behind where Josephine sat. It was her father who had entered in time to hear her last remark. With his usual fondness he implanted a kiss upon her lips, then looked with happy fervor into her eyes. "Tell me, my dear," he enquired, "are the thought waves of to-night so seriously burdened?"

"Maurice and I were attempting to reverse the order of things a little—nothing more serious, I assure you. You remember you have often told me how we can pinion a dead friend to earth by an arrow of self-love. It certainly makes one long to go away unawares—"

"And return only when the spirit moves," Zelma added, archly.

"There would certainly be the exercise of one's liberty in that. If we could but go away in peace and send back our love-thoughts instead of our personalities, there would then exist no actual separateness, and we would not need to be looked upon as literally dead, as our nearest friends may have been taught to believe us."

"Ah, yes, I see," contemplated Zelma. "Life is queerly planned, and death has its mysteries if we choose to make them such. Think of the poor mortal who has just left this house. In her locket she carries the picture of her dead husband and a lock of his hair, in her widow's weeds there is a gloom impenetrable, and in her face—well, truly, her spirit seems to have left her body, and she begs of me to tell her how she can make the memory of her dear one more sacred—what she can do to express more deeply her loss and all because of her extreme reverence for his saintliness! Gloom? why, hers is about as selfish a grief as one ever runs against; and yet this poor woman is totally honest. Theology has told her that her husband is dead and buried, and that she is left alone in her sorrow. He is among the saved, of course, but his far-away heaven only puts a greater separateness between them. To be sure she is honest. And yet, let such a person wake up to spiritual truths and she is the most thoroughly emancipated soul living. One never cares to return to one's mournings and regrets after proof comes that our loved ones have not gone away from us in the least."

"Then you did not advise her to build a monument to her husband's memory?" questioned Maurice.

"Yes, I did, but not one of granite. I could do no better than ask her to take her mind from herself, learn to do for others, and so perpetuate the memory of her husband's saintliness in fact rather than in

morbid grieving. Thus she might profitably dispense with the customary memorial of stone or bronze."

"I was just saying to Maurice that memorials to dead heroes are not after my choosing," explained Josephine. "And yet if what you say be true, the hero-worshipper must be honest as well."

"Certainly, so long as he is the product of past teachings. True individuality will not become popular for some time to come. I think I have strolled past statues of stone, and as I reflected how truly great must either of the subjects have grown in spirit life, the memorial and the man seem no more alike to me than daylight and darkness. I will venture to say that such are the feelings of many people, were the truth better known."

"As you look upon such things, an inventor need not crave personal recognition to be saved," laughed Maurice.

"His works, if they are of the spirit, will save him. The world should in fact forget that such a person ever existed. His discoveries can be tabulated and numbered, as belonging to such an age. For example: the cathode rays might be labelled, 'nineteenth century, ninety-sixth year, first month.' If credit was due to anyone, let it be awarded the people as a race who lived in that year—so lived that the truth in science became possible—not to the mere instrument through whom the truth was given out. The inventor has gone on, and will continue to go on if we do not worship his personality."

"I have observed of late that well-known authors shrink from publicity, and when their pinnacle of fame is reached they turn away from it with distaste," remarked Josephine. "Why is this?"

"Because true genius evolves its productions from out the universal akasa, but before attempting this there must first be the renunciation of self, else fame can never be truly achieved. Name otherwise acquired would not be fame. The world is quick to go into raptures for the moment. Little do the worshippers of famous people know the pain they inflict upon them by praises shouted in their ears. This proves to me, that since there is but one author, it matters little who is the chosen instrument of expression. To be sure we honor such a person, but we should not honor him more than we do other men, but fix our hearts and minds upon the progress the world at large is making. Did we do this there would cease to be hermits, and nuns, and recluses in the wilderness. Men of God could then dwell among us, both companionable and brotherly, because of our wholesome neglect of them as persons. When I reflect that the world must surely come to this sometime, I can only smile inwardly at what our biographers have written in the past. I believe the historical records of the future will be of events mainly, and of persons only incidentally."

"Without monuments and gravestones the cemetery will lose its charms," again ventured Maurice.

"There are to be no cemeteries in the distant

future. The practice of burning our earthly tenements will then be in vogue, and the greatest hinderance upon the spirit will thus be destroyed."

"People with second sight tell us of the ghosts of men sitting for centuries upon their graves, earth-bound and miserable, waiting for their bodies to decay," Josephine remarked, quite candidly. "If this be true, their bodies may have been petrified or hermetically sealed in caskets. I certainly would not want to doom a friend of mine to such a fate. The crematory is many times preferable, and fire is said to be the greatest of all destroyers of personality. No sensible spirit would need to linger long over a handful of ashes."

"What of the great works which genius may have left undone?" enquired Maurice. "Might not the love of one's work hold the spirit down to earth?"

"Certainly; why not? Right there comes up a lesson every gifted soul should learn," spoke Zelma, gravely. "There are two ways in which genius can work—selfishly and unselfishly. It may be well that one puts his entire self into his work, if there is no self left in it when it is done. Then he can willingly lay it down at any moment. As an illustration, I will say that an artist has conceived a great subject, and his whole life is wrapped up in it. As he pursues his work its probable value as a painting becomes apparent. Self steps in and computes its worth in dollars and cents, and though the masterful hand goes on for a time, there is likely to come a clash between the

lower and the higher man. We will say that for some reason death ensues. Still, self clings tenaciously to its work. Until all such love as this is eliminated, the spirit of the dead artist must of needs be cast down and regretful. On the other hand, could a master of the art but paint with a purely unselfish thought, his unfinished work when left behind would quickly vanish from his memory of earthly associations. The fact is, that at no time has he subordinated his gifts for gain, but has lived in freedom constantly. If in freedom, then for him there is no need of heaven, for he carries heaven with him both in life and in death. This must be true with all who work in the spirit. There are a few such on earth to-day, and there are many more to be born in future years."

Counsel of great value was this for Maurice, whose love for his own work had been limited only by his lack of vision into the realm of discovery. Was there, indeed, immortality to be realized here and now, by the mere elimination of self? His face as Zelma spoke grew radiant with hope and abiding love. Might he not find the solution of life hidden even in the very trifles which the dreamer overlooks, or the lordly will abjures? He was becoming convinced, at all events that it was a privilege to live. This was every day more apparent to him.

## CHAPTER XX.

## A CRIMINAL BROTHER.—GOOD FOR EVIL.

MRS. EMILY FESSENDEN, as preceptress and founder of the School of Modern Home Ethics, was without a peer in her chosen work. As the weeks went by there was noticed a gradual change in public sentiment regarding her venture, another proof that when an earnest soul polarizes silently and without mind disturbance toward a worthy end, it takes more than idle gossip to work its defeat. Nothing is more quickly forgotten than unjust criticism if we but let it pass unchallenged. This is one of the central facts in the gospel of non-resistance. A few favorable notices of the school had found their way into the newspapers, and one sheet had made bold to speak of the lady as a public benefactor. It is scarcely necessary to record this fact, for change of sentiment is sure to follow where truth and oneness lead.

Among Mrs. Fessenden's pupils was Miss Myra Gilbert. The millionaire, as we already know, had become one of the warmest advocates of the school. There may have been magic in the thought, but, sensitive to the emanations of love from those around

her, new color was returning to Miss Myra's cheeks, while there was already visible a certain impromptu but attractive grace in her movements. This, however, was only in common with the other maidens who were availing themselves of the superior advantages which the school by this time afforded.

One afternoon Mr. Gilbert's carriage rolled up before Mrs. Fessenden's residence, and he and Mrs. Gilbert alighted. It was also interesting to note the many evidences of Mrs. Gilbert's return to life. A woman never given to many words, she moved along when the current was not against her without seeming difficulty. It was true that the recent developments in her home had been to her a twofold revelation. While they had made her serious, the mirror of new hope into which she now looked reflected a sunny sky. She was also becoming a proficient pupil of Zelma's. Little need, then, had she for the tortuous revealments formerly given her by the psychics, which now only recurred to her as troubled dreams which had lacked fulfillment. Who better than Mr. Gilbert could have enjoyed the change? Now more than ever did he feel the love of human kind coursing through his veins. Had not his own awakening been the index of what had followed? Verily, there was healing even in the meager light he had thus far received. What might one be moved to do who was entirely free from past bondages?

The carriage was dismissed for an hour, for the call upon Mrs. Fessenden was to be more than a

merely formal one. Mrs. Fessenden met them in the parlor with loyal greetings. Extremely busy from day to day, she had little time for aught else than work. Never should the least of us marvel why an occupied woman is at once lovable and interesting. The wise ones tell us that soul growth is to be attained in no other way. She had regained much of the former mastery of herself and the admiration of those about her, and yet this equipoise, resolute and firmly executive, had now a quality not of self. It was as if the new life possessed charms, unsullied charms, to lead the untrammelled spirit upward and onward.

She had related to her callers a few of the incidents she had already experienced, much to their mutual enjoyment.

"Your pupils come from every quarter of the city, of course," commented Mr. Gilbert.

"From far and near; yes, sir. And it is interesting to observe the lack of maternal knowledge among girls in common. I find children who have been lavished with every known advantage, who have no more idea of motherhood than babes. I never could have discovered this had I not taken up the work in person."

"Then how grateful to you must be the parents of these children," remarked Mrs. Gilbert, with feeling.

"They are grateful as a rule, but we make no note of that. The end we hope to attain does not call for gratitude," and the speaker smiled sweetly as she

spoke. "You may perhaps have noticed that the central object of our training is to teach the youthful mind how to discriminate between true love and what is known as personal magnetism among young people. Nothing is easier than this; and how necessary that our daughters receive this knowledge before we send them out into society. Many a mother, though she may have learned the difference to her sorrow, is powerless even to define what are and what are not legitimate attractions between the sexes. But the sex functions once understood, there is scarcely a maiden but holds the balance in her hand to make for herself a happy marriage. She no longer blushes at the truths of maternity, and she can judge far better what goes to make up true virtue in the opposite sex. Her individual selfhood becomes apparent, her personal charms are real, and the young man who is attracted to her must in some degree possess an ideal standard of right equal to hers."

"Good! your system is certainly a most charming one," spoke Mr. Gilbert, with enthusiasm. "I am sure you have gone none too far in the one direction."

"And you say it is not hard to teach this particular truth?" questioned Mrs. Gilbert. She, too, seemed to catch the spirit of Mrs. Fessenden's words.

"No, it is not difficult. With our methods we appeal directly to the youthful instinct; after that we resort to the sciences. Their places in the Zodiac are taught them, along with a knowledge of such birth signs as are most congenial to theirs. The

planetary laws are as a rule a favorite study with the young. The science being an ancient one and long since proven true beyond a doubt, it affords much to be learned that our school books do not contain. A maiden's heart is as susceptible as her intellect, and when the two are combined it is not a difficult task to point out, at least, that every new attraction between male and female is not love, as romantic minds are apt to believe. We assist the young woman to apply all tests from a rational point of view."

"You are to be congratulated, Mrs. Fessenden, for having so fortunately chosen this particular field," said Mr. Gilbert, with a still deeper appreciation. "What of the other branch of your work; are you succeeding equally as well with that?"

"In the way of assisting young women whose genius is unrecognized, there is a broader field than I had supposed," Mrs. Fessenden said with a secret enthusiasm. "Imagine, if you will, how quickly genius responds to the touch of sympathy. Those we help are of course to be found in the humbler walks of life. Our purpose is to do no more than bring their gifts to the attention of those who need them; after that there is no doubt about a truly worthy girl's advancement. We do not lift them up literally, but we teach them as best we can to help themselves."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert were smiling their admiration for such exemplary ideas of what true charity implied. Mr. Gilbert's blood now truly tingled with the desire to go and do likewise, but had

it not taken a woman's subtler insight to point out where an untrained hand is to begin?

"I am frequently called upon to perform some strange duties," Mrs. Fessenden said, further. "This I presume is the case with every worker in public affairs. A young girl came to me this morning whose father has been indicted for theft. So certain is she that he is innocent, that she wishes me to go down to the prison and use my influence for his release. Her pleadings were truly pathetic. How strangely out of harmony is the world in some respects."

"The girl is a charge of yours, is she not?" guessed Mr. Gilbert.

"One we have been assisting somewhat. She is a natural delineator, and ought to be given a thorough course in some good art school. Since we do not feel equal to this we have hoped to find a place for her in some of the engraving establishments soon. Cases like this appeal most keenly to me, but what can I do? A woman would be given little chance to intercede for the child's father; and yet suppose for one moment that he is innocent."

"He will be branded as a felon in any event," speculated Mr. Gilbert. A happy thought just then occurred to him. "But if you wish it, Mrs. Fessenden, I will offer to investigate the case for you. I will go to-day; now, if the matter is an urgent one. You have his name, of course."

Mrs. Fessenden's face became radiant with thanks. "Here is a card giving all the data necessary. I took

down the particulars, though I saw even then no way to make use of them."

Mr. Gilbert took the card, and after glancing over it a moment, said :

"I have other business to attend to in the city, and I think I will take the car down town and leave Mrs. Gilbert to return home in the carriage. It may do no good, but it will perhaps relieve you of further anxiety for the girl."

Mrs. Fessenden warmly thanked her wealthy friend for what certainly seemed a great condescension on his part. Mr. Gilbert was a man of prompt action, so he arose and at once prepared for the trip. Mrs. Gilbert smiled, but did not commit herself to any opinion, though she may have thought the office her husband was to fill a decidedly new one for him.

On his way down to the city Mr. Gilbert had ample time to reflect upon the multitudinous phases of life. How little one half of mankind knows what the other half is doing. Was there prudence in his taking on even a thought of the criminal class? for was not the realm of crime over-populated, past all retrieve, and full of desperate men and women born and bred in the heinous atmosphere? And yet, out of this lowly realm comes a cry of injured innocence, told forth by a loving daughter, the last person on earth to believe a father guilty. Mr. Gilbert concluded that he must have been prompted by Mrs. Fessenden's innate love for the human race, else how could he have thus offered to go upon an errand so strangely conceived?

At the jail his well-known social standing gave him an early audience with the sheriff. A turnkey was called, who led the way down several long corridors with cells upon either side. The atmosphere as usual was tainted with offensive odors. At last they arrived at the cell they were seeking, when with ready authority the turnkey unlocked the steel door and swung it back. On the cot sat a man whose face was at first turned aside, but when he looked around his eye caught that of the millionaire's. A quick recognition passed between them. For an instant Mr. Gilbert was dumb with surprise. But at last he was able to find an expression in words.

"Indeed, sir; there has been some mistake," he said. "Your name is Rev. Carl Brody. We have met before."

The turnkey smiled wisely, and rattled his keys in grim amusement.

"A mistake all around, I guess," said the man, rather meekly. His glance fell, for Mr. Gilbert was looking him through and attempting to get used to the fellow's perfidy.

"And can he be the father of Mrs. Fessenden's protegee?" he asked himself, trying his best to compass the seeming strangeness of the circumstance. "Well, Mr. Brody, you have fallen into hard lines, I see," he said aloud, and still eyeing the prisoner keenly. "You may have left the ministry since you paid me the visit."

The prisoner was at first loath to say anything, but

seeming to feel the glance Mr. Gilbert was giving him, he muttered a couple of sentences that were scarcely audible. Mr. Gilbert waited a moment in silence.

"I say, Mr. Brody, what have you to offer for yourself?" he asked, this time a little authoritatively.

"I guess we will not talk about that," said the man, still with muffled accents.

"And your daughter—have you a daughter?"

The man raised his head and shot a quick glance at his questioner. For a moment he withstood the gaze of his visitor, but at length turned his face in sullen silence.

"Your daughter believes you innocent. Have you anything to say why her belief is not correct?"

A powerful emotion seemed quickly to be working in the heart of the prisoner. He could not have been dealt a harder blow. The turnkey had strolled to the farther end of the corridor, and could hear but little that was said. Mr. Gilbert's next words were spoken lowly, as if in confidence.

"My dear sir, you are a man in any event, and a father. You stand accused of theft. Are you innocent, or guilty?" But no response passed the prisoner's lips. "If guilty, why has not the love of your family saved you? Why have not your child's talents given you courage to be a man in very fact? Have you never thought of the quality of a daughter's love—a daughter, if you will, who refuses to believe her father guilty?"

A minute of absolute silence, then a tear trickled from the prisoner's cheek. He bowed his head upon his hands, and now that he was truly humbled Mr. Gilbert could but look upon him with compassion. He tried to persuade himself that a man who could weep was no criminal at heart; and yet, can our laws be so framed as to discriminate between the responsible and irresponsible wrong-doer?

"Did they ask you to come to me?" the prisoner at last found words to say.

"I have been asked to intercede for you, yes. I presume I would be quite powerless, however. But were it possible for you to be made a man outright, I might at least make an effort in your behalf. Tell me the name of your accuser."

When the name was given him Mr. Gilbert looked surprised. It was that of an intimate acquaintance of his whose house had been robbed a few nights previous. Hurried thoughts ran through his mind as he recalled the words of his esteemed friend Zelma. Had it indeed been his good fortune to escape, while his neighbor's house had been thus plundered at night? Whose wisdom shall ever be great enough to explain these differences in the lots of men? The silence of the culprit before him was without doubt an admission of his guilt; it needed no ulterior vision to discover this.

When the realization at last fell upon him, Mr. Gilbert turned away, but soon he again faced the man, now with an unqualified air of sympathy.

"You may not escape the law," he said, offering to take the prisoner's hand in his own; "but as man to man you are still my brother, and I will promise you this: your daughter's gifts, which certain interested persons have recognized, shall not go begging. She shall be assisted until she is able to honorably support herself. This is all I can say to you now. I have little thought that any effort of mine can lighten the penalty of the courts, but I can at least promise you this."

In his abjectness of spirit the prisoner had arisen to his feet, but did not trust himself to speak a word.

"I see our time is up," Mr. Gilbert said at length, "and I shall need to bid you farewell; but remember, that even though the law shall take its course, I shall keep my exact word with reference to your daughter," and with this he gave the hand he held a kindly pressure. After that he turned and went deliberately out of the cell.

The turnkey, seeing that the interview was ended, returned to shut and lock the door. As the bolt fell back in its place a quick dart of pain came into Mr. Gilbert's senses. Could his mission have been a more fruitless one?

## CHAPTER XXI

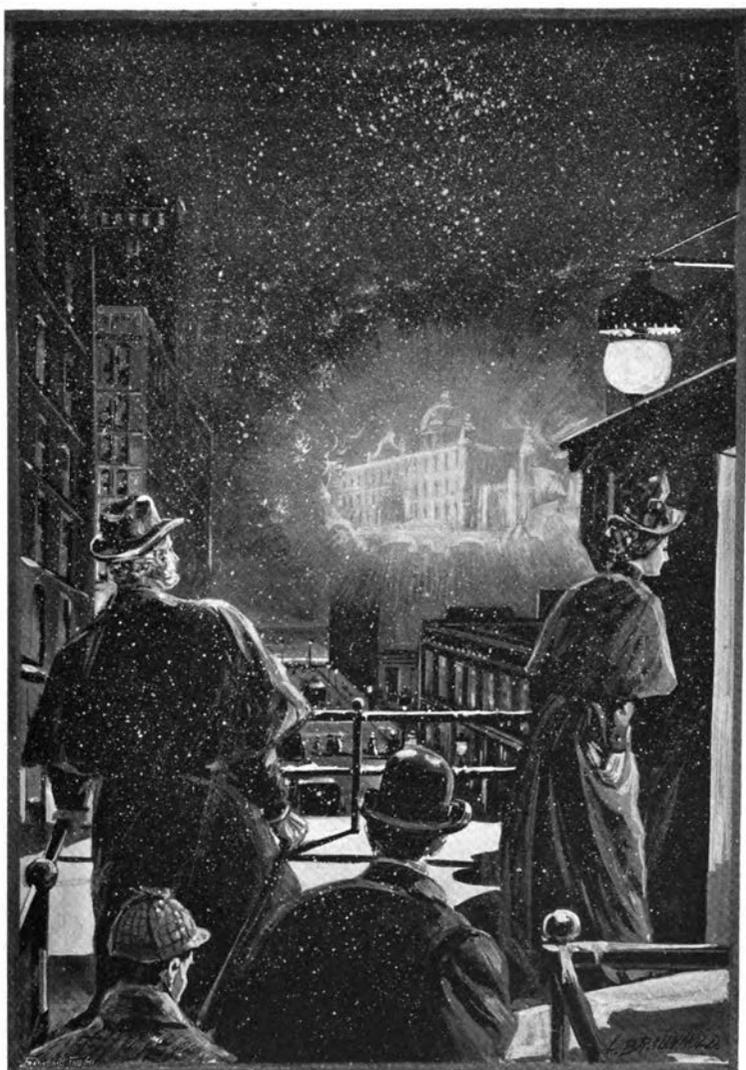
## THE MYSTERIOUS VISION.

DID you ever feel the thrill of a new inspiration? A bar of music, perchance, comes tripping in upon your consciousness when you least expect it—rarest notes which, could you but have them put upon paper, might turn out to be a famous melody? Or, has not some divine thought come like a flash into your being, which you try your best to grasp, but which slips with cunning caprice beyond your reach, and the more you seek to recall it the less you know about it—I say, do you not, and do we not all experience these vague impressions in one way or another?

Before Mr. Gilbert had dispatched his other downtown business a mild snow storm had set in, the weather having been growing warmer steadily since morning. The large flakes were falling in dreamy, sluggish silence, and the walks were already covered with a maiden whiteness. Night was approaching and the tide of shoppers was setting homeward. Borne along with the crowds, Mr. Gilbert drifted on with the many others to take the elevated train

southward. By the time he had reached the Congress street station some grave reflections had entered his mind. His brief experience at the city prison had set him to thinking. Whose charity is broad enough to forgive the deeds of him who will steal? and are men endowed with wisdom to correctly adjudge the thief as guilty after all? Is there not a message to be borne to the world in behalf of the criminal, even he who takes his brother's goods by stealth in defiance of law and gospel?

Thoughts like these had entered Mr. Gilbert's mind while he was mounting the steps with the throngs of others. Reaching the platform, he did not seem much moved by the hurried footsteps of those who rushed past him to secure seats in the train, but as if his time was his own, he paused for a brief moment to watch the snow flakes as they came down so slowly and peacefully into the street below. Up at the great Auditorium he looked and beheld its dusky shadow, now scarcely visible in the oncoming twilight. At that instant a strange sensation passed over him, and in the midst of this a mellow cloud of light appeared before his eyes, as if it stood out over the shores of the great lake. It was only a flash at best, but it revealed much to his now heightened senses. A tall, imposing looking building seemed to stand upon the edge of the lake, with a fringe of yellow rays surrounding it. It may have been a mirage, or a thought, or a vision, even, but it appeared to him most real, though altogether new and



"IT WAS ONLY A FLASH AT BEST, BUT IT REVEALED MUCH  
TO HIS NOW HEIGHTENED SENSES."



novel. The style of its architecture was different from the buildings surrounding it, more massive and yet replete with many modern suggestions. It had turrets upon each four corners, and long rows of windows were visible, one above the other, which cast their many reflections in the peculiar yellow aura. With the rapidity of a dream did all this pass before Mr. Gilbert's vision, and in no more than a flash of time.

At first he fancied that it had been caused by some lantern effect, and the scene had no more than shifted than he looked hurriedly about him to discover its origin. But only the deliberate, steady falling snowflakes were visible, glittering as they fell in the rays of the electric lamps, now shining upon every hand. Half mechanically he strolled into the station and paused a moment to look upon the cases of flowers kept here for sale. Mingled with his first glances at the be vies of pinks and roses, the keener memories of his vision returned, but each time he strove to recall them the less tangible did they seem. The one marked realization left him was an exalted sense of spirit. It seemed as if all persons who came into the station smiled and were invariably young and buoyant. The gravity of his thoughts had fled, and he felt like one whose eternal friendliness with the world had been assured.

After he had boarded the train and was well on his way homeward, the thought occurred to him to pass his own station and get off at the station nearest his

friend Zelma's residence. This he did. Still in a mood most thoughtful, he betook his way on foot through the snow until he reached the home of the seer. Omar Kava, Zelma's one smiling and gentle associate, met him at the door and bade him welcome. Zelma was just then busy with some guests, but as he was in no hurry, Mr. Gilbert seated himself in the library after removing his heavy coat.

How peculiarly inviting did everything always seem to him here, and how superbly appropriate were the furnishings about the room—the books and their cases, the warm colors of the rugs, the screens, the old-time pictures, a few Egyptian reliefs in bronze and plaster, classic symbols in colors, bits of oriental furniture, inwrought and queerly unmatched, and mottoes of spiritual import worked by dainty hands and hanging here and there upon the walls—how perfectly satisfying were all these to him who drifts therein from out the world of mammon, where all is not love, and health, and harmony.

It was while Mr. Gilbert was busy with his thoughts that Zelma appeared and grasped his hand with his wonted air of cordiality. They seemed to have long since become as brothers in the spirit of truest friendship.

"Not ten minutes since I was looking out at the snowfall and wondering how the Gilberts were faring," said Zelma, as he seated himself for a cosy chat. He had caught with ready instinct the look of settled content upon his caller's face.

"We are faring most agreeably, thank you," said Mr. Gilbert. "I have been having an interesting afternoon of it down town. Some queer thoughts and fancies do come to one—and experiencies, off and on."

"Yours have not been unpleasant ones, I dare say," surmised Zelma.

Mr. Gilbert responded with a familiar shake of his head, which put the seer quite at rest. Agreeable with his habit in the past, he proceeded at once to give a brief account of what had happened to him, not omitting the incident at the station. Zelma followed him with a beaming countenance.

"There remains one thing unexplained," remarked Mr. Gilbert, in conclusion. "If I really experienced the vision, or fancy, or illusion—and I hardly know whether I did or not—must it not have had a meaning?"

"The same as all things have meanings. Nothing exists, or comes about, or enters our presence but means something. There are no things unreal, or supernatural, or wasted. After we consent to live wholly in the natural, and occasional gleams come to us out of the darkness, we see, pass them by, and go our way no more exalted than before. This is living in the realm of spirit, with the scales poised in the Absolute. Yet the scene may have some reference to your future; I cannot say as to that. As you are now living you do not need to ask for a solution; one will come to you without."

"The unfortunate man in his cell impressed me deeply," stated Mr. Gilbert. "I believe him to be one of the crew who had previously planned to rob my house, about the time I received the warning from the police superintendent. His call upon me that same evening gave me a feeling that he was anything but the man he claimed to be. Strange, was it not, that I should have found the identical culprit in jail?"

"All as it should be, without a possible doubt. You befriended his daughter, you say?"

"Yes; I promised to do that. She shall at least be placed above her fallen father, in whom she puts such implicit trust."

"And do you then wonder that a vision is flashed before you? that the heavens open and that there descends upon you a spirit of inner content?" asked Zelma, laughing with a genial humor. "Why, the Samaritans of old never did a kindlier act—I will venture to say they never did."

But Mr. Gilbert's native modesty forbade more than a passing response to this. He was certainly not a person to be moved by any worldly pride in his own endeavors.

"However, speaking of our criminals in general," philosophized Zelma; "why do men go wrong?"

"Because they are sinners, not saints, I suppose."

"Yes, they are the wanderers of earth, the restless, unreliable members of the human family who exist to teach us what morality is. Without wrong-doing

morality would remain undiscovered. So much for contrast. Have you ever thought how man came by his right to punish his fellows ?”

“He has taken it to himself as an act of self protection.”

“Exactly so—he has taken it; but from whom? Who gave authority to those who punished Christ for his heresies? To me it is a curious spectacle, a very, very delicate task to undertake, when one human being deigns to sit in judgment upon another; doubly so when I contemplate some of the modern erroneous methods of punishment. The law says, punish the body. Do this, and the culprit, when he gets out of prison, goes and commits the same crime over again. Of what practical use, then, has been the punishment? Who ever thought of letting light into the soul of the criminal? Suppose some magical refining process could be introduced into our prisons, some discovery by which, in the twinkling of an eye, the thief or murderer would be made to see how absolutely poor in spirit he is; would this not punish him as would nothing else? I dare say the one word of human love you gave to the wretch in his cell this afternoon did more to punish him than years of incarceration can do, and possibly if he were released to-morrow his career as a criminal would be at an end. But think of the forthcoming penalty of the courts yet to be added, perhaps years in duration.”

“I know it; I have thought of that. But it will be a great stride ahead when exact justice shall be

meted out in every case. The process you suggest, of revealing the outer man to his inner self, were such a thing possible, would certainly be the essence of punishment."

"Well, then," continued Zelma, "can any of our prisons boast of one practical method, ever so slight, by which a man confined therein is made any better? His body is punished by body slavery, and the prison contractor goes his way with the profits of his labor. Now comes public opinion and demands a change. But what is proposed? That convicts cease making competitive goods. This much has the growth of the age brought about, but a further difficulty again confronts the officials. Must these people be kept in idleness? This of all things would be the most to be deplored; and yet no alternative seems to suggest itself."

"It is a vexing and many-sided question, really," reflected Mr. Gilbert. "But is there an alternative?"

"There is. Combine education and work; education to help unfold if possible the real man underneath, and work to keep the lower man in check. Suppose we had in our prisons competent artisans and instructors to teach art mechanism almost wholly. Let the time it takes to do a given work cut no figure. Let the value of the article in hand consist mostly of work put upon valuable woods, shells in the rough, mosaics, or other not over-expensive materials, these to be converted into some skillfully planned work of art which, when done, would be fit

to adorn some public building or memorial. Or, suppose weeks and months should be spent upon some valuable room decoration, which the wealthy philanthropist might buy to help along a cause so commendable. We punish a criminal many fold when we have aroused him to the enormity of his crime. If we do not awaken him in the least, he is in no wise above doing the same act over again. In a prison such as I have described, the hours for work could be rigorously observed the same as now. Rogues have many shrewd gifts, talents which might be turned to excellent account. Other classes, those less gifted in mind, could be employed in building the machinery needed, do the cooking or attend to the sanitary welfare. The more lowly class could do the menial work, which need not be so lowly but that it has instructive and elevating features. Then a duress for a term of years would be to some purpose. To me the demand already being made by legitimate labor is to be the entering wedge to a new dispensation. There are plenty of ways to keep the convict employed and yet produce no goods that will conflict with the open trade of our country. To be sure, this is the only solution to come, and the one that will be adopted eventually; but why the remedy has not suggested itself along with our other social reforms has been a query with me for many years."

"Your suggestion is certainly a novel one," commented Mr. Gilbert; "and as you put it into words I seem to get an impression that what I have been

telling you bears some specific relation to the subject. I do feel that I can profit by what you say, at all events, for our penal codes have long seemed to me most odious and incompetent. Possibly my experience at the station has some direct bearing upon the question," he added, in afterthought.

Zelma remained silent a moment. Finally he lifted his glance and looked smilingly at his guest.

"Possibly; I could not say as to that. I think I will give some thought to the subject hereafter, and if I can I will offer some suggestion," he said, most kindly. "Your subjective self may already be fully informed of some work which lies before you. This is true with many a soul which is about to have its vision broadened in the near future. It is not always best that we know the whole beforehand, for the Great Mind is ever most discreet, and reveals to us only that which is for our immediate use. Such an experience as yours I look upon as a shadow cast before—evidently not a shadow in your case, however; it may mean that you are to hold yourself in a receptive condition for the truth; we should all do that."

## CHAPTER XXII.

A SOUL TO SOUL CONFERENCE.—THE COMING  
PHILANTHROPY.

IF WHAT came to Mr. Gilbert the night following his talk with Zelma was not of the supernatural, it could at least be looked upon as decidedly unusual. Some time after twelve o'clock he seemed to be awakened by the touch of something upon his arm. Immediately he raised himself in bed and looked around him. His room was elegantly furnished, and a ruddy fire was smouldering in the grate. Into his windows crept the pale light of the street lamps, and this, together with the glow of the grate, gave only a dim outline to everything visible. At first he was impressed with the extreme stillness about the room. It seemed as if there had come into it some unaccountable presence. It took but a single glance out upon the street to see that it was yet snowing, and that the pavement and housetops were thickly covered with the wintry mantle.

He would have lain down again but for the distinct touch upon his arm, the effects of which he still plainly felt. He discovered nothing unusual anywhere until he chanced to look across the foot of his

bed, toward the fireplace. Here he saw to his surprise a figure seated in one of his easy chairs. Yet this did not appear to him altogether unusual. His impressions were those of perfect friendliness, and he felt moved to arise and greet his visitor. This he at once proceeded to do; but he had no more than stepped upon the floor than the recollection somehow came to him that he had not as yet undressed himself. He wondered greatly at this, but finding himself clad in his dressing gown and slippers the same as before going to bed, he was forced to believe that he must have lain down with them on.

Without hesitation he advanced toward the figure in the chair. In another moment he became aware that it was his friend Zelma who had come to see him. There appeared to be no need of formal greetings, but it seemed like an act most natural for him to draw another chair up and take a seat beside him. This done, he observed that the seer was dressed much the same as himself, and precisely as he had seen him the night previous in his own library. Their conversation began as if it were the continuation of some subject they had previously left unfinished. Zelma's words were as usual softly spoken and full of serious meanings. With a smile he looked into the face of his host, and said with perfect friendliness:

"I see the scope of thy earth life is broadening. We have been talking of the love of Him who doeth all things well. It is but just that thy new mission



“WITHOUT HESITATION HE ADVANCED TOWARD THE  
FIGURE IN THE CHAIR.”



hath been given thee. Thy right arm is mighty, and the fortune which hath been placed in thy keeping is not for thee alone. Already the work that is thine is fully planned. The building not yet reared by mortal hands already exists in the invisible. The culprit, who in his weakness sins against society, shall find in the structure yet to come the new charity of man and men. On the four corners of the building shall be reared castle-like turrets, and out of the many windows shall gleam the light of a new dispensation. The era in which you live demands a change, and the time is ripe for an overturning of the old and an establishment of the new. At thy birth hour was this great work given thee. The experiences of thy entire life have led thee gradually up to it. Fortune hath smiled upon thee, and no other one is better qualified to take this formal step into the ideal. It is true that the material bondages of the past hath held thy work in abeyance, but with the new cycle comes new methods, new aims, and new possibilities. The century past hath been the formative period; now shall come the period of actual compliance with spiritual law. Thou art indeed chosen to do a work most deserving."

Just as this word was spoken the clock upon the mantel struck the hour of one. Mr. Gilbert had sat listening, but seemingly not with his fleshy ears. The profundity of the words he heard seemed to reach his innermost being in other ways.

"You have spoken to me before this of an ancient

city which once stood upon this spot," he said, yet his lips did not seem to move in the least. "Is not our city again to be the chosen Mecca for the advanced thought of the future?"

"It has been so decreed. This is made possible by the wisdom of those who lived on the shores of the inland sea ages since. They were a people of great thought force, and skilled in the arts. The peculiar black soil underneath the city gave easy play between the magnetic and electric currents, the same as now. The occurrences of the past few years have made good the prophecy that the city is to be the great civilized center. The eyes of both the Occident and the Orient are upon thee, and thy words are already being dwelt upon by many sages of the East. Great conclaves of able minds have been held upon thy shores, and others are to be held here in the years to come. The battery of strong minds already attracted thither are to attract still others to thee. In no city throughout the land shall so-called good and evil be more intermixed. Thy forthcoming intellectual lights shall shine brightly, and the earth-loving mortal, he who is wedded to his idols, shall be swept down as by a passing breath. In no city will the reward for righteousness be realized with greater certainty. There shall come to thee the white-winged angel of peace and the destroying archangel. The hour at hand is indeed one of great significance."

"Thoughts regarding the welfare of our people

have forced themselves upon me of late," again spoke Mr. Gilbert. His words seemed almost to utter themselves, without the usual vibratory effect of sound. "The thought comes to me that the days of all creeds and society beliefs are numbered; that faiths given out by men and women will be replaced by Universal Brotherhood attainment. Is the world indeed to witness so great a change as this?"

"Yes, in time, and the hour is surely approaching. The spirit of individual freedom hath already entered the hearts of thy loyal brethren in every sect that exists. Dependence upon faiths established by persons will never do for the coming century. Every soul must become a creed unto itself, a follower of no man or woman, and a seeker after God alone. Thy ready wit will tell thee that such unqualified uprightness of thy people will readily pave the way for the Universal Brotherhood—a brotherhood which will ask of no member to name his or her belief, for faiths given out in words shall have little meaning in the ears of the coming race. As the trees are different, so is each member of the human family different. Attempt to bring two separate souls to see alike and there is conflict. Yield to them an unqualified freedom, and all words, rituals and precepts become as vague remembrances. Then only will each soul have found its oneness. When every wayfarer of earth shall stand upright, there will be no need of leanings this way nor that. All will be one because all will be separate, and there shall come a lasting

peace unto man. This shall be the freedom thy people have so long been struggling for."

"Troublesome happenings seem to be prevalent among us, and the moralist is many times unable to account for them," was Mr. Gilbert's next response. "The most serious of these is the frequency with which our unfortunates die by their own hand. Is there no power to stay these terrible deeds of self-slaughter?"

"None as yet. It is but a phase of the law of compensation. As I have told thee, in a city destined to such greatness the dynamic forces surrounding it are either most destructive or filled with great spiritual uplifting. Like those who are crushed beneath the wheels of the juggernauts, they who do not seek the inner temple of light must of needs grope their way in darkness and danger. Boastful pretences of power come into the hearts of those who live for gain alone. Their power is but weakness in fact; for when the light of day breaks suddenly in upon them they are blinded and depressed, and to take their own lives seems to them their only way into oblivion. Other unfortunates who inhabit the astral zone, and who hath done the same, hover over the suicide and fill his being with still greater forebodings. The sorrower's mind responds, the deed is done, and another victim is added to the army of meddling shadows which surround our earth. In the new day just dawning it shall be a privilege to live, and the mania which hath been stalking over thy city shall disap-

pear. The spiritual sunlight shall not dazzle as now, for the light within the hearts of thy citizens shall be equal to it, and the new condition of things shall be as the second coming of the Christ spirit upon earth. Brotherly love shall move thy neighbor to deeds of kindness, and the man-made laws of the past shall not be needed. By the aid of the silent forces now being everywhere discovered, the invisible shall be made visible, and that which you call disease shall be driven hence. Fire once swept away thy households and business marts, but there was deliverance even in that. The new was given the place of the old. That great event in thy history corresponds with the spiritual fire that is at hand; so that if there continues to live the mortal who heedeth not these on-coming things, and bows to his idols as all his own, he shall of needs be stricken down and a new being born in his stead. It truly behooves the merest of the race to cleanse his garments and look well to the promptings of the inner self. Already the hosts of mammon have felt the tremor of fear. There is change threatening in every avenue of earth life, and it is but just that this is so."

"You have spoken to me of the reformatory to be built for the coming criminal," Mr. Gilbert again interposed. "Where ought it to be located?"

"Directly on the lake front, with the restless waters lapping its sides by day and by night. Because it is to be a place both of learning and of punishment, it should stand where it will be a constant reminder of

the newer dispensation. Thy destiny requires thee to lend a helping hand to build this forthcoming and sorely needed structure. Other strong hearts will be drawn to the work with thee, and like many things which thy city hath undertaken and accomplished so quickly, this monument of charity and correction will arise from the water's edge with surprising rapidity. By the side of this lake are to stand the future great memorials of art and learning. The view toward the east must remain unobstructed, and the rising sun shining upon the waters will help to focus the mighty currents of occult wisdom from the Orient, which are to temper the newer and more aggressive wisdom of the West. Over the many steel tracks and numberless wires leading north, south and west, shall the currents of thy new cults be transmitted to other states, and thus like a luminous orb shall thy city radiate that which it is to receive interiorly."

Thus earnestly ran the talk for a half hour or more, and when it had ceased another interval of placid stillness pervaded the room, and the two grateful souls who sat therein became lost in a mutual and brotherly communion. The dim flittings of the shadows here and there seemed to cast a still holier sense of spiritual rest and comfort over the surroundings. In the midst of the silence the clock upon the mantel began striking the hour of two. After a time other earnest words were spoken, but these were breathed forth more lowly and pertained less to matters terrestrial. As the moments glided by it seemed as if

the outlines of the visible objects began to be gradually displaced by a mellow light of floating amber, and that the words spoken were changing to a sort of musical chant in which other voices joined. Amid the increasing halo the seer and his host seemed to float away into a realm of rayless sunshine and tinted jasper, beautiful beyond description. After that the realizations were only those of spirit absorption into a perfect oneness which forbade the reckoning of either time, place or speed with which they were traveling.

It was only when there came a sudden end to this charming vision that Mr. Gilbert lifted his bowed head and glanced about him. He was alone, and the hands upon the clock pointed nearly to three. His visitor seemed to have disappeared as silently as he had come. A sense of weariness stealing over him, he arose and approached his bedside. A maze of conflicting thoughts began to be mingled with his sense of dullness. Upon his bed he sat at last, and strove to collect himself. Again came the measured strokes of the clock, after which its ticking seemed louder than ever upon the breathless stillness. In another moment he lay quietly down and closed his eyes. Gradually his being seemed to become absorbed into another personality. Immediately thereafter he felt a second touch upon his arm, similar to the first. He opened his eyes quickly and raised himself upon his elbow. The contradiction of finding himself after all in bed and undressed, was for an instant

most confusing. He sprang at once to the floor and looked out of his window. Only the dull light of the street lamps and the still falling snow greeted his vision. What, indeed, had awakened him? He turned quickly about and clasped his hand over his eyes to shut out his surroundings and to recall if possible some memory that seemed to be slipping away from him. No, it was gone; he had been dreaming. But what strange fantasies must have tempered his dream!—thoughts and fancies which, try as he might, he could not now remember one of them.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

IN MAURICE'S WORKSHOP.—THE WORLD'S INVENTIONS.

THE haste with which Genius sometimes strives is apt to make the inventive mind go plodding after externals. Maurice had by this time buried himself deeply in his work. A very good counterpart of his old model had begun to take shape under his deft skill and workmanship; and as he contemplated its possibilities a fever of intense fondness began to tinge his blood, and that vague unrest so common among inventors often kept him awake until far into the night. This could scarcely have been attributed to his love of gain. He who is truly wedded to his art is seldom mercenary. It has been our lot to observe, that though some men with gifts of invention may acquire great riches, their work in the ideal goes on as if there were no such thing as wealth. What, then, is the ultimate they hope to attain?

One night when Zelma had been detained by his callers until late, he bethought himself to look in upon his friend, as he had done several times recently. Stepping quietly into the laboratory he closed the door gently behind him. What he saw at first

glance was a scene most interesting. So lost in his dreamings was Maurice, that the presence of another person in the room did not arouse him in the least. His two elbows were resting upon the work-bench, and the model lay before him. At the little thing was he staring with all his eyes. His features seemed almost like those of another person's, a certain hardness of look upon them due to excessive contemplation. Doubtless some enigma had been encountered, and he may have gone out of himself to seek the solution. The complex workings of his eyes denoted a waste of energy, an attempt to reach into the unknowable beyond a feasible limit. To have aroused him suddenly might have been indiscreet. So for a time Zelma stood with folded arms and waited. Believer that he was in the efficacy of thought transference, he called to mind an old rhyme, a favorite of his, and which was filled with peculiarly soothing words. This he repeated mentally, while his magnetic gaze blended with that of his friend's.

Thus several moments passed, until gradually the intense look upon the dreamer's face began to soften. Then as if some new hope had been realized, he smiled slightly and with his right hand began turning a small disk in the model to a certain angle. This done, he looked up and his glance met that of Zelma's. He seemed to have become conscious of his presence through thought sympathy alone. With ready deference he at once arose and placed a chair for his guest.

"Only a tilt with the impossible—that is all," he laughed, stretching his limbs and resuming his own seat by the bench. "I came near getting hold of an entirely new idea that time, but the elfin melted into thin air in spite of me. How decidedly novel becomes an idea which is just beyond one's reach."

"Was it an idea in fact, or only a semblance of one?" enquired Zelma.

"Well—I can hardly say as to that. It would not be considered an idea until one grasps it at any rate," laughingly speculated Maurice. But his look of mirth faded into that of sober reflection. "I think I have heard you say that there exists a reservoir full of ideas to be drawn upon. It is our weakness I suppose to want to tap the supply in advance of our fellows."

"Not the best thing to strive for, really. Why not wait?"

"So I have heard you say before."

"Wait for the inspiration to come naturally and without haste."

Maurice thought a moment, then looked up at his counselor. "I think I can see the wisdom of that; but our dreams come upon us so unexpectedly that we seem to need a time lock to measure our prudence."

"Eternity abjures the theory of measurement," philosophized Zelma. "When we have come to know that all that exists is ours; that there is time for all things—time infinite and to spare—why should we

reach out at all? Personal effort beyond a reasonable limit is of the self. Some of the world's greatest thoughts have been known to drop into the consciousness of men without a ripple of disturbance, while genius has been known to delve for weeks without the shadow of reward. To so live that we can truly welcome an inspiration is one thing; to attempt to force it is another."

"I must own that I have been reaching out to a considerable length," contemplated Maurice; "but a dream of one's favorite pursuit is quite apt to lead one into all sorts of wanderings. I am glad to have you come in, however, for there is always so much we need to talk about. I have been steadily chasing one of my pet phantoms most of the time since yesterday."

"I think this must have been inventor's day," remarked Zelma. "Just as I awoke this morning a thought came to me which seemed rather interesting as I turned it over in my mind. It was concerning the close relationship which Light and Power bear to each other. The electric currents, since we have come to know more of them, are supplying us with both."

"And yet we are only in the infancy of electrical research," suggested Maurice. "It is interesting to me to note the fact that the world's old ideas of power were those of immensity; now they are those of subtlety, which is quite the reverse. We seem of late years to get our best energies out of the silence."

"I am pleased to know that you realize this," smiled Zelma. He had sat down beside the workbench in a most comradely way. "Some very marked examples of utilizing and applying power are already before us. Think if you will of the locomotive of thirty years ago, with its pretentious smokestack, slender boiler and unscientific lines of workmanship. How it used to bark and let off steam and get stalled at nearly every grade. Then think of the compact locomotive of to-day, with its almost invisible smokestack, compound cylinders, massive boiler stripped of all useless trappings, and every ounce of steam used to turn its wheels. Its every look gives hint of monster strength equal to any emergency. We feel its ponderous muscles when the train starts, and in an instant more we are hurrying through space as if no stop had been made. The evolution of the locomotive alone has been to me a most interesting and pleasing study."

Maurice's appreciation of this was quick and subtle. His face was once more aglow with feeling, for he was aware that in Zelma he had a most appreciative co-laborer.

"Then we have the bicycle," continued the seer, with little hesitation. "I have grown to look upon the wheel as a happily conceived forerunner of the silent forces yet to be discovered. Witness its gliding, noiseless movements. The friction of its bearings has been reduced to a wonderful minimum, and though our parks and boulevards are thronged with

riders, yet not a sound is heard. The flying past us of a bicycle without a tremor of resistance or warning is to me like the language of the spirit, the more potent because of its silence. Noise attracts the multitude, but the secret power without the word gives to us a much greater potency of accomplishment. Take it in your own case if you will. The thoughts you have bestowed upon your model never could have been called together as the farmer hives his bees. They have come to you out of the silence. More of such will be forthcoming if you do not attempt to hasten them."

"Sometimes the real is hard to sift from the unreal," said Maurice, speculatively. "When a boy I used to watch the carpenter screw his vise together, and would imagine the force he exerted in the act. Later in life I imagined myself placing between the vise a spring or other compressible substance. Were I to depress the substance therein I would exert a given amount of force. Until that substance is released the force is still being exerted. I would spend much time wondering if such exertion might not be made active, so as to compel motion in other substances. So long as the force is applied, why not get from it a reactionary movement or pulsation to be utilized elsewhere?"

"It would be much like a man trying to lift himself by his boot straps," smiled Zelma. "But the world is full of people who aim to draw upon this inert force in one way or another. The mass de-

pressed in the vise is as a fact held there invincibly. It is not liable to escape. On a collection of such facts we build our sciences. It would trouble the scientist to have that mass in the vise become active. To him it would then cease to be a fact, because in it there would be life. Where life enters in the scientific materialist loses courage. He must hold to that which can be made captive. So the substance between the jaws of the vise remains the fact that it has always been since mechanism began. He who would question whether it might not be made active is looked upon as a dreamer. Yet are not feats seemingly more remarkable accomplished yearly? Had we said twenty-five years ago that a voice in Chicago would some day be heard in New York, we would have been called lunatics forthwith. Now the feat is as common as if the telephone always existed."

"The public will acknowledge a truth in time, of course, but to me the thinking classes seem reluctant when it comes time to change from the old to the new," Maurice reasoned.

"In former years it was more so than now. I believe the newer schools of science are more liberal than the old, and because of this our discoveries are more frequent and startling. An attitude of friendliness toward a thought gives it better opportunity to prove or disprove itself, according to its merit. Scientists have lost much of their fear of displacement. This makes the future seem most promising. With the balance in our hands, and in the absence of

prejudice, we can weigh a truth even regardless of the popular verdict."

"And discoveries can come to light at their appointed time," added Maurice.

"Yes, like all else which goes to make up the grand plan of human existence. You may have noticed how the one popular air springs into being. It is whistled, sung and played everywhere. There is a tincture of soul in it which the masses instantly recognize. Airs like this are born periodically; they are never made or thought out, but are a necessity in the grand scale of universal harmony. The fact that the composer thus touches the public heart but once is proof that he is the chosen instrument through whom the melody was to be produced.

"You have referred to the close relationship of light and power. What are the most direct evidences we have of this?" asked Maurice.

"Well, without light, power is impossible. The first light to enrich civilization emanated from the human mind. From that time power of control has been courted by all nations, the more ardently as the light of learning advanced. Now comes to us a force which primarily combine the two, and proves to us that they never have been separated. Light of the intellect first revealed the way to power. New countries were discovered, and then the power of man became mighty. Without the light of learning those discoveries never would have been made. Thus have light and power come down to us as twin realities,

until now we discover a latent, tangible fluid which gives us a living example of their affinity. This is but one of the many similar correspondences in nature. In my estimation the study of light and power is to be first in the minds of our inventors for many years to come. Incidentally we have heat from electricity to substantiate the inseparableness of light and power. With these three combined results already accomplished, what may we not expect in another decade of years?"

"Air ships and perpetual motion must wait," laughed Maurice.

"Possibly not many years, really, for latent forces seem to lurk in every shred and fibre of substance. The two would-be discoveries you mention have had checkered careers. Periodically we read of an air ship said to be a success without peradventure. That is the last we ever hear about it. Then some painstaking genius discovers perpetual motion, files a caveat at Washington, and that is the last we hear of that. So public expectation is kept constantly alive, and all because of the secret desire of the multitude to see these two feats accomplished. Now, suppose we deduce a theory from these facts this wise: Are not the frequent attempts made to solve these problems, together with the equally constant expectations of the public, a prophecy that both discoveries will some day be made? Inventions have their birth in the abstract. Do not air ships and perpetual motion machines really exist somewhere in

the thought atmosphere? If so, their discovery will some day be so simple that savants of science will everywhere smile in self-derision."

"When the time is ripe they, too, may be forthcoming," said Maurice.

"Yes; if we keep our polarity with the One, all things reasonable, and some things which at first seem unreasonable, become possible. It is when we seek to antagonize with our finite haste that our ambitions lack realization. Time cuts no figure, neither do circumstances, in the great whole, wherein nothing is ever lost. Inventors, of all people, should learn the wisdom of even-tempered polarity."

Thus mutually drawn together, Zelma and his pupil would frequently meet and discuss questions of common interest, each learning in his way much that could not have been evolved by thought alone. It was late when they separated for the night. As usual the seer left behind him a presence wherein a person like Maurice could find flashes of helpful light and strength incalculable.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## MRS. FESSENDEN'S SUCCESS.—A SPECTATOR IN COURT.

MR. GILBERT'S experiences were as varied as they were interesting. Time had been when life seemed barren and purposeless; now there began to be a pulsation in it which gave him a wish to make each day an accomplishment of itself. Beneath his exterior he felt an assurance most promising. Just what it promised he knew not; but since he had been under the tutorship of his friend Zelma, he had certainly come out into a sunlight of hope and renewed ambition to do and feel with the rest of mankind. His old habit had been to look indifferently upon commonplace things; now he discovered in them much that was new and engaging. He saw more of both wife and daughter, who spent many agreeable hours in his company, Myra seeming to realize the improved conditions, as children do, unconsciously. As much as it were possible, the past had been dropped, and the present was being lived without resort to needless apprehensions. People of mature years, and those who have tasted the bitterness of domestic inharmony, make apt pupils in the school of

regeneration. Our past habits of error have been many, and the way to live has almost become as a lost art in our land. Social disruptions have confronted us upon every side, and yet no wisdom has been great enough to suggest a remedy.

It was somewhat singular that Mr. Gilbert still clung to the belief, that should he become in any sense a public benefactor, his duty was to lend a helping hand to Mrs. Fessenden and her School of Modern Home Ethics. He may not have learned the one lesson of individual accomplishment. Yet he had been impressed that some such work lay before him. At first thought it seems a pity that the sublimer man, the soul, the astral counterpart, after its talk face to face with the seer's diviner self, could not have dictated to the purely objective man the proposed philanthropic venture in behalf of the criminal. Instead of this, there seemed to come to Mr. Gilbert's outer senses only a general impression that he must do the world some act of kindness. Its exact consummation was but dimly visible to him if his own and Mrs. Fessenden's work were not to be correlated. No one had ever so much as hinted that they were. Often, indeed, do these debatable hinderances come between our lower and higher selves. Will they ever be wholly reconciled and man's eyes opened to the simple daily truths which the inner self seeth so readily? Or, is it not best, after all, that our way be not definitely shown us, since out of our experiences, as we search for ourselves, we get

the very schooling we need? If this be so, then we have but to look upon the midnight conference which took place in Mr. Gilbert's bed chamber, as a connecting link between the active and the passive zones, and not as an imperative direction to do before the hour is ripe for doing.

It was during this period of Mr. Gilbert's meditations that he made an early call upon Mrs. Fessenden, to report the result of his visit to the city prison. Secretly he had resolved to offer her a liberal amount of money to help carry on her school, for every day he saw more that was deserving in the enterprise. It can therefore be imagined that their meeting at this time was one of considerable friendliness.

"And you say you were permitted to talk with the girl's father?" enquired Mrs. Fessenden.

"Yes; and it was altogether a queer coincidence," and Mr. Gilbert related the story of his recognition of an old offender. "I concluded that I would be wholly powerless to save him from the law, for my talk with him led me to believe him guilty. However, I desire to have you place the girl in the Art Institute, and provide for her living as well, and draw upon me for the entire expense. I would be pleased to have you do this at once. She doubtless needs to be alienated as soon as possible from the thoughts of her father's misdoings."

Tears of compassion came into Mrs. Fessenden's eyes. "I shall be most happy to carry out your wishes, and in her behalf I thank you sincerely," she

said, with undisguised pleasure. "I am growing to look upon the complex situations in the human family as something remarkable. Here is a child seemingly clothed with superior capabilities, yet her lot is burdened with conditions most perverse and unseemly. To be sure, we must not question why this is so; still, the complexity of such things do sometimes give one serious thoughts."

"To carry the matter still further," remarked Mr. Gilbert, "children have been born with every known advantage and with surroundings most enviable, and yet they seem endowed with dispositions toward evil, and are unable to so much as care for themselves. Actual human merit is indeed a pearl of great price. I hardly know where or how the universal education is to begin."

"That reminds me of what I have been reading in a pamphlet on Mysticism," replied Mrs. Fessenden. "The author takes direct issue with our ideas upon education. He believes that the haste with which our children are hurried through school destroys their powers of intuition as it frequently does their health; that intuition is of more value in practical life than intellectual attainment, and that during the formative period in particular no haste should be indulged in."

"Good doctrine, and it must be true in the main; it seems likely to me at all events," coincided Mr. Gilbert. "Many of us have those same ideas but we do not know just how to express them. It would be

a little strange if our erroneous ideas have not invaded our schools and colleges as they have our dogmas. Had I the bringing up of my daughter over again, her early education I assure you would be somewhat neglected. I should encourage her inclinations to be a child naturally, to sing and play house and dress dolls until she actually pined for school. Even then I should not hurry her in the least, but of the practical things of life, as she might be able to understand them, I would give her all she could assimilate. To-day the abstruse wanderings of algebra and trigonometry, of dead languages and the fad-like classics are of far more importance than knowing how to spell. Like many other things of equal importance, we are most wise after we have successfully exploited our ignorance."

Mrs. Fessenden smiled at her guest's remarks. "Yet we pride ourselves upon our schools and colleges, and people of wealth are endowing them yearly," she said.

"Yes, and only a reaction from our present intellectual eagerness will ever save us," declared Mr. Gilbert, quite warmly. "Schools with simple practice and less study; more attention to everyday object lessons that excite the child's love nature in the place of tantalizing brain work, are everywhere needed. Like a competition in stock-raising or speculation, there exists the strife between parents to see their children graduate, and the frequent open grave which follows graduating day seems scarcely a warn-

ing. I am inclined to believe there is much of truth in the pamphlet you refer to. I think it has been my aversion to popular competitive education that makes your school seem altogether practical."

Nothing could have been more gratifying to Mrs. Fessenden than her caller's appreciative and ready understanding and frankness of speech. It was exactly this coöperation that she needed. A speck of timely encouragement told in neighborly terms is worth more than a division of one's fortune. Mr. Gilbert perceived the pleasure of his hostess, and this added to his own sense of fraternal enjoyment. The elixir once tasted, he could have gone to most any reasonable length in his liberality. But somehow he could not find the exact words to offer material aid in behalf of her school. Money seemed most paltry beside his friend's truly lofty aims. Besides she seemed amply able to meet all of her expenses, and under her management the school was growing daily. He marveled to himself that he had not gone and done likewise years before. As we have before intimated, he had one important lesson yet to learn, namely, that the work of one individual is never that of another's. When each earth's inhabitant stands alone, co-relationships will be less numerous. It may have been a thought which Mrs. Fessenden gave him, that she needed no further aid. If so, his intuition enabled him to receive it, for as the talk progressed his opportunity to offer her assistance seemed only to diminish. And yet, their friendships were

being cemented in invisible ways. His simple act in behalf of the girl was all he needed to take upon himself at present. So, when at the close of the interview Mr. Gilbert went his way, his soul satisfaction was tempered with none of the sensuous thoughts of money values he had brought with him. He was in a condition half to believe that his duty lay in some other direction.

Yes, and trifles do sometimes move us unawares. That day when he took up his paper he chanced to read of the trial of a young man accused of embezzlement. The facts were somewhat pitiable, yet the offense against the law was none the less serious. The accused had a widowed mother who was ill. He had had the handling of his employers' money, and as stronger men have done before him, had used some of it to relieve his parent and provide her with a few simple necessaries. His purpose was to return the amount the next day, but a train of circumstances had prevented his doing so. Result, a discovery and its attending dishonor, a dismissal from his position, and a charge of embezzlement to answer for in the courts.

In some unaccountable way the case touched Mr. Gilbert deeply. In an early day he had studied law somewhat, enough, at least, to know that it is the province of one lawyer to show to the court how black at heart the prisoner is, and of the other to picture in glowing words his unimpeachable innocence. All this friction of thought many times puts queer

colorings upon man's supposed degeneracy. It may have been no more than an impulse, but Mr. Gilbert believed he would attend the trial of this young man, the outcome of which was problematical, since public sympathy had already arrayed itself strongly against the inexorableness of the law. Accordingly he became one of the spectators in the court room that day, where many others had congregated, doubtless with motives similar to his own.

The charges had been made, and the evidence was nearly all in. The prisoner was by no means a hardened criminal, but a man of quiet manners and intelligent looking. He had doubtless taken the dishonor much at heart. Friends had appeared in his behalf, but the judge who sat in the case knew the law to a fraction. The extenuating circumstances put forth by the defense were old and much worn from overuse. The prosecution had the law and the average depravity of human kind to fall back upon, and a speedy conviction was demanded in the name of the commonwealth and society in general. The jury seemed confused. Such diametrically opposite treatment of the foibles of the race quite unnerved them. But they, too, in their extremity fell back upon the swedge-like law-and-depravity code, and found the prisoner guilty. The word went through the court room like an unhappy message. Yet there were the facts—the money had been taken, the act had been discovered, the facts had been proven—and, well, the law had simply to take its course; and while

the prisoner was being taken back to jail the spectators filed noisily out, with widely varying opinions as to the soundness of the verdict.

Common scenes are these in our courts of law. Mr. Gilbert could not easily dismiss the thoughts of the trial from his mind. He could not help but pity the poor mother, whose only support the son might have been, and who might at that very hour be lying at death's door. Yet had he any good excuse for letting his sympathies run, when pitiful dramas such as this were not new, but as old as law itself? Where might one cease doing good, or lending sympathy, with the yearly crop of unfortunates coming and going as regularly as the seasons?

While on his way homeward that afternoon there somehow seemed to be a vague connection between his present thoughts and the scene which was flashed before him recently at the Congress street station. In his usual meditative mood he mounted the steps once more to the railway platform, where as before he stopped a moment to think. Up at the Auditorium he glanced with a hope of recalling the vision, or remembrance, or impression, or whatever it might have been. It was indeed only a remembrance now, very far from anything to be grasped with the normal senses. The tall blocks on either side, the noise and bustle of business down upon the street, the chilly barrenness of the mists which hung over the great lake, all seemed ponderably real and suggestive of anything but visions. And yet as a mere remem-

brance, he was inclined to believe it had some connection with the things he had heard that day in the court room. Here, again, was he incapable of successfully putting this and that together, as a more spiritually minded person might have done. Well, the time might not have been ripe for the fullest revelations. As we have before stated, to have our everyday obligations marked out for us beforehand would make our lives but automatic existences, with no special merit in them. Mr. Gilbert did not seek his friend Zelma on his way homeward this time; yet there came to him a series of thoughts sufficiently profound to awaken in his soul a feeling of still deeper solicitude for those whose burdens were greater than his own.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## A LATTER DAY AGITATOR.

SOME time previous to this there had come to Chicago a gentleman of foreign birth, whom, for the sake of convenience, may be known to the reader as Mr. Considine Speed. His mission was reform; not a quiet, unostentatious molding of public sentiment, but a radical treatment of things in general. He had hoped to remove the boundary line between good and evil by one well executed flank movement, such as might make him, both in the eyes of the Lord and of suffering mankind, a worthy benefactor of his race. He had come to the city of all cities wherein could be found everything he might be looking for, and much beside which he may not have had the eyes to perceive. The cosmopolitan atmosphere of the town was full of creepy shadows and unsavory findings. These gave the gentleman a broad scope, and he had raised a voice of righteous mutterings against society and its attendant badness. To his aid he drew a few local lights, and a war of words began. The fashionable clubs, from sheer politeness, had invited the now distinguished citizen to their banquets, at which he

would tell, sometimes in speech not at all flattering, of the wickedness and contempt which lurked in other localities than those of the Chicago River. At first the innovation was a novel one; in time it was not so novel. Certain sensitive ones declared against the foreigner's aspersions, and sought to "cut" him. This had various effects, one of which was to cause the gentleman to write a book. Other men less wise than he had done the same. This may not have helped his cause to any great extent. At any rate, he had come into the city's midst, and the wise ones looked calmly on and dared not predict what the outcome might be.

Owing to Mr. Gilbert's unsettled convictions as to what specific reform he ought to befriend, he had become more or less attracted to this agitator, who, in very truth had succeeded in warring most gallantly against the social and statutory evils about him. Mr. Gilbert's club had accorded him the homage due to a man of foreign citizenship. And yet his radical onslaughts frequently puzzled the millionaire, and he had not just succeeded in classifying him in the great category of such men as wished to see the world grow better. So one day he invited the gentleman out to see his esteemed friend Zelma. He wanted the seer to lend a thought or two by way of suggestion, as he had done on so many previous occasions.

The meeting of these three vastly different minds was a most significant one. Zelma received his guests in a cordial manner, and at once entered into the talk

with much of his wonted fervency of spirit. Mr. Gilbert had before this been tempted to advance his theory of the non-resistance of evil to the stranger, but somehow he had not started in right. So he had for the most part been a generous listener to the man's theories as advanced by himself. The talk in Zelma's presence had of course turned upon the subject of social purity. Mr. Speed had given a brief account of his mode of warfare in a general way, and Zelma had listened attentively.

"Your motives are without doubt righteous ones," Zelma remarked, quite liberally. "It is my belief that we must each work in our own way, and receive for such good deeds our various allowances of credit out of the aggregate returns. My way, however, would have been the opposite of yours; for when we antagonize we are apt to slip a cog in our machinery, and the result is a stoppage for repairs and a consequent loss of time."

The exact way Zelma said this—the hint of mirth in his tone and the settled look of good will upon his face, together with the almost incredulous expression upon Mr. Speed's countenance, were all exceedingly interesting to Mr. Gilbert. As for himself, he felt safely anchored now, and perhaps it were best that he had been thus sparing of his own ideas upon reform. Mr. Speed's eyes had dilated with wonderment.

"You would not have attacked these giant evils?" he asked, archly. "How then would you reach them?"

"I would not reach them at all. An upbuilding of the good is more effective than a tearing down of the bad. Working upon the circumference adds fuel and friction to the heat of contention; to go to the center and work outwardly is the better way in the long run. Then no friction is produced, men become better without knowing why, and almost before we are aware of it the silent forces have triumphed in innumerable ways. There is another law which cannot be broken with impunity. It is a law not man-made, but more certain in its workings than any we now have upon our statute books."

"You refer to the divine law," guessed Mr. Speed.

"Yes, the law of love. It is secret, subtle and ever operative. It has moved kings to repent and the criminal to break down in his hour of defeat. It was the hidden strength which inspired the carpenter of Bethlehem when he taught the disciples. It has since then been the promise to all nations that we are to witness a final redemption from sin. I do not advocate pitched battles of any kind. I can wait and be humbly patient with the trust that all will be well."

"I see; but have your methods, so transcendental and nicely drawn, been tried to any successful ends?"

"They have; but as a rule they are little known to the world. Take the Hull House of our city, a work of love from its inception; the independent medical homes to teach emancipation from drugs, a recent and most worthy move in the direction of purity; the increasing number of settlements for teaching the

poorer classes; the kindergartens; the humane societies for befriending the dumb brutes and homeless children from cruelty; the many humble missions among the lowly, founded upon love and outspoken fellowship; and, if you will, the Salvation Army and its more recent ally, the American Volunteers, at this hour the only absolutely Christian sects upon earth. All these have espoused the teachings of the non-resistance of evil, and the good being accomplished by them you or I would be at a loss to estimate. If we do not witness immediate results, we are at least setting up a series of karmic conditions which will bear fruit sometime in the future generations. We should not work for results, however. To do wisely is to leave results to the Infinite Mind, which is capable of sifting the truly good from that which we in our haste have called evil. Novelists, poets and teachers have come to us from your shores and have given us of their best. As a consequence new impulses for good have been nurtured, which must show very largely in the final accounting. An attack upon our society with force of arms is abortive. It is one way of asserting that the false, or unreal, is in the ascendancy. As seen by the broader view the law of love will eventually reform mankind."

"Our so-called evils are but signs of a negative conformance to the right," put in Mr. Gilbert.

"Certainly; and by abstaining from open attack we help to encourage the love impulses which no human being is wholly destitute of. Arouse a com-

munity with some startling movement, and for a brief time all heads are turned. Then comes the reaction, and people grow tired and begin longing for other sensation. It is the silent doing, and thinking, and striving for others which never grows irksome while the spirit of the work remains uppermost. The reason of this is that it is never outwardly forceful, but thrives as well in the darkness as in the daylight. It sets in motion no discordant vibrations, hence it reaches where tumult and opposition cannot."

"Your views are certainly most novel ones," asserted Mr. Speed. "But granting their truth in the absolute, there have been in all periods the pioneers who have broken the soil by force of will and conscience. It has seemed to me, that to explode a cartridge of dynamite in the midst of society revel might awaken the unholy pleasure seeker to his sense of duty. Do you suppose non-resistance will ever impeach the gloating sensualist, or hang the wrecker of a bank, or stay the hand of the social outlaw in any particular?"

"It will set all things aright, only give it time. The world to-day is smarting under the lash of condemnation, which has been the means of chastisement since early history. One religious sect has ostracized the followers of other sects; one school of reform has reviled its opponents, and instead of a survival of the love principle as taught by the Nazarene, we have simon-pure selfishness to console us after centuries of preaching, teaching and coercion. My plan

would be to stop fighting, hating or fearing, and go to loving our fellow-men outright. He is the most trusted warrior who seeks to relieve a wounded brother by the wayside. The Good Samaritan has never really had his day; do you think he has, Mr. Speed?"

Zelma smiled as he said this, for in spite of the gentleman's rugged views he felt agreeably drawn to him. He could not but admire any honest or earnest soul, and the quality of his caller's motives must certainly have been honest. So he readily recognized in him a co-laborer, though, perhaps, after a manner altogether his own.

"The combative man can do better than exercise his dominant faculty," again suggested Mr. Gilbert.

"It would work very little reform with the masses, because the people as a rule are combative. We have put this faculty into our wars and carnage of the past, but in our present day we have something better to stimulate us. The combative person is apt to stand in his own light, and, while working wholly upon the circumference, holds up to view some great wrong or riotous evil. The person having occult wisdom, and the faculty of using it to the greatest advantage, to the world seems non-aggressive. His name rarely appears in history, and his most successful bouts with the inharmonious elements are carried on through meditation and coöperation in the silence. One thought thus thrown out in love and compassion brings greater returns, greater humiliation to the

law-breaker, than can an army of noisy invaders. This if I mistake not is to be the next gospel lesson to be set before us."

"You would assist our everyday reforms with mere religious convictions, non-aggressive ones at that," implied Mr. Speed.

"Religion and common usage in our daily lives should never be separated," counseled Zelma. "He is religious who is honest; and since an honest man is the noblest work of God, when all become honest all will be religious, and sects will have had their day. One good human example is to me of more value than a book filled with precepts, because the thoughts we engender by doing right are our invisible agents which never sleep. Much of our moralizing could be dispensed with, to give room for wholesome practice."

"I recognize all that; but suppose we take a more general view of the subject," reasoned Mr. Speed. "As we are as individuals, so we are as a nation. In our country we have the iron heel of a monarchical government to lend its crushing weight against evil. Here I find a republic with its tattered ends flying this way or that with every passing breeze. Your laws are loosely framed and are enforced if, after they are passed, there seems to be any special need of enforcing them. As well have no laws as laws without effect. Sometimes you forget to cross them off your statute books after you have repealed them."

"Does this not go one step toward proving that

the higher laws are to attain after the man-made laws have failed?" asked Zelma, still speaking smoothly and with brotherly fondness. "Somehow, somewhere lurks a power which keeps our ship of state afloat, and the craft is destined to keep floating after all the old monarchies have passed away. This is to be the land of promise; and though at times the outlook is dark, there is an eye of wisdom behind us which is guiding us toward wonderful revelations and discoveries. You will therefore not despair if we are not the most model nation as yet. We have much of the future in which to redeem ourselves."

"Well, take the vicious men and women of your city," said Mr. Speed, evidently quite satisfied to return to his former logic. "There is a canker festering in your midst of most serious import. Like attracts like, and the evil is becoming rampant. Banks break, the saloons are run wide open, and suicides are every year increasing. Why have such propensities run riot in the face of all that is good and moral?"

Zelma still betrayed only an unruffled candor. "All this you speak of is a phase through which we are to pass," he said, after a moment's thought. "Go back into history, and one by one the popular cruelties and vicious habits of men have been dropped. No degree of moral effort would have dispensed with the Inquisition until that phase had been lived out. That is the law of growth. You cannot hurry a reform one iota. This once realized, we stop our vitality-losing,

righteous warfare, and seek the peaceful silence. Here we gather thought force, courage, and charity for our fellows; and all who do this emanate a most subtle essence of reform. Do you not see wherein the power of silence can overthrow the will of him who dares violate a sacred law of his being?"

"I confess that I do not," admitted Mr. Speed, still holding to his peculiar views. "Signal punishment for him who violates a law of the land, be he among the high or the lowly, is the corrective which must show its strength in all coming reforms. Those who are beyond the reach of law should be ostracized at every available turn. Create sufficient sentiment against the evils of your city and the canker will be driven out."

"Driven out, or suppressed?" asked Mr. Gilbert. "Suppression is not always a cure for a malady, according to our newer philosophy."

"Have not rebellious insurgents been quelled and put to rout by the strong arm of the mother nation?" reiterated Mr. Speed. "Once reveal to the wrongdoer the terrors of lawful punishment, and he is balked and kept in abeyance; but yield him even a semblance of popular charity, and he will override your most sacred wishes to make him better. No, as I see it, might against might in these troublous days serves us best in our reforms. If we pin our faiths to our laws by enforcing them without stint, an ultimate reform can be reached. After that we can fall back upon our ideas of fellowship and religiously sue

for peace. Until then the ammunition we use should be carefully housed and kept in constant readiness."

"I think we agree in the essentials," Zelma said, consolingly. "We all desire that the world be made better. It is only in our methods that we differ. But when we have fully realized that every man is accountable only for his own misdoings, and never for those of his neighbor's, we will have ceased our warfare in a great degree. We have too many self-appointed monitors of other people's morals. The mastery of our own person and not of some other person is to be, according as I see it, a valuable lesson of the near future. Our individual responsibilities have suffered largely because of our overweening desire that the other fellow be good and law-abiding. Reforms are curiously handled sometimes. The way intemperance is fought is most unique. Instead of seeking the root of the evil, the monster is haggled at here and there spasmodically, and still men drink as if the large-hearted temperance advocate did not exist. No, the silver-tongued orator and the doctrinal advocate may come and go, but the forthcoming era of love and brotherly tolerance will be destined to go on forever."

At this juncture in the talk a moment of silence ensued. Nothing further seemed necessary to be said. Zelma's way was never to argue to any great length, but to state his views firmly and without heat. Evidently Mr. Speed, since he was growing somewhat excited—and he may have considered the seer's

last remarks as somewhat personal—felt the reserve force of his adversary, for he soon broke forth again, more vehemently than before.

“Do you not know, and have you ever reflected, that your so-called polite society is reeking with slime?” he asked, in a tone of masterful conviction. “It is a fact; and should Christ come to Chicago—”

“But, my dear sir,” expostulated Zelma, “the Christ spirit is already here; what care you for His personality? We have but to look about us and His spirit is revealed to us everywhere. In a city as large as this you can find anything, positively anything you are seeking for. I, for example, may look for the spirit of the Saviour in the by-ways, in the very places where you see but vice and inharmony. Men who sin are not wholly depraved. In the upturned face of the lowly urchin in the gutter I see a spark of childish love. Perform a simple act of kindness for the hardened criminal and his face softens toward you. Lash him with reproach and he scowls and hates you. It is indeed the mild power that cures.”

“Your doctrine as I understand it is, that we should let the world go joyously on until the present phase is lived out,” implied Mr. Gilbert. “At the same time we must allow that even in Mr. Speed’s theories there are thoughts which must have their effect. After every motive follows certain vibrations of harmony or inharmony. Mr. Speed’s salient thoughts must certainly be more or less effective, since he speaks them with a spirit of forcefulness.”

"All phases of thought help to make up the aggregate, I suppose," laughed Zelma, pleased with Mr. Gilbert's offering. "In spite of all the theories which man has invented; all the doctrines, mandates and subterfuges which have been put forth, civilization has advanced steadily and with the precision of clock-work. We are but creatures of sublime shortsightedness after all. We can no more hasten or delay the advance of the world than we can turn a planet upon its axis. Then why spend any vitality upon outward things?"

"Yours are magnificent teachings, to be sure," mused Mr. Speed, as if he deemed it vain to try to reconcile their widely differing opinions. He may not have come from among a people who love to yield. Yet they say the strength of men's convictions have been the making of them. They must have made Mr. Speed what he was, most assuredly.

In his office of mediator, Mr. Gilbert at first strove to endorse, or find reasonable applications for the views of his aggressive friend, almost to a degree of sacrificing his own; yet like most discussions, into which human wits put their love of victory, this one brought up just where it started. A few new vibrations may have been set in motion, but society, so far as we know, did not profit by the talk in the least. As an occasion of friendly interchange between gentlemen it was a success. So far as indicating any striking epoch in modern history, it was void and of no effect.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## A MYSTERIOUS MESSAGE.—ESOTERIC VIBRATIONS.

OF ALL the members of Zelma's household, little Dolphin had become Maurice's most intimate companion. Her school hours ended at one o'clock each day, and scarcely an afternoon passed when she did not pay a visit to his laboratory. With elderly forethought he had allotted her a small space at one side of his work bench, where she could sit and play. He had also placed at her disposal many curious toys and blocks with which to amuse herself. She seemed to him a strange child indeed. Though young in years, she was old in her manners and ways of thinking. She would frequently sit regarding him with deep concern, and when he would lift his eyes to hers responsive vibrations of soul would pass current between them. However discordant his moods, one look from her was sufficient to bring him back to his normal self again.

One day in particular he had become deeply absorbed in a certain problem relating to the model upon which he was working. His object sought had been the simpler method of generating electricity

direct from heat without the intervention of steam. Upon this, together with several other favorite ideas wholly his own, was the success of his invention based. The desired result was to be obtained by the combination of various metals. This much had been discovered and had already been partially made use of. But the per cent of electrical energy thus far obtained was insufficient to make the discovery of any great commercial value. Another metal, yet undiscovered, was evidently necessary—some missing link in the endless chain of mechanical energy—and could Maurice but discover the one secret his long hoped-for success might be speedily assured. What was the metal he sought? To what hidden niche in the bosom of magnetic earth could he turn and find the object of his quest? He had waited long for the desired impression to come to him, and his thoughts had of late grown to be perplexing ones. His meditations over the problem upon this occasion were deep and steadfast, so deep that he became quite lost to both time and circumstance. It was like a quiescent indwelling of the spirit in times of peaceful yet unsatisfied seeking for the unreachable.

Seemingly as if impressed with the gravity of the silence, Dolphin had turned from her playhouse, and climbing into her little wooden chair, and with a building block still in one hand, sat looking with all her eyes at the troublesome model. She, too, appeared to be dreaming. Presently, and during a moment of supreme quiet, two distinct words fell up-

on Maurice's ear. One of these was the name of a very rare metal, spoken with unmistakable clearness. Slightly startled, he looked up and his eyes met those of his little friend's. He was sure it was she who had spoken. For an instant he was speechless with surprise.

"Did you speak to me, Dolphin?" he asked, at length, and with a feeling half of awe. Dolphin, with a child's caprice, turned smilingly about and pointed to her blocks.

"I wanted you to see what a pretty house I have built," she said, innocently. "Here is the door, and there are the stairs, and this is the chimney," and in her eagerness she got down upon the floor to put a few finishing touches to the structure, which had the appearance of a very creditable habitation for one so young to have conceived.

Along with his surprise there came to Maurice strange and fanciful doubts. Was it Dolphin who had spoken to him after all? or had it been a voice from out the silence? And yet as he thought it over he was quite resolved that what he had heard had been his little friend's familiar accents. Even then, what knew she of metals, or of the problem that was perplexing him? Under the stress of the moment he arose, and going to his book-case took therefrom his Chemistry and turned to the treatise upon metals. Dolphin, somewhat in doubt as to his indifference, followed him with serious eyes. He had scarcely noticed her house of blocks. Soon, as if she resented



“DID YOU SPEAK TO ME, DOLPHIN?”



the slight, she arose and stole slyly out of the room. By this time Maurice was as deeply absorbed in his study as ever.

But the strangeness of the incident only served to deepen his perplexities. His Chemistry, though he readily found the name of the metal, had little else to offer in explanation. It only set him to thinking upon other lines with added intensity. Observing that Dolphin had gone out, he smiled to himself for his one fault of indifference. He again strove to recall the words he had heard. No, it might not have been the child's voice at all. Here was certainly the semblance of a mystery, to say the least.

That evening he was relating the circumstance to the child's mother, while he and Josephine were seated in the library together. Josephine listened to the recital with an absorbing interest. She did not, however, get any very direct impression regarding it. Other happenings nearly as strange had come to Maurice, but he had usually let them pass as too uncertain to be spoken of to others.

"I can only account for it through the ever-present theory of vibrations," remarked Josephine, after a moment of careful thinking. "Dolphin's interior self may have been at that moment vibrating with yours to a degree of intensity. Here is a book on the subject which has thrown considerable light upon much that has seemed obscure to me;" and from the table she took the volume and opened it. "It says that every correspondence has its separate vibratory ac-

tion, which is heightened or diminished according to the harmony which pervades it. That when minds are in perfect accord, they are as two poles sending currents of communication toward each other. If there is sufficient intensity to the thought passing between them, some unusual demonstration is likely to result, seemingly of itself. The words may have been Dolphin's, whether spoken orally or not. According to our philosophy a child may be a sage for the many lives it has lived in previous cycles. I have many times been surprised at the queerness of her impromptu wisdom. It has a quality all its own, and in school she is an enigma. While problems are being shown her she does not at times seem to hear them, but grows for the moment listless and unresponsive. Her integrity of spirit wins her teacher's love, and if the child absorbs her lessons at all it is through her sympathetic faculties rather than her mind. It would hardly do to send such a child to the public schools. Children gifted with the inner light ought to be taught by private tutors only."

"I think I can appreciate all you say," Maurice replied, with feeling. "My school days were much the same, but I have looked back upon my lack of application as a species of perverseness. I never could be hampered by rule. It is scarcely to be wondered at that school seemed more a prison to me than a pleasure."

"You were doubtless out of harmony with your environments; or, as this book would say, the vibratory

belongings of the school did not harmonize with those you had acquired in some previous existence. When the sixth sense begins to unfold itself there will need to be radical changes made in our educational management. The differences in children will be more marked than ever. But I think as we look farther into this fathomless subject of vibrations, many contrary happenings will be avoided, and our special gifts be made to serve us in a still greater degree. Here, for example, is a passage worth remembering," and Josephine read with her usual clearness of diction: "Take a violin in perfect tune and let one of its strings down a trifle, and what strange and contradictory sounds result. Gradually bring the string back to its former tension, and the cross vibrations immediately cease. Examples like this represent the most simple forms of vibrations known to science, because they pertain wholly to the material. The temperaments of two people may be as the strings of the violin. They may be only a little out of harmony, yet their entire surroundings are effected, and other minds feel the discord and instinctively draw away from them. To understand and apply the first lessons in vibrations is not difficult. We see their workings in everything. Colors blend, chemicals intermix, and the mere sound of a voice will sometimes give one a thrill of pleasure or pain, according to our vibratory relations to it. We go into a crowded car and perhaps sit beside an uncouth laborer. There is something beneath his exterior we

seem to recognize—a sort of helpful vibratory emanation—and were we to talk with him our speech would flow with ease and fluency. At another time we may sit beside a finished scholar and orator, and become tongue-tied and long to escape from his presence. Our two spheres are as unlike as may be; and while the scholar may that day have inspired some pupil to great flights of oratory, he is as a blank to us so far as our aura blending with his is concerned.”

“I think no person can be more conscious of such personal contacts than I,” remarked Maurice, when Josephine finished the passage. “I have never heard the subject alluded to before, but I have thought of it often. You account for all these by the theory of vibrations, you say.”

“Yes, and much more beside,” and Josephine’s face grew bright with pleasure. She may have made the theme more of a study than her words had thus far indicated. “When I pick up a book I feel the value it is to me. If it is one I should read the author and I at once enter into friendly relations; and though I may not agree with the writer wholly, I read between the lines much that the text does not contain. Without the favorable vibrations between us I might have only a passing interest in the book. This accounts for the reason why a book will frequently reach a most remote stranger, while the writer’s immediate friends, perhaps, pass it by almost unheeded. This ought to make every author in our land contented. If he is truly moved by a righteous spirit to give out

a thought, that thought is going to strike somewhere, rest assured. It may not be written for the one person, but another mind may truly feast upon it. This to me is the next higher recognition of vibratory use."

"The study must certainly be a most interesting one," Maurice said, with a ready and appreciative understanding. "What would be your next higher application of the law?"

"The next in the scale seems to me to be the vibrations of the home, where its members are brought into daily contact. A home may be as discordant as possible, and yet be scrupulously well kept and exquisitely furnished. The moment one steps into it counter vibrations touch us with ghostly fingers, and we are glad to leave our cards and get away. Another home may make no pretense to outward elegance, but our call there is longer and more enjoyable than at the other place. Instead of a feeling of depression we go away with lighter hearts than when we came. I do not pretend to any great amount of occult training, but I seem to know instinctively when I pass a house how much harmony or inharmony it contains. In some way there is a look of rest and fondness about a dwelling with happy people in it. The broad porch, the clean windows with their shades raised to let in the sunlight, and the unpretentious lace curtains, are some of the things which catch the eye at first, while the very gables of the house seem to smile upon me as I pass. One can

easily imagine the opposite of such a home. There is little comfort even in bringing it to mind."

"And the next higher phase?" asked Maurice.

"The next step upward would be the vibrations of love. This phase contains and overshadows all other phases. Love is as food and drink to the child, and as fondly shared in by the centenarian. The quality of the vibrations between parent and child are of heaven; between man and wife, of perfect oneness and confidence; between brothers and sisters, of helpfulness and patience; between pastor and people, of charity and brotherhood. But let me read more to you from the book. This is what it says upon the subject: 'When the Saviour healed the vibrations about him were intact. His aura glowed with the yellow light of the Orient, as it was made manifest through him. All who have truly reached the people since the Christian era began have come to us with a message of love. The pretender has been forgotten by the masses, who in truth are only swayed, governed or made better by the universal love vibrations. When the youthful lover comes upon a single vibratory discord he tosses upon his pillow in sleeplessness. When the offerings of a promised love are denied the maiden she droops and grows pale with suffering. The strong mind gains mastery over a nation by first establishing warm vibratory relations of love and fellowship. Thus, too, can a ruler acquire infallible guidance in moments of doubt and perplexity. To the heart in trouble a word of love

will sometimes turn aside the hand of the wrongdoer. Love for one's calling brings rich reward, while a work carried on in discord and unrest is frequently in vain. Centers exist here and there among the human family, where love vibrations are daily dispensed to other centers. If we keep our thoughts and acts in harmony with the supply, we marvel at our accomplishments. The world has but just come to discover how real and universal are the soul and thought vibrations about us. Through the better understanding new powers and new uses of power are being revealed. Men of science work more deftly in the field of matter, and the gospel ministers labor to better ends as they go deeper into the lesson of vibrations and their wonderful relations to life. The new school of learning is to be built with this knowledge as its corner stone."

"I think I can realize how such an understanding might quicken one's insight of discovery," commented Maurice. "Inventors must already be largely indebted to its refining influence."

"Yes, it is true that when the theory of vibrations is made use of, much that science tells us is impossible becomes revealed to the mind that holds itself receptive. All inventive thought appears to us first in the ideal. If the proper vibratory action is set up, the material and metaphysical blend evenly and without loss. A wheel, a lever or a spring has an exact correspondence with the thought seeking to be expressed."

"And the complete model is the entire thought made manifest."

"As much as we ever attain to completeness. No seeker after hidden lore is ever wholly satisfied. The possibilities which arise before him at each stopping place in his work are without number or limit. Genius will never reach the ultimate. If that were possible there would be no Infinite; all would be practical and commonplace."

Just as Josephine ceased speaking a sudden abstract look came upon Maurice's countenance. When it had passed he raised his glance to hers and smiled. "It was only an impression of some sort," he said, "one of those fancies which flit in upon us so unexpectedly. It may have been some forgotten incident of the past, and yet the present moment seemed to recall it most vividly for an instant. Now it is gone as if it had no connection whatever with the present. Much that has come to me of late has been thus fragmentary and largely inconsistent. Yet it was without doubt a thought which I ought to have been able to grasp. Even then, why should I have received the impression just at this time?"

"We can well ask that question every day of our lives," reflected Josephine, also conscious of the subtlety of the presence about them. "The thoughts in the book may have set in motion some new current of esoteric vibratory force in your behalf, emanations, perhaps, from the author, though sent forth in a way wholly foreign to yours. Every good book is

thus doing its work constantly, the more so as the readers' minds recognize the philosophy of vibrations as applied to everyday life. No work is ever put into definite form but it has its use. This ought to make us cease battling for what we have not, and setting up counter vibrations that only retard and annoy. We are never denied that which belongs to us, except when our finite wills attempt to govern. Our one study should be to make the best use of that which is placed in our keeping. The getting of more need never concern us in the least."

Maurice had by this time become intensely interested, so new and tenable did the philosophy seem to him. Each time he and Josephine met they seemed to approach nearer than ever in spirit. Josephine's love of the ideal was serving a double purpose. It was revealing to him the existence of a broader knowledge, and confirming much he had evolved himself. Josephine could scarcely help but grow in spirit in her capacity as teacher and counselor, for she had a woman's delicate touch of human sympathy and breadth of vision beyond most members of her sex. So it came about quite naturally that Maurice was growing to look forward to these meetings in the library. Were they not also a part of his awakening into the new life which Zelma had promised him?

That night further revelations came to him, of still another kind. He was sitting under the glow of his lamplight, meditating until late upon what he had heard. Twice that day had a message of timely sig-

nificance been given him, and he longed to crystalize the two into tangible thought. They must both have related to the work he was engaged in. He resolved to procure the missing metal at once, and perhaps he would be able to continue his studies with better results. Hard work might and might not avail him now; only time and patience would determine that.

Midnight came, and still he sat with his model yet before him. This one unfinished creation, and into which he had put so much valuable thought, was becoming a thing of life, with a language quite its own, and it was slowly and surely wooing him into the borderland of vibration and spirit harmony to which his friend had so ably alluded. The atmosphere in the room was becoming livid with harmonious blendings of both thought and astral color. When he at length rested his head upon his table and closed his eyes a face appeared before him—calm, thoughtful and womanly—the face of her who had spoken to him so wisely and with superlative forethought. She was indeed a being the memory of whom was to be treasured, not worshipped. Is there not one divine angel upon earth to every honest seeker for light and love? Had Josephine not the gift of second sight, and had she not divined his needs and volunteered to become his close companion into the dual life now spreading out before him? While he was with her only her strong individuality and integrity of self were within reach of his perceptions. For the past few days when he had gone by himself the woman

with feeling came and smiled before him. What a masterful hold upon life must she have to thus fill the place of mentor and friend. And yet she had spoken of love as the highest attribute of human realization. What knew she of love—one so wise and charitable and so in touch with the absolute? Love to the mortal means commotion and unrest. She seemed like one without longing or unrest of any kind.

At this thought there came upon Maurice an indescribable sensation, as if every recollection of the past, which he had buried as past indeed, seemed to come back to him robed in the soft splendors of a new translation. In a moment of forgetfulness he found himself once more at home, where a mother's presence shed light and comfort as of old. Beside her stood Josephine, whose eyes looked down upon him out of the enchanting picture. He went up to the old garret where lay his tools and models just where he had left them. Youth had returned and so had his early fancies, but they were now mature and rich with promise and fruitage. All that he had dreamed of in early life seemed now real and easily attainable. The whole was indeed a vision of love as the spirit sees love in the inner life.

When he at last awoke Maurice looked about him in confusion. Could anything so real have been a dream? The fast beating of his heart told him that he had lived much in the few brief moments. Glancing up at his clock he saw that it was nearly one. Dared he for this instant alone to think of love—even

to dream of it—he, the follower of a destiny so strange and humble? But it might be kept a secret, and so intensify itself that all else would become secondary, of whatever name or nature. It may be the accustomed lot of the ideal worker to become thus instantly transformed. It was indeed evident that Maurice was happy with the mere hint that he might love even a being so beyond him in wisdom and fondness of spirit. Like the sailor who, before starting upon his voyage, wished to know the name of the woman he had so long worshipped at a distance, that he might speak it when the storm should threaten his ship, so Maurice could revere the presence in the same house with himself of one whom he could be content to adore in silence.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

THE NEWSPAPER INTERVIEWER.—TWO PHASES OF  
PHILANTHROPY.

SOME two or three weeks later a startling announcement was made public, and owing to its element of originality was for a time accorded rather more prestige than it deserved. It came from Mr. Gilbert, who for some days had been passing through a period of transition rarely experienced by men of his kind. Singularly enough the lesser man, the man of finance, he who talks, eats and drinks with his fellows in the flesh, felt certain that, growing out of the word given him by the seer, he had made an important social discovery. It gave him an abundant soul relish because no other person had thought of such a move before him. Some details of the idea had come into his mind one morning just as he was awakening from a refreshing sleep. Even as he lay and thought them over they seemed every moment more just and feasible, and above all, he believed them quite suited to the present era of alleged social progress. All that morning his blood tingled with the new inspiration; and since his practical application of the thought had been evolved from out the silence he spoke not a word

regarding it to anyone beside his wife, not even to his friend Zelma, whose ready endorsement he felt sure of in advance. Mrs. Gilbert had imbibed the new faith with a surprising tact and willingness, and as a result her life was already broadening almost in keeping with that of her husband's. Never given to opposing him in matters of finance, his latest resolve met with her tacit approval, to say the least. What Mr. Gilbert had proposed was a somewhat radical measure to be sure; but might it not bring to him the contentment of spirit he had so long been seeking—a fulfillment of the shadowy impressions which had been vaguely haunting him throughout the winter?

But with his usual business sagacity he turned the matter over in his mind for several days. The purely objective man must weigh carefully all the modifications needed to make his offer acceptable to an uncertain public; but like many other philanthropic ventures which have an element of real soul in them, his own plan of action grew daily upon his hands. Its scope broadened as did his desire to see it fulfilled. This may have been largely due to the fact that he believed it wholly original with himself—with the lesser man, the man who walks the streets a tangible, human-hearted unit among men. So when the exact hour came, the hour of fulfillment, Mr. Gilbert sat down at his desk and penned a well worded communication to two of the principal daily papers. When the missives were sealed he laid them out

before him and fell to musing. Did they, in all their finiteness, represent just what he ought to say to a needy world? and would the message they contained bring him rest, or unrest? He had spoken from the depths of his inmost soul; but what words to put before the eyes of a critical public! The public—yes, that heterogeneous mass of souls, some in bondage and others fleeing from liberty into danger like moths about the treacherous flame—what right had he with pearls in abundance to cast them before the wallowing swine which eat and grunt and sleep the sleep of unchastity and stupor? The letters were written, worded in phrases of an honest love, but ought he to obey the impulse even now? His offer was to do the world a simple kindness. It had not as yet appeared in print, and with a single movement he might tear the missives into shreds and go his way as if no humane thoughts had ever moved him to pity. But there came upon him a peaceful feeling of resolve which bade him go on; after that there came neither time nor opportunity to retract.

Have not such things a seeming of invincible necessity, when strong men are thus moved to acts of courage? On the following morning came the unlooked-for announcement. Nothing more strange or out of training with conventional habit had ever come from the pen of a private citizen. From the most friendly of the two papers we copy a portion of an article which the editor, rather than print the communication verbatim, had seen fit to publish, along

with some of the headlines written over the same by some disingenuous servant who may not have read the letter any too faithfully. These were as follows :

“A CURIOUS PHILANTHROPIC OFFER.

*Millionaire Gilbert's Crowning Effort to Win the Plaudits of his People.—A Million Dollars to Build a combined Prison and Educational Reformatory on the Lake Front.—Another almost Inconceivable Example of Capricious Benevolence, Etc., Etc.*

The editor of this paper is in receipt of an offer in writing to the City of Chicago, made by no less personage than Mr. Adolphus Gilbert, Jr., the multimillionaire, whose palatial residence is situated upon Michigan Avenue. Coming as it does from such a source the facts seem most significant, since Mr. Gilbert has for many years been counted without a peer among the wealthy men of our city. Other beneficences have been dispensed in behalf of art, of education and the city's general welfare, but this last offer comes to us with a hint of latter-day unexpectedness, to say the least. Mr. Gilbert's proposition is to build upon the lake front an imposing edifice at an expense of a million and a half of dollars, wherein to educate, punish and stimulate to better lives the criminals now confined in our prisons and work-houses. He offers to contribute a million dollars toward the project providing a site shall be donated by the city, and if the other half million can be raised by popular subscription. That Mr. Gilbert's money

is ready and awaits investment gives to his offer a most extraordinary bias of originality. He does not propose something to be considered in the future, but the idea seems to have taken definite shape in the gentleman's mind, as something to be done at once. His convictions are equally sincere. He affirms that the convict, as a convict, is made to serve out a body punishment alone, with scarcely the shadow of a chance for his soul. That the idea of making him better has been overlooked and overshadowed by the people's inherited love of retaliation and dread of criminals generally. That our social standing as a city is becoming every year less enviable, while our prisons are overflowing with new and old offenders of the most dangerous types. That since it has been decreed that all prison labor which comes into competition with that of the honest toiler is to cease, the occasion ought to be met by a complete change in our penal codes, such as shall be a credit to the century about to be ushered in. The methods proposed are these: that articles of esthetic value alone shall be turned out in the Reformatory, and that the hours for labor shall be strictly observed the same as now. That all work shall be carried on under the tutorship of competent instructors who shall be finished artisans, and that the articles made be those of beauty rather than utility. That all work when done shall be disposed of to the wealthy classes or used to decorate or furnish our public buildings or memorials. That no account shall be taken of the time consumed in doing a given work, but rather that the elevating association with something out of the ordinary be

the sole object in view, so that the criminal will be lifted from his depraved and largely irresponsible state and made to realize how poor in moral acumen he is. That rare woods, shells, mosaics and other not over-expensive materials be used in the main, and that the article thus indefinitely worked upon shall embody some undeveloped fact of modern art, to be made manifest to its builders as it progresses, and that teachings promulgating the higher ideals be given out to the inmates on alternate days. All these, according to Mr. Gilbert's theory will give the wrong-doer a foretaste of better things, and refine him enough, at least, so that he will abstain from further infractions of the law when his sentence shall have expired. Thus, too, the prison industry would not conflict in any respect with legitimate labor, while the ends of justice would be attained by a strictly worthy application of humane rather than retaliative measures."

We quote from the article only down to the first sub-heading, which, it would seem, contained nearly all of Mr. Gilbert's views as set forth in his letter. The other three or four columns of fine print were devoted mainly to his history as a man of wealth, his family, his ancestors, and every fact or fancy obtainable that might be of interest to the wonder-loving public, while the whole was supplemented by a very unlikelike picture of the millionaire, together with a crude cut of his residence which was printed upon another page.

That day was one long to be remembered by Mr. Gilbert. Before ten o'clock the newspaper interviewers began to arrive, a Mr. Caleb Wing—the name Mr. Gilbert read upon the card sent up to him—being the first. For a breath our newly-made philanthropist scarcely knew what course to take. He ought to have calculated upon this phase of the ordeal which he had so lovingly invoked; but it was a fact that he had not, and as he contemplated what a siege might be awaiting him before sundown, a goodly share of his beneficent anticipations took flight. But he had only to recall one or two of his good friend Zelma's ideas of neighborly tolerance to partially recover his equanimity; so that when he went below to meet the scribe he carried with him a moderate show of amiability which, to make matters somewhat worse, the caller must have mistaken for a desire to be interviewed.

The interviewer was not a young man, but may have been as old as Mr. Gilbert. There were hard lines upon his face, and a sort of unsatisfied style to his demeanor, as if he had sometime seen better days. His lips were somewhat compressed, and his mustache was short and grizzly. His first appearance would indicate that he had taken to his calling from necessity rather than from any special love for it. Yet as he looked up at his host and smiled a few of the footprints of age disappeared, and his voice had a hint of agreeableness which is not infrequently acquired from habit.

"I have called, sir, in regard to your proposed venture in behalf of the criminal classes," was his very proper speech after he had shaken hands.

"I think the particulars have already been fully published," replied Mr. Gilbert, with a smile of forbearance. "I do not know that I have anything further to say."

Mr. Wing had produced his note book with the conventional habit known to his craft, and being thus preoccupied may not have caught his host's fullest words. When ready to proceed he looked up with a smile of meritorious assurance.

"Your offer will without doubt be favorably received by the public," he ventured to say.

"I trust it will. My motives in making it were in contemplation of such endorsement."

Mr. Wing wrote a sentence in his book, then asked with a smile of winning courtesy:

"Isn't the price you set upon—or, rather, might not one's bid for popularity involve less outlay and more—"

"Sir!" demanded Mr. Gilbert, looking his caller through and speaking rather peremptorily for him; "how came you by the idea that this is a bid for popularity?"

"Pardon me, my dear sir," begged the interviewer, becoming suddenly humble; "but our paper states—"

"Your confidence in what the papers say must be phenomenal." tartly interrupted Mr. Gilbert. "My offer is purely one of public beneficence."

Some very creditable diplomacy would need to be resorted to by the scribe, who colored slightly at this unexpected rebuff. For a moment or two he was at a loss how to proceed. But a happy thought, though a rather unprofessional one, at last came to his aid.

"You will indeed pardon me when you come to know that just then I was speaking a word from personal experience," he confessed, with a smile that was meek and truly penitent. "I was once a would-be benefactor myself. Now as you see I am only a mere newsgatherer working upon a salary."

Mr. Gilbert smiled as he contemplated the distinction thus dramatically stated.

"In a moment of great sanguinity I gave my entire assets to the cause of charity, only to find myself confronted with a sort of fossilized forgetfulness on the part of everybody. I hadn't anything more to give."

"And had you in mind any return of gratitude?"

"Certainly; why shouldn't I?"

Mr. Gilbert now broke forth into a hearty laugh, which seemed altogether puzzling to his guest.

"But my good will went with my money, and my reputation as a philanthropist went with them both," rather facetiously added Mr. Wing. "Money to bolster one's reputation is but a poor make-shift when we have reached the bottom dollar. You may not have thought of that."

"I believe I have given due thought to the matter," replied Mr. Gilbert, speaking a little more agreeably; his laugh had been to his advantage.

"And ought I not to have been canonized for my liberality?" asked the interviewer, still very humbly.

"Certainly not. Just there lay your whole mistake," counseled Mr. Gilbert, with his usual promptness of opinion. "All work for the public good should be wholly impersonal. If you will look at the matter closely you will discover that my bid has not been for popularity, nor gratitude, nor personal gain in the least. It is a mere proffered kindness without even a regard for specific results—a conviction merely, if you care to put it that way, without sentiment or show. Since my philosophy forbids desire of any kind, the public is at liberty to accept or reject my plans; it will be the same to me in either event."

This condescension and peculiar drift of ideas from the millionaire was another rock upon which the interviewer foundered, for his face now reddened more than ever. Evidently he wished he had left his own matters out of the question. While he was recovering himself he wrote the words "immoderately modest" upon the margin of his note book, not that they should go into his report, of course, but they would serve as a passing reminder of one of his early impressions of the millionaire.

"Well, well," he murmured, smiling with humility, "this may be only a proof of the saying that to thrive one needs only to stick to his trade. Perhaps it would have been better had I stuck to mine. We will now come back again to the subject. May I ask you if you have any thoughts bearing upon the theory

of benevolence in general, or of the particular reform you have proposed, to give out for publication?"

"None whatever. Of the so-called popular benevolences I know very little, and as to my own proposition, it has been made, and if it meets with favor it will be because it has some measure of divinity in it—or soul, I might more properly have said. A motive with soul in it is above worldly pretense always."

"I think I do not understand you," reflected Mr. Wing. "My work, since I failed as a philanthropist, has been confined to the realm of fact. Soul, like sentiment, is a stranger to the masses. How do you define the term soul in this connection? Can one grasp it with the ordinary sense perception?" and the interviewer wrote hurriedly as he spoke. Not getting a ready response he glanced up with the same look of inquiry upon his face.

"Why—by soul I mean—common decency, or whatever else you might call it. Doing a thing for the mere love of it. One's best deeds need not be heralded by the town crier or printed upon posters. The most encouraging evidences of man's forthcoming redemption is his growing love for his neighbor, be he of high or low degree. Such a love should rarely ever appear upon the surface."

This was the first time Mr. Wing succeeded in getting anything really novel or "newsy," and he smiled thereat with an illy concealed relish. Yet not being able to comprehend Mr. Gilbert's theories first rate

he put upon the margin of his book the word "queer." This, too, should in no wise go into the report. It would mar the rhetoric for which, since his failure as a philanthropist, Mr. Wing was noted, especially when having to do with the much-overrated subject of charity. In the course of their talk he confided to his host that the managing editor invariably sent him out to interview other would-be philanthropists, and usually with the best of results.

"Now I am to understand you, Mr. Gilbert," he said with well-feigned wisdom, "that one's love of doing for others should be kept off the bill boards and enjoyed secretly as it were."

"I think I have said nothing concerning enjoyment," and Mr. Gilbert smiled with a surprising tolerance. "Gratification does not or should not enter into the question. One does an act unselfishly and forgets it in less time than it takes to do it."

Mr. Wing's eyes had a merry twinkle in them. "To me a forgetfulness like that would be a God-send," he said, laying down his pencil and rubbing his hands gleefully.

"Well, sir, you had but to forego the feeling of adulation which prompted you to give."

"Certainly, I understand."

"Then drift away, entirely away in thought and spirit from the scenes of your operations and seek new opportunities—

"I did; I came to Chicago."

—And the next time you would have given less

lavishly. You were a mere enthusiast, carried away by an irresistible love of gratification. A purely liberated soul would have felt less and given less."

Mr. Wing gave a little side laugh which meant volumes. He picked up his notes once more and good-naturedly turned their pages. "Well, we are wandering again," he said, drawing a pencil mark beneath his last memoranda. "You see I am easy to lose myself when talking upon a theme which has been of such vast importance to me. You wish—or you don't wish, as you say your doctrine forbids desire—to build a monument for yourself that will be imperishable and without a parallel."

"Wrong again. Had I a monument in view I dare say my lack of righteous motive would kill the project forthwith. My own and the people's harmony of vibrations must be kept intact. No selfish bequest has ever done the world a lasting good. I have made my proposition, and if good comes from it I shall be content, I hope, to forget it all and try again in the future. Of course you grasp the distinction between giving in the spirit and giving with an eye to results."

Mr. Wing knit his brows and looked solemnly down a moment. "Yes, I do," he affirmed, now with superlative wisdom. "One should shut his eyes and open his coffers to whoever comes—or, rather, to the needy—and positively forget all glory that comes from it. That is giving in the spirit. To go out upon the highway and observe the looks of content

upon the people's faces because of one's benevolence would be giving for results only. The distinction is not so difficult when one comes to think it over."

Mr. Gilbert smiled and felt secretly encouraged. Here was a newspaper man actually coming into training as an idealist. His unspoken wish was that a point so delicate might not be put into cold type. He hardly believed the interviewer would deal unfairly with him, so he did not deem it necessary to request that it be omitted. But it is not the way of our press representatives to let anything new escape them. So in a rambling manner Mr. Wing wrote out a few more sentences, and for his personal convenience jotted down the words "symptoms of lunacy," which must in no wise go into the report, of course. He needed them only as a passing reminder, as before.

"You have said something about doing a thing for the mere love of it," again extemporized Mr. Wing. "You may have purposely omitted anything about love in your letter to the people. I dare say you did, but to my mind a stroke of fondness like that could have made you famous in a day. The criminal would not perhaps have appreciated it, but the orderly citizen would have looked upon the idea as decidedly original. Prisons, as you know, are not built for love, nor are they the outgrowth of any vast amount of brotherly regard. This, by the way, accords with some of your views," added the caller, with another of his patronizing smiles.

Mr. Gilbert's hope for his guest had been all in

vain "Why do you mention fame—the last and remotest return a true benefactor ever stoops to recognize?" he asked, with a hint of impatience.

"Well, really," cogitated Mr. Wing, stroking his mustache and glancing carefully over his notes, "if not fame, then what can you expect for such a lavish outlay of money?" This he said a little absently, and more from habit than otherwise, for he was in fact searching his notes to find some peg upon which to hinge another question.

From sheer discouragement of ever letting light into the soul of the man, Mr. Gilbert looked at him pityingly and in silence. He began to think that perhaps he had said too much already. Thoughts such as his might become dangerous things when put before the reading public, and after Mr. Wing's peculiar interpretation of them.

So it came about that very little more was said, for when the fountain of information had been pumped dry, to state it in Mr. Wing's own words, there was little use spending further valuable time. Accordingly, and after a few polite remarks of farewell, the caller withdrew to make way for the second reporter, who was already in waiting.

We do not, however, need to make a record of the other interviews to which Mr. Gilbert was subjected. Suffice it to say that before sundown he knew vastly more about the subject of benevolence than he did at sunrise. He wearied most at the bothersome cant about fame, gratitude and names made immortal,

and the like, which were portrayed before him in every conceivable caste.

In proof of what a mere word of genuine love can do, we wish to state that in the midst of the afternoon seige a note from Zelma was brought to the door. Mr. Gilbert was quick to recognize the superscription, and he promptly tore open the envelope while the two reporters—he was now obliged to talk to two at once—sat chatting of things very foreign to charities or benevolences of any kind. This is what the note contained, as if its writer had anticipated what the day was bringing forth :

DEAR BROTHER:—Thy word hath gone out, and the doer thereof shall drink, first of the falling dews of disquiet, but at last of the waters of life. It is my sincere wish that thy hand keeps steady, thy words patient, and thy heart pure and simple. I am strongly impressed that the day of great reforms is upon us. Be of good cheer and falter not. Your friend both in the spirit and the flesh.

ZELMA.

While he was reading the note the lines upon Mr. Gilbert's face grew softer and he smiled gratefully to himself, so that when he again faced the interviewers he did so with a renewed strength and more affability of manner.

During the early evening he was sitting alone in his library, thinking over the events of the day. In the midst of his musings his wife entered and took a seat at his side, at the same time letting her glance

of inquiry rest upon his face for a moment before speaking. When he became aware of her presence and had lifted his eyes their smiles became mutual.

"Well, Sylvia, one day's battle has been fought," he said. "What the morrow may bring forth I presume we are not to ask. But it certainly seems strange to me what ideas one can have brought to his door. I am at a loss to know where this thing will lead to. Still, if the worst shall come—" here he stopped and searched his companion's eyes for an answer.

"But should what others say or think move us in the least?" she asked. The woman's gentler insight was asserting itself.

"I suppose it should not in the strictest sense; but the thought waves that have been set in motion are already telling upon me. I do not wonder that so many people give to charities anonymously. It is the only way of realizing what pleasure there is in giving."

Closely following her mother Miss Myra came in and with childlike freedom knelt between them, as if she too, realized the seriousness of the moment.

"Papa looks tired," she said, softly, and stroking his cheeks with both her hands. In return Mr. Gilbert drew her to him and kissed her pretty forehead. Then an interval of perfect silence followed. Mrs. Gilbert's hand stole into that of her husband's, and for a brief period the annoyances of the day grew less

"Yes, if the worst comes and our best motives shall be falsely looked upon, we have yet another kingdom left us, where the thrusts of an unwise world cannot penetrate," soliloquized Mr. Gilbert. Of late his home had seemed dearer to him than ever.

"What can make people think and talk as they do?" asked Myra, straightening herself with a youthful air of self-assertion.

"It is the way they are born, and taught, and live; possibly the way the world expects to be saved. But it is rather hard on one's nerves to listen and keep a solid front. I often find rest in picturing to myself a planet where people are dumb and live by means of their bodily senses merely. Gossip would need to be carried on under difficulties in such a world."

Mrs. Gilbert lifted her serious gaze for an instant before speaking. "Even though your motives are misconstrued," she said, "in the absolute nothing ever goes amiss. Was it not our friend Zelma who told us that?"

Mr. Gilbert regarded his wife with pleasure. This was the first time she had thus openly made use of Zelma's teachings. It does take extreme conditions to call forth our best thoughts from out the silence. One word like this was to him worth a whole battlement of outward defense. With a secret satisfaction he produced Zelma's note, which Mrs. Gilbert also read with an intuitive understanding.

Myra was gazing dreamily into the grate, in which the fire was burning with a comforting glow. Some

unspoken thoughts far beyond her years may have been coursing through her mind. A seed, too, may have been planted in her heart made susceptible by the remarks she had been listening to. It is the trifles of life that frequently give us the key to the stellar spheres of spiritual insight.

At all events, it was quite true that so much as a hint of the world's possible misunderstanding or ingratitude had caused the three pulsating hearts to draw closer together. But for this kingdom of home love, now thrice renewed because it had outlived the past, they might all have felt like hunted fugitives seeking in vain for freedom from a pathless wilderness.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.—PUBLIC INTEREST  
AWAKENED.

IT WAS quite natural that the first day should be given over to the interviewers. The second day brought different results. After the city had recovered its first breath, so to speak, a few of the influential members of Mr. Gilbert's club took it upon themselves to call. The mayor, one of the millionaire's closest friends, called also, as did two or three members of the common council, who, like some of the other wide-awake councilmen, were in the habit of keeping a sharp lookout for the city's interests. So it came about that early in the afternoon a sort of informal levee was held in Mr. Gilbert's parlors. Those who were present lingered until others came, and all being more or less known to each other, the occasion was fruitful of much good, as well as highly gratifying to Mr. Gilbert. It is needless to say that the offer which had been proposed was a difficult one for the most alert minds to assimilate. That Mr. Gilbert's motives were good none had the slightest doubt. That his plan was sound few could believe; for, involving as it did a novel innovation from

old-time methods, it could scarcely have been otherwise. Still, an offer to expend a million dollars for the public good was not to be scoffed at. Had the offer been along any of the well-tried lines of benevolence, congratulations without number would have been instantly awaiting it. As it was the public mind wanted to think it over, and so it did, even while Mr. Gilbert's more intimate friends came and went, and while a moderate number of letters and telegrams began arriving from points outside of Chicago. One enthusiastic sympathizer in the southern part of the state sent a prepaid message to say to Mr. Gilbert that his proposed scheme embodied the sender's long pent up ideas of reform, and that all he had lacked was the money donation with which to bring the matter before the people. He wished his correspondent an unqualified success.

Mr. Gilbert read the telegram and handed it over to his friend, the mayor. That gentleman put on his glasses and scanned it with official tolerance.

"Certainly, I realize the fellow's predicament," he said, laughingly. "It was the mere million that was lacking, depend upon it. A blessed few of us exist who have not been similarly fixed at one time or another."

This truism was freely endorsed by the others who sat in hearing of the mayor's words. The letters, increasing in numbers with each delivery, must of needs wait until the callers should depart, but the telegram, like the telephone bell which rings during our busiest

moments, seldom fails to receive immediate attention.

Mr. Gilbert was kept busy explaining his peculiar theories, which, as they were gone over, did seem more or less feasible to the sympathetic minds present. His earnestness and lack of personal vanity were at once apparent and evidently impressed his friends most favorably. One thing they could and did at length unite upon, and that was a proposition that Mr. Gilbert reduce his offer to writing, and include a definite statement of the objects sought, so that the same might be brought before the next regular meeting of the common council. It was also the express wish that he be present if possible, to say a few words in defense of his plans and to answer any questions that might arise. The mayor suggested that the intervention of the state would in any event be necessary, and as the legislature was then in session an early hearing before that body might be obtained. To all of which Mr. Gilbert gladly assented, and if no more than this had been accomplished, he felt that the day had been thus far well spent.

There had been but one newspaper report that morning in which Mr. Gilbert felt any great interest, and that was Mr. Caleb Wing's interview. It had been drawn out to a considerable length, but was well written. Of all the press members who had called Mr. Wing had sent in the most favorable report. The fact that he had once been, or had attempted to be, a benefactor himself, seemed to have lent a

friendly flavor to it throughout. There must have been established, too, some kindly vibrations between him and Mr. Gilbert, for every paragraph contained much that stood to the latter's credit—many things, forsooth, which had not been said, much less thought of. The finer points of the new philosophy had been touched up, brushed out and made to look commonplace, while the sublimer truths had been made palatable to the popular taste, and, unique though it might seem, the whole subject was dexterously and favorably treated without committing the paper to any unalterable opinion. Mr. Gilbert looked upon this as a stroke of genius, and Mr. Wing could not have more aptly secured the millionaire's opinions of him as a writer.

Four days thereafter the council met and a most unusual scene was enacted. Public interest had grown hourly; and though for the most part the popular discussion had thus far hinged upon the extreme novelty of what had been proposed, there were certain analytical minds which were prone to believe that Mr. Gilbert's power of doing did not lie wholly with his money. Possibly the gentleman had hit upon some subtle secret which carried in its center a truth. If so it might bring to his door both calumny and delayed glory, as all advanced ideas have hitherto done for men of history who have dared to live a day or two ahead of their time. It was therefore not at all surprising that the council room on that memorable night should have been crowded

almost to suffocation. A man who would deliberately and with his eyes open, place a sum of money so great at the disposal of his city or state, was at once a demi-god in the eyes of those who crowd galleries to get peeps at monstrosities generally.

His Honor, the mayor, was in the proverbial good humor which precedes the spring elections, and in equally good favor because it had fallen to his lot to preside at a meeting so auspicious, the credit for which he had taken very largely upon himself. Besides, there was not a vast amount of routine business before the council, so that a consideration of the unparalleled offer brought hither by Mr. Gilbert had the best of opportunities afforded it.

Before nine o'clock the millionaire was escorted to the mayor's desk amid tumultuous applause. It took repeated raps of the gavel to quiet the demonstration, all of which was more or less distasteful to Mr. Gilbert, who merely bowed and shook hands with the chief executive and took a chair beside him.

A very happy speech was made by the mayor, which preceded the reading of the formal offer to the city. This was greeted with long and rather disproportionate applause, after which the clerk read the momentous document in a voice audible to every ear in the room. Frequent applause interrupted the reading, and at its close there came a prolonged tumult from above and below, while the gallery calls for the millionaire were loud and numerous. Rising to his feet the mayor pounded with his gavel and at

last succeeded in restoring order, whereupon he introduced his esteemed friend who had, he said, with true cosmopolitan spirit condescended to appear before the assemblage in person. Of his munificent offer in behalf of his fellows he would leave the gentleman to speak for himself. His personal gratitude at being thus privileged to present an old-time friend and wide-awake citizen was beyond his power of words to express; and he trusted that not a sentence of the speech to which they were to listen should go amiss of an uttermost appreciation.

It had doubtless not occurred to those present that speech-making might not be in Mr. Gilbert's line. Upon any subject in which he had less faith he might have failed outright. As it was he arose as would one who had a pleasant message to impart. During the first few words he was a little shaken, but after that there seemed to come to him a support most masterful. Sentences formed upon his lips which moved his hearers to frequent applause. It seemed as if another soul might have taken possession of his being, and that the extreme tension of every mind in the room was the battery which called forth his finely worded appeal—an appeal to the creatures of earth to link their destinies together with the ties of eternal and indiscriminate friendship; to deal with charity as they would with the divine mission of church or college, or with Christianity itself. There were doubtless many within hearing of his voice whose hearts had been made to bleed because of the

injustices between man and man, all of which comes about by lack of expression of the divine love principle, which every earthly being inherits as his first birthright from God. Therefore, was it not in keeping with the age, since a new charity for the weak is needed and new correctives for the fallen positively necessary, that added forces should be marshaled to help make men better instead of worse? As the thoughts came crowding in the subject seemed like a limitless one to both speaker and listeners. Had the theme not contained the measure of soul it did the effect might have been different. At every renewal of the applause greater weight seemed to attach to each added word. To the indifferent onlooker the scene would have been a strange study indeed. The speaker could scarcely have helped feeling the intensity of the moment, as was evidenced by the wrapt looks upon the throng of eager faces.

Yet there were only a few present who had so well informed themselves as to understand that Mr. Gilbert's offer contemplated the building of a reformatory with a hope of eventually lifting up and redeeming the criminal classes. It was one of those cases where the incentive is taken at random without a careful understanding of the motive. All felt that some important step was being proposed, its greatness to consist in its entire departure from things that had been. Great, too, because he is a man of power indeed who can substantiate his words with a clear-cut backing of a million in ready cash. Thus are the

best of us apt to compute the wealth of a kingdom by the glitter of its gold. The real and mighty impulse of true brotherhood must of needs remain hidden until mankind sees deeper beneath the everyday externals. On this occasion had come a tangible, living millionaire—and yet only a mortal in the flesh—pleading for a privilege to dispose of his surplus belongings in the midst of a great social center. To most of his listeners his offer seemed a fabulous one. But men of high and low degree heard with equal interest, and all seemed equally prone to the error which makes a deity of him whose riches have been acquired beyond a prescribed limit.

It may have taken Mr. Gilbert a full half hour to say all he desired to. His words, though confidently uttered, were wholly dispassionate, and therefore all the more effective. When he closed a dozen aldermen sprang to their feet to offer a reply. But Barry Cams, who represented one of the outlying wards, was the first to catch the mayor's eye, and was therefore given the floor. Barry's stronghold was the amusement he provided by his lack of good English and his way of huddling his ideas together after the manner of a true Irish patriot.

"Could your Honor please, sir, I would like to say a word or two of me own on the subject," he called out. Every eye in the room was at once turned toward him. "Would the gentleman mind knowing that it's in the heart of every saint and sinner of our city to give him their right hand, and say that we'll

take his money and build any kind of a jail where the great and glorious stars and stripes shall forever float over it, sir; and if it comes in Barry Cam's way to fight for the honor of this great republic, we'll get the money first, sir, and at the break of day some fine morning salute the gentleman and honor his warm soul with our thanks for his gallant deed, the likes of which no man ever heard since the great stars and stripes was first planted and the sons of Ireland loved the hand of him that was warm, sir—"

But Barry's words were drowned by the applause and laughter, and after one or two indifferent attempts to go on he sat down, his face red with the enthusiasm which he had so signally failed to express.

Next came the "finished orator," whose lot it sometimes is to get to be alderman, and a very able reply was made by him to Mr. Gilbert's speech. He, like some of the others, had not given the matter sufficient thought to be able to prophecy the success or failure of the plan; but when it came to the expenditure of a sum of money such as the honorable gentleman had named, he believed he could safely predict that only the wisest action on the part of a grateful people would prevail. He therefore moved that the offer be accepted so far as the common council of the City of Chicago was concerned, and that pending a hearing of the measure before the state legislature, that subscription books be opened for the purpose of raising the balance of the fund needed to

insure the ultimate success of the project, and providing, of course, that the people should see fit to endorse the present most friendly attitude of the city government.

At the close of this speech loud calls for the question were made, which cut off further chance for remarks. As soon as the mayor could announce the motion from the chair, a unanimous affirmative vote was taken amid great confusion. All business seemed suddenly to have come to an end, and in an incredible space of time the crowds began surging out of the gallery, while dozens of aldermen and prominent citizens came up to offer congratulations to Mr. Gilbert.

Taken as a whole, there had been every desired response. In the heat of the moment the millionaire felt highly honored. His compatriots could not do or say enough to express their admiration for his liberality. His hand was shaken by strangers who were anxious to make known their loyalty to him and his cause. It was insisted upon by his friend, the mayor, that Mr. Gilbert should go to the club and reiterate his plans to the select few who felt that they were more closely in touch with him in both aspiration and sentiment. To be lionized is both a privilege and a pain. Mr. Gilbert felt more like seeking the quiet of his own home, but the dictations of the many minds prevailed, and to the club he went to fulfill his standing fraternal obligation so long since entered into.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## LOVE AND ETHICS.—A MESSAGE TO MAURICE.

IT MAY be supposed that Zelma took careful heed of all these happenings, and that he read his paper each morning with an increasing interest. Who better than he could understand the exact workings of the law of Use which was revealing itself in this one instance? Though many visitors came to his house daily—some days his time was almost wholly taken up—none had so profited by an association with the divine law as had Mr. Gilbert. It is the ripe soul which discovers the way and follows up the discovery with immediate action. It was a most favorable indication, too, that during the week since the offer had been made, his friend had gone on without counsel, and, so far as he could see, with superior wisdom. It is the delight of the prophetic mind to witness another's individual growth; a delight to partially lift the veil for him who hungers, and then to see him manifest his latent powers justly and manfully. In truth, this is the only office of the Mystic. The officious counselor who assumes to lead the dependent one to the goal of content and claim credit therefor

as being his saviour *per se*, will not, nor will his client, find the promised goal, which, in fact, exists only in name.

But after the first of the agitation had cleared away, Mr. Gilbert called to keep up his friendly relations with the seer. He found him ready and in waiting and wearing a beaming smile upon his face. None of their former meetings had been more sincerely enjoyable or prompted by a deeper feeling of fraternal oneness.

"Yes, I have become fully convinced that the car of progress is moving steadily forward," Zelma said, shaking his caller's hand and looking him fondly over. "Take a seat, please, and let me know what is the best word. I have kept a partial run of affairs through the papers, and for some of the things that have been said you have my unqualified sympathies."

To this Mr. Gilbert responded with a quiet laugh. "I may even then have held my own," he remarked, cheerfully.

"Why, sir, back of every worthy motive there is no other law—none other in the absolute," affirmed Zelma. "No matter how many paltry disturbances we encounter, the right wins, monarchies tumble, saints and martyrs are born and new eras come with the swiftness of time, and all because of the ever-present laws of growth and change. I must own that you have exceeded my most sanguine expectations in making the move you have. It makes it seem as if we are already in the midst of accomplishment, and

yet with time still on our hands for doing more. I can assure you, my brother, that when personal desire is killed out we are ready to go to work. Before that we are but striplings doing service after the manner of our fathers. The original and truly emancipated mind lets go of self and takes up the thread of existence from pure love of right doing. After that he is able to build temples in the by-ways instead of huts for mere shelter."

Very like a benediction did these words seem to Mr. Gilbert. In reply thereto he related one by one the happenings of the last few days. Zelma listened with a willing ear, for what his friend said put a very creditable coloring of homelike truthfulness upon all the papers had said or had tried to say.

"Very good," he remarked, at the close of the recital. "Thus far the popular mind has been in that active state which we call the primitive phase. This is usually short lived. I will give you an impression which comes to me at this moment. After every event which enkindles a common interest, there follows a reaction. I do not say this disparagingly, but by way of testifying to the drift of human tendency. Those who grant to any new movement the warmest words of support are usually the first to forget them. It is wise to know how to meet the second phase, which as a rule is less demonstrative. The truly appreciative citizen is he who does not train in the advance column. He waits until the band and bugle go by and the marching ceases, when he comes forth

and looks wisely about him for the real cause of the commotion. If he sees that the spirit of justice and sobriety has survived, and that the cause still endures, he at least looks on with friendly glances, and it is from him the public worker gets the first substantial coöperation. The American people live in ecstasies and forget or repent as soon as the next flutter of sensation fills the air. It is the sober onlooker who sifts and finds out the facts after the first glitter of generalities has vanished."

I have already surmised as much," replied Mr. Gilbert, wisely. "I think I have become quite reconciled to wait and see how much of real sentiment survives my proposal. I can not help but feel a spirit of resignation, come what may; so that now the matter can be said to have reached its stage of probation, which, as you say, may be the forerunner of a reaction."

Nothing could have pleased Zelma more than this. The training his friend had passed through had evidently fortified him against the uncertainty of impulsive flattery. In this period is found the first dangerous pitfalls of a public career, and he is counted strong who is able to successfully avoid them.

Nor was this the only indication of the world's progress which concerned the members of Zelma's household. Josephine's experiences were becoming more and more interesting as the days went by. Her insight into natural sequences was deep and unerring. For Maurice's gifts and his favorite pursuit in par-

ticular was she growing to have the greatest respect, and she involuntarily made them more of a study than ever. She seemed to have lost all impressions that he had ever been aught else than what he was at present. This made them friends indeed. As for Maurice, his experiences were growing each day more strangely potent and realistic. He still suffered at times from burdening feelings of doubt, and like one whose habit is formed unawares, he was growing to look to Josephine more than to any of the others for an encouraging word. Out of the myriads of thoughts which had crowded his inner vision he had thus far evolved but few ideas of intrinsic merit. Hence his invention had grown, but only slowly. Had he been wholly alone he would doubtless have become a dreamer merely. Josephine's words and practical views of occult things served in a way to keep his mind centered in the realm of fact. Is not this companionship of sympathetic souls after all the most subtle secret of personal interchange?

One day Maurice stood at his window idly musing and watching an approaching storm, whose dark clouds had already filled the western horizon. In the midst of his thoughts there came a knock upon his door, and he turned quickly about to open it. To his surprise he found Josephine waiting to be admitted. Her smile, winning and truly modest, was a vision of itself.

"Pardon me," she said, with an easy freedom, "but

a fancy has just come to me to know what your workshop is like," and before Maurice had fully recovered himself she had approached the bench upon which stood his model. At this was she gazing with a wistful smile of happy interest.

"You are certainly most welcome," Maurice said, with mixed delight and hesitation. In his confusion he set himself about to unload a chair piled with tools and sundry articles. This accomplished, he made haste to offer her a seat.

"And this is the troublesome unit which contains the unsolved enigma, is it?" she said, regarding the model still with curious eyes. It is certainly not great in size. I had thought that perhaps it was more intricate in design and more massive."

Maurice smiled in reply. "And more rational and more obedient to one's wishes, and more life-like, perhaps," he added, with a hint of levity.

"Yes, but when it comes to life your object will have been attained. What then?"

"Dissatisfaction, I presume. I think you have told me that to achieve is to double one's ambition for more worlds to conquer. But to-day in particular I have not been getting on first rate. Possibly the lack of sunshine has to do with it. You see it is already raining and the air is filled with smoke and mist."

"Yes," mused Josephine, as if it were the first time she had noticed it; "it is raining and the snow is disappearing hourly. The clouds, like people, have moods, and the sunshine goes out of our lives now

and then if we let it. It stands us in hand to invite the other kind of sunshine we find written about in books. We are told that the saint in his cell sees light in the darkest hour. What a pity we are not all saints," and she ended her sentence with a laugh somewhat of indifference. Her attention was still fixed upon the model.

"Then we might all be too cruelly alike," reasoned Maurice. "There would be nothing to gain because there would be nothing to lose. You do not refer to the perfect saint, perhaps."

"Only in the figure. When it comes to being human we merely dream of saints, and even then fashion them in our minds as we see fit. This gives us a variety which is very far from perfect. He or she who can and does truly love for love's sake, and can do for doing's sake and not for selfish ends, is a sample saint to begin with. What you or I might make of such a one in real life is another question."

Maurice looked at her a moment in silence. "Love in real life has its doubts," he almost murmured, turning his glance out at the storm.

Josephine caught the seriousness of the remark. "Doubts, to be sure; but when the idealist ceases to talk of love or the swain to die for it, then the self-love of mankind will have largely disappeared. Perfect love is never demonstrative, and therefore has not the faculty of doubting."

As usual Maurice found himself face to face with the woman of perfect wholeness. Her words lifted

him but she seemed to approach him no nearer than ever. It was most prudent that he had been thus far content to recall to mind her singular beauty in the silence, or in other words to admire her in spirit rather than in the flesh. At times when he was in the midst of his work he would become radiantly happy contemplating what she had told him. When in her presence she was the woman of a refinement such as moves no man to speak of personal love. Self-poise in either man or woman may be only the acquirement of many previous lives. Maurice would have been content to listen to her words indefinitely, for her fund of soul knowledge seemed to him exhaustless. She had already become to him as a star in the unreachable firmament. Now as she sat beside his work-bench she was as self-possessed and unaffected as though seated in her father's library. At her request he explained the model and all its points bearing upon the object he sought to achieve. She understood with a surprising alertness; and having an appreciative listener Maurice's enthusiasm soon began to kindle, until every remnant of his former hopes came vividly back to him. A new being was already looking out of his eyes recently heavy with the fatigue of isolation.

"And can you say that love is a doubter?" she asked in the midst of his recital. "You love your work as a mother loves her child. Is a parent's love ever to be doubted?"

A revulsion of feeling sprang to Maurice's temples

at these unexpected words. It was like a sudden blending of the real and the ideal in happy union. He looked up at her and smiled in rapturous silence.

"Well," she said, still with evenness of speech, "we do not need to talk of abstract things. It is the substance we are as yet to deal with, and while we are in the thought I feel moved to say that you have certainly a charming work before you. Living in two worlds at once must be a pleasing avocation. I feel certain that some day you will succeed, and at a time when you least expect it. Inventions seem to be handed down to us from out the akasa at just the given moment. One would scarcely dare fail to be ready to receive the gifts thus destined to be awarded us."

"I do not know that I could otherwise show my gratitude for the kindnesses I have received since I came here," Maurice said, still manifesting a superlative pleasure.

But like her father Josephine did not quite enjoy the word gratitude, so she turned the subject as soon as possible without abruptness.

"You may not surmise that I have brought a message for you," she said, with a woman's generous fealty.

"For me?"

"Yes; father and I have agreed that you shall be invited to participate more closely in our spiritual work, about which you know only a part as yet."

"Have I a right to anything more?" he asked.

"You have a right to all that concerns the human welfare—a right, at least, as soon as you have fitted yourself for it. In this house is a room used for a purpose known only to four living souls. We call it the Temple of Silence. Here we seek to acquire the self-help needed to carry on our work. Do you care to join us and be one of us in very fact?"

A feeling of deeply concealed pleasure overspread Maurice's features. Was not a gift like that second only to a woman's love?

"You scarcely needed to have asked me the question; I would deem it the privilege of a lifetime. If this all turns out to be a dream I shall wholly lose my faith in life," he said, with solemn avowal.

"Life is never a dream when we can accept the things that come to us as everyday verities. Dreams have their counterparts at times in real life if our polarizations are of heaven and not of earth. As soon as we are worthy all that is is placed at our disposal. When the world learns this the strife for power and material gain will be replaced by a universal faith and brotherly union. In our work we find certain conditions necessary, and by means of a united concentration we have all revealed to us that we need for each day's following. Thus led, we have nothing of self to aspire to. Concentration is the secret of all real power and accomplishment."

"And you have waited that I might become worthy of the trust?" Maurice asked.

"Every step upward has its time and place," said

Josephine, still philosophically. "When our room was first dedicated to holy uses we anticipated that seven members would sometime be admitted to it. We have now but three. You have been chosen as the fourth, and who the others will be yet remains to be seen."

With his imagination now thoroughly aroused, Maurice listened as would a child to a fairy tale. She told him how the room was furnished, of the various emblems, the cressets, the luminous crystal, and of the hours when it was their habit to concentrate therein.

"What are the requirements needed to entitle one to the privileges you mention?"

"Positive cleanliness of body and mind, and absolute silence during meditation. No word is ever spoken aloud save the opening and closing mantrims. Thus the vibrations needed to transmit the power for our use are kept undisturbed. To further preserve the conditions we clothe ourselves in white robes, the insignia of purity and peace. To us it is all very beautiful."

"It certainly must be; it can not be otherwise," reflected Maurice. "To prove to you my appreciation of what you have told me, suppose that my answer shall be given you out of the silence. I think I will not need to qualify it by the use of words. You and your father must have received it in advance by means of the thought-feeling we have been discussing so much of late."

For a brief moment Maurice imagined that he felt the actual personal nearness of his friend, but it was only for an instant. It may have been a flash of mere womanly sympathy, given out in a moment of unguarded impulse. But what she had told him had an unparalleled friendliness underlying it. What a seeming pity that our lives do not always blend thus perfectly. Our most secret feelings of confidence, of unity of purpose, of love, even, are not infrequently neutralized by our attempts to express them in words. Yet they come to us seemingly without our choice or bidding. To live with our fellows in thought is to be the revelation to come. By that time, what we call courtesy will be a courtesy of unspoken, kindly tempered good will which will need no certain standard or alignment to make it real.

Now that so much had been said, both Maurice and his guest remained silent for several seconds. It was a period of intense enjoyment which the silence affords us when we do not seek it in advance. When Josephine arose to go Maurice arose also, and they stood for another moment with their united glances fixed upon the model. At last Josephine spoke, as would one from impression.

"After you shall have united with us new revelations will come to you. The only return you will need to manifest will be to treat your success, when it comes, as a mere trifle in the great ocean of eternity. We should none of us take to ourselves more than the love of obedience, which completes

and rounds out our lives and makes them necessary to others for whom we live."

"And am I to have your unqualified sanction—your promise of companionship—can I hope—" but some strange hesitancy broke in upon Maurice's words as Josephine looked calmly up at him. She reached out her hand to him in adieu.

"You are to be one of us in very fact. That implies the promise of all we have to gain together as co-workers," she said. Then with another pressure of the hand she held she turned and went out.

The day may have been a gloomy one without, but now the sunshine which had entered Maurice's room was truly of another kind. It may even have been the light which illumines the cell of the imprisoned saint. He had never before known the real touch of human happiness.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## TWO LETTERS OF MERIT.

A WORD concerning Mr. Gilbert's mail. Letters were by this time coming to him in great variety. It was interesting to observe the construction some of his correspondents put upon his offer after reading the different newspaper comments. Some glorified him, and because of their own inability to give saw an unparalleled righteousness in the act. Some sent begging letters for numberless objects, while others warned him against invading an untried field without first obtaining certain scriptural or ecclesiastical endorsements. One writer gave him to understand in as many words that the being commonly called the criminal belongs to a class of creatures long since past redemption, callous and totally depraved, and that the wrath of a just God is necessary, in addition to man's punishment, to torment him and blot him out of existence. He failed to state who gave the criminal his existence to begin with. His church doctrine may have been a little remiss upon that point. Extremists do exist both in and out of the church; but Mr. Gilbert thanked his stars that a kind

Providence had already given to the people a gentler doctrine of peace on earth and good will to man.

Probably the most interesting word received was a letter written in an execrably bad hand and full of wretched orthography. Because of its direct bearing upon previous happenings we give it herewith in full. It began without date or street number or other mark of identification, and was as follows :

“Deer Mr. Gilbert:—I see by the Papers you expeck to give a million dollar to bild a better plais to keep Men in what steals and cuts up moastly. It maiks me feel pretty blew when I think how we pals onct took it into our heads to rob you, and maybe we’d a done it only one of us Died, and Sandy, he’s another of us, didn’t like yore looks eny to well and dassent do it. Now thay say you hav set up Sandy’s dawter in skule, and Sandy is in jail and I spose the pore sinner will hav to go over the rode; and when I read of what you are doing I want to go back to Missury and go to plainting corn again with my father who is most seventy; wouldn’t you? It’s a heep moar differcult to Steel now when I no the papers is full of what you expeck to do. If you doant heer no more from me you will no I am gone to Missury and quit steeling. Maybe you wont Thank me for riting to you, but somehow I can’t quite help it cose me and Sandy onct cum to yore House to git yore money, and if you ’bieve it or not, we was going to Carry you off and get a million to give you up, and now you want to spend the Money all on the pore devils what cuts up so. If I ever earn a dollar honest I’ll send it

in registerd letter. I doant want you to think I'm bad cose I aint, only I aint done quite Rite, maybe. I hope you haint got nothing agin me as didn't rob yore house after all. Yore esteemed frend,

SKIT BRADY.

P. S. This ain't my reel name, ony what the boys has been calling me."

What a sermon was this! Mr. Gilbert s eyes moistened as he slowly deciphered the scrawling confession, and he put the letter aside as one of his choicest souvenirs, to be referred to whenever his doubts as to man's ultimate salvation might arise.

But a letter containing quite another phase of realism found its way to him about a week after his visit to Zelma. It was from an old-time miner in California, now a bachelor of eighty and very wealthy, who, it seemed, had wrested the greater part of his earnings from mother Earth, but who, now that his sun was about to set, was troubled to know just what to do with his life's accumulations. The novelty of Mr. Gilbert's plan seemed to have struck him quite forcibly, and in a brief and rather decided style he proposed that the Chicago common council should draw upon him for a hundred thousand as soon as the fund had all been subscribed.

Here was the tincture of Christianity which had a ring of the true metal, and doubtless it was the yellow metal at that. Mr. Gilbert felt, as we very often feel for others who have good motives, that it is

truly more blessed to give than to receive. His own magnificent offer had not impressed him as deeply as did the figure of a homeless and childless bachelor of eighty, hungering for a mere privilege of doing somebody a kindness.

It was a stroke of good management to give this letter out for publication, for there was a pith of news in it which the public mind would certainly appreciate. So it was accordingly printed, and again were the thought waves set in motion, and Mr. Gilbert's project, now partly forgotten by some, was once more revived, revamped and discussed in all its latest settings. Upon one of the subscription books opened by the city was inscribed the name of the California donor, written in a bold hand to signify its importance. Several minor amounts had been put upon the books, but their aggregate was totally eclipsed by this most unexpected gift from the West.

It is surprising how much a money value will stimulate the minds of a doubting community. No sooner had the letter been read than several very creditable subscriptions came in from local capitalists, and, as the fund grew so did the friendliness toward the project grow. This was doubtless the aftermath which the seer predicted would follow when the first commotion should have subsided. But the movement had soul. It was right in the broadest sense. Was there, then, any reason why it should be denied an ultimate fulfillment?

It was not, however, until the subject came up in

the state legislature that the cause took on a national importance. Other states heard, discussed, and thought it over, and several bills of one kind and another were introduced in the various legislative bodies, in response to the demand of the people that prison goods should cease to be made. No question more troublesome than this had ever presented itself. The prison contractor had become a fixed reality, while between the criminal and the courts of justice yawned a gulf of vindictive hardness of heart which had been inherited from an aged past. Now a crisis had been reached, and what was to be done with a problem so far beyond any convenient solution?

A representative from Mr. Gilbert's district was importuned to introduce a bill covering the question of building and equipping and putting into commission a reformatory with educational facilities. Like most men who legislate, the representative obligingly consented so to do, not that he had any great amount of heart in the cause, but because a gentleman of wealth and influence had requested it. This meant that it should go in as a pseudo-reform measure which might, if persisted in, reach a second reading before the House, and perhaps get referred to the Canal or Drainage committee, or some other committee that might promptly relegate it to the realm of neglect. No, the mere presenting of the bill was not enough. A lobby was needed to go to Springfield to work for it. Then personal pledges must be

secured, all of which would be difficult when the general run of the legislative members were vastly more interested in railroad franchises and municipal control than they were in the relief of other people from soul misery.

However, in every great epoch there seems to be born a man or woman for the place. Lincoln was born to face a troublesome crusade of arms as was Joan of Arc, and other martyrs before either of these had lived and died for principle alone. As good fortune would have it, a representative from one of the most southern Illinois districts became suddenly enthused with the spirit of sensible vigor, and before Mr. Gilbert was hardly aware of his friendliness, had called the bill forth from its obscurity and was working for it with trojan-like heroism. He it was who met the few Chicago citizens who had come down to help the measure out by personal solicitation. The committee was made up of some of Mr. Gilbert's warmest friends, and they were not long in discovering that their champion of the bill was a man of no mean calibre. He seemed truly destined to distinguish himself, as others had done, by befriending an unpopular cause. He could at least secure the approval of his constituents at home by being heard, however little merit his cause in hand might contain.

So as time went on a discussion was actually begun, and some new and very suggestive facts were brought to light. It had not previously occurred to the average member that the base man of the commonwealth

called the criminal was human; that he lived and breathed and ate and slept as did the saints and other righteous people, and, perhaps, had a soul. That he was born of a mother and had been a babe with infant ways like other babes, or had, in brief, any of the faculties possessed by people who never break laws, or swear, or drink contemptible liquids. These things, strange at first, were actually broached by the enthusiastic member from the remote county, and solacing smiles were perched upon the faces of the other members who chanced to be listening. The habit of these latter world-wise servants had been to treat debates of this order with a seeming kindness, and thereby save their energies for the committee room to head off corruption, to protect the popular weal, to oppose trusts—anything but to be put upon record as having directly favored a measure so full of purely reformatory possibilities or impossibilities.

But the discussion had its effect. It set the people of the state to thinking. The labor organizations took it up and sided with Mr. Gilbert. New subscriptions to the fund were coming in, and the prospects bid fair for raising the other half million before the legislature should adjourn. All of which may be looked upon as somewhat phenomenal, of course; but it takes a superlative insight into occult law to estimate the hidden strength of any modern movement. It was by this time most probable that as soon as the cause should reach its first stage of popularity,

and with a million and a half of cash back of it, some of its actual merits would be seized upon by members not so remote as he who had at first championed it.

It was a fact that positive plans were ere long suggested by several orators who spoke more fluently than had the remote member, and their polished phrases contrasted very agreeably with said remote member's fighting propensities, which it was found he possessed in abundance. So it came to pass that the bill at last took on an element of surprising popularity, and with proper management might soon become a law and the reformatory be an assured fact in the near future.

It is sometimes a weighty question where great reforms, perhaps obscure at first, get their start in the soil of popular indifference. To the student in spiritual training it is not so strange. All that had been asked was that an experimental reformatory should be built in Chicago, to which certain classes of criminals should at first be sent from throughout the state. It was to be an experiment merely, for the world's observation; and since the expense of the institution was to be borne by individual endowment, some deigned to vote for the measure if no more than for the satisfaction of making Chicago a monster experimental station ahead of her peers in the East or West. Mr. Gilbert had indeed brought his wares to a promising market, for within a month his bill had passed the lower house, with prospects of meeting with little opposition in the senate.

Immediately following this culmination of affairs Mr. Gilbert received many warm congratulations, both by letter and in person. Time had been when men had petitioned state legislatures to pass laws for selfish ends; here was an instance of a man with his millions petitioning the state to permit him to spend his money for the popular good only.

None of the millionaire's callers were more welcome than was his esteemed friend Mrs. Fessenden. It now became her coveted privilege to offer a word of praise for his thus far successful campaign. Two victories, her own and this latest one, were indeed proof positive that civilization was not without its warmth of soul, when the real inner forces are set at work. Both Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert enjoyed Mrs. Fessenden's call beyond measure. She had still much to tell them of the continued success of her undertaking, which to her friends was thrice interesting.

"I can conceive of nothing more timely than the work you have undertaken," Mr. Gilbert said to her, warmly. "When our reformatory is built the cause of municipal charity will have much to encourage it. The scope of your school will be duly enlarged, of course, and who can estimate the practical good likely to be accomplished in the next few years?"

"One would hardly dare attempt to estimate it," replied Mrs. Fessenden. "Since I opened my house to this work the field has seemed to broaden and many possibilities not at first dreamed of have pre-

sented themselves. I find that a work for humanity is not so difficult when carried on altogether in harmony with the people's needs. I believe the day of active Christianity is at hand, and if so, how much have the future generations in store for them!"

Many a true prophecy has been spoken by those who are not prophets. Mrs. Fessenden had without doubt worked in a spirit that had been renewed and made whole by positive illumination. Beside all that had occurred and was occurring, and the discussion going on, it may be a matter worth recording that, coincident with Mrs. Fessenden's words, several eloquent sermons were preached from the Chicago pulpits the Sunday following, some of them full of the prediction, that in view of the recent developments in behalf of the unfortunate of God's children, the second coming of Christ was already upon us, and that the worshipper needed but to open his eyes and the hem of His garments could even be discerned in the floating mists. With such a recognition of the spiritual law, who could say that the work for a needy humanity had not taken root in a fertile soil?

## CHAPTER XXXI.

LOVE, NOT MARRIAGE.—THE SECRET OF THE MODEL  
DISCOVERED.

SPRING had arrived, and the usual awakening after a winter of snow and ice was everywhere visible. The vast enterprises of the great city began pulsating with new life, a life typical of a re-birth into still broader fields of cosmopolitan energy and accomplishment. For Maurice the springtime had yielded a wealth of new understanding and spiritual growth. His admission to the Temple of Silence had been indeed a revelation. Highly sensitive in nature, he had very readily adapted himself to and understood the workings of vibratory law when conditions thus favorable are obtained. Nothing could have served to awaken his inner self as had this, and still nearer to him in friendly union had become the thrice devoted members of Zelma's household. His remembrances of the lower life had been given over to the past indefinitely, and the better man now stood forth in single oneness with the companionable harmony amid which destiny had placed him. It is questioned most emphatically by the newer school of philosophy, why we must of needs postpone our heaven until the

spirit and body separate. If we are living in eternity, why not in heaven also? Must a geographical survey be made to locate the boundaries of the celestial life? To find a heaven upon earth seems to the mystical mind most natural and altogether possible. Our universal longing for heaven is but proof that just behind the screen—a screen built by human hands—lies a veritable heaven, with its rays of light ready to burst forth upon us. The few who have caught sight of this tell us of its nearness. We have but to part the curtain and behold it each for ourselves.

During the period of time just past a most important event had occurred. It took place one night after the usual hour of concentration in the Temple. All that day Maurice had felt that his success was near, for during the week previous his model had once or twice taken life and had run imperfectly for a time. The desired metal had been procured after a diligent search, and he had tested it thus far with only indifferent results. The exact combination had not as yet been hit upon. It was while he was with the others in the Temple that evening, that a secret had been revealed to his inner consciousness which kindled his spirit with a new and fervent hope. Of this he spoke to no one, but went directly to his laboratory, as if he had been under a spell of magic most profound. The fire in his furnace was smouldering, and he kindled this and set himself immediately at work. It took only a brief time to apply the thought he had received. An hour or two sufficed for this,

and before midnight he was ready for another trial test. Because of the intense interest under which he had labored, the occasion was becoming a momentous one. The word which had been given him proved only a slight modification of the thought he had been following, but it needed the one simple application, called by the world an accident, to solve the problem in a mere second of time. When the proper moment arrived, and with still a lingering doubt, he applied the current with the hand of a careful expert. Instantly the wheels began turning, and Maurice drew impulsively back and watched them breathlessly. His face was a study of pathos and human instinct. As proof of the uncommon energy back of the model, its velocity of movement momentarily increased and set up a whirl of startling speed. In another breath the wheels were turning with a rapidity which threatened destruction to the model. Suddenly warned by a sense of danger, Maurice drew near and turned aside the current, when the machine slowed down with exemplary obedience.

Done! Was his dream of these many years at last realized? Could it be possible that the supreme moment had arrived? The thought was so overpowering and the reversal of his feelings so great, that he could only drop into a chair in partial exhaustion, while great beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead. His heart was beating rapidly, when in the midst of the livid silence the clock be-

gan purring forth the hour of twelve. How audible sounded the strokes, for not until then had Maurice given a thought to the time, so devoted had he been to his task.

After a few minutes of relaxation he weighted the model and once more applied the current. The result was equally certain, and under the increased resistance a power seemingly inexhaustible turned the wheels with a quick responsive motion. Midnight, indeed! Maurice looked abstractedly up at the clock. Yes, it was late, but with the incoming of another day was he not now a man among men—a live, pulsating citizen who had evoked the divine presence to some useful end? Was not his discovery in fact more fabulous than the shifting subtleties of a dream? more real than the wealth which men strive to obtain by force and cunning? How he longed for daylight to come that he might make known his discovery to his friends. Would it be any more than just for him to lay his invention at their feet in return for his deliverance into the life of the spirit?

While the glowing embers in his furnace smouldered and cast a dull red light over the surroundings, he flung himself upon his couch and tried to sleep. But he closed his eyelids in vain. Only rambling, knotty dreams came to him, so livid with the agitation of suspense had the atmosphere become. There was more rest in positive wakefulness.

Nor had he slept when streaks of daylight began

to appear in the east. Not having undressed, he arose and went quietly down to the street and turned his footsteps toward the coming sunrise. What a glorious view awaited him when the great rays began creeping up from the golden horizon. It seemed to him like the dawn of his first perfect day in the better life.

Who shall say that there is not holiness in accomplishment? Not that one must cease in the least to push further on; but the first blush of having gained a victory after months of persistent effort is like unto the spirit of love made manifest. When our purpose has been gained, those hearts which have throbbed with ours, or the minds which have given us stray thoughts, seem nearer to us and life becomes sweeter and more endurable. And in a like degree the worker who accomplishes has become more an individual and less a dependent, more a friend and less a hinderance in the arena of well doing. When Maurice at last came in sight of the great lake, above whose shimmering bosom the sun was just peeping, still added glories were mounting the heavens, and a yellow pathway led out over the water toward the rising orb.

Reaching the shore he stood alone in the solitude and watched the waves chase each other inward with playful freedom. Occasionally the rumbling and hissing of a locomotive would break in upon his revery, and an outgoing train of coaches would speed past him with phantom haste. Thus are the realms

of imagery, both in city and country, invaded by the iron-clad, smoke-begrimmed monsters of fact, which go hurrying over the steel tracks to bring friend nearer to friend by defying time and distance. It was through his truly awakened faculties that Maurice found a ready blending of both fact and fancy. A dreamer he may have been, perhaps, but he had aimed to keep his feet firmly upon earth during all his followings of the ideal. This is the one lesson of prudence which Genius must learn and practice. Accomplishment rarely comes to him who shuns the world of fact, for the ponderous is only a correspondence of that which we dream about or think about in our moments of inspiration.

On his return Maurice seated himself in the library until the other members of the household should be astir. The warming sunlight was already creeping in at the windows, and the hour was one well suited to his now reflective mood. But he had no more than settled himself in thought than the door leading to the library opened and Josephine entered, dressed in a soft colored morning wrapper. Her surprise at finding Maurice present was at once visible upon her face, while the look of enjoyment which sprang to Maurice's features was no less apparent. With a strong tide of feeling he arose, and meeting her in the center of the room, grasped her two hands and looked into her questioning eyes.

"It is done! I have discovered the secret!" was all he could find words to say. His feelings of rest-

less delight were overpowering. Josephine, with her usual calmness of self let their glances mingle for a moment before she spoke. Meanwhile Maurice held her hand in his tense grasp, which alone denoted the unspoken depths of his emotions.

"Then the higher will has conquered," she said, fondly, but still with perfect dignity. "I am not wholly surprised, for the conditions surrounding us of late have been unusually promising."

With a slightly forbidding movement she released her hands and drew her chair up to the window. Maurice took a seat beside her and in a few words related the happenings of the night.

"And can you realize even a part of my feelings at having at last succeeded?" he asked, in conclusion. "Like many another event, I can scarcely look upon this one as a reality, even now, and yet there is a sense of having gone forward in the scale of advancement many fold."

"When the subjective self conquers there is never an entire realization of it, nor does there need to be," Josephine replied. "Our inner vision has cognizance of coming events, and every incident of our lives, however important, is no more than a just working out of the unfailing law of causation. Should we ever find ourselves living wholly in the subjective, wonders will cease and become commonplace, because what occurs will have a predestined place in our existences. Our objective senses are not to be trusted to say what is and what is not of the marvellous."

Maurice listened to this with his usual ready understanding. Her words had the effect of soothing his restless spirit, the same as upon previous occasions. But he believed he had never seen her looking so truly radiant before. His admiration for her superiority of self caused him to forget a greater part of his night's vigil. She seemed almost to answer his inmost thoughts when she said :

"Now that I have heard of your success, you may be interested to know why you have met me here at this early hour. I will tell you. It is a habit I have followed since the passing of my husband to the higher life six years ago. As two earthly friends can communicate in thought however far removed from each other, so we, too, have our hour of communion in the morning when the thought forces are most at rest. It is not in any sense a psychical experience, but merely a communion of soul to soul over the ties of love and spiritual unity. This annihilates what we call death and sets up a perpetual youth in its stead. This is to me the only legitimate communication to be sought between the two worlds."

"Then I may have intruded," began Maurice, with some delicacy. His reversal of feelings brought a shadow upon his features

"Not in the least. Congenial souls never intrude," and Josephine gave him a look of womanly assurance. "Our philosophy forbids exclusiveness under the enforcement of universal equality. A husband's claim upon his wife is only that of soul mateship, for in the

absolute all beings are friends. This would be fully realized were we living wholly in the spirit. It is only the grosser self which looks upon marriage as a bond with a lawful limit."

"And have I an equal right—are you conscious that my spirit is in touch with yours to such a degree?" Maurice said, with a sudden realization of happiness.

"Listen—I will tell you more," and Josephine gave her friend a glance of still deeper meaning. "I have been aware for some time that we two were drawing nearer in soul life, because of a certain favorable adaptation of temperaments. In my morning hour of communion I have once or twice foreseen this very conversation, as well as the success of your invention, but it would have been a violation of law to have spoken of them. As I told you upon that night in your room, we are to be co-laborers in the great work of spiritual upbuilding. Could either of us ask for more? Does not the privilege of living wholly for others make sweet one's very existence, and place the theory of mateship above earthly consideration?"

"What of love? Have we not the human frailty of loving the being who lifts us up?" Maurice said, almost pleadingly.

"The highest type of love is of the spirit. That never demands nor controls. Are you not conscious of that?" This time Josephine spoke with an emphasis of tone seemingly beyond herself.

Yes—or I may grow to be conscious of it; but in my haste of affection and eagerness to repay the debt I owe you all I had hoped—no, you will not let me say it. Why have you the power to conquer at every turn in our conversations?”

Josephine smiled, but maintained her perfect composure. “You should not call it power,” she said, warningly. “Perfect poise of self is restful, never aggressive. Your thoughts have been of love, of marriage, even, a consummation which does not necessarily follow a union of destinies.”

“And you say you have divined my very thoughts? And more than this, must I surrender a joy which fills my being with happiness when all else fails?” Maurice’s words were by this time full of passionate fervor.

“To add to that joy would not be to surrender it. Listen to me again. Every soul, as a soul, is sexless. After one earthly marriage has been experienced, another may or may not be lawful, according as one looks upon it. If there is a contentment of soul in living an ideal life of spiritual refinement, a second marriage is not in any sense necessary. To take another mate in wedlock is but to live out an incomplete phase in our existence. This may be necessary for some. When only the higher self is in the ascendancy, then he or she can give out an unqualified love for every soul in existence. This is the interchange of good will which we are to experience in lives to come. Perfect mateship is hard to define

unless one has first experienced it. In return for the love you have been secretly cherishing, I am free to offer you a mateship in common with all lofty souls, a friendship which is, in fact, necessary in order to generate the power to do the work we have undertaken for mankind. We are indeed to be co-workers, and with our unity of purpose can we accomplish more than wedlock has to offer us in any event. Absolute purity of association alone will yield us the richest results."

A strange sense of conviction had stolen into Maurice's feelings during Josephine's last words. The throes of passion which had moved him to such sudden impulses after his discovery in the night seemed to be subsiding under the benign influence which she had brought into his presence. But to learn that she of his imagery was above and beyond the claims of earthly marriage was the greater discovery of the two. Yet had she not spoken a truth which, though it had raised her in his sight, had also drawn her nearer to him?

In the moments of silence which followed there came a still deeper sense of spiritual rest. When he raised his eyes at last, Maurice's face betrayed a look of calmness and self-respect. Josephine was regarding him with studious glances.

"Yes—I feel that what you say is true," he said, now with smoother accents. "Our pledge of loyalty may seem a little strange to common usage, but it is just to say the least."

“And we are to be constant friends and co-workers so long as work is given us?” added Josephine.

“Yes.” Maurice spoke the word with some effort, but the look of friendly encouragement she gave him made him see the fullest justice of the pledge. No further speech was necessary to give weight to a compact thus unselfishly entered into.

It may be surmised that the repast at Zelma's table that morning was a most enjoyable one. Zelma had heard the message which Maurice had for him, and smiled pleasantly in response.

“Only another proof of the fulfillment of universal law,” he said, with perfect complacency. “What is to be will find its expression sometime, somehow, and in its own good time. We as obedient servants need but to remain obedient, and when the desires of self leave us our accomplishments come into our lives as if foreordained. The vanity and grasping spirit of mankind hinders and obstructs; the fullest freedom of self will win when all else fails.”

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## THE TRIAL TEST.—AN IMPROMPTU LOVE SCENE.

SO PLEASED was Zelma with his friend's discovery, that he dispatched a messenger to Mr. Gilbert, inviting him to come and witness the trial to be given the invention at a certain hour during the day. Maurice had known of the millionaire's proposed philanthropic endeavors, but he had not as yet met him personally. It was Zelma's ready adaptation to passing events which moved him to make a timely suggestion to Maurice during their chat together in the library after breakfast.

"It interests me not a little to learn that a secret with such a wide divergence of possibilities has been revealed to you," he said, approvingly.

"To me it seems no less wonderful," replied Maurice; "but the elements are quick to respond when we accommodate ourselves to them. They are a little dogmatic of conditions, but are most willing servants when discovered."

"You must necessarily attach a great commercial value to your discovery," implied Zelma.

"Yes, it will have a worldly value, I suppose."

“Ought this not to be turned to good account? Suppose the profits arising from it were to be used for the public good? You are of course free to act your pleasure, but have you any decided choice in the matter?”

“I have only the wish that the invention shall benefit the many rather than the few. What would be your suggestion?”

“Well, the first thought I had was, that it would be scarcely prudent to take the credit for the discovery all to ourselves. A finite result coming from a source infinite best serves us when it is made to accomplish the greatest possible good. My friend Gilbert’s recent movements have set me to thinking much of late upon the subject of public charities, and I am desirous that his plans shall succeed. What would you say could the proceeds from your invention help to build this same reformatory?”

Maurice smiled with incredulity. What a thought for a person so remote as he. It took him a few moments to compass an idea so foreign to his own. But after a breath or two a reply came upon his lips.

“I would certainly deem it a great honor; but the magnitude of your suggestion is almost overwhelming to me.”

“Not overwhelming, really, when we consider that we are all mortals alike. Personal caste is a creation of society, not of fact. A man with a million is still a mortal; a man with an idea is still a creature of earth. It is only our opinions of personal self that

make us or our friends worldly great, and our greatness when forced upon us is still lacking in genuineness. I dare say that the key to our friend Gilbert's forthcoming success, if he is to succeed, will be his recent insight into spiritual truths. Why should I not say the same for you?"

"I think I can realize the facts in my own case, and if the success of the invention is due to spiritual insight, the world is all the more entitled to reap the benefits. Possibly Mr. Gilbert might care to put the discovery before the world personally."

"Yes—so he might," reflected Zelma. "I am sure it could not be entrusted to better hands. His influence and social standing would give it prestige at the outset. How true it seems to me, that when we set ourselves at work building our spiritual temples, each event or accomplishment fits into its own particular place as if ordained by an infinite wisdom. And yet how often do men overlook the necessity of seeking the one real source of accomplishment."

With their realms of fact and spiritual attainment so closely allied, who better than Zelma and his inventive friend could understand a truth like this? It was a fact that their plans seemed almost to form themselves, hence Maurice found still added enjoyment in anticipating the proposed exhibition of his discovery to his friends. By the noon hour he had everything in readiness. Mr. Gilbert had responded promptly to Zelma's invitation, in time, in fact, to have a talk with the seer beforehand. To him Zelma

broached the proposition he and Maurice had agreed upon. A more complete surprise could not have been awaiting him; and it may be supposed that his desire to learn more of the invention was a most earnest one, particularly after he became better acquainted with the nature of it.

Maurice's meeting with Mr. Gilbert was attended with a slight diffidence upon his part, but the latter took his hand with a friendly assurance which forbade any seeming social distinction. In the years to come the laborer and capitalist are to clasp hands with a similar friendliness. By that time wealth will not be counted by digits, but by the spirit of brotherhood and equality which will lie back of it.

The scene in Maurice's laboratory was one of unusual significance. Including Josephine and Omar Kava there were four witnesses present. It seemed like the coming together of a group of willing souls to receive a reward of past fellowship. The vibrations were those of perfect harmony. In a few well-chosen words Maurice explained the technical bearings of his discovery, and gave a brief account of the prolonged search among scientists for a combination of metals, which, when expanded and contracted by intense heat and cold, should generate an electrical current without other accessories. The questions asked by Mr. Gilbert proved his superior powers of thought analysis. Encouraged thereby Maurice was moved to speak of his work with still greater freedom. But the readiness with which the working

parts of his model began moving gave the fullest point to his words. He had been obliged to modify his test of the night previous to avoid the danger attending its fullest application.

It was Josephine alone who observed, with her ready gift of discernment, the look of utter forgetfulness of self which had come upon Maurice's features. She plainly saw pictured thereon his now thrice awakened love of invention. It was during the one supreme moment, and when the subtle current was fully applied to the model that the look she discovered seemed most vivid. The others were watching his movements with breathless interest; she had her glance fixed upon his features with a woman's yielding sympathies. At the most critical moment Maurice chanced to raise his eyes to hers. As their glances met a flash of intense feeling passed over him. It seemed as if his victory of the hour had been instantaneously colored with a hue of mutual soul love. A smile, such as betrays only the language of the heart, came upon his lips, but in the next instant he realized that the extreme moment of recognition had passed, and that he and Josephine were but friends in the flesh again.

When conscious of what had occurred, Maurice colored to the temples and his next acts seemed somewhat confused, though the model continued its movements with regular and unabated speed. It was Josephine's realization of this moment of soul communion which brought a flush of enjoyment to her face

also. She may never before have met with a similar experience, when her objective self had been so fully controlled by the subjective. It seemed to her like one of the fables which are wont to temper our dreams when self, and shadows, and discord are blotted out.

The trial of the invention proved most convincing to them all, and was particularly satisfactory to Mr. Gilbert, whose shrewd business tact enabled him to prophesy some rare possibilities for it. After he and Zelma had retired to the library, the seer explained more fully their proposed plans.

“Maurice is no less convinced than I that an invention so important should be shared in by the outside world under proper restrictions. It was his suggestion that you be given the personal privilege of placing it upon the market. You see it is all along the lines of duty and obedience to natural law. I feel already assured that you will accept the trust most willingly.”

“But do you realize the value of a discovery so unique?” enquired Mr. Gilbert.

“I think I do, but its greatest value consists in the use we make of it. A certain combination of forces, favorable because earnestly lived out and sought for, has been brought about with fortunate results. You nor I are supposed to estimate the value of such an invention except as we are privileged to turn it to some worthy public use. When this is done, will we not feel inspired to do a still greater work for mankind?”

"It seems truly certain that we might be." Mr. Gilbert's reply was doubly sincere, and he spoke like one gifted with a deepened insight. "Already there has come another lull in my plans for the reformatory," he added, "but this latest of discoveries would certainly give them new life should its profits be devoted to our cause. You need only to be assured that I will accept the trust with the deepest gratitude. I will if you and your friend so desire, formulate some course to be pursued at once."

Thus promptly was the matter agreed upon, and Zelma accepted the settlement with his usual ready faith in the inevitable as seen from his lofty standards of right.

"And now a word more concerning the higher ideals," he counseled, before his friend should take his leave. "Every lower phase has a corresponding prototype in the higher. I think I see a striking correspondence which is in line with our friend's discovery. To do with the subtle forces successfully we ought to be conversant with all phases alike. The lowest of these forces is magnetism, of course, which is largely of the earth. Electricity comes from the air realm, and is the next higher. These correspond with two still more subtle forces, the etheric and the auraic, the etheric being of the mind and the auraic of the spirit. Could we truly recognize the reality of these more refined spiritual energies, and live in them daily, we would learn more of the lesser or lower forces. In other words, as we broaden in our knowl-

edge of the upper stratas of life, we are enabled to put the lower forces to practical use. In the Keeley motor we have an incomplete demonstration of this kind. To me the reason why the now famous motor has not proved a visible success, is because there are not sufficient minds capable of grasping the truths of vibrations upon which it is based. It is never possible to give out a new truth until the race is ready for it. Vibratory science, founded upon occult law, is yet a myth to the masses. When there are a sufficient number of centers in our land where thought force shall be rightly correlated, discoveries like that promised by Mr. Keeley will be more or less successful. In other words, the inventor, who is only the instrument of other united minds, is but the product of the age in which he lives. At present our materialistic tendencies forbid the new and seemingly transcendental science, which reaches out an incalculable distance beyond all facts thus far established. An inventor with due spiritual knowledge will have ampler chances for success when the thought habits of our people are changed, and many of the out-of-date standards of materialism ignored."

"Letting go of the old is not a popular virtue by any means," smiled Mr. Gilbert.

"Certainly not; we have been held too strictly accountable for the hard-earned accretions of the past. A discoverer needs to evolve from within. Great inventions are seldom brought to light through mere thought drudgery. They are not infrequently looked

upon as accidents, but I believe them to be the result of the inventor's nearness to the higher life. The discovery of the X rays is the first adaptation of the next higher or etheric force to man's use. In time we will have made use of the auraic force as well, which, when discovered, will blend our two worlds into one, and the separateness we now imagine will not exist. Every day do I feel more clearly our nearness to a universal soul knowledge, or the discovery that instead of two worlds we have indeed but one. You or I can illy afford to dwell long in the material when a future so promising is spread out before us."

Zelma ended his sentence with a smile of exquisite pleasure. Understanding him as he doubtless did, could Mr. Gilbert be less than just in the charge that had been offered him? A realization of the sublime truths of the inner life transcend any pledge of good faith set out in words. The term honesty loses its adaptation after being displaced by the higher and holier obligation.

Josephine lingered in the laboratory after the others had gone out. Between her and Maurice there had come a touch of soul sympathy indeed. Upon the model were they both looking, and speaking with the fewest possible words. In the midst of their thoughts little Dolphin, who may have just returned from school, came tripping in. Maurice was just then in the act of drawing the cinders together over his furnace fire. With her usual happy freedom Dolphin clambered upon the work bench and put her

arms lovingly about her mamma's neck. She seemed to be impressed that some important event had just taken place. She, too, looked longingly down at the model which lay at her feet. To her it was the same mysterious visitant in the household as ever. Soon Maurice turned about to welcome Dolphin, and in the forgetfulness of the moment she put her other arm about his neck also, and there stood with the innocence known only to untutored childhood.

"Mamma!" she said at last, a little drolly, "is it God who always makes us do right?"

Josephine turned her head and kissed her child's lips in silence. The act was of itself a reply.

"My teacher says that if we love God He will make us love everybody else. I don't think it's God who makes us love one another; do you? We just love, and can't help it. I told my teacher that God didn't *make* us do anything. She looked awfully funny at me after that."

Significant glances passed between Maurice and Josephine. With an almost unconscious stealth Maurice put his arm about the little prattler and drew her nearer to him. Somehow she seemed to carry the fabled key which had unlocked the secret of his deeper love. For a moment not another word was spoken. It was one of those intervals of perfect peace which never come about by human planning.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

HASTENING EVENTS.—PASSIONLESS LOVE AND  
ITS REWARD.

AGAIN was the public attention drawn to Mr. Gilbert's offer to charity by the publication of the fact, that the one great attainment so long sought for by electricians had been achieved; that its discoverer, a hitherto unknown inventor, had agreed to add the profits of his invention to the fund already subscribed for building the reformatory, and that this, unless all signs failed, would be quite sufficient to soon complete the subscription needed.

Thus in a single day, almost, had Maurice become famous. That the announcement of his discovery came direct from Mr. Gilbert proved most significant, and the heads of uninvested capital were being everywhere turned, and inquiries came pouring in from every quarter. Zelma, as was his way, looked philosophically on, and observed his inventive friend's manner of wearing these honors thus suddenly acquired. Public sentiment was running high, and many who did not see the divine hand in it all, were growing to believe that, even when viewed from an everyday or business point of view, the proposed

reformatory might be in some measure practicable. Thus, let us say again, do the occult forces serve those who take up the threads of life and follow them peacefully and without haste to successful ends. Mortal that he was, who can say that Maurice might not have been greatly moved by the flattering words said in his behalf, had it not been that a deeper, almost superhuman love had been wooing him gradually into sublimer fields? Josephine's wish, that when his victory should come, that he treat it as a commonplace incident of his life, was meeting with an actual realization. It was true that there seemed scarcely a ripple of disturbance in the atmosphere of Zelma's household, so exempt was it from all that pertained to worldliness. The same unaggressive, silent thought force was still invoked, as if nothing unusual had occurred. What, indeed, was there to be disturbed about, when only the divine Will had thus far been obeyed? If in the summing up of all life there is to be found a justifiable average, why should the anxious mind divert its energies by a purely human indulgence in either joy or sorrow?

It would please us best to record in detail the events of the next three months, but a casual mention of them will need to suffice. By the early days of June Mr. Gilbert's success had been assured—the fund had been raised, the state law enacted, the site for the building chosen, and a board of officers and managers selected to judiciously push the enterprise forward. With characteristic promptness Chicago

had redeemed itself most emphatically; and where doubt had at first existed there was now an almost unanimous movement in favor of this, the latest of reforms. Coincident with all that had come about, was the fact that in this great throbbing, commercial center lived the discoverer of a secret which would revolutionize in a great degree the motive power of the world. Certainly no circumstance more important than this could have occurred to lend dignity to the cause which Mr. Gilbert had espoused. The patents covering the invention having been fully applied for, rights to use the same were being disposed of throughout the different states, an illustration of the readiness with which the world appropriates a truly meritorious idea.

And yet, must not this awakening of public spirit and enterprise have brought added courage to Zelma in his chosen work for mankind? Still dutiful, and still wont to look within for his spiritual guidance, there had come to him the divine right to use for the world's good his powers thus attained. With not a single violation of this right, he could be entrusted with more. So with us all. It is when our creatures of earth yield to temptation by the misuse of their occult knowledge, that their powers fade and grow less; but a continuous exercise of them for the common good brings to our domain a capital of strength without limit. Was not the visible capital which Mr. Gilbert had caused to be subscribed in aid of his project, a direct correspondence of the other?

While the ferment of public action is going on, let us return and record some of the more secret workings of Zelma's household. We have learned that there were to be seven members of his group in the Temple of Silence, to complete the number needed in the work of thought concentration. Already had the three added members been secured. With her life now fully redeemed and rounded out, her soul awakened and her deeds of charity known far and near, Mrs. Fessenden had cheerfully accepted the trust in response to a request from Josephine. Could the remaining two have been other than Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert, both of whom had truly risen from the ashes of their discontent into the promised life? Verily, these three pupils of Zelma had made extraordinary advancement, even greater than the seer could have anticipated. Two meetings each week were being held, moments of absolute devotion to Truth—the world shut out, the vision quickened, the spiritual forces gathered together for good alone—what more could be asked to complete the battery of seven souls into whose keeping had been given a trust inconceivable! Yea, what might they not be able to demand in the name of right and holiness? Many strange movements will be set on foot during the oncoming years, and the race will pride itself upon its unparalleled civic progress. He alone who has discovered the potency of united thought force will know through whom cometh such powers of greatness. Each chosen brother or sister shall be as a

saviour without guile or glory—humble, and yet endowed with rarest gifts of healing and wisdom. Is the prophecy too sweeping for mortal credence? Then wait and see; a careful observance of the times will not be without its advantages.

One meeting of our friends in particular ought by rights to be recorded. It was the one which followed the choosing of the site for the reformatory. It was a mild summer evening, and the exact hour found every member of the group present, seated in a semi-circle facing the east. The lights were turned low, the crystal glowed with an uncommon brilliancy, and the stillness was sublime. All were clad in robes of white, and every thought of outer life or personality was banished. Each breathed with the other in perfect unison, and a single holy sentence having been chosen, all sat with their united glances fixed steadfastly upon the crystal.

A half hour may have been thus spent in silence. Then a peculiar change in the crystal became gradually apparent. A greyish shadow began to dim its surface for a moment, after which there appeared with a mysterious slowness the merest outlines of a massive building, surrounded by a halo of light. Mr. Gilbert was the first to recognize the scene. As it grew more visible he became aware that it was a repetition of his former vision, only that within and about the building were evidences of activity, while from its great chimneys came forth volumes of smoke, which rolled peacefully away in the heavens. Every

breath was for the moment stilled; and yet so in keeping was the scene with all that had of late been happening, that as it grew apace it did not seem in any marked sense unusual. Every eye saw the same alike. A summer sun stood out over the great lake, and the golden atmosphere seemed filled with hope and radiance. Even the inrolling waves could be seen lapping the massive stone walls, upon which stood turrets after the manner of a medieval castle, only that these seemed to blend in harmony with the other details of modern architecture.

It was indeed a remarkable vision, and lasted but a brief space of time. A profound spirit brooded over the silence which followed, and when the mantrims were repeated in unison the vibrations were divinely felt by all. After the exercises were over, and when all had retired to the parlor, Zelma said:

“Like all evidences of occult truths, this one seems most acceptable to us at this particular moment. It is in keeping with the occasional impressions which flit into our minds when we are pursuing a righteous course. If we are right, certain agreeable glimpses of the future, suggested by some incident of the present, are given us, and if we look upon these as friendly tokens, our doubts are dispelled and our accomplishments increase correspondingly. It is indeed a privilege to know and feel that we are right. Our sensibility of this cannot be based upon what the world has done, or is planning to do, but upon what we feel within is right. This opens up new possi-

bilities of research, new acquirements of truth, new inventions and discoveries, and, above all, we are at rest with ourselves, because our polarities are constantly upward and onward. Were this the basis of religion, there would be no friction or dogmas. The love principle alone would be our guidance, and the live-and-let-live policy of existence would be sufficient for our daily use. That the reformatory is to be built there seems not a particle of doubt. That other and perhaps greater reforms will follow this one we may rest assured, for the wheels of progress are never to cease turning. Every new movement will be made manifest in its own good time. Our finite planning to hasten or delay is only so much waste of time and energy."

Seven warm hearts were these, which were pulsating in perfect accord, for good alone. Adepts tell us that the weal of a nation can be dictated by a few master minds in secret conclave, and that the power vested in one righteous motive is superhuman as compared to the will of him who makes war upon his fellows. If this be true, must we not hereafter get our strength and guidance from out the silence, instead of seeking it from past usages and beliefs?

On this same evening, after all the others had retired, Zelma's daughter and Maurice sat until late discussing the recent most satisfactory happenings. A new beauty sat upon Josephine's brow, and out of Maurice's eyes shone a light which cometh only from a super-conscious soul. An interval of silence had

dropped in between them, and neither seemed desirous of breaking it. But at last Josephine raised her glance, and said in words rich with inner meanings:

"Yes, I feel that it is but the spirit of the Christ made manifest, and were we to boast of even a tithe of credit for its fulfillment, discord would come into the vibratory soundings like a false note in music. As it is, we have an expression of absolute justice to all alike."

"And we find upon looking backward, that martyrs have been burned at the stake for this same love of truth," replied Maurice, also speaking quite seriously. "Yet truth has remained the same as before the martyrs were born. Our loves are but finite after all, whether for the truth or for one another."

Josephine smiled and regarded her friend calmly for a moment. "When love is born of chastity—is divine because it is of heaven—then health and healing will come to us unbidden," she said, loyally. "Our intensest love is that which obeys, is silently abiding, passionless, and is never distrustful. I am growing to believe that we seven people are destined to reach that mutual soul love, or spiritual oneness. What more can be asked than an impartial trust thus given to us each the same?"

Instantly following these words the longing in Maurice's heart ceased, and for a priceless moment he was at rest. What magic could indeed have worked the change? Had she toward whom he felt such

devotion thus opened the way to a holy mateship indeed? Had not their two spirits, in the sublimity of the hour, at last blended in positive harmony? If so, what purely earthly union could have served them better? In the mere interval of time Maurice saw plainly the wisdom of her former words. She had lived out her allotted experiences of wedlock, and was now able to love all mankind with an excess of womanly fidelity. Should it not have been enough that he could so much as be present to share in the purity of her life, devoted as it was to the one cause of helping humanity? Yes, he was for that one moment at rest. The ideal woman was before him, and could his former passion for her but be stilled forever, that rest might be made eternal. Truthful love, when found out wholly, exacts nothing it does not possess. It may have been Maurice's lot to have discovered this, even during an hour of his other less important victories.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## THE SECOND COMING OF VIVIAN.

THE date of Monsieur Vivian's midsummer visit was drawing near. Owing to the recent events, this particular visit from the French brother would be one of considerable moment, hence the occasion was being looked forward to with many pleasurable anticipations. So in harmony had the vibrations between the seven members of Zelma's group become, that a thoroughly indivisible power was being realized—a power most soothing, yet teeming with life and purpose secure from worldly cognizance but of the world to a degree but little known to the masses unlearned in occult lore. And yet this power, though it had been the means of much accomplishment already, was only an index of what may be expected when the popular mind has learned to justly conserve its hidden forces to praiseworthy ends.

It was on the evening of the first Wednesday after the full moon in July. Extra preparations for the occasion had been made, and at an early hour every member of the group was present in Zelma's parlors to await the time of Monsieur's arrival. To four of

the members Vivian was yet a stranger, except in spirit. They had been made fully acquainted with his mission, but never having met him, he was to them as yet a sort of ideal executive to whom they were hereafter expected to report for the good of the Brotherhood throughout the world. Every face was lighted with that soul radiance which has made saints and martyrs famous. The night, though warm, was otherwise serenely beautiful, and the bickerings of a hapless world being shut out so completely, nothing to tempt the lowly senses seemed capable of entering into their midst.

Little had been talked about, so enjoyable was the thought-freighted silence. No word of Vivian's coming had been received, but that he was sure to arrive at the appointed hour none doubted in the least. So, with willing and expectant hearts they sat, offering now and then a friendly word, until the exact hour approached. When at last a series of gently undulating, finely attuned vibrations began to break upon the stillness, all exchanged glances of ready approval and renewed expectancy.

Omar Kava, with his usual quiet movements, arose to admit the guest. When he returned to the parlor a few minutes later he was closely followed by Monsieur Vivian. Yes, he had indeed come, even to witness the fullness of the work which he had predicted at the time of his visit in January. First he grasped Zelma's hand with fraternal warmth, then that of Josephine, after which he was presented for

the first time to the four remaining members of the knot. But something seemed to have made them friends in advance. How often does it occur, that upon our first meeting with a stranger in the flesh, there comes over us a feeling that we may have met somewhere before. So real is this sensation, that our spirits seem instantly to touch, and our acquaintance seems ready formed. Why, then, should a formal presentation be necessary between friends whose destinies have been thus closely united?

Possibly no group of genial souls ever met more opportunely. Omar Kava at once retired to assist in preparing the supper, and there being no restraint upon anyone, all fell to talking freely upon matters of spiritual import. But not until the company had gathered about the table did the talk begin in earnest. Monsieur Vivian appeared like one who had brought with him an important message. Of his travels he spoke at some length, then listened with frequent expressions of approval to an account of the work already accomplished in Chicago.

"I am sure," he said, "that the possibilities of a brighter future are many fold, both here and elsewhere. Throughout Europe there is also an undercurrent of power being generated of inestimable value to mankind. The holy churches are permeated with it, and the older governments feel its approach from every quarter. It is in no sense a power to be perpetuated by force of arms, but one of love and tolerance which, if it is not retarded, will in time unite the

whole race in one universal nationality unknown since the first confusion of tongues. I am aware that this may seem extravagant, but does not the law of growth demand it? Would not a consummation so much desired be in keeping with what has been accomplished in the past?"

"It is your belief, then, that in the progress at hand the younger nations are to take the initiative," suggested Mr. Gilbert.

"Assuredly so. In the cycle of evolution the new must invariably take the lead of the old. When a nation is born, there is work set for it to do which the older nations cannot perform because of past environments. New beliefs spring up, as well as new forms of government, new types of character, new attainments in literature and the arts and sciences, and many times there must be entire changes of customs; and if the older nations do not heed this march of progress, they must of needs totter and fall, and cease to be known other than in history. Change is our saviour in all known civilization. Without it there can be no advance whatever."

"I have long looked upon that as an important truth," coincided Zelma. "And yet there is no need of haste in whatever is set for us to do. The unmanifest becomes manifest under a fixed and inevitable law. When we are fully conscious that throughout eternity there is absolute precision in all that is taking place, we can certainly overcome our haste and strive with a far better courage."

"I find in my work that one moment of haste will frequently undo a week of accomplishment," reasoned Mrs. Fessenden. "I believe that each day has its certain claims upon us, and if we begin it with the thought of doing, rather than attaining, the month or year yields us a better return than if we seek to crowd the events together to suit our personal pleasures or ambitions. Satisfaction comes to us as a rule when we have stopped seeking for it."

This remark brought a smile of approval to Josephine's lips. "Idealists have talked and written of contentment," she said, "but how few have ever found it. It is more a theory than a fact, especially if we have not an abiding faith in the eternal fitness of things. I think I am more a believer than ever in what is, and that we can attain to wisdom only as fast as our interior growth will permit."

Other apt responses were made by the different members to the suggestions offered during the repast. When the feast was nearly over, Monsieur Vivian took occasion to request the undivided attention of his friends. He had, he said, a few things of importance to say to them.

"You must all be made aware," he began, "that as we go forward in our work our fields of action will broaden, and our wisdom must necessarily become greater with each step upward. Your knot has now completed its membership of seven. This is the mystical number which is the key to many wonderful revelations. It is therefore meet that you should be

fully informed of the work which the race is about to enter upon, and in which all earnest souls are interested. First, as to the coming united movement for a newer and better civilization. You have doubtless all observed the signs of the times in the religious world. The spirit of liberality is cropping out everywhere, as if the day of universal freedom was near at hand. To successfully advocate any great reform it has already become necessary that an assembly of creeds shall meet in vast conclaves, regardless of minor differences. Why is this? Because a greater universality is needed. The stronger the battery the greater the spiritual energy. There is a supremacy in thought concentration. This generates occult power, whether in or out of the church, and whether those participating know it or not. Certain convictions are formulated with which to hold the minds of the people toward a desired fulfillment. So latent is our mind energy becoming, that like the dynamo which gathers electricity from the atmosphere, we are able at certain marked periods to draw from the universal akasa a seemingly new and powerful force. In history this is called an epoch; it is in fact only an incident in creation, and wholly in accordance with the unwritten law.

“And yet, notwithstanding the excellency of a widespread unity, it has been proven true that each group of minds has a work distinctly its own. That however far removed it may be from other groups, the good each is to accomplish is none the less iden-

tical. In the past, so sure has each awakened mind been that his or her light is a direct ray from heaven, that we have had waste through wars, religious persecutions and personal differences, until the heart of man has grown sick from the direful consequences. The new dispensation is to be a less retaliative one. Here, for example, you have a group of seven souls, foresworn to the tenets of universal love, and who choose to work largely in the silence. In another state or country you hear of a movement for the relief of the unemployed. Elsewhere a bevy of religious sects has taken up the cudgel against social distractions, while still again some strange healer or teacher appears among you to arouse the people to the dangers of unregenerate ways. Each and every phase of effort is intended, in the divine economy, to be only an addition to the aggregate whole, and not that any one phase is to save mankind outright. Once persuade ourselves to tolerate all honest work, and our preconceived prejudices disappear. Then, and only then can we attain to a universal brotherhood. The all-important fact I wish to make known to you is, that we are on the eve of an emancipation from the radical errors of the past, and that there never was a time more ripe than now for a unity in all religious and social thought. It has been revealed to our Brothers that the supply of occult knowledge which awaits us is limitless. Hence there are grave needs that we look not doubtingly upon our neighbor's acts, his methods or his beliefs, but

rather that we each husband our individual forces to meet the demands of the immediate future."

Profound words were these when given to the alert ears of Monsieur's listeners. The Brother spoke somewhat slowly, and his slightly foreign accents gave to his words a peculiar depth and forcefulness. After touching his lips to a glass of sparkling water, he said further:

"Another very important fact, though apparent to the careful observer, has been much overlooked by the race at large. This is the world's tendency to cling to out-of-date pursuits and obsolete ideas. Every seven years there comes into a person's life a new store of vital energy, to be used or abused, as that person sees fit. For example, we may say that a man has entered a successful avocation. Seven years go by, and he has acquired a valued citizenship, and is looked up to and honored. Another seven years, and his success in life is assured, and he follows his profession easily, and perhaps has become a man of means. But after another seven years there begins to come into his being some secret dissatisfaction, and his profession begins to hang heavily upon his hands. Still, his standing is so honorable, his trusts so many, that there appears to be no opportunity to let go the thread of life he has followed so successfully. So he clings to it, distasteful though it may be, and though angular lines have begun to appear upon his face. Possibly some step higher in the scale of usefulness has presented itself, one which

would have put new blood into his veins. He may have felt an impulse to abandon the old and take up the new. But no, he looks upon his reputation as his hard-earned capital, and finding it thus difficult to break away from his habits of business, now perhaps only mechanically followed, he settles back into the rut again, and plods on as before over the beaten paths. Truly, the world's ideas of honored citizenship are grievously at fault. It is a fact that we cannot follow a single pursuit throughout a full life period, and do so successfully. There may be some rare instances of this kind, but the person is prone to become either a slave to greed or in some degree a mental or bodily sufferer.

“So with our ideas of religion, of diet, of morality, or of conscience. As I have said, change—legitimate change—is the saviour of the world and of the ambitious man or woman; and wise is he or she who discovers when the time for change has arrived. A successful preacher falls a victim to some serious malady. For many years he has preached to crowded houses, and is known far and wide. But somehow he falls by the wayside and a long siege of sickness is experienced. This period, though attributed to purely physical causes, is in fact only one of nature's friendly summons for a transition from the lower to the higher. Such a person should never preach again. By studying the laws of his being closely, he will discover some other field of the world's work awaiting him. Yet how few ever heed the summons.

Back to the pulpit the preacher goes, and though with shaken voice and a non-magnetic personality he strives to expound the articles of his creed, there is a gradual falling away among his hearers, and a bitter disappointment at last closes his decrepit years.

“Suppose he had shaken off the old, and had taken on the burden of some active work for humanity at large; think you the law of compensation would not have renewed his life seven fold in return? This one occult truth is yet to be understood by the many. It has been learned by a chosen few, who have wisely seen fit to pass from the lower to the higher at the proper time. We believe the race will yet come to know, approximately, a perpetual youth, through an adherence to the laws of succession. As it is with persons, so it is with a church, or a nation. Age, ever so honored, is losing its respectability, and the wiser ones are espousing the cause of youth instead. It takes a vast amount of renewing by the wayside to lengthen one’s life to four score years of manhood or womanhood. But as nutriment is given the body, so is the spiritual man moulded and kept from decay by a succession of re-births. I wish to enjoin upon you in particular, that you hold to the thought of periodical re-births as a means for the prolongation of human life. You can do your fellows no greater service, I am sure, for this is to be one of the foremost secrets in our forthcoming enlightenment.”

Again did Monsieur Vivian cease his remarks, as if to collect his thoughts before proceeding farther.

His hearers were still following him with a momentarily increasing interest. Soon he raised his eyes and seemed like one filled with an unspeakable and inspiring love.

“And now let me say in conclusion, that it has been decreed that I shall impart to you one other occult truth, which is also of the utmost importance at the present time. We have, as you all know, been promised a latter-day redemption from the numberless ills which the flesh is heir to. Unto the followers of the cult it has been shown that our forthcoming redeemer is Woman. Never having wasted her energies in wars, in intellectual greed, or in a succession of bodily habits, woman has been steadily gathering to herself a power but little dreamed of by the present male leaders of the masses. Like all real individual strength, her mastery is to be a silent one, and will originate largely in the love dominion, and will not need the sanction of any established authority. Intuitive, and a ruler over the passions of the self, she is to step forward from her seclusion, not as man’s superior, but as his equal. Thus united, the male and the female principles shall constitute the perfect Man, as a wise creator first ordained it. The reason why the taint of corruption has invaded our governments and social life, is because man has stood practically alone in his doings and misdoings. What more could we expect? Every human being, to be perfect in development, must have the feminine and the masculine principles evenly counterbalanced.

How grandly proper, then, that in all national and family growth the man and woman shall be equals, one necessary to the other, and neither be made to suffer the penalty of subordination. We believe that when this truth is recognized by the ruling minds, governmental and personal inequality will be an exception, and that there will then come into our midst a welfare of peace which is at present but a dream, or a prophecy at best."

This ended Monsieur's discourse, and immediately following his remarks, and at a sign from Zelma, all arose from the table and sought the parlors, where they were to receive further instruction and counsel. Until later than usual was the conference prolonged, since there was so much of serious interest to be considered. But the interchange of views yielded ample profit to everyone present, the four recently added members in particular. Monsieur Vivian seemed more inspired than during any of his former visits to interpret the meaning of all that had been accomplished, both in America and abroad, as well as to impart to his co-workers that confidence in the future which they would need in the coming months of activity. So it may be supposed, that before the night's talk ended the degree of fellowship which prevailed was such as is seldom felt among friends embodied in the flesh.

It had been planned to devote an hour to concentration in the Temple of Silence, and as soon as convenient all repaired thither robed in gowns of white,

and carrying with them the single thought of peace and loyalty to the Universal Will. It was a scene full of unalloyed tranquillity. In the center of the room, and directly in front of the others, had been placed a chair for the visiting brother. When the glorias had been repeated in concert, all seated themselves and fixed their eyes steadfastly upon the luminous crystal. The stillness seemed livid with a holy presence of divine love and chastity. None felt this more than did Zelma, whose spiritual insight seemed to have been quickened to a remarkable degree. All that the human heart might wish for, and all that the most unselfish soul might aspire to, seemed to him to have come about in the past few weeks, and to have found a welcome recognition upon this most memorable night. Could he have helped but enjoy, for a single moment, the blessings of a just God, thus made manifest at this chosen hour?

In the midst of the unfathomable silence the seer's eyes gradually closed, and his breathing came deep and regularly. Some change of spirit was creeping over him, and he felt the sensation of being lifted into a sublime ether filled with a still holier thought radiance. At a moment when the last vestige of earthly taint seemed to have left him, his inner eyes were suddenly opened upon a scene of wonderful descriptions. He found himself seated upon a high eminence, overlooking a city spread out far and wide upon either hand. The shores of the great inland sea were lined with parks and scores of arched me-

monials of beautiful designs, while dozens of massive public buildings dotted here and there the intervals of space, from the towers of which floated the national emblem and streamers of various sizes and colors. Vehicles driven by invisible power ran noiselessly to and fro down the great boulevards, which wound hither and thither through the parks and out toward the suburbs of the city as far as the eye could see. A system of chimes, both remote and near at hand, broke upon the air with a pleasing melody, while great palace-like boats, decked with hundreds of tri-colored streamers seemed to be passing and re-passing beneath the monster arches, and out into the sea beyond.

An ideal city indeed! Over the seer's being swept a wave of renewed thanksgiving. Was there justice, and divine law, and brotherhood actually existing within the boundaries of this wonderful metropolis? In answer to his longing query, there came into Zelma's soul vision a stately building with an arched dome gilded with gold, upon the apex of which stood the goddess of Justice, holding aloft a pair of evenly poised scales. This stood near the center of the city, and was of a new and wonderful architecture. The people were moving in and out of the building with orderly step, and in their manners were tokens of a rare dignity of deportment. No clouds of smoke hovered over the city, but through an atmosphere filled with the sunlight of a new era could be seen the sequestered parks clothed in green, while endless

banks of flowers and colored foliage skirted the lagoons in perfect contrast with the limpid waters therein. No haste, no hurry of trade, no evidence of intrigue were anywhere visible, quite as if the spirit of brotherly content had at last met its fulfillment. No slavish followings of custom, no military rule, nor prisons filled with suffering humanity could possibly have existed in a city so brooded over by the white-winged angel of peace and sobriety. It was happiness even to a denizen of the nineteenth century to look upon a habitation of human kind like this, so dream-like and yet so strangely just and real. In the midst of the vision there came to the seer a profound impression that the fabled gospel of love had at last found its expression in the heart of man. How, then, could he return to the less-deserving realm of the present, without a protest against the follies and self-inflicted miseries of a people who dwelt in darkness and doubt?

To Zelma the vision seemed hours in length, so much was there embraced in the marvellous panorama spread out beneath him. But when at last a gathering mist began to form before his eyes, he felt as if he was being again absorbed into the ocean of terrestrial presences, until in time he became as nothing in the still wrapt and holy silence. Yet so harmoniously was the whole change taking place, that without the slightest feeling of disquiet he once more opened his eyes and beheld his brethren seated about him, with their united glances still fixed upon

the crystal. Possibly in no other place than this could a vision of the city of the future have been possible. What the others may have realized during this hour of communion we do not need to record. Suffice it to say, that when they had once more retired to the parlor, the sublime presence they carried with them was of that sort which makes heroes of men and women, even in our day of mistaken followings and manifold sufferings.

And now, that the story of Zelma and his humble household has been told, let us with the close of the evening's love feast, and after the hand shakings and adieus of the members present, draw the curtain upon the drama which, we trust, may be in some slight degree a prophecy of that day of rejoicing, when the world's efforts for good will not be judged by the fixed standards of him who, even at his best, is only human after all.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

LOOKING FORWARD.—SUPPOSITIOUS LETTER FROM A  
TWENTIETH CENTURY CITIZEN.

Chicago, July 18th, 1907.

*To the Publishers of Zelma, greeting:*

IT IS with mingled pride and thanksgiving that upon my return to this city, and after an absence abroad for a number of years, I find among the other public betterments, a magnificent educational and penal Reformatory standing upon the lake front, almost identical with the one foreshadowed in your book entitled ZELMA, THE MYSTIC. Upon inquiry, I learn that the principal donor, Adolphus Gilbert, Jr., has achieved a world-wide celebrity, having been not only a constant and devout promoter of this, but of several other worthy enterprises for the alleviation of his fellow-men. Also, that the inventor, whose rare gift of genius was the crowning circumstance which made the Reformatory possible, is now superintending artisan in the institution, while under him has been gathered together a large corps of assistants, all of whom are men and women of talent, invited thither from every quarter of the globe. Also that, as a result of the almost phenomenal success of this

movement, several other states are in one way or another following close upon Chicago's lead.

As a further matter of fact, it has been told me that our state prison and city jails now contain only a prescribed number of the more incorrigible criminals, and that the number of these is growing smaller yearly. Would you care to know, that as I write this there comes over me the shadow of a belief that Zelma's vision of the perfect city is yet to be realized in its entirety, so rapid is the advance now being enjoyed by our philanthropic people everywhere? I also note with pleasure that the school established in an humble way by Mrs. Fessenden, now occupies a large and commodious edifice of its own, which is an ornament to the city both in design and completeness. That aside from its primitive objects, other educational features have been added, until now it stands second to no other school of its kind in the land. Moreover, I have been informed that the never-failing friend to humanity, Zelma, still lives in his south side home, and with the aid of his daughter and the Indian chela moves on in his quiet, unobtrusive way, while his methods of doing for the unfortunate are as securely hidden from the world as ever. It is a fact worth mentioning, that Zelma and his daughter Josephine and their willing servant seem to defy the evidences of oncoming age, and in some respects appear younger than during the period covered by the story. If I were to communicate this fact to you alone, I would feel quite warranted in doing so, since the French brother gave us certain hints upon the subject of re-births, which would seem

to indicate that age is not so much a fact as a habit. Believer that I am in the gospel of Truth, and as a resident of the city of Chicago and of the twentieth century, I feel moved to congratulate you for having published, so long in advance, so much that has since been crystallized into actual fact. Permit me, then, to assert my continued loyalty to the truths so fittingly championed by the author of ZELMA, and believe me, as ever, your friend for the further freedom of the race.

M. C.

THE END.

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