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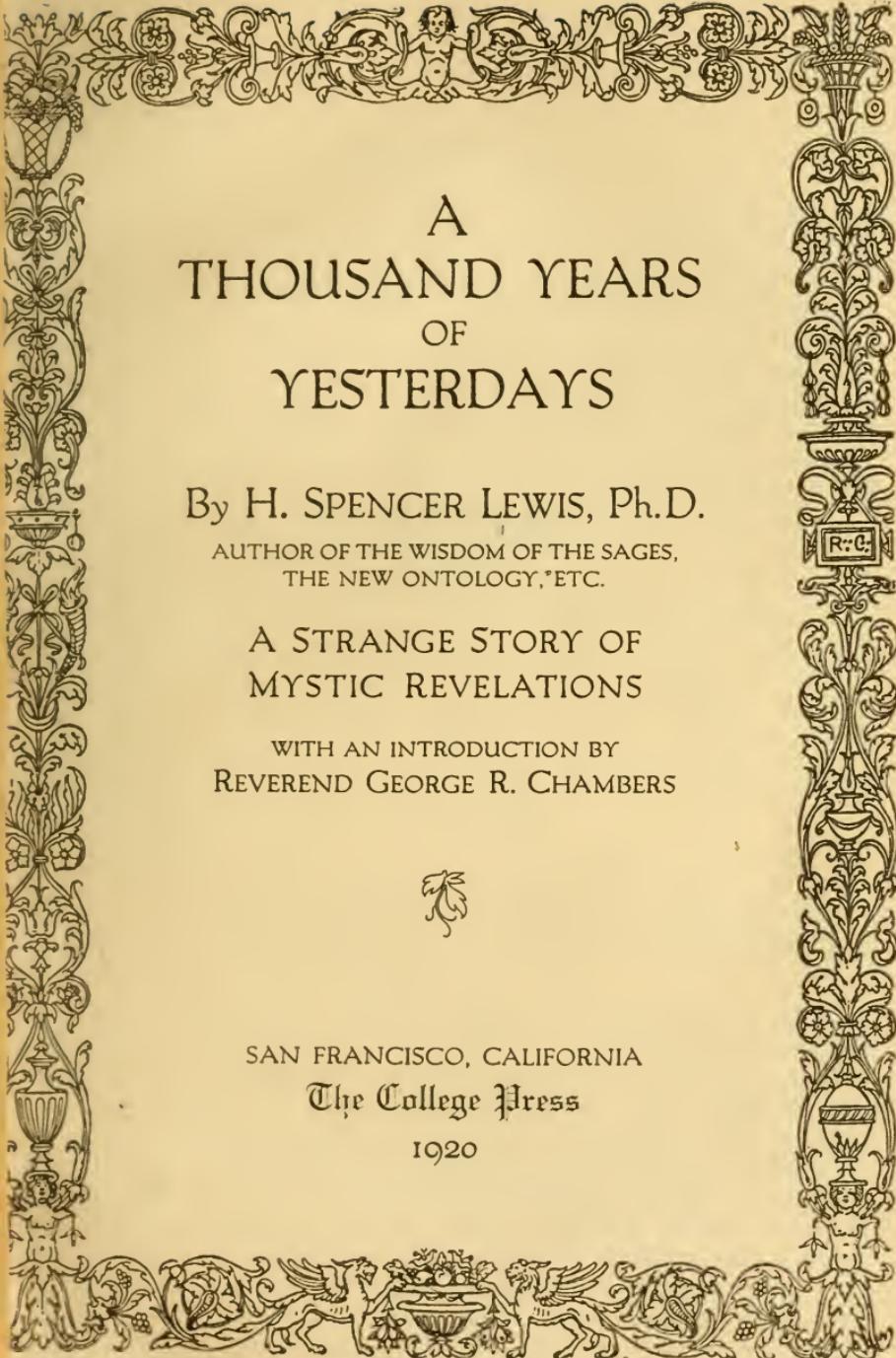
# THOUSAND YEARS OF YESTERDAYS

"A STRANGE STORY  
OF MYSTIC REVELATION"



R. TAY





A  
THOUSAND YEARS  
OF  
YESTERDAYS

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AUTHOR OF THE WISDOM OF THE SAGES,  
THE NEW ONTOLOGY,\* ETC.

A STRANGE STORY OF  
MYSTIC REVELATIONS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
REVEREND GEORGE R. CHAMBERS



SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

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## PREFACE

One may or may not believe in the strange theories of continuous existence of personality, and one may reject the more or less unscientific theories regarding the probability of *reincarnation*, but one cannot reject with the same absoluteness the apparent completeness of memory's records. Almost every one has experienced the sudden conscious realization of *facts* released from the storehouse of the memory involving incidents long forgotten in the conscious recollection; and coupled with the release of such facts as one knows were stored away within the present span of earthly life, there comes an array of incidents, associated and unassociated, which could not have been stored in the memory through any experience in this life.

Psychology offers as an explanation for the possession of such seemingly *inexperienced* facts, the theory that in our dreams we charge our minds with experiences which are not consciously realized at the time or possibly forgotten in our waking state, but which return to consciousness by association of ideas. Another theory offered attempts to explain the mass of inexperienced incidents and ideas as come from the subconscious mind, as being the result of the processes of imagination.

Shakespeare wrote:

And as imagination bodies forth  
The Form of things unknown—the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.

But, such theories leave the cause and nature of *dreams* and *imagination* unexplained. To conceive of the mind mechanically creating from *nothing* those wondrous things which the imagination of man has given us in the past and present, is more difficult than to conceive of unconscious experiences—or experiences of the mind, stored away in the memory, resulting from forgotten realizations.

Leaving aside the prophetic nature of some dreams and likewise the prophetic nature of many things seemingly drawn from the imagination, we still have a great mass of facts and incidents resulting from dreams and imagination, which coincide with experiences, facts and incidents which have had *actuality in the past*, outside of our conscious knowledge. And very often these actualities

were in the remote past, in a period beyond one's present span of life. How came these facts and incidents to be stored away in the memory to be recalled, reviewed, analyzed, in the present span of life? This is the question which confronts the scientist today.

The present story attempts to throw some light on this question and its possible answer. That the matter is presented in story form rather than in heavy, scientific arguments, does not argue that the principles involved are without scientific foundation, or that the process whereby the "Yesterdays" are revealed is an unnatural, uncommon, or unscientific process. It is, in fact, typical of the experiences of many individuals and may find its similitude in some experiences of the reader.

With the sole idea that, in a pleasant, or at least fascinatingly strange story, some will be brought to the *threshold* of realization that the partially explored activities and functions of the mind contain many profound mysteries and principles of considerable import, and that those so *illuminated* may be tempted to seek for *more light* in the Chamber of the Unknown—this book is offered to those constantly asking for the *unusual* in fiction and the *mystical* in romance.

THE AUTHOR.

Temple of Alden,  
Valley of Amorc, California,  
November 25, 1919.

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## INTRODUCTION

Yesterday the idea commonly prevailed that Religion and Science were antagonistic. Today they are thought to be essentially dissociated. Tomorrow they will be known to be one.

The basal reason for present-day dissociation is found in the fact that religion in its inception is understood to be revelation, and in its individual experience, subjective. While on the other hand science is considered as a matter of research with a minimum of inspiration or revelation and as objective in its realm. Psychology being the one effort at reconciliation of the two.

It is not generally known that for thousands of years there are those who have taught the unity of truth. This body of students reveals in the present volume that which may be accepted as a more popular expression of their teachings, and as the pioneer of others which will be forthcoming. It is presented as evidence that science is a matter of *inspiration* and *revelation*, as is religion.

Granted then, that science is to be deductively realized and then found to be true by an inductive process of investigation, the consummate skill revealed in the story of dealing with the science of psychology in the laws of consciousness will be recognized in their presentation as experience in the form of a story. The understanding student may discover very many laws and principles other than psychological hidden in the text which are also contributory to the clearness and force of its message.

As a Priest of the Church, remembering that whenever the Church was able to foresee any fact of science, or science anticipated the Church, it has been necessary to reconcile the one to the other, I rejoice in the possibility of a better understanding here presented as an occasion for readjustment, answering to the demand of the present-day growing insistence upon the unity of Truth.

Among the many points for readjustment which constitute the problem of today, both Theological and Psychological, are the following:

(1) That which is known as Metapsychosis or Reincarnation. Theologically unnecessary *today*, it must be reckoned with *tomorrow*. For, reincarnation is demonstrable. It may be discovered in the teachings of the early Church and is found in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments by those who will read the words in

the light of their most apparent meaning rather than by the dimness of individual precedent and prejudice.

(2) To read and understand scripture just as it is, is not the least of the problems of today as is understood by the reference in the present story to "And God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living Soul." Together with this may be mentioned the problem of bringing into popular appreciation the complete Bible including the so-called Apocrypha. And the full recognition of other Sacred Writings as subsidiary.

(3) The problem of apprehending Immortality as a present consciousness and not necessarily as a dogmatic statement or the conclusion of a rational process.

(4) The problem of bringing into popular acceptance the unencumbered mystical appreciation of prayer as the story in this book makes clear. This understanding has been within the consciousness of many an earnest and devout thinker in a theology of experience which, however, has fallen short of expression by pen or speech.

(5) The problem of duly recognizing the holiness of birth apart from any glaring unconventionalities.

And there are many others. Most of them are beautifully set forth in the following pages.

I cannot refrain from calling attention to St. John, 1:9 (Revised Version) as a most remarkable corroboration of the author's elucidation of Light in connection with birth: "There was the true Light, even the Light which lighteth every man coming into the world."

Interesting as is the story, it is not intended for light reading. It is to stir the depths of most profound thought, and urge to the most thorough investigation. Let the merely curious beware of disappointment. Here the sincere soul will rejoice.

GEORGE R. CHAMBERS.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE STRANGE DIARY

To the man of iron nerve, steel business sharpness and intense concentration to business—like William Howard Rollins—the ending of a business year is like the ending of a segment of life.

The closing of a fiscal year brings with the closing hours the summary, the review, of acts done and undone, profits made and lost, prestige and power gained or decreased, greater success attained or unattained. The closing of the fiscal year marks a milestone in the cycle of the business; it is an entity, a thing unto itself, and must be considered as an independent lifetime in the evolution of the business.

To William Howard Rollins, it meant all this, and more. The fiscal years of his business began and ended at midnight of the calendar years. To him January first was the day of rebirth, personally and in every business sense. To his associates, his closest friends, this meant, *socially* also, for Rollins was reputed to be *all business*, with nothing but business to interest him. It was his whole world; with it the day began and ended, life's activities came and went. There was no other world for him, they said.

There was reason to believe this. Rollins was not only a mighty power in the commercial world, an attractive figure in the business circles of the largest American cities, but he had no club life but with business clubs, he attended no social dinners except those given by the Rotary and other commercial clubs, he had no pleasures except those which afforded, through relaxation, increased power for business—and he was not married. He lived in an unpretentious home with his mother, and avoided all attempts on the part of his social equals to interest him in the charms of their daughters.

His bachelor home, presided over by an adoring mother, was ideal to this man of peculiar ideas. Naturally he had but few visitors and never entertained in his home, if he entertained at all. But those who knew his home life, or those little phases of it snatched from short visits, said that neither luxury nor indifference manifested itself in any of the rooms except the private study. Here there were many paintings and one would judge that Rollins was especially fond of landscapes and etchings of rural scenery.

Yet no one could recall having found Rollins even motoring into the open country to admire nature in all its unpainted splendor. Books were not his hobby, for there was but one small bookcase in his study, and this had frosted glass doors which were always locked. What books were thus hidden and what their natures might be, not one of his intimate friends knew. A large safe, enclosed in a mahogany cabinet, and a large wooden chest bound with ornamented brass bands and corner-pieces, were the only other interesting or odd furnishings of the room. The large easy chair, the broad reading table, the standing reading light, the standing ash-tray, the pillowed footstool—these merely suggested that at times Rollins relaxed and read. But what he read in addition to the *New York Times* and the *Literary Digest*, none, except possibly his mother, knew.

But on this evening, the last hours of the closing fiscal year, the hours just before midnight when the New Year, 1917, would be ushered in, Rollins was reading in his study and he was reading his *diary*.

His mother had retired, the house was still and Rollins was in a world alone. The gas logs in the open fire-place of the study were entwined by the blue and yellow flames that dimly lighted the shadows surrounding the end of the room, while near by, seated in his large chair, dressed in his very plain smoking jacket, Rollins was reading by the direct rays of the movable reading lamp, which cast but little light about the room.

The *Diary* seemed to be his book-of-all-books. With the same regularity that he conducted each affair of his daily business routine, he made his notations in this book nightly before retiring. For years, in fact, since his college days, he had kept these daily records of the day's activities. Naturally, the twenty or more books, covering over twenty years' business career, contained notes and comments almost exclusively of business affairs. Each of these books had become, in its turn, his daily guide, his bible, his record of thoughts, of things to do and of things done—with occasionally a thing left undone.

And tonight he was to close the 1916 diary! As was his custom, he must pass over the pages one by one and see, by the check marks opposite each notation, what important things had been accomplished and especially what others had been left unaccomplished, that he might enter them in the new diary and plan to accomplish them in the next year. This was the task he had set for himself this New Year Eve, while outside the city was celebrating as only New York City can, the last hours of the old year.

As page after page was turned backward from December to the previous month, and from that to October, and on back to September, he fell into reveries. In retrospection he was living over again each day of each month. Once in a while a smile would pass over his tense expression and at other times a stern look would come, as though he were about to issue some serious command, or make some weighty decision.

Then came the date of September 12th. But one notation appeared on the page. Like many others, it was a command unto himself. It read, briefly: "Find out who painted the Spring landscape signed Raymond ——." Immediately the entire tense attitude of Rollins changed. He was plunged by this short notation into another world, a world of speculation, curiosity, pleasantness and—challenge. The smile passed from his face and there came the look of defiance. Why has it been impossible to learn the painter's last name? Why is it so obliterated when the picture is otherwise so well preserved? These were the questions that passed through his mind.

The painting referred to hung upon the walls of his study. It was an old masterpiece, a very old and costly painting. Its age and its masterful work were testified to by its technic, by all the signs and earmarks that constitute a real old master-work, despite the fact that the dealer who sold it to him could not name the creator of it. The dealer had promised to find out; other experts in the valuation of paintings had examined it and had agreed that it was the work of a master *unknown*, for there was not known to be any other large landscape signed by a similar name. Not even the first initial of the last name could be deciphered, though apparently it had been signed there. The first name of *Raymond*, however, gave no clue. No such name was known among those of the old Masters in connection with landscapes of such rare work. It could not have been the first or only work produced by the painter; such skill as was shown in it is not attained except by long experience and much work in evolving a personality of technic.

For five years the diaries contained on the pages dated September 12th—the date on which the painting was purchased—the command: "Find out who painted the Spring landscape." Yet, with the money to pay for research work, with dealers ready to please Rollins with every favor that might lead to other sales, with a friend in Paris who connived with artists of repute, with all his sincere interest, unrelenting desire, and intense curiosity, he could not learn the painter's name. To him it was no longer

a mystery, it was a challenge; the secret name defied him, and defiance annoyed. Rollins was known as a man who cherished a challenge and laughed at defiance in the business world. But in this world of art, to which he seemed a stranger, he was defied by a simple little thing which even a student of art might wipe out of existence through a casual investigation.

"How many more years will I carry this notation in my diaries?" asked Rollins of the spectres of dealers who loomed up before him in his reverie. "Five years have passed since I sought this knowledge first, and each year adds only to the age of the picture and possibly to the occultness of the answer to my question. If all trace of the painter is lost now, why hope that future years will bring him to light? Time only cloaks mystery and makes it more profoundly obscure. Years enhance the arcane and thicken the veil that hangs between the known and the unknown. If the painting was a *thousand* years old when I purchased it, it is now a *thousand and five* years old, and next September it will be a thousand and six! Before my life is ended and that painting passes on to others, it may be—why even a thousand and forty years old—for I hope to live at least forty years more. And then, what? Will the question, *who is the painter*, be any nearer answering than it is now? The dealer who sold the painting to me and many of his associates will be gone then, and, even now the man who sold *him* the painting may be beyond the veil and can no longer assist in learning the painter's name. No, the future holds no encouragement in my search. I must go back to the past, to the days when the painting was new, when it hung upon the wall of some old castle, when the name was still readable, when—*the painter was still living!*

Such were the thoughts that passed through Rollins' mind as his eyes wandered from the page of the diary to the blue and yellow flames of the gas logs, and he relaxed into speculation as to where the painting may have been made and when. The name suggested a Frenchman and France, and France suggested a world of life and living so alluring! "Why does France appeal so and why have I never taken the time to wander through its peaceful old towns and quaint old provinces?" The words were almost audible in the stillness of the room. And then Rollins' mind speculated again. "The war makes it impossible to visit France now even though the escape from business were possible. But there were days when neither business or other affairs would have prevented a summer-time vacation trip to France, when all the strange longing for the environment, atmos-

phere and life of the southern provinces would have been wonderfully appeased by such a trip, and yet France remains but a dream of the mind."

Rollins did not know that his thoughts were identical with those of many others who have a strange longing for an unseen place which seems to be so familiar, so much a part of themselves and yet remains but a dream, a picture or condition of the mind.

The lateness of the night, the sudden consciousness that he was slipping off into wild and unfruitful dreaming, brought Rollins back to the diary in his hand, and to where his forefinger still held the place at the page dated September 12th, 1916. He would check that to be reentered in the next diary, as usual! There was nothing else to do but turn it over to the future, to place his question on a future page.

And then, as he turned back a page in the diary to that dated September 11th, the strangest thought of all occurred to him: why not turn backward and backward the pages of the *yesterdays* to the past and find the great answer there? "If I could only turn backward the pages one by one of a *thousand years of yesterdays* as easily as I turn backward the pages of a year of yesterdays in this book, I could easily learn about that painting." The possibilities astounded him; and as he thought, he fell into a light sleep in which he was fully conscious of his position before the warm fire of the gas logs, and that he was just dreaming a day dream; but the diary in his hand now seemed to be an index to pages of the past, to consecutive yesterdays of many years, and as he dreamed the scenes that came into life-like existence in the fireplace, he felt the pages turning one by one in the great book in his hands.

And then came the hour of midnight; the old grandfather's clock in the hall outside the room struck its twelve bold strokes and before the last had sounded, the city was stirred with the bells and chimes, the horns and shrill whistles, announcing the birth of another year; and though the sounds did not disturb Rollins or arouse him from his dream world, he was conscious of the fact that another period of life's cycle was at hand, and he turned backward to the first *yesterday* of the past, in the world that lies *beyond the veil*.

## CHAPTER II

### THROUGH THE FIRST VEIL

As his concentration centered upon the open, black space above the flames of the fire, his consciousness also entered the vacuum of that space as though it were a world to dwell in and be a part of its limitless possibilities. And, as the strange sensation of entering that miniature world passed over his realization, he felt that he had just passed through a great veil which separated the past from the present. Thus, the turning of a page in the great book brought with it a peculiar lightness of spirit and an awakened state of subconscious reality. Physically, his body was still in the chair of the present, but mentally, self-ly, he was in the *yesterday* that was now being created in the little world beyond the veil.

Slowly he realized the story unfolded around him. What a strange room there was, yet seemingly familiar. The mahogany bed—ah, yes, the little woman, so young and—suffering! There are others there—the man with the little satchel, a nurse, and another woman. There is sobbing, excitement, expectation. What does it mean? Now there come the agonizing cries of the young woman, the pleading for relief, the quiet gentle assurances of the man with the satchel—yes, a physician—tender and considerate. The nurse goes to the door and opens it—and there enters a tall, fine-looking young man, excited, questioning, hurriedly dropping his hat on a table and rushing toward the bedside, but gently stayed by the physician who warns him to move slowly and carefully. Tears come to his eyes—his darling is suffering—the words so softly said are words of tender love. The wife suffers, the pain is agonizing, it lifts her body from the bed in paralyzing spasms. The physician holds his watch and waits. Can't something be done? The question, inaudibly spoken, comes from the mind of the lover, the husband. The nurse says kindly: "Time alone will end it all!" The wife is frantic now, the pain intense, the suffering beyond reason or human endurance; and now she falls back upon her pillow, exhausted. She is quiet. The physician is again concerned and lifts her left hand; he times her pulse. She moves again. She is assisted to her feet; she tries to walk, but she is so weak. She

cries: "Harold, Harold, if I had only known, if I had only known—now I want to die . . . it would be better . . . better than this! Please, Harold, can't you help me? I am so weak, I cannot stand the pain again!"

And then Rollins discovers himself in this scene. He feels that he wants to help this poor woman, and he looks to find where and what *he* is in this incident of some past day, some *yesterday* of his life. But he is *not* there, yet he sees, he hears, he knows. How is this? He is in every part of that room, yet the others do not see him and he is conscious of the fact that his mind, his innerself, his soul—that is it—his *soul*, IS THERE WITHOUT A BODY. What, then, is he? and where is this incident or where *was* it? He lifts his soul-eyes about to see more of his environment. Above him space and—other souls like unto himself, without bodies. Each is busily moving in some direction, but *he* is hovering *here*. Where? *Over* and *in* the little house in the country. It is early morning, the winds are swaying the trees and whistling a continued murmur. The fields are cold and the flowers have been touched by frost; fog veils the distant hills and the rising sun just tints the heavens above and all is quiet and still without, while within the humble home pain and suffering, fear and hope, anxiety and expectation intermingle with intensity, while casting its shadows across the threshold of life stands the big black figure of death.

And Rollins is but a Soul, waiting and watching! Why waiting? Cannot the records of yesterday answer the *whys* and *hows* of this sad scene? And then there comes a light! It forms a doorway and beyond it a channel. The Channel of Life! The words were written in blood over its archway. Through that passageway enters the Light of a little Soul.

The little woman is again stricken. Once more she falls to her knees and cries for relief and drops over exhausted. Gently she is lifted to the bed while the physician and nurse tenderly soothe her hands and brow.

Spasm after spasm, agonizing screams, heart-rending suffering, hour after hour until the sun is high and the day is half spent. Through all this the little Soul waited and watched. knowing and realizing, hoping, and wanting to ease the hours and minutes—but the law! THE LAW MUST BE FULFILLED!

Then the little Soul, bathed in Light, hovered more closely and contacted the Soul of the suffering woman. The Souls communed and their inner minds spoke what words could not express.

The Soul of the woman, the young wife, longed for the home of love, the giving of great happiness to the man she loved, the Harold who had always been a tender lover, a considerate husband. Together they hoped to spend their lives sharing each other's joys and sorrows, and now, perhaps, the end had come. The body was slowly losing its strength, the brain was terrified with the intensity of the suffering of the flesh, the spirit walked in the valley of death while the Soul within longed to soothe the aching heart. Bravely had the little woman looked forward to the hour when greater joy should come into their lives, when their home should be blessed with the cries and laughter of the little child. Thoughtfully had the husband eased her mind and allayed all fears by his assurances that he would be near when the hour came to walk through the land of unknown grief and pain. Yet, now he was helpless to do more than touch her lips with a kiss and smooth back her loosened hair. What if death were to end all their hopes? Even in her minutes of intense suffering she could think of him; and the thoughts of how he would suffer if death should end it all and if the hopes they had should prove futile, made her strive to bear the tests and trials and gave her strength to fortify the weakened constitution for each periodic spell. The hour must surely come when weakness and ease from pain would let her rest and perhaps dream and then—the long cherished sound of a babe's little cry would be joyous music to lull the senses of the new mother into the forgetfulness of motherhood's first long sleep.

And then the little Soul blended into the Soul of the expectant mother and quickened it with its divine life, and the little woman knew that God was near and that the moment was here for the supreme trial of her life.

Communing, consoling, trusting in the faith of each other, knowing full well the infallibility of the law, the weakness of human flesh, the temptations of earthly desires—these two Souls clung intimately throughout the minutes of closing travail. The little Soul looked to the woman in her joyous sorrow to bring to the world the body in all its perfect completeness, which would serve as the material cloak for *its* welcome visit to this loving home. The little woman, on the other hand, clung with outstretched arms to the little Soul and, with the instinct of motherhood already born, tried to warm the little Soul into staying *there* that her child might have soul and life, even if

she should pass on into the mists of the heavens in her supreme sacrifice.

What a relationship! Nowhere in all the wondrous processes of nature, nowhere in all the principles of creation, was the law of God, the marvels of His ways, so beautifully, sacredly and *simply* exemplified.

Then came the crucial moment. Life in the little woman's body seemed to be at its lowest ebb. The suffering was pitiful. Husband, physician, nurse, the woman friend and the little Soul in waiting, all felt the sadness, the terrible sorrow that pervaded the room. Eyes were wet and hearts were heavy as, helplessly, the little woman tried bravely to co-operate with nature and fulfill the decree of God that *in sorrow and in pain shall woman bear the fruit of love!*

Then a gasp! The little woman was lifted high upon the mountain-top adjoining the valley of death, and for one moment she saw a glimpse of the Heaven of God—and even God and the Angels appeared to her and she knew—that—the baby's cry—it lived!—and she was back again in the valley, *asleep*. But where the shadows had been there now sported the little spots of sunbeams that forced their way through the foliage of the green trees, and they danced upon the green lawns of the valley like fairies in the spring-time dance, all jubilant with the joy of living.

The little Soul no longer rested in the aura of the woman's Soul. As the little cherub lips of the precious babe opened for their first breath of vitalizing air, they caused the lungs to exhale the air which held back the Soul, and with an immediate inhalation through the nostrils, another divine decree was fulfilled: *God breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living soul!* The little Soul felt itself irresistibly drawn down toward the infant body, and found itself in the Chamber of the Soul, the Kingdom of the Inner Man.

The body pulsated; it was warm; life was vigorous. The little Soul was enthroned on earth within its own palace, to direct and to suggest, to dictate and to impel, to urge and to tempt; to be the conscience of man, the mind of God, the Master Within the Holy Temple.

And it listened. The mother slept peacefully, the nurse tiptoed gently about her duties, the physician watched carefully after the matters of concern. Nearby, in a little cradle, rocked the infant body while the Soul within observed and rejoiced. At the side of the cradle knelt the husband with tears in his

eyes and a quickening of his spirit, for fatherhood was *new* and *so wonderful*. Carefully he arose, tenderly, humbly, he leaned over the babe and covered it with the little hand-crocheted blanket the little mother had made in her hours of hopeful waiting. Lifting one of the chubby hands he reverently kissed it as the representative of all that was divine, all that was sacred, all that embodied the love he had for the little woman in the corner. Then, placing the little hand down and covering it with a blanket, he whispered softly: "Baby man, *we* will bless you as God has done, and your name will be—William Howard Rollins!"

\* \* \* \*

Startled, Rollins came back to consciousness of self and place. The picture in the fireplace was rapidly fading and Rollins found himself withdrawing from the scene. He was no longer a part of that *yesterday*, the incidents of which had been so strangely enacted for him. He was now the man of *today*, the restless, modern, matter-of-fact *today*. *But he knew*. He had turned back the pages of life's diary to the yesterday of his birth and it was *his soul* that had entered the body of the babe. But—what a price motherhood paid! *His* little mother, who even now slept peacefully upstairs. Could man ever repay the suffering woman bravely bears that the unborn child might have the very essence of her life—even its very existence if necessary? What supreme love! Love divine! The love of God alone equaled it—yes, and it *is* the love of God.

Thus pondered Rollins until, as tears came fast and the heart beat rapidly, the love in his heart for the little woman upstairs was about to take him to her bedside to kneel in reverent adoration, when the door of his study suddenly opened and there stood the little gray-haired woman with pink shawl thrown about her and the sweetest smile on her lips. Surprised at finding him awake, she said in the kindest tones of loving motherliness:

"Come, William, *my little man*, it is very late and I was worried that you might have fallen asleep; *for tomorrow is your birthday* and I was just thinking of the day God gave you to us. Will you come now? I have your bed all prepared for you. Let us go up together. That's a good boy."

And together the strong, tall, masterful man and the little, old, gray, woman, weak and trembling at times, walked side by side, arm in arm, out of the room, lighted now only by the

pale light of the moon, past the window of the hall to the wide stairway. Ascending together, it seemed, as they entered the deeper shadows and disappeared from sight beyond, that angels hovered over them—the little mother and her baby man.

## CHAPTER III

### BEYOND THE FIRST VEIL

Nervously and restlessly, lacking real fatigue, Rollins turned from side to side in his bed. Sleep seemed impossible. His mind was haunted with the story and the picture he had just lived through.

The curtains at the windows simply turned the beams of moonlight into filigree designs upon the darkly carpeted floor, and in the far corner of the room the large, old-fashioned mirror of great size reflected the one shaft of moonlight which hit the white lamp shade upon the small reading table. As Rollins gazed at this reflected sphere of white in the mirror, it seemed to turn into a pale, beautiful face that smiled at him at times, and at other times, wrinkled with pain, became moist with tears of suffering.

Motherhood and the coming of a little soul! These were the entities, the wonderfully ordained things that occupied the threshold of his consciousness to such an extent that dormancy of thought, so necessary to sleep, was impossible. And he had witnessed the birth of his own body and the entrance into it of his own soul! What an important *yesterday* that had been; far more so than any other occupying a place in the last twenty years of his business career. Yet, this fact astounded the matter-of-fact Rollins. It controverted what had been his belief for so many years. There could be nothing more important in his life than these yesterdays and todays of business, each of which was so carefully chronicled in his sacred diaries! To him, the day of birth, like the day of death, had seemed to be just the beginning and the end of things; it was the period of life between these two points that was essential—nothing else.

Tonight, however, as he lay in the increasingly nervous condition, there loomed upon the horizon of his measure of essentials, something more or different from the material affairs of life. The beginning of life was intensely interesting and most certainly important. And, perhaps the end of life was equally interesting and important. Much of life's success and power depended upon the first hour of life, the hour when the

soul entered the infant body. Suppose the soul had failed to enter the little body—then what? Well could he recall the anxiety experienced by the mother lying in travail, fearful lest the soul hovering near might fail to enter and vitalize the little body struggling for birth. All the hopes and aspirations, plans and ideals stored in the mother's breast were dependent upon that one mysterious manifestation of an unknown law—whereby the soul in space would be transferred, transplanted, so to speak, into the body prepared for it; and the body, lifeless except for being infused with the borrowed blood and vitality of the mother, would become transmuted into a perfect creation, a living soul, a vitalized body. What a wonderful transmutation! Could this be the transmutation that the mystics of old symbolized and compared with the alchemical process of infusing a grosser material with a finer or refined spirit until the blending of the two made manifest a third and different thing—the refined, perfected creation, the pure gold of the universe?

Yes, what if the soul had not entered the body? Was not the soul at such time concerned too, lest it might not fulfill the law? In such an event as failure to unite—terrible contemplation!—he, the great Rollins of the business world, would not now be here. "Born lifeless" would have been the curt and sole dictum of the physician—and the soul now within would have returned to—where?

Rollins was wide awake now. Here was a question or two quite as important as any in his business, quite as mysterious in its nature as "Who was the painter?"

He sat upright in his bed. He ran his fingers through his hair and slowly breathed a deep breath—it was almost a sad sigh. He was impressed with the importance of his question and at the same time was stirred by the very intensity of his curiosity. Down stairs the great clock struck one long sonorous chime. Rollins could not tell whether it indicated twelve-thirty, one, or one-thirty in the morning. It was late and he ought to sleep, this he realized; but the question, the all-important question was not answered.

He turned his gaze toward the corner of the room and there the face peered at him again in the mirror. It seemed to be the face of the mother who prayed for the coming of the little soul, and almost unconsciously he stared at it with that same questioning gaze known so well in commercial circles when Rollins was after the concealed truth. "Tell me," he

demanded in stern tones, "tell me, where would that little soul of mine have gone if it had not come into my baby body at birth?"

He waited for an answer, and after a pause that seemed like the stillness of death in the room, there came to his consciousness like the whispering of a voice within his soul: "Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind." The words were those of the Holy Bible, the twelfth chapter of Job. But to Rollins they revealed the Law. "In the presence of the Lord shall all souls tarry and rest and await the coming of their day."

The soul would return to its own realm, to the presence of God, to the world of other souls, and—wait! Rollins, the man of now, would not be here, but the soul would not be lost. There seemed to be consolation in that for Rollins, yet, *why*, he could not have explained then; for until the hour of the penetration of the veil of yesterday, the personality of Rollins rather than the divinity of the inner man, was all-important; and now—why it seemed that Rollins could have felt contented with the knowledge that if the personality of himself had been unborn, the soul that would have been his own would have lived—and waited.

Rollins fell back upon his pillow and closed his eyes in contemplation. There were two of him there in unison—his personal self, Rollins, with the baby body grown into adulthood, and the little soul residing within. The one came from the blood, the thoughts, the hopes, the desires, the love of his mother, the other from—God.

Thus contemplating, Rollins reviewed again the minutes when his little soul, a shapeless, formless, thinking, feeling entity, hovered in space awaiting the moment of passage through the great Channel. Hovering in space? Where? Again the question that came to him then: "How came I there? And *from where*? If I was there within the presence of that little home and that little woman that day, where was I the day before the birth—the *yesterday*? Oh! if I could turn back another page of life's yesterdays and see the day before this day of birth—to see and live again the last day of the *yesterlife*."

\* \* \* \*

Whether Rollins fell asleep with that desire in his mind or not he could not tell when the night had passed and day

had come again. All he knew was that a page had been turned in the diary of life's cycle and that, as he lay there in bed he was startled by the presence of a great light near the ceiling. He gazed. The ceiling seemed to be gone, limitless space was beyond the room, and even the walls of the room now seemed to be blankless, colorless space. Turning from side to side he found upon his body the weight and bulk of the great book whose pages indexed and recorded his life—the book he had seen but a few hours before in his study. Sitting upright again he gazed at its pages and found his hand slowly opening to a page marked, *Yesterday, December 31st*. That was the day before his birthday. It was the last yesterday of his yesterlife.

Looking again toward the space above and around him he found that the great light which had aroused him was, in fact, a mass of smaller, blending lights, each distinctly individual and yet so united that the thousands and thousands within range of his sight were as an undivided mass.

Each light moved, moving in a motion that was rhythmical and harmonious. There! one separated from the mass and moved in a circular motion toward the East and passed out of sight; and toward it followed for a long distance a shaft of light that illumined it, strengthened it on its way. Another moved outward, this time toward the South. It, too, carried with it the projecting light from the mass, as though it required a stream of power to mark its path of motion. Another moved! Many were now moving in different directions, each followed by a scintillating, transparent but luminous, beam.

One was approaching him! As it came nearer to him, it grew larger, more brilliant and more intimate in some peculiar sense. Its light cast a shade of violet white upon his body and seemed to blind his eyes. It came closer and closer; it was just above him now. His body tingled, but the active pulsations of the heart seemed to stop. A peculiar etherialness pervaded his body and it became lighter in weight. Finally his whole consciousness was outside of his body, vibrating with an attunement most difficult to interpret.

The great mass of light before him elongated until it was a large oval-shaped mass. It fairly trembled with vitality of some kind and radiated toward the consciousness of Rollins a peaceful, soothing, familiar warmth.

Then from its very substance a voice spoke. To Rollins the words were those of a gentle masculine nature, but he realized at once that he was not hearing the voice through the

ordinary channel of the ears of his body. In fact, he felt that he had no body. What there was of him, the him that he knew as self, was in front of him, was a part of the great light now—was even the Great Light itself! It was his own soul-voice to which he was listening. It was his soul talking to him. This—this was *his soul, his soul in space*. It was the yesterday of ———.

“In thy Light shall we see Light! In the beginning God said, Let there be Light. The Light is the Life of men. I am the Light of Him who sent me; of the greater Light am I a part. Within me there shineth the Light of divinity. The Soul of man is the Light. Ye are all Children of the Light. Thy Kingdom is the Kingdom of Light. Into darkness comes the Light but the darkness comprehends it not. When the Light goeth it returneth unto Light and leaveth darkness unto itself. Light is Life, Truth, Freedom. Darkness is Death, Sin, Bondage.

“This is my world, the limitless world of God. Of God’s Light am I. Beyond are my kin, all Children of the Light, all of the Fatherhood of God, the Motherhood of Love. In the beginning God said: Let there be Light and there was Light, and the Light was divided into mansions of the Heavens, and there were twelve into which the Children of Light were received that they might be prepared to serve in their time as souls for the races of man on earth. And one by one, each was ordained by the Mind of God to go forth and let the Light shine on earth through the body God made of the dust of the earth. And when the hour came and it was good that a soul should bring the Light to earth, God breathed into the nostrils of man and each man became a living soul on earth. And there was a time and a place for each Light to shine, and a day and an hour for each Light to dispel the darkness and give Life, radiant and abundant. The law is immutable, the ordination infallible in its manifestation.

“And when the Light could no longer shine through the sinful bodies the Light was absorbed into the halo of the Heavens and there communed with its kin in the mansions prepared for them. For man on earth is ever sinful, decreeing unto himself the power of free-doing in violation of the voice within which speaks in Truth; for it is of the Light which is Truth. And man destroys the body that God has made and weakens its structure and defiles the dust of which it is made and it can no longer contain the spirit which animates it. And it succumbs, it falls like the walls of a Temple rotted with the

worms of filth and decay from neglect. And it crumbles into dust again. For the Light leaveth and darkness reigns within. Light is Life and—darkness is Death.

“The Light that returneth seeth all that is and that will be. Of the Mind of God, its Father, it is attuned with all minds. It heareth the secret prayers and cries of the Lights of men, it knoweth the hopes and desires of the souls of earth, it seeth the despairs and the dangers, the temptations and the pitfalls of those whose Lights are denied the power to speak, the right to guide. Unto the Lights in the mansions beyond is given the power to help, the freedom to act, the inspiration to direct. They cast the beams of their Lights into the shadows of the hearts of man and speak with him and strengthen the Light that is held powerless within. This is their work, the work of the Children of Light waiting the hour to come into man with the breath of Life.

“And when the hour comes that the Light within the mother on earth shines forth and an infant body is prepared for the coming of a Soul, the decrees of God send forth *that* Light which is ready for the *time* and the *place*, the *work* and the *service* that shall be the mission of the Light of some mansion. And into the body of the babe goes forth *that* Light to be a Light among men. It takes with it unto the brain of the babe the personality and the mind, the soul and the memory of its former periods of life on earth; and there shines forth through the body of the child and the man the Light that is within. But man hearkens unto the words of the unwise, the thoughts of the temptors, the schemes of the men whose hearts are steeled against the radiations of their Lights within, in preference for the mortal earthly realities of their own physical senses; and some men are therefore lost. But to him who hearkens unto the voice of the Light within and finds pleasure in communion with the Soul within, there, and unto him, comes God and Truth and Life.

“But I must hasten on. I have come unto thee to speak as we would speak unto all men who seek Light, that the mind and the brain may be illumined. My time has come to leave the Kingdom of Light and stand near the little woman who, within a few hours, shall walk through the valley of travail praying unselfishly for the Light to come to the infant body she has nourished unto creation. It is so decreed that that infant body shall be mine, for it will come into places and meet with those who will need my Light; and it will pass from association to

association, city to city, peoples to peoples, wherein and whereby shall be many experiences needful to my evolving personality, and needing the knowledge that I have attained in the past. In the home of that child will I wait. I will give ease to the new mother consistent with the laws in operation. I will stand guard over the threshold of the Channel to Life and be prepared. And, when I enter with the Breath of Life I will look out of the windows of the Soul, the pure eyes of the babe, and I will see—your mother, your father, your home! Come, consciousness and understanding, you must accompany me and pass with me into the being now ready for Life's supreme miracle! Through space we shall pass, followed by the loving beams of radiating Light which unite us with the Greater Light, and tomorrow will be thy birthday on earth."

Slowly the Light passed on into the night's darkness and with it passed from the aura of Rollins that sublime consciousness, that strange ethereal self, that was outside of his body, yet belonged to him. And he fell into oblivion, and slept. Awakened by the usual call of his mother, he was startled into consciousness of self and self's environment. The morning sunlight cast its warm yellow beams across the floor and bespoke of life and the glory of living. Downstairs a door closed. There was the sound of wagon-wheels on the gravel of the path around the house. The world was astir! It was *today* again and the yesterday had passed. The *yesterday* of a yesterlife—the day before his birth, when his own Soul was preparing to pass through the experience he had seen earlier last evening.

Once more he had turned backward a page in the diary of Life's cycle to a yesterday *beyond the veil*.

## CHAPTER IV

## IN THE SHADOWS OF THE PAST

The day being a holiday which even the tireless business man must recognize and keep, Rollins decided to spend *this* New Year's day at home. He had partially planned to slightly deviate from his rule of many years and have dinner at some fashionable down-town restaurant, where he and his mother might enjoy the music and the change of environment more than the food. But, learning that his mother was fully prepared to serve lunch at home, and with the experiences of the night weighing heavily upon his mind, Rollins was quick to take advantage of any logical excuse for *not* dining away from home at this hour of the day, postponing the restaurant dinner to the customary evening hour for holiday dining.

With a light breakfast served in his study, he begged to be excused until afternoon that he might complete his analysis of the diary. He had fallen asleep the night before without finishing what he had started. This was the excuse he gave to his mother—the only person to whom he ever gave any explanation and perhaps the only one to ever ask why he did some of the things that appeared so erratic. But mother seemed to understand, and so mother had some special privileges.

As soon as he could hurriedly digest the important news in the morning *Times*—a practice that nothing could break—and as hurriedly sort a few letters that had come by the only delivery of the day, he pulled down the shades and closed the inner shutters of the two windows of the room and lighted the gas logs again that he might sit once more in the quiet, darkened room and be alone with the dreams, the visions, the *something* that now seemed to be a part of his real being.

If Rollins had been asked just at this time to give as keen an analysis of himself and his mental attitude as he gave of those he scrutinized before employing them or dealing with them in any manner, he would have said that he was a man *possessed of a hallucination tending to become a fixed idea*, and would have added that such a man was useless in business and a nuisance as a friend. He would have said of his mental attitude, generally, that it was being warped by imagination,

swayed by passing emotions, fixed by a tentative goal, obsessed by a single passion, and made impractical by ideals too vague to describe. Secretly, however, he would have reluctantly admitted to himself that he was being mentally, and, somehow *inwardly*, revolutionized. His processes of thinking were being changed by newer premises of reasoning. He was unlearning the old lessons and learning new ones. He was discarding old faiths and beliefs and slowly, analytically, absorbing from some sort of secondary personality new and more worthy, noble and spiritual beliefs. By another, his change in thinking and believing would be called *development of religious mind*. But, with Rollins, religion would have to come from within, for he was not in sympathy with churches and religious ceremonies; and he would hardly believe that a religious *change* could come to any man who did not come under the hypnotic spell of master sermon-preachers. Naturally, Rollins would hesitate long before admitting that through his recent experiences God had spoken to him and he was, in fact, developing that religious mind and attitude which constitutes the real conversion from sinful indifference to sacred appreciation.

Relaxing easily in the big chair, turned purposefully so that he could conveniently gaze into the flames of the logs again, he fell into that same mind of speculation as controlled him the evening before. He had not taken the 1916 diary from his desk, for despite the statement to his mother, it was not his intention to continue its study until later in the day. He wanted to be free, mentally, and not distracted by even the holding of a paper or pencil in his hand. He seemed to feel that the fireplace would again serve him with another manifestation of some weird process of the imagination, or possibly, memory.

Could these things be the result of the imagination? If so, he, his outer objective self, the brain's creative faculties and reasoning abilities, had created, manufactured all he had seen and realized. Some men are born with an unusual ability to create in this manner. The faculty of imagination—granting that it is a distinct process or faculty separated from the ordinary process of inductive, deductive and syllogistical reasoning—simply requires a premise of probability upon which the wildest thoughts of possibilities and impossibilities are placed in some schematic manner suiting the fancy of the dreamer.

Usually, accompanying the foundation stone or premise of such a structure, the builder has in mind the last stone, perhaps the key-stone, that is to be conspicuous in the completed creation.

## CHAPTER VI

### RESURRECTION

As time, place and circumstances dawned upon Rollins' consciousness he found himself staring at the old painting, the mysterious landscape with the incomplete name of *Raymond*. It seemed older now, and it breathed an atmosphere of some incident of life. Did his memory recall the scene? He was not sure. And, as he studied the details of the picture, each growing more vibrant with life until it was as though he were gazing through a window out upon some foreign valley with its purple-tinted hills, his eyes wandered to the corner where the large R of Raymond was plainly visible, even at the distance he was from it and in the soft light of his lamp. Then he was startled. He had seen that R, with its peculiar, bold formation, before. Truly; and he had seen similar pictures. The old room! The finished and unfinished paintings on the walls and standing about. Some were signed—and the name on them was RAYMOND. There was no other name after it, but there had been a mark. *Raymond* and a *symbol*. The symbol was faint on the painting now upon his wall, but its faintness had led him, and others, to believe that it was the beginning of another name and they had sought in vain for that other name.

Jumping from the chair like one suddenly possessed of a key to a great secret, he removed the painting from the wall, and with the aid of a magnifying glass, one that had been so used many times, he studied the signature again. There was just a little space after the *d* of Raymond and then there was a mark, or possibly two marks, that suggested the letter V, the beginning of the letter W, or possibly the upper part of the letter Y, or, perhaps, the last part of the letter N or the center of the letter M. Having always believed that these indistinct marks were the beginning of a second name, he traced out certain other faint brush strokes as being part of the faded name. But now he saw that this was the work of the imagination, for the brush strokes just as easily formed a part of the shrubbery in the foreground as imagination made them a part of the name. No, there was nothing truly definite except the first

name and the two additional marks which now suggested a symbol.

Closing his eyes, he tried to recall the paintings he had seen on the wall of the room behind the old man that had just passed to the beyond in his last strange scene. Distinctly he saw the name of Raymond on a number of them, and just as distinctly a mark of some kind following the name, but the nature of the mark he could not recall; could not clearly visualize. Why had he not paid more attention to these pictures? And, how came those pictures there? Was it an artist's studio he had seen? And was the old man an artist? Was he, this old man, Raymond? Was he? Then——.

One can easily appreciate the nervous tension, the holding of the breath, the rapid heart beat, the joy that overcame his emotions as he realized the fact that he, Rollins, in one incarnation of his Soul, had been *Raymond the artist*, whose one great painting now hung upon the wall, whose identity he and others had sought in vain. That was why Rollins had such a strange liking for nature's scenery, while out-door life otherwise did not appeal to him. That was why he loved landscape paintings. He was carrying over, *from a past life*, from the yesterdays of old, the likes and desires, the ideals and the standards of previous experiences.

Here was a subject for deep study. Could there be such a thing as heredity of *mind* as well as *blood*? Is the man of today the result physically of the blood of his forebears, and, mentally, of his own evolution? Is the body, after all, but a material cloak made of the blending of substances of many bodies, while the mind, the Soul, is of one continuous strain of divine essence?

Hanging the picture on the wall almost unconsciously, lost in the wonder of the abstract problem that now occupied his reasoning, he walked to the secluded bookcases and after unlocking one section, he took from it a book entitled "Heredity and Its Laws." Sitting down again he turned page after page seeking for some chapter heading, some caption, some phrase which might throw light upon this new idea of soul-rebirth. But he was disappointed. He was about to look, almost hopelessly, in the Encyclopedia, when the chimes in the hallway announced that lunch was ready.

It was a holiday and courtesy demanded that this day he should show consideration to his mother and not deprive her of his company all day. Surely after *all this* his mother and he ought to find greater joy in their companionship. So, to the

imagination, fancy or hope, or whether I have been informed in some strange way, of what occurred when I could not have realized it myself.

Forgetting the request that he wished to be alone, and never realizing how peculiar his inquiry might seem to the little gray woman, he rushed from his study, and calling to the sewing-room at the head of the stairway, said:

"Mother, mother, oh, mother! Can you come down to the study for a little while, *now*? There is something I would like to talk about."

There was a tenseness in his voice, an excited vibration, that plainly told of a new-found interest, an important subject of immediate attention. His mother knew well that tenseness and she knew it would brook no delay, and so she came at once. He met her at the door, and fondly, more kindly it seemed than ever, put his strong arm around her waist and together they passed into the study. He placed her in the chair he had just occupied so that she might look right into the dancing flames of the gas logs, while he squatted down easily, like a big boy, on the stool in front of her.

"Mother," he began slowly, "I want to ask a few, eh, rather personal questions. You see, that is you know, it is—it is my birthday today. Yes, it is my forty-second birthday. I was born January 1st, 1875. That's right, isn't it?"

"Why yes, William," she replied, glancing at his big, questioning eyes with a peculiar query forming in her own mind. "But why talk of it now? Why not forget—that is, forget how *old* you are, and think only of the many, many more years that are to come. Why—I believe I have forgotten to congratulate you today! You were so anxious to be alone this morning, I hardly had an opportunity to say even *good morning*. My boy has grown so big these last twenty or thirty years I realize more and more what a great man has come from the *little man* that God once gave me when ——. But come, William, let us talk about the future. Are you ever going to take a nice long vacation? Would it not be wonderful at this time of the year to spend a few weeks at Palm Beach? We, that is, you, certainly need a little change and rest, and sometimes, sometimes I feel so tired, too. You know I am getting old, William, very old and——But there, I did not want to ask favors of you on your birthday. It is you who should ask them *today*."

"That's just it, mother, I am asking a favor now. I want

just a little talk with you about my birthday—my *first* birthday. You say I should not talk about how old I am, and you, with all the pretty color of a young girl in your cheeks, with the twinkle in your eyes of a twenty-year-old sweetheart—you talk of being old. But, to come back to my question—tell me, mother, at what hour was I born if you can remember?—No, I did not mean that—of course you can remember, that is *not* so long ago—and who was there? Where was the room? Or rather, in which room of the house was I born? You know what I mean, tell me all about that day, from the hour of *sunrise* to the hour of—*the hour when father gave me my name!*”

“Your father!” The little woman gave a startled gasp. For a second she looked sharply into the eyes of the big boy—and then into the flames of the fire. A sigh escaped her lips, her hands twitched and slowly she let her right hand slip into the big firm left hand of the man-boy she idolized. Tears came into her eyes and she did not try to stay them.

Rollins looked for a moment and then dropped his eyes to the floor. Motherhood, suffering, the valley of death—and now *recollection!* That was all that passed through his mind, and he was deeply, sympathetically affected. What cruelty to have the sweet little woman live through it again!

After a pause of several minutes, wherein the inner sobs of a bleeding heart gave pulsations even to the vibrations of the room—a pause in which mother and son were again wrapped in the soul-auras of each other through divine attunement, he spoke.

“Pardon me, mother, I did not mean to bring back to your mind the sorrows and pains of that day. I know what it means—that is, I believe I understand what a supreme sacrifice of life’s forces you must have made. Come, tell me only of the happiness of that day!”

“My boy, my boy,” sobbed the little woman, now turning in her chair so that she could look down on the head and shoulders of the man who slowly buried his head in her lap, and finding work for her nervous fingers in the smoothing of his hair. “There was no sorrow that day, all was joy, all was happiness. The next day brought its sadness—and widowhood, for I did not know of his—his going—until the next day—I was too weak to be told at once. But your birthday was the most wonderful day to me, and my tears, boy-man of mine, are tears of joy—just the duplicate of the tears that I shed so silently and quietly as I fell asleep when I heard your

first cries and knew that you *lived*. I was so fearful that you might not be—that you might not live—and that you might not be a big, strong boy to become a big, big man, like—*your* father. But your cries, your cries of life, and the words of the nurse—‘it is a boy’—these gave me unbounded joy. My prayers were answered and oh! how I prayed that day, from *sunrise* to the hour of peace in the arms of sleep—that my baby might live, that *the Soul of God might be in his little body*.

“There is not much to tell of the events of that day, but there is so much to tell in one other regard, that I feel I must tell you now. Long have I tried to say nothing; long have I wanted to keep this little day holy to myself—the day of your birth. But you would know some day—some day when I close my eyes in sleep eternal, and it may be better to speak now. There—keep your head in my lap, my man, and—let me look off into space as I speak. I cannot now *look into your eyes* and tell you—with shame—the story I must tell; but you shall know, and God help me to tell you in some way, in some words, that will beg, as *I* cannot beg, for your forgiveness.

“Your father and I knew each other as playmates at school. We lived in the little town of Alberta, Minnesota, not far from Morris, which was the county seat of Stevens County. Our parents were typical farmers of that day, fair-to-do, and each of us was the only child. We attended school only three days each week, sharing our teacher with the school at Donnelly, many miles north, the other three days. This gave us much opportunity to romp the fields, enter into the games and pastimes of the other children and—become sweethearts. When I became sixteen I went to the town of Morris, which always seemed like going to a big city, and there I attended what would be called a high school today. But your father, a robust boy of eighteen, went to Benson, in Swift County, adjoining, to study law with an uncle who had a large practice there, it also being a county seat. Letters passed between us that grew more fervent, perhaps because of the separation, and it was not long before I was considered as engaged to the young law student. His future seemed bright, as it was considered in those days when good lawyers with connections with established practices were few, and I remember that our school-day friends spoke of the happy lot I was to have. It was not just a school-boy and school-girl love affair, for, you see, we had grown up together and we seemed to be so much a part of each other.

“Then his father died. The boy had to return to the farm

and look after his mother and the big lands left uncared for. Once again, we were together for several weeks, and his possible return to the town of Benson made me unhappy. I had left Morris, having completed a two years' course of study, and he had only reached the point where he could go into court and take care of some minor cases. I was then eighteen and he was twenty. We made our plans—that some day we would be married and live in the house his father had left to him, and his dear, sweet mother should live with us. My father had always wanted to go to Duluth and there associate with a brother who was in the produce business—'food stocks' it was called then—and I knew that it was just little me that kept him from selling the farm and going on East with mother. And so, when he learned that there was a possibility of my marriage with the son of his old neighbor and that we would live in that house, that I would be well cared for, even if the boy never '*mounted to much as a lawyer,*' he began his preparations for selling and moving.

"I remember how strange I felt when men came to estimate the value of the old farm and homestead, and then when buyers came, one by one making their offers. Father would explain to them—sometimes in my hearing—how the 'little gal' was going to be married soon and would live over 'yonder' in the home of old Walt Rollins. It seemed day by day that, as things were packed up and certain things were set aside for me, I was being forced out of my home and literally given away to the boy who had not even then *asked me to marry him*. That we would marry, some day, seemed so well understood between us, we never made any reference to it. But this indefinite understanding on our parts was translated into a very definite matter by our parents and friends.

"My boy, my sweetheart, seemed to realize that it was near time to take the matter into his own hands, and I recall the day that the big *mahogany bed-set* was moved from mother's room over to the Rollins' home to be *our* set; I was embarrassed to find how intimately we were being placed in the arrangement of the new room and with never a word from my boy as to when we were to be married.

"Finally my father and mother moved away—went on their long planned journey—and bid me good-by. I was well established in the Rollins home, had the big room with the mahogany bed-set all to myself, and dear old Mrs. Rollins acting as mother to me.

"My sweetheart was still anxious to return to his study of law, and when he learned that his cousin Harold, who lived in the East somewhere, was to come West, he wrote for him to visit *our* home. Harold, much to my disappointment, proved to be a fine, manly fellow of twenty-two, far from the weak, characterless type we had been led to believe lived in the big Eastern cities. He was well educated, polished, athletic in action, religiously inclined, and always gentlemanly. I did not know it then—for he would have never told—but he took a fancy to me and it was that which made him prolong his visit and never reach farther West as he had planned.

"As soon as Harold had been with us several weeks and indicated that for *some reason* he thought he would stay perhaps a year, my sweetheart decided that, since Harold could look after the farm, he might well return to Benson and continue his studies at law. I protested in a way, for many weeks before he left, but he had been going ahead with some studies at home, preparing for several months to take up a definite work when he reached there. All this time he said nothing more about our marriage and you know, in those days, we were taught that it was not proper for a girl to appear even anxious to marry. Therefore, the anxiety that came to me at times never expressed itself.

"We grew more and more intimate, my sweetheart boy and I, as the days passed. Harold, the cousin, could not help seeing that we were deeply in love. To me, my boy personified all that love meant to a woman. He was an idol, a hero, a master, in my heart and mind. And then came the last week. Often we sat in the twilight, his arms about me, my head resting against his shoulder. He would tell me of his love and how happy we would be in the future. Oh! it was the old sweet story over and over that every girl loves to hear. It was the first week in May, the spring-time sun, the blossoming of the flowers, the green trees and lawns so fresh with new life, the singing of the birds, the exotic perfume, the setting sun, then the moon—all this seemed to add to the joy, and the alluring power that my boy sweetheart held over me.

"And—just the night before he left—thrilled with the warmth of his kisses, saddened by the sorrow of the morrow's separation, overpowered by the protestations of his love and the beauty of the tie that binds, we cast our souls into the flames of sin—and I was his bride. It was not the way I understood, but it made him *mine*, and for one brief hour he was mine—all mine, united

to me by a marriage of all the passions and emotions, all the forces of the universe. I had looked forward to another kind of marriage, but this—this must suffice for the present. He would return soon, and then—then the other marriage. We agreed to keep our secret. He would return in the summer vacation days when even the country courts were closed for a while—then the day of our marriage. Oh! how well I remember those plans, for I lived over them hour after hour during his absence.

“One week later he wrote me that an uncle in Duluth wanted him to go there, as there was an excellent opportunity for his law practice after he should have completed his studies; and he could just as easily complete them there, easier in fact than he could in Benson. I remember feeling that that fact alone atoned for the greater separation that would come between us—he would more quickly and with greater efficiency complete his studies *there*.

“A few days later there came another letter, hurriedly written, saying he was leaving Benson that very hour. He would write to me from Duluth. I should not forget him, and he would not forget me for a single moment; and some day soon he would come back. Come back to old Alberta, the town of his boyhood, *the home of his bride*. And—that was the last that was ever heard of him. Weeks passed and I wrote to him in care of his uncle. His uncle wrote to me that they were still waiting his coming. Harold went to Benson and found that he had gone the day he wrote his last letter to me. There was no trace of him. Telephones and telegraphs were not available in those days as they are now, yet even such things might not have located him. Remember this was in 1874. Many things could have happened to him, the most logical being the one we all agreed upon. He had probably changed cars at some station and listening to the pleadings or the enticing expectations of those moving westward where fortunes were to be made, joined with them. Harold agreed in this, for it was the allure-ment of the *Golden West*, the promise of fortune and the hope of great, quick wealth, that had started him westward.

“The day came when I discovered that not long could I keep from some the knowledge that something more than wifehood was to be my lot. I had never thought of this—sublime innocence and *ignorance* was a girl's charm in those days, *and likewise her ruin in many cases*. Old Mrs. Rollins, heartbroken, but brave and sympathetic, answered my many questions and revealed the law to me. Never did girl need—and have—so wonderful

a friend as that dear, sweet mother. My own parents were never told; and only this kind mother and myself knew, at first. Then Harold knew! I was startled when I discovered that he knew. I realized at once that his many kind attentions, his extreme consideration, had been for the purpose of letting me know, intuitively, that he knew. And, as the days and weeks passed, and the warm months of July and August passed, he and I spent many hours together walking and talking and reading the most sublime and inspiring literature from the pen of man and the mind of God. I knew he loved me—intuition had told me that when it would not tell me what else he knew. And, knowing, he loved me; knowing my sin, my error, my failing, he loved and respected me. I remember that one Sunday, when modesty kept me from going to church with him as I had been doing, he read to me from the Bible, and he read so slowly, so impressively, the verses: 'Learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'

"As Fall came, and then Winter, Harold pleaded with me to marry him. He knew I loved the one who was gone, still idolized him and forgave him for the error of his life; for I wanted to believe that he would have come back to me had not something terrible happened to prevent. But, my child must have a name! Oh, how those words rang in my ears! How often, as a child, I had heard the stinging rebuke of men and women, commenting on the life of some unfortunate child—'it has no name; it was born in shame and sin!' I wanted my child to be great and good and wonderful, like his father. And so it came about that I married Harold.

"We were married just before Christmas and only the pastor of the little church knew our secret and he prayed with us and spoke of the noble love Harold had. As the honor of his act, the sacrifice he was making, dawned on me after that day, I came to love him for the soul that shone through his body. It was like a *light that shines in the valley of shadows*.

"At last came the day—really unexpected—when the greatest lesson of life was to be learned. January 1st, 1875! Early in the morning I called to dear old Mrs. Rollins for advice. She called Harold and he drove through the cold of the bitter morning to get the doctor and a nurse. They returned at nearly six. It was still dark and I was—well, I have forgotten the

suffering now. I only know that as the hours came—and I counted the minutes in suspense—I thought of but one thing: *will my baby live?* I wanted it to be a little man and look like his father. I prayed for this, I cried and sobbed, in fear that it might not be so. Some are born dead. I had been warned not to worry about the absent one, lest it affect the soul of the unborn child; but the fear came now, in the hours, the last hours, of waiting.

“As the sun rose in the sky and penetrated through the fogs and the winter clouds, I felt that the last hours of my life had come. I became exhausted and depressed. I remember lying upon the bed in the corner of the room and looking at the empty cradle near by and wondering if it would ever be otherwise. I closed my eyes and prayed, prayed as Harold had taught me to pray. And as I prayed there seemed to be the voice of an angel whispering comfort and encouragement to me. I keenly felt the very *Soul of God* in my presence and knew then that God was standing guardian over the birth of my little baby. At each cry to heaven for—I knew not what—I felt the magnetic, soothing, inspiring presence of something around me that appeared several times to be bathed in radiant white light. It was as though the Light of Heaven opened at times and shone upon me to strengthen me, to tell me that all would be well, that my baby would be born alive—that *life was there*, waiting, waiting, waiting with me.”

Rollins felt his mother sobbing. Her hands trembled now on his head, her whole body vibrating with the emotion that was overwhelming her. The last words she spoke were said slowly and softly, tears and sobs breaking the even rhythm of her voice. Yet, he would not look up into her eyes—the time had not yet come for that. There was a minute coming, he felt sure, when she would need his help—need what, even now, he was ready to give.

“And then Harold came to me. He had attended to some things at the barn and in the kitchen. He was as anxious over my safety and my desires as though it—was—the—coming—of—*his* child. With a tenderness that only a woman can appreciate at such times, and with a love that was holy and good, abundant and so self-sacrificing, he did all he could. He kissed me, smoothed my disarranged hair, held my hand and told me in every way possible that he was with me in spirit and soul as well as body.

“I do not remember much more. Nervously I awaited the

words of the nurse. 'It is a boy—a fine boy.' Mrs. Rollins, too, was relieved at these words, for she stood by and was so sympathetic. Then I heard Harold talking to the baby in the cradle. They say he kissed the little hands, and then said—oh! I recall easily the words—'Baby man, *we* will bless you as God has done, and your name will be, William Howard Rollins.' That was your father's name, my boy; and Harold meant that we, he and I, would always bless you and reverence you, even though the world might some day learn your mother's shame and dishonor you. And, in giving you your father's name, Harold meant to make me happy—to give back to me again my William—my lost William. And—I have had you, boy-man, ever since, for God was good to me and gave me the soul of my love. Can *you* forgive me, my boy? Can you ever, ever look at me again and say that you understand, you know, you forgive, and that you love your dear old mother?"

Slowly Rollins rose to his feet. His mother was slipping toward the floor in exhaustion. Quickly he took her into his arms and kissed the tear-stained cheeks, then the sobbing lips.

"Mother—I—why I—I am not the one to forgive or refuse to forgive. God made mothers like you, God gave you the Soul you have, and God gave me the Soul I have, and God united us that day in a way that not even you understand. Your love was good, your faith, your trust—all *that* was as pure as snow. There are no crimson spots to wipe away—nothing to forgive. God bless you, and let us forget that any man ever thought your love a sin or your act a shame. You have proven both to have been God's own decree. But, tell me, mother, where did Harold go?"

The mother sat down again, reassured, comforted, but still unable to look at her boy, her man, in the eyes. "That day he was hurt and then died, through a runaway of the horses that had earlier taken him to get the physician. As I said, I never knew until the next day what had happened on the *yesterday*. Sometimes the delaying of sad news of a *yesterday* until tomorrow is a blessing. It was so in my case; I hope it will be so in this case."

"And, mother, just one more point to complete the picture of that memorable day. Was I covered in that cradle with a hand-crocheted blanket that *you* had made?"

Startled, the little trembling woman arose. Glancing at him inquiringly, she said:

"William, have you found *even* the one little secret that

I wanted to keep? Oh, I suppose it was futile, but I have tried all these years to keep that away—and preserve it. Yet, somehow, you must have found it and have discovered it. Yes, during those days of waiting I had made a little blanket, knowing that winter was coming and the little baby would need every bit of warmth possible in the old house. And with each stitch I worked into that blanket thoughts of love for my missing William. Harold knew this too, and never said anything but tender references to how my little baby would be wrapped in thoughts of purest love. I have kept that blanket all these years, have often kissed it and hugged it while the tears came to my eyes. It is all—all that I have saved from those days—those days—of saddest love. And now you know all, William. Take me to my room and let me sleep—the sleep of peace at last; for I need no longer hide my secret in my heart—or hide the blanket of love from your eyes.”

## CHAPTER V

### TRANSITION

Again Rollins returned to his study. It was near noon. In another hour lunch would be served, yet he was sure that he would not eat, could not eat, in the mental attitude he was in just now. Seating himself in the easy chair again, he was ready to speculate once more on the things that were rapidly filling his life with new interest.

"So William Rollins was my father," he mused half aloud, "and Harold Rollins was his cousin, my *stepfather*. My mother married this Harold Rollins, I was born a Rollins—I am a Rollins by blood and by birth. The world can say nothing of that. It is a perfect title, a perfect chain. It is only the material side of the whole affair, after all, and I am more interested in the other. Poor little woman, how she *did* suffer! And she does not know the *facts* as I know them. Facts? Yes, the actual facts, for has not the story of my mother verified the story, the vision, I heard and saw—there—last night? Imagination? A fabric of the mind? Then, I, the self within me, the Soul of that little woman, the experiences of her life, the suffering she bore—the tears she shed—all imagination then, too? Impossible!"

And Rollins was right. The mother's story, even in the minute details that might easily have been forgotten or even misunderstood by the man, were identical. No imagining of the mind could create so correct a reflection of the actual events of the past, and no child's memory could remember the events of its early life, or even the stories that it might have heard. Yet, was *that* impossible? Was the child-memory locked against the storing and preserving of tales it might acquire in babyhood, and release again as a fantasm, in adulthood?

How could he be sure that at no time in his childhood—in years when he was a boy of ten or even fifteen—he had not overheard his mother telling someone about the events of that day? While forgotten now so far as objective recollection was concerned, still the story may have recorded itself for preservation. It may have been entered on—why the pages of the Diary of the Past! THE DIARY! He had forgotten about it. Since

last evening, he had turned backward to two adjoining days of the past in the diary of—memory perhaps? That was a simple answer.

He remembered reading somewhere—or perhaps he had been told by some one—that when a person is in the deeper stages of hypnosis, or a similar subjective condition, susceptible to suggestion—one can be made easily to remember—or recall from the archives of the memory—the events and incidents of certain days of the past. Such experiments often and scientifically made, proved the existence of a perfect storehouse of memories, impressions. Only the necessary condition, the appropriate causation, the unhampered opportunity, were needed to permit this storehouse, this perfect and indelible record of all realizations, to marshal themselves out to the borderline of consciousness and be realized again. Concentration of all the active faculties, incentive, suggestion, relaxation, hypersensitiveness to impressions—these conditions were necessary and—they were controlling Rollins' mind and physical condition at the time he had had his experiences. Scientifically, his experiences were psychological ones, hallucinations, illusions, fantasms of the memory, almost anything. But to Rollins, they were realities that required no actualities to make them of value to him. No, the scientific analysis and explanations of them would not suffice. There was something more than mere *mentalism* in all this.

It has been said that there is a key to the past, a link that unites the present with the past, and that with this key one might easily lift the veil to enter the forbidden chamber and read the records there. Delving, then, into the past would be like delving into the recesses of the memory for a forgotten fact; all one needs is the associated fact, as a key, and with this the forgotten fact is brought to light. If all that came to Rollins in the past twenty-four hours came as an insight into the past, what was the link? What was the key? He asked the questions over and over, and then, mentally analyzed how it all began. At once he thought of the diary, turning the pages of yesterdays in the yesteryears of long ago. The Diary! Again its very sound, its entity as a *thing*, impressed him. It seemed like a thing alive! And did not Casaubon, the great French theologian of the 16th century, make his diary, the famed *Ephemerides*, a thing that lived for centuries?

To the diary must Rollins return. He felt it—it was impelling. Once in his hand, it seemed to vibrate life, animation, exhilaration, *creative powers*. Truly it was *attuned* with the

unknown, yet it was a mere book; and on not one page was there a word which could be interpreted as referring, in the remotest sense, to what had been aroused in the atmosphere of that room.

With the closed book in his hand, merely to satisfy the idea that there was some key required, he leaned back again into relaxation in the chair of contemplation, and waited. But one thought occupied his mind. "I will turn back the pages of the diary of the past, to the yesterday of the yesterlife!" He re-expressed the thought audibly—as a command unto himself.

How many minutes passed while Rollins sat there with his eyes closed is not known, but he was drawn from the silence of his concentration by hearing a peculiar humming sound throughout the room. Opening his eyes he saw nothing at first, but slowly there formed a great violet haze in the corner of his room where but a single chair stood in darkness. Gradually the haze formed itself into a mass near the floor, and then elongated into a form that eventually—perhaps after five minutes of time—formed itself into a couch or couch-bed. It was covered with blankets and sheets and there was an old man lying under the covers with just the head and one arm showing.

More of the picture—for picture it seemed—began to form now, as Rollins stared in deep concentration, even breathing slowly lest the spell be broken. At the side of the couch-bed sat another old man. His hand was holding the hand of the other—the man who was lying there—ill. It was another scene of sorrow. The very atmosphere of the picture breathed again pain and sadness. The arm of the sick man was pale and thin. It hung almost lifeless. The man who sat at the side of the bed was intent in his study of the older man's face. A crucial moment seemed to be at hand.

The violet aura or haze surrounded the whole picture, and divided the picture from the rest of Rollins' study in which it was being enacted. The wall behind the couch seemed to be of a different color and nature than that of the study, and seemed to be farther away.

Rollins watched and waited for developments, but again he experienced the peculiar sensation of his consciousness leaving his body and being over there, somewhere in the picture itself. Now he was completely there. He could feel the difference of the atmosphere; the room he was now in was cold. He seemed to be at the side—no, just over and alongside—of the man on the couch. He was there *unseen*.

With the new position of his consciousness there came a

clearer consciousness of what was transpiring. The old man was ill—was, in fact, *dying*. It was merely a matter of time, perhaps minutes, when he would breathe his last breath. But how? Why? Where? These questions must be answered first. And as each question came to mind there came the answer, not in words, but in that inner understanding that was so strange to him—to his ordinary understanding; but it did not perplex him now.

So far as Rollins could see, there were many odd things in the corner of the room in which the couch and the men were located. But most prominent were the many paintings framed and unframed, and some even unfinished. The room seemed to be empty of those things so familiar when a woman shares the home. The untidiness, the signs of dust and neglect indicated that the impressions that the old man had been ill very long, and *alone*, were correct. The other man was—a physician. He was in a hopeless attitude, but had just administered a potion which would prolong life. The old man was struggling, inwardly; for at times he gasped and after each gasp a little color would come to the cheeks.

Desiring to know more of the story, Rollins, or rather the consciousness of Rollins, leaned over the body of the sick man, and hovered there a few minutes. The old man gasped again, and opening his eyes said falteringly:

"See—see! There—just above me—my Soul. It is leaving me—it wants to go, it is hovering there waiting, waiting, waiting." The words died out in weakness. But they were not the words of an American, they were not English—they were French. But the consciousness of Rollins understood.

As the import of the man's exclamation dawned upon Rollins he was startled. Did it mean that he, Rollins, was witnessing his own Soul in transition from another body? What else could these words mean?

The thought seemed to be the result of the fact, for at once the consciousness of Rollins—the mind, the intellect—answered, "I am that Soul!"

Then came the sensation of attunement, a peculiar connection of some kind, with the man's body. Rollins felt the weakness the old man was feeling. He felt a dry parched mouth, a desire for water, and as he realized this, the old man lifted his hand and said: "Water, water, please—some water." The physician turned and picked up a wooden cup and lifted the old man partially upright while he put the cup to his lips. Rollins

could feel the cooling drink go down his throat. Then, the ease of temperature manifested itself and Rollins noticed for the first time that he was warm. The old man closed his eyes and sank into relaxation and as he did so, the consciousness of Rollins seemed to become lighter and to almost float in space above the couch.

Suddenly the cry came again for more water. This time the physician put some powder into the water and gave it to the man to drink. Immediately Rollins tasted the element in the water, but it was cooling and soothing.

In a moment or two a peculiar sensation came over the consciousness of both, the old man and Rollins. The old man began to quiver and cried: "No, no more, I want to go on, I do not want to stay. Why did you give me that again? I was eased, I saw that I was going and was happy." To Rollins the effect of the powder was that of making his consciousness heavy, thickening it, it seemed, and drawing it down, and down, and down into the body of the old man. It pulled, it strained, it stressed.

The consciousness did not want to go, the body of the man did not want to hold it—but something, fiery, strong, gross, *unnatural*, was pulling the two together. It was uncomfortable. The old man wept in pain. The physician held his hand and watched. The consciousness of Rollins could stand the situation no longer. It would free itself from this bondage. It grew stronger, it grew lighter, it rose slightly from its close position to the body. Its sense became more keen, it could feel its own entity. It seemed to be a living personality now, almost independent of the body there—but connected by a mere haze—a violet aura. Then it spoke, the voice coming from the very density of the consciousness:

"I will be free! I am the Master of my destiny while here, and the decree shall be fulfilled and the hand of man shall not alter or modify that which is written in the Great Book. It is my time to pass on to the Kingdom of Light and be illumined by the Greater Light. Long has this body served me well for the work I came to do—the work decreed for me when into it I came. But now that body can no longer stand the power of the Light within, it can no longer serve without hindrance, work without breaking down, assist with efficiency, the mission of my time. Your poisons and your drugs are of the stuff the body is made of—the dust of the ground; and they cannot do more than strangle the mind, paralyze the senses and

hold fast to that which is better gone. Peace should come to the old body there which knows only what I know, which suffers only what I suffer, which rejoices when I rejoice. For, it has no consciousness of its own. Its mind is my mind, its Light is my Light, its Life is my life. It is nothing of itself. It wants nothing, can have nothing. Away with it, for I want it not, and I AM ALL THERE IS TO MAN, and I *have life eternal!*"

From the old man there came a gasp—a sudden jerking of the body, a tenseness that made the body rigid, and then a slow relaxation which left the body limp. And, as the relaxation came, there was a slow exhalation of all the air in the cells of the lungs—and the Soul that hovered above, united to the body by only the aura, slowly floated off into space and illumined the darkened walls as it passed by. Reaching the upper part of the room the soul-consciousness spoke gently and sweetly: "Peace, peace unto all, for I am risen! From the tomb I have come, resurrected. Long did I suffer and try to make my escape that I might be free to give greater Light unto the world, but man in his ignorance and vanity held me fast, crucified upon the Cross of false realities. Man's body is the Cross upon which all Souls are crucified because man makes it so. *On that cross have I been like a rose held fast by the entwining stems and the thorns.* The tears were the dew drops that came from the petals and left the perfume of immortality to radiate into the aura of the Soul. But I am free, free to return to the Kingdom of Light, where Souls unite in sacred communion and abide in the mansions of the Mind of God."

As the violet haze passed on and faded from view, the couch and the man sank into darkness as behind a veil, and Rollins, the man, came slowly back to self-consciousness again. Rubbing his eyes, tired from the long strain of concentration, he straightened his tall body, stretched out his arms horizontally at each side to take a deep breath, when again the words rang in his ears: "On that cross have I been like a rose." Quickly he dropped his arms as he realized that his posture was that of a cross—THE CROSS. He dropped back into his chair, and for the first time since childhood this great, strong man wept. He had witnessed the passing of his Soul from the body in its previous life—the yesterlife of another century.

And the builder builds to suit the needs lying between the foundation and the very pinnacle of the structure. With the goal clearly defined in mind, it is possible to select from the memory of facts and ideas just such elements of fabrication as are needed to reach such a goal. This applies to the average imagery of man's mind.

But such an explanation of the process of imagination, so-called, eliminates all appreciation of the following facts: First, all the deductive and inductive reasoning of man's brain must result from a careful analysis of those experiences which he has consciously realized through participation in them, through reading of them or through hearing or seeing them. Secondly, facts drawn from the memory of man must be facts or ideas which entered the memory during a period of realization of them or otherwise.

How, then, thought Rollins, can all that has occurred since last evening be attributed to my *imagination*? There is, truly enough, but *one limitation* to the activities and products of imagination; all must be centered around and within the limits of my knowledge. I cannot imagine a fact that I do not otherwise know or that is not a part of or related to some other fact or facts which I know. Nor, in the process of adding to my structure of imagination, can I take from the memory such elements as are not there. Each point, each element, each feature, in even the wildest and most weird fabrication of imagination, must be the result of deductive or inductive reasoning, based on a premise within my conscious knowledge.

Whence came, then, the facts contained in what I have seen and experienced within the past twenty-four hours? Whether the *facts* of my experiences last night are actualities of life or not, they are, nevertheless, facts in my mind now—and where did they come from? I never knew before, never heard or read before, that the soul of the unborn child hovered near the expectant mother and passed into the body of the child with its first breath. Not only did I never hear, nor read, nor understand that before, but it is contrary to what I have hitherto believed, contrary to what I should have argued, contrary to what I have been taught, and what I know so many believe and teach. Twenty-four hours ago, I should have said emphatically and without tolerance for debate, that the Soul of an unborn child enters its body some time prior to its birth—perhaps months before. Our civil, criminal and moral laws are based upon that belief. Great fortunes have been granted

to heirs on the basis of that principle. Learned judges, eminent jurists, undoubted authorities have argued in courts, claiming that after a certain period of gestation, the unborn child has a Soul, and is therefore an entity, a personality, separate and distinct from the mother, and could, therefore, be a potential heir to a fortune, even before birth. Men have gone to the gallows in the past for having destroyed or caused to be destroyed the Soul, or rather its functioning, by the destruction of the body of an *unborn* child. Yet, from what I have learned, and what I must confess seems to be the most logical and correct statement of the matter, the unborn child up to the moment of the first breath of life, is living on the vitality, the soul-essence of the "borrowed blood" of the mother, as the words of the Soul-voice explained to me. The severance of the umbilical cord is the establishment of the child's independent existence and the taking of the first breath of life is the establishment of the independent and separate vitalizing of its blood; and this must necessarily precede the severance of the two bodies. It is most logical, reasonable, and natural from a scientific point of view. It explains the statement made by the Soul-voice and which I have often read in the Bible without realizing its import: *God breathed into man the breath of life and man became a living soul.*

But, how could such a startling, revolutionary, illuminating fact come to my brain, my memory or my consciousness through imagination? If but one illuminating fact can thus come through imagination, then a complete education, a veritable encyclopedia of facts, a mine of exact knowledge, might be possessed by any one through simply day-dreaming and imagining.

And, there was the scene of my birth! The little room, the suffering woman, the physician, the nurse, the kind and gentle husband, the cradle, the voice of my father saying: "Baby man, *we* will bless you as God has done, and your name will be—William Howard Rollins!" I do not recall, in fact, I am sure of this, quite positive, that my mother has never told me a word about that day, for it is a sad event in her life; for on that day she lost the man who loved her, and I lost the only person whose absence has been my one great regret. How could such facts as constitute the picture of that room and the incidents of that day, come from either imagination or my memory, if I had never known them? But—were they facts in actuality? Ah! here was a test. Mother—she could verify them! She alone could prove, now, whether I have created something from

eye could cast upon the retina for absorption by the nerves for translation into consciousness. What difference, then, did it make whether he *saw* objectively, or—how?

The mist became a light purple at its outer edge and a neutral gray in the center. The center then darkened until various colors spotting the space like first blocking-in of colors on a canvas. Gradually they took form and some blended until the whole made a picture. As it developed its life-like atmospheric qualities, and became alive with feeling, the consciousness of Rollins passed from his body like a wraith toward the scene, stretching along with it, from his body to the scene itself, a misty light which radiated a *coolness* around him. Then—perhaps after a minute or two—Rollins saw, not from where his body was, but from the scene. His senses were with his consciousness, not with his body. From the scene in which he was now a part, he looked back at his body on the chair, and that view impressed him as being but a picture whereas his new environment in the strange scene was real, actual. It was tempting to analyze such a condition, yet something urged him to think no more of it, to center his thoughts on where he was and what he was doing there.

He looked about him. He was in a large room, the room that had begun to form as a misty picture and became life-like. It was stranger than any room he had ever been in before. The ceiling, crossed at various parts with heavy wooden beams, was very high above the floor, perhaps sixty feet. The walls were of stone—large stones evenly placed but not tightly united by cement. The three windows, set deeply in the thick walls, were arched at the top and screened with rough wiring, but contained bars instead of glass panes. Opposite the three windows there was an open fireplace the recess of which was unusually deep and wide. In it large logs were burning and before it a number of odd irons and racks were set. In the center of the room was a carved table, the workmanship suggesting great labor and skill, but the wood was unstained and unvarnished. It was fully twenty feet long and four feet wide. Chairs, with high backs, carved and finished much like the table, were in various parts of the room, and at one end a large combination closet and table upon which sat many large pieces of beautiful silver. In the closet could be seen silver and gold dishes and some few pieces of porcelain and china.

There was a stately doorway at the opposite end of the room, the frame work of which was massive and wonderfully

carved, and in the center of its top there was a shield in which were carved two heraldic devices. The doorway suggested an entrance to a cathedral, and the two doors which hung therein were of iron, partially rusted and ornamented. They were closed and therefore what room was beyond, Rollins could not see.

The most interesting features of the room were the many pieces of armor, shields and spears, and the magnificent oriental rug that covered nearly the whole rough floor. To judge from the marks and symbols on the various shields, many different persons or families were represented by them, and while most of the articles of battle were strange and old, they showed signs of having been used.

The room was comfortably warm and very quiet. Nothing but the occasional crackling of the burning logs disturbed the stillness that was like the stillness of a tomb. Rollins decided to investigate and moved toward the great door. His feet seemed heavy and unnatural, though the movement of his body was light and almost without weight. He glanced at his feet. They were covered with heavy leather boots with metal pieces over the toes. When the heels touched upon the uncovered portion of the rough stone floor, they made a noise that suggested metal on the heels. He looked at his costume. It was like those he had seen worn on the stage in Shakespearean plays. Knee breeches of a dark, heavy material, a tight fitting coat of a lighter material, a soft collarless shirt, light blue in color, and a heavy plush or velour band of dark red about his abdomen. Surprised at his appearance, he could not reason about it, for the mind seemed to refuse to reason, to argue that it was useless and of no immediate need.

At the side of the door there hung a heavy silken rope. Its position and nature suggested its use and Rollins, with the most natural air, stepped forward and pulled it twice. He waited. He heard a metallic clanging at the door and slowly the two parts of the door separated and there stood before him, against the dark background of an unlighted hallway, a tall heavily built man in a robe of gray tied about the waist with a gray cord. He bowed very courteously and said in a soft voice and with pure French which Rollins' mind easily and immediately interpreted into English:

"Your *wish*, my lord? And, . . . . pardon the privilege that bespeaks my lord's generosity . . . . I hope . . . . I pray . . . . that all your wishes may be granted . . . . this day."

The feeling of surprise that came to Rollins was not nearly

A newspaper is a press-agent of business and a tattle-teller of personal things. Bah! you know how many of my associates, and even myself, have looked upon life and all there is to it. You seem surprised at what I say, and yet, mother, you must have felt many times that that was how I looked upon all things. But I realize now that there is something even more interesting than the problems of production and selling, manufacturing and marketing, cost and profit, profit and loss. Maybe I have crossed the bridge between the follies of youth and the imbecilities of old age; perhaps I am on the brink of that last span of life. But this I know, I am more enthusiastic about the past and the future today than I have ever been.

"Men are always so self-centered. The average business man cares more about his personal ego, the self within and around him, than about the rest of the world. Yet, I see now, where I and others have been cheating ourselves in ignoring some of the facts of life in our desire to put the sun of the universe in our own individual solar plexuses.

"The average business man seeks power—dominating, increasing, unflinching power. But he has overlooked the one great source of power—knowledge of the real self and its possibilities. Every great or prominent man in the world today boasts of his ancestry, is proud of the forebears who achieved, and he looks to their strength to help him dominate the world today. But he misses the greatest prop, the strongest foundation, in overlooking the ancestry of the mind that rules him—the mind which is his own and yet not his own. Every mighty factor in the big-business world today seeks to be well informed regarding every law of city, county, state and land that he may take advantage of any potent power therein. He seeks, through his hired advisors, to utilize every power that the courts and constitutions of business give him. He engages experts to keep him posted on the advances of scientific achievement, that he may utilize the power or privileges which science reveals. He looks for opportunities everywhere to make himself great, mighty, controlling, dominating, feared and—wealthy. But he overlooks the laws of nature and the wonderful possibilities of power that must be hidden in her processes and in her ways. I see the great mistake now. I am going to change my life—and before it is too late, I am going to make myself mighty with some knowledge that courts of law in man's land, bankruptcy proceedings, business failures and market quotations cannot take

from me. That's my determination, and so now I want to hear more about the reincarnation of the blood."

"I am afraid," she began timidly, "that you are not using a term that science would accept, for science really has taken up this subject in a way that will be hard for me to explain. But the term *reincarnation* would be rejected by science. In its place the term *continuity of the germplasm* should be substituted.

"You see, William, for years many forms of insanity, such as *dementia praecox*, for instance, have been considered as traceable to hereditary traits or taints. Then, again, many mental habits, physical habits and general tendencies are also traced to the result of heredity and they are called *inherited characteristics*. Up to a few years ago, the principles of heredity were considered as theoretical, and science smiled at many of them. Now, recent discoveries or rather observations, reveal that the principles so long advanced are true and other principles not even suspected are also true.

"Man as a specie of animal life is just the result of inheritance. Every trait of character, of mind and body, like the specie of his physical being, come to him as an inheritance or because of his environment and education. The doctrine that 'as man thinketh so is he' applies only to those few traits classified as *acquired characteristics*; otherwise man is what his forbears have made him through their thinking, their living, their environment and their education. Every man is the sum total of his direct line of parentage and is himself adding to that sum for the next generation.

"It was believed at one time that the germplasm of both male and female parents were creations of the organism of the individual parent, and that each germplasm contained only the characteristics of the parent. Now it is known that the germplasm that enters into the formation of an embryo contains not only the characteristics of the parent, but also of the grandparents for many, many generations."

"Why, mother, do you mean to say that the germplasm entering into each embryo was not a distinct and individualistic creation in the body of the parent? In other words, is the germplasm a continuous element or essence never losing its entity and individualistic nature from generation to generation?"

"Precisely, William. That is what is termed the *continuity of the germplasm*. This germplasm contains the elements of character and specie. It passes from generation to generation and gives from itself the necessary elements to reproduce its

nature and characteristics but is never wholly lost in the process. Each generation of specie adds to it of its *acquired characteristics*, so that from generation to generation, it is always the *sum* of all that has passed before it. All this was made so plain and clear with diagrams and illustrations the other evening—Thursday evening—at the monthly meeting of the Civic Hygiene Board. The professor has been giving us a series of talks on the subject of heredity and we understand now the meaning of the admonition ‘unto the fourth and fifth generations’, and so on.

“You see, each cell of living matter utilized in the process of fertilization and development into the embryo first passes through a series of divisions so that the final cell of the female, called the ovum, and the final cell of the male, called the spermatozoon, is composed of certain portions of the original germplasm. In the nucleus of the cell there are the hereditary elements called Chromosomes and these according to a definite law are numbered in each cell for specie, nature and condition. The remainder of the cell has its bearing upon the character of the embryo, of course, but it has to do more with the modifications that are to be made by each generation and are accumulated by each and passed along.”

“Does that mean?” he inquired after some thought, “that in my body, in my blood, tissue and bones, there is some of the identical elements that composed the blood, tissue and bones of my ancestors, my remotest ancestors?”

“Yes, in a direct line. And all your brothers, all your cousins, every one in this generation of your family, would have the same elements plus the modification resulting from marriage in the previous generation. Within your body, William, in the cells that will reproduce themselves and fertilize the ovum, there is chromatin substance, which becomes the essential Chromosomes, and this chromatin within the cells of your body is some of the identical chromatin that existed in the cells of your most remote grandfather and grandmother.”

“Then that means that instead of new Chromosomes being created by each generation, the Chromosomes simply duplicate themselves and continue to divide and divide until in the last generation, perhaps after a hundred generations, there is still some of the same Chromosomes?”

“Precisely. Yet, in dividing, these Chromosomes do not weaken in characteristics or essential nature. In each generation they divide many times and each divided segment grows to full size again, retaining its precise nature, ready to fertilize

an ovum and within that ovum reproduce its nature again. This is what science has recently discovered and proven to be true. Remember, William, these Chromosomes of the cells, microscopically small as they are, contain the elements of every other cell that form the many kinds of cells in a matured body, plus characteristics of specie, plus characteristics of appearance, even family resemblance, plus nature, plus mind, plus tendencies, plus everything that makes personality and individuality. That which makes you distinctly different from all other men, as well as that which makes you precisely like every other man, and that which makes you a child of a certain line of ancestry—all this is contained in the Chromosomes of every one of the hundreds of cells that mature in the body for the purpose of reproduction."

"That is astounding, Mother! Why, then, the blood in my body, the bones, the tissues and membranes of every organ and muscle and vessel, the cells of the hair, of the brain—all within and of me, is that of my foreparents, *reborn*. I am not I, but all of my forefathers and foremothers united. They did not die, for, I am all of them reborn! What they cast off were dying cells while other cells of their bodies were perpetuated and lived and now are in me!"

"But that is merely an exaggerated and bombastic way to look at it. But you can safely say that you *are* what they *were*, plus what you have added by education and environment."

"And," he said rather slowly, "if all that is true—and I can not doubt it if science has found the law—I am—well, with a reincarnated soul . . . . a sort of dual person, after all, for, the flesh and bones and blood of my body are of the family of Rollins . . . . but the Soul and mind within me are . . . . that of Raymond . . . . and possibly others."

"Why, what do you mean?" the mother asked, surprised.

"I cannot fully explain, not at this time. I must have a little more time to work it out, but a great light is dawning upon me and I think I see the scheme of the universe revealing itself to me as few have ever dreamed of it. I must learn more . . . . but how?"

"I cannot help you in your strange thinking, William. I am quite satisfied with what the Professor told us. We are nothing more or less than what our foreparents made us—plus environment and education."

"No, no, mother. You are wrong. All that you have said may be true, and I believe every word of it. It cannot be otherwise. I see that plainly. But, all you have referred to,

all that science has discovered, relates to the physical and worldly man, the material and brain part of man. There is—the Soul—the memory—the inner personality. That cannot be transmitted by chemical or physical substance, and that is what I am interested in now. Pardon me, mother. I must return to my study. I must finish my little researches today. Tomorrow the business world begins again and I am going to enter it with a different spirit. This earth—this world is now *my home*, and men and women are now my kin—my brethren. I will deal with them as such—even to the most humble in my employ. I have a work to do—a message to bring to the cold world of business. Perhaps I have found my *mission*, the Light that must shine through me.”

And off he went to his study, moved inwardly by the gradual realization of the touch of divine inspiration. He was no longer William Howard Rollins, the business man, but a Light on earth, an incarnated Soul, an earthly segment of the Divine with an earthly mission. His mother watched him leave her presence in thought and knew that it was a changed man who dwelt in her house; and somehow, strange though it seemed, she looked upon his moving figure with reverence as though through the room and out into the halls there moved silently the figure of the Master Jesus who had come to break bread with her and go on to the work that must be done.

God's presence was there; she felt it, knew it. But how? How came this through a man who had never before indicated even the slightest interest in Church, the Bible, or God? A miracle had been wrought since yesterday. Today was the anniversary of his birth; it was more than this—it was the day of his rebirth, she thought. It was the day of awakening, the holy day of illumination—*resurrection*.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE THRESHOLD

Returning to his study, Rollins put away the book on Heredity with a smile. He had saved it as being the last word on that subject, but, evidently, it had become antiquated by the recent discoveries in that field; and he pondered over the rapid changes that were being made in scientific principles and more especially in the knowledge of man and nature.

"Truly, he said to himself, 'little that one knows is of a nature to remain permanently. Change, change, change! That is all there is, even to knowledge. The great Greek philosopher who said that 'matter is always *becoming*' was certainly right and it applies to our knowledge as well. Matter is always changing, becoming something and never really is something for any length of time. Knowledge is also becoming more and more accurate, more nearly true, and the facts or theories of yesterday may be fallacies or superstitions tomorrow."

The word *yesterday* brought to mind the Diary. He had not completed his analysis of it, and tomorrow business began again for the new fiscal year. He must complete his review of the *yesterdays* in that book.

Closing the bookcase, he took his Diary from the desk again, seated himself in an easy chair, adjusted the reading light and with a sigh, leaned back comfortably to think. That book! The Diary! Was it alive? Did it have between its pages people, places, conditions, all animated with a vibrating life? Could he not feel a vibrant essence fairly pushing itself through the covers and from the edges of the leaves? His arm trembled from the pulsations it gave to his hand. More than a year of life and action was represented in that book's notations. A life time—a generation, many generations, all time past, a thousand years, perhaps a million of yesterdays, were recorded there. It was not a book, it was a *key* to the past—the key that unlocked the chambers of the past.

Again his mind reverted to the scenes he had witnessed and he wished they would come again, or others—more *yesterdays*. The wish! It started a stream of tingling throughout his body. He closed his eyes, he relaxed. He was entranced. The wish!

It was a command! It was as though a great gong had sounded. He could *feel* and *hear* the vibrations of the gong's note in the air. Was this what occurred when Aladdin rubbed the lamp and wished? Was there something psychological in a sincere wish expressed or realized at the right moment? He was lost in the mystery of this sudden experience.

Psychology has often said, as an axiom, that *suggestion* results in the realization of anticipation in those cases where the suggestion is given by oneself—or given as auto-suggestion. In other words, when the process or formula of auto-suggestion is indulged in, it presupposes on the part of the person certain *anticipation* of results. Psychology claims that such anticipation is necessary, is a prerequisite to realization. That fact is, however, that if there was no anticipation there would be no suggestion given. It is the hope, the faith, the belief, that there will be a result that induces, encourages, the person to give the mind a suggestion. Without such faith, hope or belief, no matter how mild or weak it may be, no one would purposely give an auto-suggestion. Therefore, not only must anticipation precede the realization but it must precede the suggestion. That *unconscious* suggestions—auto-suggestions even—do produce results in the absence of any anticipations, does not affect the law or principle. In those cases where it has been demonstrated that an unconscious suggestion given to oneself has resulted in keen realization, it has been found, after careful analysis, that preceding the suggestion there was *fear of realization* or its antithesis. In substance then, the same condition existed.

The psychology of prayer reveals that certain psychological or psychomental conditions are existing and certain laws operating. Prayer is not, therefore, the shallow tenet of religion, but the concrete manifestation of a subconscious process of mind. In every sincere wish, in every lingering hope, in every sincere desire, in every conscious longing, there is the essence of prayer. Prayer is but the deliberate expression of an inner desire—a hope of mind. It is deified when it is expressed to God, and this adds to the faith, the hope, the belief in its potency. For, who would pray to God did he not first believe that God would hear and answer?

And the realizations to such prayers. What of them? Are they even more than realities of the mind, a condition of the Soul? We pray for the speedy recovery of a sick one. Health comes; we are made happy at the change. We recall our prayers, our petitions to God. Our faith makes us believe that

the change that has come is a direct result of our prayers. God has wrought another miracle. With reverence and humility we gladly credit God with direct intervention. In that belief, in that faith, in that purely mental realization, we find happiness, joy and firmer trust in the efficacy of prayer. When the prayer brings not the desired result, if death comes to the sick one, we ease our minds, we excuse the disappointment, with the expression of faith in the better judgment of God. Our belief in the value of prayer is not lessened. In either case, the results of prayer remain, to each individual, a psychopathic, mental, condition.

Naturally, metaphysics and mysticism ascribe other powers to prayer. It teaches us that in prayer to God the essential element is a sincere desire, a cherished hope, a clean thought, with all the elements of goodness and, usually, unselfishness; and that in the process of prayer, in the very attitude of prayer, we attune ourselves, our minds with the Infinite, the Cosmic, the Divine Mind that pervades all things and is everywhere. That in mental or audible prayer, we formulate the desire in a definite phrase, we visualize the anticipated results and then, release that desire into the Cosmic where it naturally vibrates with the constructive forces, the love and goodness of Divine plans; and the thought, with its mystic potency, brings results. This does not eliminate the intervention of God, but it reduces it from direct to indirect, from personal to impersonal, from specific to general. Such philosophy is the basis of much wonderful teaching and it reveals laws and principles but little realized by man.

But to Rollins there was no mistaking the fact that the desire, almost definitely and audibly expressed, produced an immediate effect. The desire to have the Diary reveal another yesterday! Was there not reason for anticipation? Was there not warrant for faith in the power of that book to open the doorway to the past and show there a scene of activity?

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Minutes or hours may have passed, while Rollins held the Diary in his hand. He did not know, he was not conscious of time. But he watched with concentrated interest the slow development of a great haze of light that gathered in the corner of his room again. He did not know whether his eyes were open or closed—he would not even try to discover. What he saw was as real to his senses as anything that the objective

dining room Rollins wended his way, determined to submit to her his newest problem.

After lunch had been partially served the discussion began. It would help to make their time of sitting together that much longer.

"Little mother, did you ever read or hear anything about the rebirth or shall I say, the reincarnation, of souls?" he began.

"Not a great deal, William!" she replied, plainly surprised at the question and more surprised at the trend of his thoughts. "You know the Bible speaks of several instances where the prophets were, seemingly, wise men who came back to earth to live again. But I presume that you refer to the teachings of some new school of philosophy. I have not studied them nor even read more than that there is some theory of reincarnation, as they call it."

"But, mother, from what you have read or heard, can you tell me *what* it is that reincarnates or is reborn? I realize that it is not the body, nor the blood, nor . . . "

"But you are mistaken, William, right at the start, or rather, information which you have in that regard is erroneous. From the little that I have heard, I believe it is claimed, and quite logically, that the Soul, being divine and immortal, is the part of man which is reborn in man. Upon this is the doctrine of reincarnation based. Of its principles I can say but little, but I stopped you in your statement because you were touching upon a subject in which I have interested myself very considerably. You remember giving me a book on heredity to read? In it I found many interesting facts regarding eugenics and child-hygiene. That, you know, has always interested me, and I believe you can now associate my interest in that subject with—*your own birth*. I remember reading one time a book called 'Being Well Born.' It opened again the sad event of your birth and the chapters of my life in the past. But I found much satisfaction in some of the principles set forth and from that time on, I devoted my study hours to that subject and gave my spare time to helping the Civic Hygiene Board of this city. Do you know; William, that it has been found that the blood of one's body is essentially reincarnated from generation to generation, as is claimed for the Soul? It was your statement that it is not the body, nor the blood, that reincarnates which made me interrupt you. I am quite sure you were in error."

"This is intensely interesting, and I want to hear more

about it. In fact, mother, it seems to me, I am in a new world these last twenty-four hours. How greatly I have neglected my reading, and how I have locked myself up in the business world and ignored the greater world of science, or at least, philosophy; for I do not suppose that the principles you are speaking of, or those which interest me in the Soul, are even honored by any attention on the part of cold science. You see, a business man gets into the habit of thinking the whole world consists of business. Every man and woman one meets must be in some business or else they belong to the other class—consumers, customers, or clients. A man is always a potential power in dollars and cents, or else he is nothing. A woman is always—well a mother, or a wife, or a sweetheart, or a plaything, with no place in *big* business and incompetent to assume such a place. The face of the earth is covered with either oil wells, mineral mines, coal mines and timber, railroads or steamship lines. The sun shines to help salesmen make more calls, the rain falls to help the crops and prevent market losses. A day consists of one-sixth of a business week and time is governed by time-clocks and production-costs and payrolls. Sunday is a day for going over books and making a few personal calls at homes when it is difficult to meet men at business. Plays, theaters and places of amusement are for salesmen to take their prospective customers that they may bribe orders and win favors—and they help keep money in circulation. Churches are to ease the dissatisfaction of the laboring classes, make them feel joyous with spiritual things when they have nothing of the material world, and promise them everything in the future if they remain good with nothing here. Marriage is sentimental foolishness with the young, and a *business deal*, a financial alliance, with the old. Children are elements of a big field of business—hats, shoes, clothes, books, toys and insurance policies. Life is a bridge of possibilities between the follies of youth and the imbecilities of old age. Love is a condition of the mind that helps business—watches, rings, more jewelry, clothes, fine stationery, books, candy and hundreds of other things which would not be made or sold otherwise. Death is a cheater or an easy way out, according to one's predicament at the time. Home is a business asset, counting more in a business man's rating on the market than in any other way. Mothers are a necessity and a dependable help in time of personal emergency. The past belongs to the failures in life, the present belongs to the successes and the future belongs to the dreamers.

so great as must have been the surprise in the mind of the servant at his own boldness in thus speaking; for Rollins could not feel otherwise than that this strange incident was truly a part of his life—new and yet familiar—unexpected and yet anticipated. Many questions arose in the mind of Rollins, but something again told him that it was unnecessary, that, in fact, his questions would be illogical and he could easily answer them by *thinking*.

But—he had called the servant—he must say something. Could he answer in French? He dared not try. He was thinking in English, or rather in good American. Perhaps he could simply gesticulate. What idea then should he express? Ah! He would ask for his hat, by simply making . . . .

“I will have my hat!” The words came forth with a vim, before Rollins could control his tongue. His mind had formulated the idea and it expressed itself in words immediately. They were in French, too; and although Rollins knew but the rudiments of the language, he was not surprised—could not be surprised—at his ability to speak French.

The servant seemed to understand, but replied with a quizzical tone: “Oc—le *causia*?”

Rollins nodded consent before he could realize what the question meant. Then the words translated themselves. “Yes—the *causia*?” What was a *causia*? He had nodded approval and . . . . why it was a style of hat, a particular design. The answer came inwardly, instantly. And then—why *oc* for yes? He had expected *oui*—but *oui* was modern French, the French Rollins had learned at College, and *oc* was . . . . the language of . . . . the old Provinces. Was he now in Languedoc, the ancient Province of the south of France? Again the answer came and—it seemed so natural!

The servant soon returned bearing a large felt hat that had a very high crown, a broad brim slightly rolled and a small feather sticking from a cord in the back of the crown. Without betraying any surprise at the hat he placed it on his head and moved toward the center of the hall as though to pass somewhere. He must go out of the building as an excuse for asking for the hat. The servant preceded him in turning toward the left and then, after ringing a bell by pulling another rope, unfastened some heavy cross pieces of metal and slowly, with great exertion, opened wide the two massive metal doors that let in a great burst of sunlight flooding the hallway. Through

this Rollins walked and out on to a balcony or porch of marble and peculiar white rock, while the doors slowly closed behind him.

Before him there was spread the strangest and yet the most enticing and alluring landscape he had ever seen. It was indeed, like the land of fairies. The intense blueness of the sky, spotted with only an occasional small gray cloud, the vivid greens of more shades than nature provided in America, the distant hills toppled with walls that surrounded old castles or chateaux; the trees as the sides of the winding roads that led from the foreground to the distance, covered with a *white* that looked as pure as snow, and, as the wind blew, lifted up into the air and tinted the trees with white until the sides of them nearest the roads looked like Christmas trees decorated for the day; the unusually bright sunlight, the invigorating air, the faint and pleasing fragrance of the flowers and plants—all held Rollins in a trance, and he thought only of how wonderful a picture it would make, if he were only an artist. If he could but paint! The thought seemed to find some response in his mind—but immediately came the answer—*but you cannot paint*. With a sigh of regret, he turned again to the left and stepped down the wide stairway to the garden at the side of the building, where in sunken sections between stony pathways there were many flowers blooming, and in the center of all a beautiful fountain playing, permitting the light winds to waft to his face the most delicate sprays of refreshing dew.

He would examine the building and see its size. Instinctively he knew that he was at the rear of the building and walked along the widest path to another corner of the building. He noticed without any considerable interest that the windows were well protected with iron bars and others were exceedingly narrow—too narrow for the passage of a human body. On one side of the building there was another doorway, smaller than the one through which he had passed but closed with massive iron doors. At the next corner there was a large turret in which there were narrow windows at various levels. A casual interest in them caused him to glance upward at the other parts of the building and he noted, again without surprise, that the second story of the building was much smaller than the lower floor and that there was a small wall around the edge of the roof, the wall being penetrated at places by the projecting bodies of . . . . *gargoyles*. The word came almost immediately from . . . . memory!

After circuiting the house he walked down the slightly

descending path toward the open field on the other side of which there seemed to be a public road—the one which was painted with the pure white powder of some kind. Approaching this, he was delighted to find his surmise correct. The road was made of broken pieces of white chalkstone and had been powdered by continued use. He stopped and picked up a small piece of the unpowdered stone and found that he could break it with his hands. As he walked he came to a small stone bridge over a dry creek and these stones of the bridge wall were large pieces of the white chalk. In them initials and symbols had been cut or scratched. He could dig into the surface of the stone with his finger nail! What wonderful stone, so white, so soft.

Walking for perhaps two miles he came to a small building of very old appearance, situated in the very center of the intersection of four roads which crossed at this point. Reaching the building, which he noticed now was in ruin in some parts, he saw that some horses, perhaps fifteen, in ancient coverings, were standing at one side of the building. Within there was chanting. The rhythmic intonations, the pauses, the very response that his Soul gave to the sounds, indicated that some sacred chant was being expressed by a number of voices. He approached the door. There was but one step, and this he took, bringing himself on the very threshold of an unknown temple. But, stranger though he knew himself to be, it seemed not only familiar, but the right thing to do—*he must enter!*

Once within, he noted that there was no roof to this old building, nor had there ever been. There was no provision for one. It was an open-air temple—of Roman design. At the four sides of the square room there were separate altars upon a slightly raised platform. Before each altar a fire was burning, and fronting each of these were two rows of rough wooden benches. Upon these benches sat men and women, with heads bowed down, chanting this sacred, soul-stirring incantation. The walls were of stone, but decorated with symbols which seemed familiar but *nameless*. Back of each altar but one, stood a man in just such costume as he wore, *without the hat*, apparently leading the chant, while occasionally a girl of youthful age, dressed in flowing white, would pass from altar-fire to altar-fire and drop into the fire from the metal prongs she used, a piece of black—*charcoal*. The word came instantly; he need never hesitate for the right word, he found. She took these pieces of charcoal from a bright brass or gold vessel—hammered or deco-

rated metal—*again* the right description came from within and said a few words which Rollins could not hear.

His entrance into the temple did not surprise any of those present, and with an urge that came from the inner consciousness, he slowly walked to the vacant altar place and, taking off his hat, faced those on the benches before him—and began to chant in this strange tongue:

“Deus, in adjuto . . . rium meum intend . . . de.  
Domine . . . ad adjuvandum me festina. Gloria . . .  
Patri, . . . et Filio, . . . et . . . Spiritu sancto. Sicut  
erat in principio, . . . et nunc, et sem . . . pre, et in  
saecula, saeculorum . . . A . . . MEN . . . Al—le—  
lu—ja.”

As he chanted he marveled at the beauty of cadence, the maintained antiphon, the unison of diction and the perfect melodic phrasing. He listened to his own voice with interest, and now began to wonder why he persistently asked, how is this? and why? Was this not his custom, his usual life? And while the outer man's mind wanted to cry, *no, no!* the inner voice said, *be patient, calm!*

The service being finished all arose and slowly filed from the temple after making some salutation to the altar-fire. Not wishing to speak to the other three men who remained in the stations at the altars, he stepped down from the platform and slowly left the building without being approached by any one of the others when they prepared to walk or to ride their horses.

Returning to the great door of the chateau, he saw no means of signaling for entrance and was about to question his mind in this regard when the doors began to open and he found his servant greeting him again with the same polite bow. Entering the hall he faced its rear for the first time and saw that it led to other rooms and to an old stone stairway.

Motioning to the servant to come with him into the large chamber with the open fireplace, he was pleased to see that the servant seemed to anticipate his desire and was even now preparing to open those two heavy doors in the center of the carved doorway.

Suddenly the doors opened wide and as Rollins was about to step lightly across the threshold into what he thought would be solitude with an opportunity to question the servant, he found himself facing a throng of men and women in gay costume

who lifted high their voices in great exclamations of some kind. One by one the men approached him and shook his hand, kissed him on both cheeks and otherwise indicated their greetings. The women bowed with courtly bow and made many dainty, softly spoken wishes in French to him, not one of which could he completely realize.

Approaching the center of the room he saw that the great carved table was covered with woven linens and embroidered satins, all in white. Silver and gold dishes were placed as for a banquet. There was fruit and—at each place some flowers. Large silver goblets were set at various parts of the table and there were other articles which seemed familiar, but likewise nameless at just this time.

Almost automatically he walked to the end of the table and took a place before a larger chair. The others stepped to their places about the table and stood waiting. He made a motion for all to be seated and in the most matter-of-fact manner sat down in his chair with a sigh. He must not stop to think; he was being scrutinized. They were waiting for him to do something, but what? His mind was sluggish; again and again in the silence of their waiting, he tried to reason, but reason was inhibited. His thinking ability seemed paralyzed. Why couldn't he think this thing all out? Why were so many here and why were they waiting for him? He must . . . but the answer came now, as he paused, and rising in his place he raised both arms and fairly shouted with excitement:

“A bras ouverts—suaviter en modo!”

And almost in unison, each arose and lifting their right hands high and with surprise on their faces—too evident to be concealed or mistaken by Rollins—they cried:

“Pax vobiscum!”

Seated again, many fell into conversation while Rollins simply waited for developments. There was mental stupor that permitted him simply to realize and act automatically as the inspiration came. He was an actor in an unknown play that was *so very familiar*.

Many servants now waited upon them. Great dishes of vegetables were served and then at just the right moment a large wooden platter was carried in by two men servants containing a huge lamb, roasted and steaming hot, decorated with greens and spices. Its aroma was alluring to the senses and its picturesqueness suggested a great feast in Babylon.

The roast was set before Rollins and a servant handed

him a great knife, an ungainly thing of iron or steel, with sharp edge, and with it a one-prong fork. He cut and carved with more understanding and success than he had expected and hurriedly finished for the last plate that the servants passed to him. An idea had come to him. He would hurry through the banquet and through dexterous means secure some information from one of the servants as to what this all meant and *who he was*.

Sitting down again to eat, for he had had to stand to carve so large a roast, he found the servant ready to hand him the plate filled with meat and vegetables. Looking for knife, he saw no forks and glancing around saw that all were using their fingers to pick apart the meat and vegetables and to pass the food to their mouths. He was handed a very large *serviet* or cloth which he saw others were using to dry or clean their fingers after every few minutes, and, without further analysis, he too, ate in this manner.

After an hour of eating to an extent that seemed almost animal-like in its persistence, wine was poured from large silver and porcelain vessels into the gold goblets. With the wine a broken cake was served, and fruit.

As another hour passed and the sun turned into a beautiful gold and sent its beams across the table to tinge the heightened color of the faces of the guests, one by one they began to rise, and with unsteady hand to hold aloft a goblet of wine and to make toasts in uncertain words. The toasts were directed to him—Rollins! To each in turn he nodded appreciation, but each toast simply added to his determination to hold a very serious interview with some one, quickly.

The servants were now bringing in small silver dishes containing water and placed them before each guest. Each in turn dipped the soiled and greasy hands into the water and washed them. Then, drying their hands upon the large *serviet* in their laps, they passed them on to the servants and arose from the table. In a few minutes all were standing again and the servants were hurriedly removing all the dishes. A small doorway or opening in one part of the wall adjoining the dish-closet served as a means for the passage of the dishes out of the room. The large table was now being moved farther from the great fireplace and—over at one part of the room a servant was lighting a number of candles in silver candlesticks. He was placing them in parts of the room. More logs were placed upon the fire—something was being prepared for and

much interest was being shown by the men in the preparations, for they were directing the servants.

Another servant entered the room and motioned to some of the ladies that something was prepared outside and they smiled and with great expectancy left the room through the great doorway. Now another servant entered and carried in his arms a number of cages, in some of which were large black birds with strong curved bills and sharp claws, and in others there were what seemed to be small white pigeons.

The men gathered around these cages, selecting some of them with great enthusiasm. Each seemed to want some particular black bird, and the birds were examined as analytically as one would examine a well-bred horse. Rollins stood motionless in the corner of the room and watched this proceeding as though he had seen it many times before but still knew not the mystery of it.

Finally the men closed all doors and saw that the windows were well screened, and then released the white birds which proved to be wild pigeons. They flew to the top of the room and tried to find resting place on the beams of the ceiling, fully sixty feet above the floor and where it was almost too dark to see them. They were crying and making a horrifying sound, when the other cages were opened one by one and the legs of each black bird were marked for identification. Then, simultaneously, all the black birds were released from the hands of the men and they flew with wildness to the ceiling.

The scene then became distressing, cruel, *terrible*. The black birds seized the white pigeons and plunged their awful bills around the necks of the pigeons. They fought, they cried; the men cheered. It was a *battle royal* between each pigeon and each black bird, with the pigeon hopelessly beaten. The black birds would drop down, soar down, to the men, with their prey in their bills dripping with blood, the gory spots on the white feathers standing like blotches on the shield of man's honor.

Rollins could not stand it. Whether the strong wine the men drank, or the custom of the times or both, were responsible for such cruel pastimes, he could not witness it and hold back the disdain, the disgust that was about to overwhelm him and make him stop the whole proceedings. *But he must not do that.* He was only a witness. He would not dare to interfere. But he could leave. Ah! the opportunity to speak to the servant was at hand. He walked rapidly toward the door; as he did so a big black bird passed before his face with one of its prey,

and the dripping blood fell on his forehead and down to his hand. The blood of innocence! The cries of anguish! The sport of cruel hearts! Man's lowest instincts freely expressing! What a scene, what a shame! He would have none of it! He pushed open the door and stepped out into the hall and closed the doors behind him. As he did so there rang out a heart-rending, piercing scream from some soul in torture, while the men jeered and laughed, and other weak cries told of the last sobs of life in some white breast. That last cry—the cry of the lost life, the conquered existence, the torn body, the bleeding wound—the similarity! The symbol! The dove of peace! Slain! By man's cruel thinking, by man's earthly ways. The words came back again:

“On *that* cross—the body of man—are many things crucified!”

Rollins rushed to the stairway. There was no servant in sight. In a room nearby he could hear the laughs and remarks of the women, the *ladies*, who, in all compliance, left the men to enjoy their murderous habits and lust for blood. Was that womanhood? Had women not improved since the days of—that? Where was the boasted modern refinement, culture, and . . . ? But this was *not* modern times. The answer was distinct. This was the day of . . .

Up the stairs he rushed and into the first open doorway. It was a bed-chamber. The bed, high from the floor, approached by two steps, was heavily and beautifully canopied. He closed the door behind him and dropped across it the iron bar. Then, in weariness and disgust, he flung himself upon the feathered bed, unmindful of the satins and laces, and buried his head in his hands and cried, sobbed, as his whole body shook with emotion:

“God, good God, what a world and what a time! Have all men forgotten their greatest gift, the chivalry of manhood, the protecting power of their might over the weaker? Can men come from chanting of Thy goodness and enter into the destruction of the littlest beings? Then make me weak, God, make me weak, that I may not hurt, or see hurt—or permit the destruction of the smallest flower of the fields or the most minute animal of Thy world. Make me humble, make me simple, make me—kind—good—loving, all—and never too strong to destroy that which Thou hast made!”

And as he prayed, his prayer was answered, for he felt the weakness come, and with it a simpleness of heart and mind, until, like the tired-out baby, sobbing its cry for the resting arms of mother, he lay on his side, and slept.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ILLUMINATION

A peculiar metallic noise awakened the consciousness of Rollins, and he gradually realized that there was some disturbance at the door of the room in which he slept. He rose from the bed in a dazed mind and finding the room very dark, walked slowly about until he reached the iron door. As he neared it he saw that it became illuminated with a faint light that emanated from his body in all directions; and by its light he was able to find and lift the bar that held the door closed.

As the door opened the same servant that had greeted him earlier in the day bowed again and said in French, softly and kindly:

"I was concerned, my lord, for it is late and you sleep without the light and thy guests have departed without bidding adieu."

"Come in and sit with me for I would ask you some questions." The words came easily, in French, and with a solicitation that seemed to surprise the servant who was more accustomed to brief commands. He entered slowly and Rollins closed the door. The servant lighted two candles which stood on an old carved dressing-table, over which hung a large piece of highly polished silver, evidently used as a mirror.

Seated opposite each other in heavily cushioned chairs, Rollins thought for a moment or two before he spoke. How should he begin his questions without surprising the servant or arousing his suspicions? It was quite evident to the servant and to all who were there that day, that Rollins *belonged* there. Perhaps they thought it was his home? The term "my lord" used by the servant suggested that Rollins might even be the master of the household. If this was true, how could he consistently ask the questions which were uppermost in his mind? He must continue to act the part of the *master of the castle* until he had all the information he could secure in a diplomatic manner. And then—why then, what? Could he leave this place? How came he here? Again he tried to reason it out and again he found his mind refusing to place facts in

their proper and logical order for mental review. Again he found that deep in his consciousness, as though recalling a dream, he had a vague recollection that he was an American of the twentieth century, but uppermost in his consciousness was the dominating realization that he was *here* in *this* place at this time, and that he was equally at home and in the right environment.

Yes, diplomacy must be used and some excuse must be given for asking the questions which would sound strange to the servant. Suddenly an idea came. He revolved it, tested it, and it seemed to be just the method to use. He would try it.

"My man, I have something important to tell you. You see, I am not like myself today. I am strange." He waited to see how the servant would understand that. He noted with satisfaction that the man opposite him looked quizzically at him and then nodded in agreement.

"I had an accident yesterday and when I awoke this morning my mind seemed to be dazed and I could not recall where I was and now I find I am puzzled as to who I am. I am sure I am not mistaken about some things, but I want to check the facts and be very sure before I talk with anyone of our,—that is any of *my* friends. Now, tell me first or all,—or rather, suppose you get the pen and ink and some paper, and we will write down the facts. Go!"

*Pen and ink and paper!* The words were in French, as was all that he had said to the servant, but Rollins wondered if he knew what was meant by such words in *these* days. But the servant was off to some other room,—he must have understood. After a few minutes he returned bearing a tray upon which Rollins saw a beautifully carved vessel which he instantly knew must be an ink-well, a long feather or quill, and a roll of skin, as it seemed, and another silver vessel with perforated top. The servant placed the tray on his lap and moved close to Rollins so that their knees touched. Then he shoved the tray forward so that it rested on the laps of both. Rollins looked at the roll of skin first. It was nearly twelve inches square and wrinkled in places, with a shiny, almost greasy surface. He laid it down and at once the servant picked it up, flattened it out and sprinkled from the tall silver vessel some white powder on the surface of the skin and with the palm of his left hand rubbed the powder into its surface, and then blew off the surplus. Then he picked up the quill and dipped it into the smaller vessel and when he extracted it, it was covered with a thick, gummy black substance. He handed

the quill to Rollins and held the skin flat for him to write. Rollins looked at the end of the quill and said: "What is that—on the quill?"

"The carbon, my lord, 'tis very thick, but the parchment requires it and the gum will hold the carbon there very well."

Rollins realized that this form of *ink* was different than what he seemed to recall, but it was too trivial a point to look into *now*. Then he passed the quill back to the servant and said:

"I want you to write the answers to the questions. I will hold the,—the *parchment*. My hand is too nervous to write to-day."

Arranging matters in this way, Rollins began his questioning again: "Now, then, tell me, what is my name? What? Guillaume, Viscount of Anduze? Write it! That's right! Now, eh,—Why am I Viscount of Anduze?—How came it to be so?—Oh, so I am the son of Count Raymond, Lord of Anduze, Lord of Rodex and Millau and Viscount of Toulouse! Write it all down, carefully.

"And where is my father? Indeed! Write that down, too,—be sure you put it completely,—'advisor in Roman Law at Charlemagne's School of the Palace!'

"Where is my mother? Oh,—I did not know,—but write it! 'Buried in the left nave of the Cathedral of St. Sernin in Toulouse.'

"I wish now that you would write down there my exact date of birth. That's right. Now tell me, what was I doing this morning at the little Temple or Church at the cross ways?"

"Why, my lord, you were performing your usual festive duty this day. This, you know, is the day of the *Compitalia*, the annual festival held each year at this time, in honor of the Lares, the deities of the cross roads. You went, as was your duty as master of this villa, to the *compita*, the chapel of the Lares, the ancient Roman divinities, situated on the cross roads, but now it is a temple to God. There are four altars there with four Sacred Fires, representing the four adjoining villas, an altar and a sacred fire for each castle and hearth of the four villas. The Master of each conducts the sacred festival while the subjects of the estate or province, represented by their principal chiefs, worship there. So, today, the first of January, you conducted the chanting for the representatives of your subjects as the other masters did for their subjects. For years your father performed this rite, and now, for the past three years, it has fallen to your lot. That is all."

"Write it all down!" commanded Rollins and while the servant wrote he leaned back in his chair, and closed his eyes to review again the morning festival.

"Who was the young girl who attended the fire?" he started again. "She was the Vestal Virgin, whose sole duty is to keep the sacred fire always burning in the chapel. It is a memorial of the ceremony at Rome when the Vestal Virgins kept burning day and night the sacred fire—a community fire—from which others might obtain hot coals for their home fires. It is now a symbol of community interest and therefore sacred trust and neighborly love. She is a virgin and must remain obedient to her duty as a virgin until of legal age. She lives not far away in the castle of your cousin who went to battle with the legions of the legates of the Roman Church, and—and he——"

"He never came back—I can quite understand that. Go on!" said Rollins, as memory served him in some peculiar way.

"No, he never came back and no one ever learned of his end. But his young bride was cared for by you, just——."

"Just as though she were my own wife. I understand *that*, too. My cousin's wife!" How strange and yet how familiar it seemed.

"And now tell me just one more fact—and be sure to write down the answer. What was the cause, the reason, for the great celebration in the—the—*great hall*, downstairs this morning?"

Surprised, the servant looked squarely into the eyes of the master before him. "Why, that feast, followed by the sport of Falconry, was at your command, your own request, planned *yesterday*—you recall *yesterday*? You asked for the lords and ladies, the nobility of these provinces, and you sent forth your herald to request their presence, for today is *your birthday*. Surely you have not forgotten *that*. The day you were to become Lord of Bellcastle—of this villa and the Province of Aveyron."

"Put that down there, my man, and I guess that is all. No, stop a moment. Tell me this. Am I married and if so, where is my wife?"

"No, my lord, with the care of *Lady Rollins*, your cousin's wife, you have devoted yourself exclusively to her well being—but you are still young, and there is yet time to marry and carry forward the *blood* and *name* of your ancestors who have always been noble men."

Writing this, the servant arose and left the parchment on the dresser, taking away with him the materials on the tray.

Rollins closed the door tightly, folded the parchment in

his hands and clasping them threw himself back into the chair, closed his eyes and began to review the facts just revealed. There was much in the story that was just beyond the spoken words. This, the untold story, he must now comprehend, somehow.

\* \* \* \*

For an hour Rollins sat in the chair thinking and dreaming. Gradually a sense of warmth came over him while a changing condition in the brain and nervous system indicated that he was modifying his consciousness in some manner. The first definite sensation was that there was a light on his eyes, then a weariness in his limbs with an accompanying desire to move them into a different position. In making this change his feet fell to the floor with a jarring of the body that caused him to open his eyes. His feet had slipped from the stool. There was an electric light at the side of his head. His reading lamp! The fire in the fireplace! He was in another room—the study at home! He was the modern, American Rollins again—at home!

Rising from the chair he noted that he still held in his hands the Diary. That key to the *yesterdays*! He walked about the room with the book in his hands behind him, nervously pacing and thinking, muttering such unconscious comments as seemed to come from a mind still in a maze. And as he reviewed his last experience he came to the last incidents—the servant writing the answers on the parchment, which he had determined to preserve. Oh! if it were only possible to preserve so concrete and material a thing from the past and have it now in the present! To *actualize* a reality; to materialize into the gross of the present the ethereal fabrication of a dream. The ancient alchemists claimed to be able to do this; and Rollins knew that their present-day successors, the modern Brotherhood of Rosicrucians exist today with their Lodges of active members, scientists and adepts located in so many cities, pursuing their studies in secret and claiming to know the laws whereby this is done. They alone would be able to explain all that Rollins had experienced within the past twenty-four hours, and while they are difficult to find, still, thought Rollins, now that he realized his mission, he would not rest until he had located one who would introduce him to their nearest group.

Again he sat down in the easy chair and almost mechanically and unconsciously opened the Diary. He had not turned more than three or four pages when he was startled to see some

bold, black writing covering the two open pages before him. Instantly he knew. Here were the written answers of the servant—and the servant's strange writing.

As each answer was analyzed the whole conversation came back to him. He was again in the old bed-chamber of the castle. Then came the first written answer that had not been spoken.

"Birthdate—January 1, 896."

Rereading the statement several times, he passed to the last notation, the last written answer but one.

"Today, your twenty-first birthday, you became Lord of Bellcastle and heir to the estates of Rollins."

Born in 896! Twenty-one today! That means that today—the today of that experience, the today of my birthday celebration in that old provincial villa—was the year—917!

January 1st, 917!

Rollins fairly shouted it. He jumped to his feet. On that day I became Lord Rollins. Today I am William Rollins. My name then, that day was Guillaume—William. What a remarkable coincidence! Unmarried, caring for my mother, my father caring for his cousin's wife, *just as in recent years*, the name Rollins, the name Raymond—. What of the mark after the name Raymond on the painting? I have seen nothing of that, the mystery which started this piercing of the Veil.

Again he glanced at the written pages before him. The page was signed, "Jordain, Secretaire to the house of Raymond IV." Raymond IV! The Fourth! Ah! The mark after the name on the painting was—V! Raymond V—the fifth of that name. The mystery was solved!

But above the signature of the secretary stood boldly forth the last statement to the last answer: "There is yet time to marry and carry forward the *blood* and *name* of your noble ancestors."

Was that a command? It seemed to be a challenge of nature, a decree from the past. Heredity, ancestry, reincarnation, evolution of nature and Soul—all depended upon it. It *was* a decree, and it should be fulfilled, before it was too late.

And then—a knock at the door. It startled Rollins again. It seemed so like the banging on the iron door of the bed-chamber in the old villa. With nerves highly excited and the mind in a stressed attitude, little would startle now.

Opening the door quickly, he found his mother, smiling and bowing slightly.

"William, my boy, have you forgotten that we were to go out today? You have been in here so long! Ruth has called and will accompany us to dinner—and you know she does *so enjoy* these occasional—very few—opportunities to be in your company. Please do not keep us waiting long or we may not be able to find chairs at any table in the 'Chateau Belcastle' downtown. You know they have such wonderful holiday dinners with the most alluring music, like the songs of the old Troubadours of Languedoc. Come—where have you been in your dreams again? You look so tired or nervous—and so surprised at what I say. What has it been now? Have you solved your problem about the rebirth of the body and the reincarnation of the Soul?"

"Yes, little mother, I have," he said as he put his arms about her waist and accompanied her out into the hall, to where Ruth was sitting in the golden sunlight of the bay window. "I have just found that it takes *two* to bring about the perfect rebirth of both body and Soul—and I was just going back over the past—over the *yesterdays*—back, back to the year—917! In fact, I was thinking of the *yesterdays* between today and January 1st, 917."

"Why, William," she replied, in a smiling, teasing mood. "That would have made a *thousand years of yesterdays!*"

# THE ROSICRUCIANS

## (PUBLISHER'S NOTE)

The manuscript of "A Thousand Years of Yesterdays" was submitted by the publishers to a number of professional and business men and women for the purpose of determining the value of so strange a story before publication. This is common practice in cases where the publishers are anxious to know whether a manuscript in hand deserves publication of a general nature or not; and it must be admitted that the nature of this story, with its seeming revelations of unpublished principles, warranted our careful investigation.

In addition to the many favorable comments made, there were two remarks made by each who read the story, and it was apparent that practically every reader would have the same points in mind when completing the story. Therefore, to avoid a very considerable future correspondence and to anticipate the questions which our readers would send to us, we made an investigation bringing to light the following information. The questions asked were these:

(1) Was not this story written by some man who has taken this means of giving to the world a system of philosophy or an oriental teaching which hitherto has been withheld from the uninitiated?

(2) Where and how can the reader learn more regarding the secret bodies of Rosicrucians described or referred to in the story? Perhaps the philosophy or mystical principles taught by the story are a part of the Rosicrucian secret work.

The publishers urged the author of the story to give them in writing whatever he cared to have published regarding the Rosicrucians, and of himself; but the author was reluctant to write anything, because, as he said: "No officer or member of the Rosicrucian brotherhood will publicly proclaim his identity with the ancient Order of Mystics unless he must do so by force of circumstances or for some unselfish purpose."

However, the publishers have secured the following facts and feel that they are not violating any obligation, moral or otherwise, in setting them forth here where perhaps only the serious minded will find them.

The complete name of the Rosicrucian brotherhood is: "The Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis," a name which is seldom publicly used, held very sacred and often abbreviated into its initials to read AMORC. Its time honored symbols, used since the days of the old philosophers, are: in all esoteric work a gold Cross with a Red Rose at its center; in all exoteric work, or for public identification, a Triangle with a Cross within it. Its history is traced back to the days of the Egyptian secret sects and the early alchemists and mystics. In modern times the Order has established and maintained Lodges in various countries, including the United States, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico and South America. There are other Rosicrucian groups in America also, we learn, consisting of those who study together, using various Rosicrucian names, but having no official connection with the AMORC and receiving no instructions in the peculiar secrets and teachings of the Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis.

We find that the Lodges of the Order which are duly established and chartered as branches of the parent body, hold secret sessions weekly in all the principal cities of the United States and in many small cities and towns. They use the ancient rites and rituals, have the complete system of instruction in all the sciences including Psychology, Ontology, Alchemy, Physics, Biology, Transcendental Mysticism and modern scientific achievement.

Further, we find that the Order is non-sectarian, occupies a high position in both the scientific and educational movements of America and is esteemed by the many professional men and women, physicians, clergymen, teachers, scientists and others who are actively associated with it as officers or members.

In regard to Mr. Lewis, the author, we were referred to the fact that the New International Encyclopaedia, Second Edition, published by Dodd, Mead & Co., of New York, uses his name in their works as an authority on the history and existence of the Rosicrucians.

More information cannot be easily acquired without one's indication of desiring to unite with this great school of philosophy. Therefore, if any of our readers sincerely desires to drink freely from the fountain head of occult and scientific knowledge, he or she will learn how easily this may become possible, by writing a frank and sincere letter, expressing the fullest desires, signing it in full and then mailing it confidentially to Mr. Thoth Amen Ra, 1297 Market Street, San Francisco, California. He

will place such letters into the hands of such secretaries or others as live nearest to the inquirer, and through them will come the strange and secret information which all seekers wait for patiently.

Believing that the author's purpose in writing this story was to reach a great number of sincere seekers, rather than to put upon the market a story which would pay him any royalty, we have decided to co-operate with such purpose and publish the book in as economical form as possible so that the sale price might be within the reach of all. This is our apology for not dressing the story in as fine and luxurious a binding as the story really merits.

THE PUBLISHERS.