

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA
The Ghost
of
Sir Francis Whynn,
Baronet



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Foreword

I am not about to offer an apology for the Ghost,—No! Almost everyone now-a-days has a belief in the super-normal. The clearest thinkers and most level-headed reasoners I have known have had a profound conviction that there is really nothing supernatural—except, perhaps, the stories usually told about the ghost, after a manifestation.

In this our day the best known and most revered scientists have asserted that there is truth in psychic phenomena; and assure us that materializations and visitations of a phantom-like order, are in reality the outcome of efforts on the part of discarnate beings; men and women who have passed the change of death, and who,—finding themselves very much alive after the experience,—are anxious to reveal themselves and tell the news of their triumph and continued existence—especially to their sorrowing loved ones.

Many scientists assure us that Death is Re-birth. Man possesses a dual nature,—soul and body,—and that only the fleshy parts disintegrate; the Ego, or selfhood, remains intact.

If one feels a strong inclination to investigate psychic matters, it is often just as well to commence the investigation by entering a sick chamber and there carefully observe the marvelous struggle for physical existence often displayed by the sick. Note carefully the potency of the Soul. The Ego, or unseen operator, is striving it would seem, to free Itself from an impeding, cumbersome clog.

Note how tenderly the watchers bend o'er the sick one to catch the sense of the faint sounds that emerge,—more or less labouriously, through the pallid lips. How eager are they to attend to the requirements and catch a word, a smile or a glance of recognition. Then note the sighing and weeping when at last the vital spark dies out of the body and is replaced by the cold, petrifying stillness of death.

The glorious animating force—that subtle Something—has entirely disappeared. Then comes the realization to the investigator that it was of a surety an invisible yet potent force that heretofore quickened that now lifeless form.

It was through the agency of Spiritual activity the physical body was enabled to use its organs, function, live, move and have its being.

Then it is possible to realize that the body of flesh was merely an instrument,—a medium for the more or less intelligent Ego to make use of.

Death in this is recognized as a means to an end—a liberation. The fact must not be overlooked that all Mother Nature's special and important labours are quite invisible to the physical eye.

There must of necessity be an unseen realm.

The marvellous force that is called "Life" is ever in operation throughout the whole Universe, working through and with atoms, molecules, germs, forming them into various shapes and putting them to various uses. Throughout the realms of Nature potent forces are attracting these and other infinitesimal atoms, or molecules, and forming cells of living germs from apparently invisible matter, and by marvellous processes—the processes of evolution and involution, shape and quicken into being multitudes of creatures.

In the past a certain school of materialistic scientists taught that mankind was probably the outcome of a fortuitous combination of atoms of matter, animated, of course, by force. And that when these said atoms disintegrated and the body fell to decay, then man's career as a thinking entity was over. Briefly put: "Man cannot think without his brain. Individuality ends at death," was their declaration.

Now, a number of Spiritual Scientists thought otherwise and asserted that Individuality does not end with death: that "Memory is Immortal"; that it belongs to the Ego,—the I Am or Unseen Being, and does not depend upon the functioning of a human brain. A physical brain is essential only to the Ego whilst dwelling in the physical body. That Memory itself is indestructible. An integral part of the spiritual nature, and a very useful part, yet not visible to mortal gaze.

It is now a well-recognized fact that Dame Nature neither wastes nor destroys one atom of matter; nor perverts, or suspends force in any way. The savants, the great analytical chemists, the Master Minds,—assure us after untiring research into the realms of Nature's finer workings that there are numberless delicate yet intensely active forces ever in operation governed by immutable laws. A few of the better known are:

Volatile Magnetism, or Life Force; Mind Force—which generates thought; Will Power; Action; Magnetic Force, or the Laws of Attraction and Repulsion; Radium; Hertzen-waves, or Invisible Light; Electricity; Ether; Electrons, etc., Unseen Activity.

As before stated, the wondrous Life Force is responsible for the myriads of creatures upon this interesting globe of ours; yet this marvellous force is so minute in its pristine state that it requires the assistance of a powerful microscope to make the molecules, which is its medium of conveyance, apparent to the student's gaze. This potent force with which man,—in common with all other living entities,—is endowed, assists him to develop or unfold his hidden powers from his inception to his demise. From babyhood to old age the activity of this force used intelligently (or otherwise) helps man to keep his fleshy body in some sort of condition. It assists him to rebuild or strengthen his bony structure; or mould the grey matter of the brain; slowly, yet surely, induces unfoldment of his organs and functions, and latent talents. Also repairs, alters and refurnishes the muscles and sinews of his body—the network of cells, the delicate tissues, the veins, the blood, the hair, the nails and all that goes to make the perfect whole; the unseen development of which (according to scientific deductions), takes place every seven years, more or less.

If this marvellous reconstruction can from physical evolution be developed what is to hinder a like form of involution from acting conjointly, enabling man to form physically within himself a finer, more perfect body for his use after dissolution in an ethereal sphere of life?

Again, Man during his physical tenure must, of necessity, have learned many valuable lessons preparatory to a higher, nobler state of existence. If he be a wise individual he will have learned self-control; patience; in other words—how to subjugate his fleshy passions, appetites and desires. Who knows better than man himself—in spite of a broken, or even evil career—how often glimpses have been caught of his soul's innate purity? Flashes of inspiration,—mirrors of intuition,—reflections of spirituality,—the inward promptings of goodness,—or the premonitions of punishment for disobedience to his better self? These powers are all spiritual powers and graces of man's immortal soul.

When at last man stands divested by Death of his physical garment, from which he merges like a butterfly from the shat-

tered shackles of its crystalis, he quickly discovers that he possesses a new body; a covering for his Soul, most useful, beautiful, and ethereal; quite in harmony with his spiritual surroundings.

He also realizes that he has no added appendages,—such as wings, etc.; he is merely re-born, rejuvenated, fully conscious, alert, and willing—nay, anxious—to resume his manifold duties as an intelligent individual. Moreover, he discovers that the new sphere into which with Death's assistance he has entered, is quite near to the old one, just outside of it, in fact, and that it is a very tangible realm, the watchword of which is "Liberty"; and that law and order reign supreme.

There is, of course, a new form of government. And as soon as he realizes its import, as a true citizen he is ready to conform to its rules. Therefore, man after death finding so much to his advantage, so much to admire in this new state, is it not natural that he should desire and endeavor in a practical, if ghostly, fashion to communicate with those he left behind?

Alas for modern enlightenment!

The Spirit-man when he puts his desires into operation discovers to his dismay—and disgust, doubtless—that there is a very strong prejudice, excepting in very special scientific circles, against spiritual manifestations.

If he persists in his visitations, he is told in effect: "My dear fellow. Now you are dead and tucked away safely in your sepulchre, be wise, and stay there. What's the use of rising from the tomb and gliding about and scaring folk? Please don't forget you ought to be in Paradise; you were supposed to be good, you know. If things are different keep quiet about it."

Naturally this kind of reception for a time non-plusses the ghost. Still, he makes further efforts; and discovers that the mind which to him once was opaque, is now as clear as crystal. He can easily read the thoughts of those he visits; so he realizes fully that—to put it mildly—he is neither wanted, or understood. Stifling his chagrin as best he may, no doubt he does some hard thinking; and eventually, according to unimpeachable testimony,—he comes out of an apparently hopeless position, triumphant. With dogged determination, patience and perseverance, he gradually surmounts all difficulties. Removes all obstacles by discovering for himself a human instrument, a medium; suitable for his purpose and willing to co-operate

with him; readily responsive to his spiritual promptings and commands. A Psychic Message-bearer. Who willingly makes known the fact that he has survived the shock of death. That he, as son, brother, lover, or husband, is still constant,—living and loving,—as in days of yore. And waiting at the portals for the coming-over of his own dear ones. He to be the first to welcome them to that glorious summer land, there to dwell with him in peace and happiness for aye.

The Ghost of Sir Francis Whynn, Baronet

CHAPTER I

I, Henry Austin, Storekeeper, had just arrived from Bath, on a visit to Manchester,—the great Cottonopolis of the North. I was here on a short pleasure trip, and—like the thrifty Scot—was endeavoring to turn my holiday-keeping to commercial account. So during my stay in the great Northern city I had taken up my quarters at a well-known hotel whose frontage is situated in the main thoroughfare near an important railway depot. Which fact alone assists in deepening the mystery and adds to the peculiarity of the whole affair.

On the special occasion to which I refer, I was spending the latter portion of a busy day in the peaceful seclusion of a private sitting-room, reading an interesting book on the dangers—I beg pardon, joys—of matrimony; time, as near as I can remember, about five o'clock in the afternoon of a mild September day; when I was disturbed by hearing, as I thought, the door of the apartment gently opened ,and someone glide softly into the room. Judging by the deliberate movements which followed I decided that it was doubtless a waiter attending to duty ,and did not therefore glance up from my book until a quiet, but peculiar, rustling caused me to do so. On looking up I encountered the quizzical scrutiny of a pair of violet-blue eyes, owned by a richly-garbed and particularly handsome young man, who upon realizing that he had attracted my attention, with an air of courtly politeness, bowed low before me.

His elaborate attire and theatrical attitude caused me to conjecture that possibly he was arrayed for a masquerade ball, *tableaux vivants*, charade, or something of

that kind. Anyhow, my unknown and unannounced visitor was charmingly dressed in all the glory of an Eighteenth Century costume, viz., a suit of delicate pale pink brocaded satin, with white-frilled shirt, his powdered hair or wig tied at the nape of the neck with a bow of wide silk ribbon; and filmy lace of cobweb fineness gracefully bescreened a pair of the most exquisitely-modeled, richly-bejeweled, lily-white hands it has been my lot to behold,—the precious stones in the rings emitting entrancing rays of many-coloured light; while white-silk hose and shoes with sparkling buckles adorned his nether limbs. His dress was one of surpassing beauty worn with the ease and custom of a Prince.

In spite of the irritation I was feeling—caused by the unwarrantable intrusion of the good-looking stranger, I was conscious of a decided interest in him. He had, apparently, already divested himself of his over-coat, gloves and three-cornered hat and deposited them on the couch beside him. With an air of nonchalance and a slightly mocking smile on his full red lips, the intruder settled himself in the armchair immediately opposite me and with a careless flick in my direction, of a dainty morsel of perfumed lace that did service, it seemed, for a handkerchief, broke the silence; coolly and commanding he remarked:

“Ah, Austin, my good fellow! I observe you are well occupied endeavouring to improve your mind by study; nevertheless, I require your undivided attention for a while. Listen to my instructions, please.”

“You most certainly have the advantage of me, Sir,” I stammered, mustering all the dignity I could on the spur of the moment, unpleasantly conscious that my manner and speech appeared rough and hard in comparison with the high-bred action and dulcet tones of my visitor.

“There is no necessity for me to apologize for my presence here,” he said, in the manner of one conferring a favour, adding loftily, “My name is Whynn, Frank Whynn, at your service. By gad, sir, try to understand that my time is precious and attend without further parley.”

As can be imagined I naturally resented this high-handed method of procedure, especially from an utter stranger; yet the peculiarity of the situation had its attraction, and I therefore composed myself as best I could. In a clear, concise manner the visitor continued:

"Now, Austin, I would have you know I am fully acquainted with all your circumstances and am in possession of all necessary information concerning your commercial ability, etc.; I find your credentials are quite satisfactory so that I may rely, I understand, upon your being honest and trustworthy. I desire to engage your services for a very important mission, and if you will implicitly obey my instructions you will have no cause to regret it; in fact, you will not need to continue in your trade of purchasing dolls' eyes for that emporium of yours in Bath, you know."

"Dolls' eyes, indeed!" I indignantly exclaimed. "What do you mean, Sir! I never bought a single doll's eye in the whole course of my existence!"

"Possibly not," he interrupted composedly. "Presumably they were all married with large families,—but your ware is quite immaterial to me. The matter requiring attention is urgent; and I would have the business dispatched with all celerity. Listen carefully: I desire you to journey with all speed to Brecon, in the county of Glamorganshire, South Wales. In that picturesque village there stands at the foot of the hill on the high road to the drowsy old town of Brecon, an ancient inn named the "Roebuck," once a fine posting station—now fast falling into decay, so aged has the building become that it may be demolished at any time; but ere its final destruction I would have you visit the spot and pass a night in the South chamber that overlooks the great orchard; for within the recess of its old-fashioned chimney there rests hidden treasure which I would have you find. Journey, therefore, hither at once; seek diligently for an iron ring three feet above the recess inside the commodious flue; use your full strength upon that ring and dislodge a stone plug, then thrust your hand into the aperture and draw forth two bags of gold,—the price you will obtain for the gold will serve you

for expenses during the fulfillment of your mission. I trust, my good fellow, you thoroughly understand the instructions so far——?”

At this point I stopped him, having decided that the gentleman was either mad or—well,—I now believed I knew the reason, therefore I said coolly:

“I imagine you are an actor, Mr. Whynn. However, I consider it a breach of good manners to force your company upon me in this manner. I have no desire to witness the rehearsal of your part—be that what it may, therefore I should be obliged if you would bring this farce to an end and leave me to my book.”

The stranger’s reply was loud and disconcerting laughter; then stopping suddenly he sprang to his feet and with a tragic gesture—like the villain in the play—cried fiercely:

“Zounds, fellow! Do you mistake me for a mummer? One of those tragical-comical-historical strolling players, a Thespian, eh? Was it not Shakespeare who declared ‘That all the world’s a stage, and men and women merely players’? Other than in this manner, I can lay no claim to histrionic greatness. Gaze well at this; I would have you thoroughly realize who I am.”

So saying he thrust under my nose an exquisite silver snuff box, bearing within the lid in gold letters this inscription, “Sir Francis Whynn, Baronet, Llangollen Castle, Wales.”

“Well?”

“Very well. I wish you to know I am what is termed ‘dead’, that is, I lived in the physical body more than two hundred years ago. Passed out in 1748. I belong to an ancient Welsh family whose baronial halls are still in existence though the original one has fallen to decay. But my position is entirely beside the question. As I have already stated I am spoken of as dead, but as you see,—very much alive. I would have you understand I have taken great pains and have spent much time and labour in preparing you for this day. I am greatly in need of your amterial—that is—physical servieses. You are my chosen vessel remember, and you must do my work well. I have come for the purpose of giving you my

orders, which you must carry out to the very letter. There is in all this a special reason which shall be revealed as we proceed."

Perhaps the expression on my face prevented my visitor from continuing, for he resumed his seat as quickly as he had vacated it and covering his lips with the delicate morsel of lace concealed, I imagine, a smile, while his eyes sparkled with suppressed merriment.

"Did you say '*dead*' more than two hundred years?" I gasped, endeavouring valiantly to recover from the shock his statement had given me.

"Aye, my good fellow, truly! My physical organism died long ago. I am what is ordinarily termed a 'ghost' but for all that I do not appear very shadowy, do I? Pray do not feel alarmed, I shall not harm you in the least. On the contrary, if you will permit me I will considerably benefit you. I understand you feel surprise, and I am quite prepared for a certain amount of prejudice,—opposition even; but I conjure you by all you hold dear not to fear me. Trust me. Do as I wish. The task, believe me, is not an arduous one. But its accomplishment is essential to my future happiness. I will, however, well repay you for your labours, will, in fact, heap on you wealth, honour and blessings. What can you possibly need more. Come now, what do you say? Give me your answer?

To be perfectly truthful I knew not what reply to make, though my brain had been actively endeavouring to account for the amazing situation.

At first I was inclined to think the mysterious gentleman might be an advertising agent trying to induce me to take an interest in hidden treasure for the benefit of some Company, or Magazine. Then I seriously pondered if I were really awake; I even shook myself a little in order to be sure I had not fallen asleep over my book and was but dreaming: Here was an individual before me, tangible and real enough, conversing, if not exactly rational yet quite easily, who nevertheless, termed himself a ghost and desired me to believe that his mortal remains had been buried over two hundred years ago. In the course of Nature the physical part of him should long

ago have been given back to Mother Earth and dissolved into the elements. The notion was preposterous! Far more likely he was an escaped lunatic; and with a madman's cunning had gleaned information concerning my occupation, name, address, etc., for some wild scheme known only to his own disordered mind.

My best plan would certainly be to ring the bell and rid myself of his presence as soon as possible; but ere I could execute my plan I was startled and confused by my *vis-a-vis* exclaiming sharply—

"When you have quite finished, Austin, cogitating on the advisability of obtaining the assistance of a waiter to expell me as a madman,—perhaps you will give me your undivided attention and possibly a sensible answer to my proposals; which would be more to your credit. For I warn you if you succeed in summoning the proprietor of this establishment,—his wife,—family, and staff of subordinates,—it will avail you nothing and the consequences will recoil upon your own head. The moment these people enter the room I should make myself invisible to any eyes but yours and you would merely get the credit of being demented; or,—as your elegant, modern phraseology has it,—"A little bit off the top." Come now, be wise in time and agree to co-operate with me. Do as I require and no harm will attend your actions. Will you undertake my mission?"

"No," I declared defiantly, "I absolutely refuse to be your servant,—to do your bidding."

Nevertheless, it was bewildering to realize that this madman was able so readily and accurately to read my thoughts.

"Indeed," said he with sarcasm, "If that be the case, I shall have to resort to compulsion and should it come to a tug-of-war, I warn you beforehand you will come off much the worse in the encounter. But I have no desire to resort to extreme measures, though if you compel me by your obstinacy there will be no alternative. Once more I ask you to well consider before you finally decide."

"I absolutely refuse your offer and defy you to do your worst," I answered angrily.

For a moment an ugly frown distorted my visitor's exquisite features, but is passed immediately and with the utmost sauvity and urbanity he continued:

"Pray be calm, Austin; don't excite yourself, old fellow. You must admit your display of temper is childish in the circumstances; please remember you have no conception of my power. I will not trouble you with a display of it, either,—as yet; but will repeat my statement that I am prepared to protect and benefit you; therefore do not throw away your chance of conspicuous promotion. Think well over the matter and decide to accept my terms. Do not fail to meet me at the 'Roebuck' Inn a week to-night." And with a sweeping bow and fascinating smile the amazing visitor bade me adieu and vanished from my sight.

To say I was astounded, but mildly expresses my feelings. I had heard no sound—the door was not opened in the ordinary way—yet the gorgeously-attired stranger was no longer with me, and curious to relate, a sense of peculiar loneliness pervaded the room after his disappearance. Had it not been that the words, "Meet me at the 'Roebuck' Inn a week to-night," still resounded in my ears and again and again passed through my brin, and a pleasant perfume pervaded the atmosphere, I should have concluded I had dreamt the whole occurrence—but endeavour as I would,—I could not break the spell; nor dismiss the recollection of that compelling sentence of a meeting at the 'Roebuck.'

Some days elapsed filled with business and excitement such as a populous city has to offer, and the impressions above related gradually paled and at length disappeared entirely. I had not mentioned my strange experience to anyone,—not even my wife to whom I wrote frequently. And when the day of my homeward journey arrived, I can assure my readers that I left Manchester duly prepared for the journey to Bath, but owing—I was convinced—to the blunders of railway officials, I found myself instead, in South Wales.

The guard who came to the rescue of the porters, whom I deluged with a storm of abuse for the inconceivable mistake of landing me in Brecon, when I desired

to be in the City of Bath, Somersetshire, declared I had asked for Brecon, South Wales, when changing at Chingley, and that he had purposely put me into a through carriage.

Conscious of the fact that scolding would not mend matters, I lost no more time, but tried to rectify the mistake. I found I should have to wait a few hours before making the return journey; I therefore wired my wife, distributed a few judicious tips to the perturbed porters and guards; and made enquiries for the "Roebuck" Inn. It appeared that it was within an easy drive, so I engaged a broken-down vehicle politely designated a 'cab' and desired the Jehu to take me thither.

On my arrival I acknowledged that the "Roebuck" Inn was certainly a quaint old edifice; solidly built of stone, with an aged and hoary exterior, it inspired admiration and respect. It was still the pride of the neighborhood; and especially of its host; to whom it was a source of much profit by way of tips from interested visitors.

One of its chief show-rooms was that overlooking a lovely old orchard,—now glowing with the gold and crimson of its ripened fruit and reddening leaves. A beautiful room, with low ceiling supported by broad, heavy black oak beams; its walls paneled; its oak doors and mantelpiece wonderful examples of the carver's art. Its mullioned windows added also to the sense of importance with which the visitor was impressed on entering, and it was easy to believe the host, who filled my ears with stories of the great ones—Royalty included—who had graced it with their presence in days gone by. The massive carved bedstead with its heavy draperies shutting out all but a sense of luxurious rest might well have sheltered the slumber of a King or Queen and the equally heavy draperies of the windows added to the vague weirdness which suffused the whole apartment.

Thus did I find myself in that very 'South chamber' of the "Roebuck" Inn of which my ghostly visitor had spoken, and I was forced to admit as I reviewed the situation that Fate in mysterious fashion had played pranks with me, and the spook had gained a point.

Though resolutely endeavouring not to think of hidden treasure, I felt a strong desire to remain longer in the room and with some difficulty and much tipping at last obtained permission from my reluctant host.

Left alone, and with the privilege of staying for the night, I began a cautious examination of the room,—especially the wide old-time fireplace with its quaint iron dogs well-fitted to support the Yuletide fuel. The huge chimney compelled my attention, and much as I determined to resist its fascination I found myself still gazing at, and conjecturing, if in romantic times long past, that ancient masonry had really received secret visits and harboured hidden treasure? Slowly and surely curiosity overcame all other feeling and I began an exhaustive examination of the room—to assure myself, may be, that no one lurked behind the curtains, or in, or under, that majestic bed; and in due time my searching finished at the capacious flue.

Very cautiously I peered into its yawning mouth; very carefully felt my way inside it; and to my surprise and delight found it contained a recess! Remembering the directions given I continued feeling over the wall with my hand, and at length came upon a metal ring embedded in the sunken portion of the masonry. Yes! Yes! "*an iron ring three feet above the recess inside the commodious flue!*"

I was now thoroughly aroused. I determined not to leave the room—far less the Inn—until I had dislodged the stone plug,—to which I felt convinced that iron ring must be attached. There passed through my mind those words: "*use your full strength upon that ring and dislodge a stone plug.*"

In vain I exerted my strength—in vain I tugged and pulled; injuring my hands with the rough, rusty ring, and my arms and wrists with the force of my endeavour. Until at last, weary and exhausted, I relaxed my efforts; deciding to renew them later on, when, after a good dinner I should feel better able to wrestle with the time-set plug.

Having dined and rested, faithful to my resolution, I returned to my task. Candles pleasantly illuminated one

portion of the room; and other candles, unlighted, were set on the high mantle-shelf and on a table at the bedside. The lighted candle I carried in my hand did duty for the continuance of my struggle; so placing it where its rays would be most favourable and shielding it from the down-draught of the flue, I again essayed my strength upon the iron ring. Try as I would I could not dislodge the plug it indicated. I had not sufficient strength, or knack, perhaps, to move it. I was at last giving up in despair when a slight sound as of loosening caused me with increased vigour to renew my efforts and to my joy, I succeeded in drawing the stone plug a little towards me, and then, exerting my whole strength in one great endeavour I finally released it. I nearly lost my balance in so doing, for though by no means huge, the stone was immensely heavy for its size; however, I saved myself in time, and depositing the plug upon the hearth beside me, I eagerly sought a view of what had lain behind it. Finding I could not clearly discern anything I thrust my hand into the aperture to feel for substances which might be there and come upon something globular in form and soft like leather to the touch. What was it—this dust-grimed substance under my hand? Bags? Yes! bags! Eagerly I drew forth one and then the other—heavy and filled with some hard substance. Trembling with excitement I struggled with the dust, and the cord securing each bag, unwilling somehow to cut the tie as I could easily have done,—and finally displayed to view the dull yellow of the hidden treasure!

When able to collect my senses a little I attempted to distinguish the nature and also count the number of ancient coins; until weary and exhausted I found that the task was beyond me and decided on repose.

I had scarcely time to begin to appreciate the softness of the old-time feather bed and the downy pillows when I was startled by a sharp rap on my shoulder; and glancing upward in alarm, I met the amused gaze and saw in the darkness,—as though suspended above me,—a soft phosphorescent light in which appeared the graceful form and face of him who called himself “Frank Whynn.”

Seeing I at once recognized him, he began pleasantly:

"Well done! Austin, old fellow. I am delighted you have felt it your duty to obey my behest! It is time now to give you further directions: When you leave here take the gold with you; dispose of it in your own establishment to a customer whom I will influence to visit you,—a Jew,—Leon by name. He will enquire for curios, and you will display your find to him. He will give you a fair price for those valuable old coins if you manage him. Get as much as possible from him, Leon can well afford to pay; and they are worth a goodly sum; therefore drive a good bargain—a Jew is proverbially a tough customer so deal with him accordingly. I will endeavour to send a tutelary spirit to watch proceedings and inspire you to demand and to accept the correct value. You must then journey to Hornsworth Castle, in Westmorland, the residence of Lord Templeton, who is a descendant of my family; he is at present absent in Italy, but you can get permission to inspect the Castle from the agent, Mr. Lennox. You go there for the purpose of obtaining documents lying in the secret drawer of an old-fashioned cabinet in the Library; it is imperative you get possession of those papers. I with other spirits will meet you there and instruct you how to do so. You will then take them to your residence and after revision by me you will return them safely to the drawer from which you removed them. These documents—whose contents is at present unknown to others—are to me, all-important. They deal with my private affairs and have within them many misleading statements—some of them fatally detrimental to those I love. It is my intention to correct the errors. You may consider this a questionable way of making history; but it is,—I assure you,—a very safe one; and in this case it is justifiable. For the present I will not burden you with more, but wish you the best of slumber in that fine old bed. Au 'voir!"

He finished speaking and my eyes could no longer perceive him. A host of perturbed thoughts and strange notions jostled each other in my brain. It was impossible to doubt the reality of the presence so lately with

me, or deny that he was more than human. Neither could I dispute the fact that circumstances not of my own making had brought me to a place hitherto altogether unknown to me; and furthermore, the discovery of the treasure was indubitable testimony of the truth of the ghost's assertions. Yet I confess I did not enjoy the idea of being the tool of a man long dead, or of that man's spirit; but being so far entangled my difficulty was to see a clear way out of it.

Eventually I made up my mind to follow his instructions and to take the coins with me, secreting them somehow upon my person. And, of course, I should have to remove all trace of my investigations lest suspicion be aroused and no end of trouble should follow. Therefore, I deemed it best to rise, and return the stone plug to its place, and re-fix the cement as best I could by the aid of wit and water,—trusting to the general darkness of the flue to protect my handiwork should anyone think of making an examination of the room after the departure of the stranger who evinced so much desire to remain the night.

These things done so as to leave no apparent traces of tampering, and all restored to my satisfaction, I once more sought, and this time found, repose.

CHAPTER II

My birthplace, and that of my forefathers for many generations, is the ancient city of Bath. A delightfully charming, old-world place; once the favourite resort of Royalty, and the residence of aristocracy of the bluest blood. I naturally love the old city with its ancient edifices, especially the gray old Abby that Cromwell and his legions tried so ineffectually to destroy.

Lying in an escalloped basin all roads lead up to Bath's broad, velvety downs, and one must therefore climb the surrounding hills to reach them; or, following the windings of the lovely river, go along the valley of the Avon.

Bath is still the "Beautiful"; possessing an inexhaustible picturesqueness in her winding and sloping streets, which give at every end a panoramic view of the surrounding beauty.

But a change has come o'er the spirit of the dream; and the city presents a very different aspect to the world to-day to that which she wore in the stirring and romantic times of Beau Brummell, and when Beau Nash was the uncrowned king of her lovely precincts.

Her natural beauties are still undiminished; "Age cannot wither her nor stale her great variety"; the dear old place still presents panorama of splendid scenery; but the once stately city of Bath is fast falling into the sere and yellow leaf of senile decay; the pride,—the pomp,—the power and the passion of her glorious past lie buried forever in the tomb, to which she herself doubtless declines.

Yet she lives on—a witness indisputable, of the Roman conquerors; who finding the district of vast fertility and interest, turned to their utmost account the healing springs of waters which, gushing, bubbling, hissing and boiling, escape from the bowels of the earth. They pitched their tents, 55 B.C., and made a settlement, which lasted until the withdrawal of their Legions in the Fifth Century after Christ. Then gradually and entirely the

Roman city passed from sight; and other builders built for other times.

Only of recent years have excavations brought to light the handiwork of those old Romans. The vast tanks for bathing,—the stone platforms,—the steps and seats,—the columns and vaulted roofs,—the furnaces for heating water,—the lavish use of materials in the plumbing,—all attesting the great knowledge they possessed two thousand years ago. And the Roman bridges, Roman roads and toll houses, bear witness also to the durability of their workmanship. Nor is it possible to dig to any great depth anywhere in Bath without making discoveries of Roman occupation in days long ago.

But the Ghost! Ah! I have not forgotten him! I could not if I so desired; his influence is too strong to be lightly disposed of.

I am a practical, hard-headed man of the world. There is nothing sentimental or imaginative about me; nevertheless, I have often conversed with a ghost, and the statement of the fact has brought a heap of ridicule upon me. Even the wife of my bosom listened to my story with an air of downright skepticism; and though it was impossible to deny the testimony of the coins, I felt,—in spite of their very practical and material evidence,—that she was inclined to doubt the mental condition of her lord!

She interrogated me closely concerning my libations during my stay in Manchester.

Doubtless the noise, smoke, dust, dirt and rain of that city are enough to drive one occasionally to drink; but I am an abstemious man and do not indulge in excess. I did not once overstep the mark during my stay in Cottonopolis. It was a real ghost and no alcoholic liquor which was responsible for my experiences,—and so I endeavored to convince my wife, and to diabuse her mind of the idea that I had courted the whole occurrence by conversing with the spirit.

Conviction, however, must have come when a Jew, giving the name of Leon, visited our establishment and enquired for curios. I exhibited several things, but failed to interest him, and finally showed him the antique coins.

He was delighted with them; and after a certain amount of bargaining ended by purchasing, at a good price, the treasure I had abstracted from the old chimney of the "Roebuck" Inn.

My business and family history will not interest the reader; but one incident should be related. As my wife could not fail to see that the prophecies of the ghost were being fulfilled, she became greatly alarmed. And when, a little later I followed instructions to dispose of my business and retire to the country, she was thoroughly unnerved and pleaded with me to have nothing further to do with the occult.

"Oh! Harry," she cried, piteously, the tears streaming down her cheeks, "do give it all up. I am certain it is but the Devil's work, and I fear for the future—indeed I do!"

I endeavored to soothe her, and made her some promises; but I gave her to understand that I could not disregard the knowledge I possessed; nor slight, nor resist entirely the influence which urged me forward. Besides,—I acknowledged to her,—I felt a great respect—almost an affection—for the ghost of Sir Francis Whynn; and his absence as I would that of an intimate friend. Also, I had experienced that by following his instructions I was always benefited and I, therefore, saw no reason to disregard his counsel, or refuse to be influenced by his advice.

Not long after this explanation I sold my business profitably; and retiring to a quiet country residence in Somersetshire, settled down to the study of metaphysics. My wife, I am glad to say, finally withdrawing a good deal of her opposition to my researches into Spiritual Science.

Time passed, and nothing of importance happened. So long, indeed, was it since I received a visit from the spirit-world that I seemed forgotten. A sense of neglect enveloped me; and depression began to lay its hand upon me.

The land was filled with summer; the twittering and song of the birds,—the drone of insects,—the colour and beauty of flowers,—the richness of foliage and lawn,—all made the surroundings of my country home a great

delight. My special sanctum,—cooled this hot afternoon and toned to a soft light by the sun-blinds shutting out the glare from each window,—was a haven of restful peace and shade. But mentally I drooped; longing for a visit from him, who, with his elegant manner and beauty of aspect had woven himself into my life. Who now seemed unconscious of my existence and whose visits I had almost ceased to expect; forced to the conclusion that he had forgotten all about me.

One afternoon I was sitting listlessly, unable to take an interest even in the occult, when a slight noise, a sound familiar and indescribable, and a waft of delicious perfume attracted my attention, causing my heart to beat wildly with a sudden hope. Nor was I disappointed. For charmingly attired as ever, and as gay, Sir Francis Whynn stood before me.

"Ah, Austin, industrious as usual," he exclaimed. "Surrounded by books and learning! No, no, don't disturb yourself," he added; motioning me with a waive of his lovely hand to retain the seat from which on seeing him I had essayed to rise.

His influence was astounding, the rush of feeling to my breast was overpowering. An overwhelming flow of affection surged through me; I felt a strong desire to kneel before him in abasement. He seemed to know my feelings, for he addressed me in a markedly tender and sympathetic manner:

"I understand you, Austin, and appreciate fully your regard; and I am glad to see that you are beginning to realize how much I desire to benefit you; that I am your true friend and have your welfare faithfully at heart. I shall also do my best to gain the confidence of your wife; a task I hope to accomplish in due season; at present there is more important work to accomplish.

You must now arrange your visit to Hornsworth Castle. The time is ready for action in relation to the affair I have already mentioned to you. You must meet me shortly at Lord Templeton's for the purpose of securing the documents I need. You will find yourself alone in the library of the Castle and will there carry out my plans. My part will be complete, and you must carry yours through in a like thorough manner. Write Lord

Templeton for permission to visit the Castle as I dictate to you, and meet me there eleven days from to-day.

And remember, I promise you this—that if you fulfill my requests as I desire, many secrets shall be revealed to you. And in the near future, as my medium, you shall visit foreign lands, dwell with great ones, and your fame be world-renowned."

As I listened to my handsome visitor speaking thus concerning myself a sense of joy pervaded my whole being; and when I had gained sufficient courage and calmness to be able to speak I assured him I would execute his every order; not with the expectation of gaining a reward for my labours, but because of the sympathy and admiration he aroused within me.

"Believe me, Sir. Francis, you may rely upon me. Yours is my true allegiance. My word is my bond. And every vow I make to you I will keep."

With a sweet smile of delight and a gracious inclination of his shapely head, he answered in his captivating voice: "Thanks, Austin, old fellow; I most certainly accept your physical favours in the spirit in which they are given. I have every confidence in your sincerity, and in your ability to perform the tasks before you. And I appreciate your expressions of loyalty to my cause. Gooy-bye, Austin. Remember to meet me at Hornsworth Castle in eleven days."

And as ever Sir Francis Whynn was gone. Only the memory of the bewitching fascination of his presence, and the exquisite odour of White Rose and Musk—which always pervaded the apartment during his visits—remained with me; wrapping me in delightful recollections for long after his departure.

The Ghost of Sir Francis Whynn has subtly and spiritually enlightened my mind respecting what were at one time difficult problems; and thankfulness blended with respect, deep admiration, and sympathy, fill my soul; and I heartily trust that all his desires may be accomplished. To refuse to aid him would be for me impossible; he is so enchantingly graceful—so easy and clever—I could not resist his power or refuse to accept any ideas he might place before me. I am content to obey his commands and leave results. I am convinced

that he possesses marvellous abilities and is a being of a higher order than mortals.

He can read my thoughts swiftly and accurately, foretell events, make and keep appointments, converse fluently and rationally, visit me by day or night.

Distance presents no difficulty; stone walls cannot keep him out, locked doors in no way prove a bar; but instantaneously he can appear and disappear, and though to all seeming quite substantial, vanishes into the air and is gone.

After such an interview my wife declares that for some time following I appear dazed, and have in my eyes a far-away expression and a glow upon my countenance. She says:

"You never seem properly awake now, Harry. And when that persistent spook of yours has manifested, your appearance and manner is of one who has been suddenly aroused from deep slumber, and who is only partly conscious of his surroundings."

"My dear," I expostulate mildly, "I feel wide awake enough—Surely you exaggerate a little. I am well aware you object to Sir Francis Whynn using my physical organism, but let me beg of you to take a more tolerant view and a more rational standpoint. The wisdom of his present course of action will be made clear some day."

I realize that my wife is somewhat prejudiced against the visits of the Ghost. Perhaps it is pardonable, for, as you see, we have neither chick nor child, and all our married life have been a devoted couple. These spiritual manifestations are our first division. I do my best to assure her all is well both now and in the future, and that my affection is not in any way estranged from her. And she admits that since the visits of the Ghost both she and I have to acknowledge the development of much latent talent. She having been influenced by a great desire to draw and paint, and in a marvellously rapid fashion has developed ability for portraiture and landscapes—faculties she hitherto never dreamed that she possessed. Again, she has unfolded powers of clairvoyance, and is able to describe to me the forms and objects she discerns which are not present to our physical senses. I encourage her all I possi-

bly can in this direction, deeply interested myself and confident such power will benefit her; and it may be the operating influence which will prevail upon her to take more kindly to Sir Francis Whynn.

My study of Spiritual Science has led me to discover that I am capable of being what is termed "controlled"; that is, my whole mental and spiritual ego can be completely dominated by the influence of a spirit-being. I am informed that I am a "spirit-medium" and considered a good physical instrument for use by the spirit-people,—which possibly explains why I have been chosen to go upon this remarkable errand to Hornsworth Castle.

I wrote, as instructed, to Lord William Templeton, and in making my written request I followed the directions of a spirit-voice which, in distinctly audible words, dictated every syllable of the letter.

This amazing experience occurred to me when I was alone in my study one evening, just before dusk; I could see no form, but every utterance was clear and distinct. I confess to considerable nervousness when the words first fell upon my ears, nor do I think that is surprising considering the—in my case—unprecedented happening. The letter was beautifully expressed, and evidently dictated by a person of rank. It produced the desired effect, permission being received from Lord Templeton for me to stay at Hornsworth and to make any use I required of his noted collection of books.

Truly the Fates were propitious and I considered myself a very fortunate individual!

All preparations being completed, I journeyed to Westmorland, and in due course arrived at the country station, where a smart brougham was waiting for me. On my arrival at the Castle I was received with respect by the steward and housekeeper, and after being shown to my room, and partaking of a *recherche* luncheon, I was taken on a tour of inspection by the old family butler.

Hornsworth is a stately erection built in the Elizabethan period. In 1669 a handsome wing was added, designed by that renowned architect,—Sir Christopher Wren; and various other additions have been made from time to time, and the interior fitted with every desirable modern appliance.

My interest centred chiefly in the picture gallery and the library; the former abounding with splendid works of art in which I took particular delight; my attention being riveted by a magnificent portrait of Sir Francis Whynn—executed by that great Italian painter, Baloni. There was also a beautiful painting by an unknown artist representing a lady and a gentleman—Sir Francis, I feel sure—upon a terrace; a smooth green lawn spread out before and below them. The lady,—lovely in the extreme,—is seated in a stiff high-backed chair, her companion bending over her with a world of affection in his gaze; she toys with a bouquet of roses, some of the petals of which have fallen and lie scattered on the ground. The grace of attitude and the perfection of her beauty of face and form are beyond my poor ability to describe.

About this picture I asked many questions. Who was the lady? Who was the gentleman? Who the painter? I received very unsatisfactory replies. The gentleman was a remote ancestor of Lord Templeton, who died abroad whilst comparatively young—the lady was a friend. I noticed that the rather aged butler seemed a little deaf, more especially when I made enquiries concerning Sir Francis Whynn.

During my stay the pictures were all uncovered and I made many visits to the gallery—indeed I could scarcely tear myself away—chiefly because of those magnificent portraits of Sir Francis Whynn. The old butler usually accompanied me; he had little to do while the family was abroad, and a privileged and learned visitor,—I think he looked upon me as a *savant*,—was always welcome; and he respected me accordingly.

We were standing talking in the gallery on the usual topic of family history as exemplified in portraits, when a startling noise attracted our attention; it proceeded from the picture of the unknown pair and was as though someone had sharply cracked a whip. As it could not be accounted for otherwise, I took it to be a signal to me from the unseen. Therefore, expressing my desire to consult a book, I left the gallery. I observed old John looked around apprehensively as we went out.

On reaching the library I settled myself in one of its restful and capacious chairs with an interesting volume on

my knee. I had scarcely lost myself in its pages when a slight and well-recognized sound caused me to look up—my ghost was standing before me, smiling and *debonair*.

"Delighted to see you again, Austin," said he. Then with a sweeping bow, "Let me present you to my friends." And behold, three other spirits stood with him, their white robes arranged and worn much as the Roman wore his *toga*. Indicating each individual, Sir Francis introduced them:

"This is Father Piercy,—my Father Confessor, and this is my esteemed friend, Rudolph Kellier,—physician and surgeon; a most useful person in warfare,—duel,—or desperate *fracas*, to repair damages. And this is my clever friend, Ribchester Rochester Hilton, a Shakesperian actor, or heavy tragedian,—therefore well suited and ever ready to amuse me when I am sad. Nevertheless, I am fortunate to be honored with their friendship. As you see, Austin, the professions are well represented."

The spirits having acknowledged the introduction, he continued:

"My reason for bringing about this meeting between you and these gentlemen is, that when necessity demands they will make use of your organism. Therefore I advise you to co-operate with them, as you have so kindly done with me. The hour of your mission at Hornsworth has arrived. This," directing my attention towards a beautifully designed and exquisitely carved cabinet of Italian workmanship, "is an heirloom, hence considered priceless; and to me is especially valuable, for the reason that it contains many secrets the world must never know. And," he added smilingly, "I intend now to remove the danger of discovery.

"Give your complete attention, Austin, while I direct my subordinats to take dimensions, magnetize, and break open the parts which securely hold my treasure. You must then take charge of the documents and keep them safe at any cost."

He turned, and in a foreign tongue spoke to someone.

At that moment a flood of soft, phosphorescent light fell upon the cabinet; and to my astonishment a spirit-man appeared clothed in a white sack-like garment from which his head and a pair of brawny arms emerged. He held a plumb-line which he pressed to the sides of the cabinet as

though measuring it. Then suddenly the spectral light went out, and for a space awesome darkness fell upon us; followed by a gradual returning of the light of day.

During the darkness the room seemed full of uncanny sounds, such as a number of rats would make scratching, nibbling, and rushing away at a great speed. This was quickly succeeded by crashes and cracking, and to my utter bewilderment the precious cabinet collapsed, scattering its contents on the floor. I felt amazed and helpless—utterly at a loss what to do. I did not understand the proceedings one iota; therefore I did not move until a whispered command directed me to secure part of the contents.

I obeyed immediately; and placing some neatly tied documents in my pockets, was wondering what would be expected of me next, when I found myself raised and whirled into space; and travelling at such speed that I imagined I must be many miles from Hornsworth Castle.

I must have fainted; for I remember nothing more until I slowly regained consciousness and found myself seated in the interior of a church.

It seemed to be empty. But shortly there fell upon my ears delicious and entrancing melodies. An unseen organist poured forth his soul in music, which died upon a weird and wailing note.

For an appreciable period silence reigned. Then suddenly the organ recommenced its music and in swelling tones a solemn air was played, and voices added sweetness. A number of choristers evidently took part, for now I observed many boys in white surplices parading the aisles and singing lustily. I also noticed candles burning upon the altar; nor was I greatly surprised when a priest—the exact likeness of Father Piercy—came forward, his acolytes swinging incense before that holy place.

It was all most absorbing; yet I wondered why I had been brought hither, and was lost in conjecture regarding the situation when came a sudden change; the cathedral,—its beauty—its music—its occupants—were all blotted out. And I again experienced the remarkable sensation of travelling rapidly through space.

I now became aware that I was sitting in Lord Templeton's library. But a sense of unreality possessed me, and moving to assure myself of facts, I heard the soft tones

of Sir Francis' voice and felt the touch of his cool, firm hand pass lightly, almost caressingly, over my brow.

"Ah, my dear Austin, you are all right now. We have you here quite safely! You see," he continued, "Father Piercy was rather anxious for you to become acquainted with his time-honored place of worship where he so ably officiated in days gone by when he resided in the physical body upon your mundane sphere. Eh, Piercy?"

"Our mission has been most successfully accomplished, thanks to your personal aid; and the valuable assistance of these spirit-gentlemen; for which, believe me, I am extremely grateful. The task, however, is not yet complete; will you, therefore, finish it by conveying the documents entrusted to you to your private study; securely fasten them in your *escritoire*, and on no account disturb them without my permission! I have every confidence in you, Austin; and feel sure that you will respect my wishes. And now, desiring not to draw too much upon your vitality, my friends and I will leave you. *Au revoir!*"

With these words the ghost and his companions faded from my sight; and a great loneliness fell upon me.

The sound of an enquiring voice,—harsh by comparison with that to which I had so lately listened, brought me back to the material world.

"May I come in, sir? Are you all right, sir?" and without waiting for permission the speaker entered, and gazing upon me anxiously, continued:

"I fancied I heard the bell ring just now, sir. I answered it, and found you fast asleep—and dreaming, it seemed, sir; for you were talking quite aloud. I immediately withdrew. But feeling anxious about you, sir, I came back and knocked again and ventured in. I trust I have not disturbed you, sir; and that you will pardon the intrusion!"

I sprang to my feet, trying to collect my senses, and stammered out some lame excuse to the dignified, if obsequious, old butler who stood in the doorway regarding me with concern; his excellent training forbidding him to make more personal remarks.

My conduct must certainly have appeared most strange, my only immediate answer being to feel hastily

in the breast pockets of my coat to assure myself of the safety of the precious documents. I then glanced hurriedly and apprehensively round the room to where the beautiful cabinet had stood, expecting to see wreckage and disorder. To my amazement and relief nothing seemed amiss, nor from outward appearances was it possible to gather that anything untoward had happened to the handsome furniture. Had it not been for the undeniable presence of those letters in my pockets, I should willingly have believed I had dreamed the whole occurrence.

As diplomatically as I could I lulled any suspicion of strange behaviour on my part; and requested the butler to ask Mr. Lennox to come to me in the library.

From observation I had decided that the steward was a man well-informed, very intelligent, agreeable, and possessed of a strong personality. On his arrival I talked of various matters pertaining to the traditions of Hornsworth, and steering the conversation towards the supernatural, finally enquired if the Castle boasted a Family Ghost.

Mr. Lennox ridiculed, but did not directly deny the possibility. In the excitement of discussion I disclosed some of the truths concerning my marvellous experiences with spirit-people. I thought my listener rather sarcastic once or twice; but ultimately he confessed that Hornsworth really had the reputation of being haunted; and that chiefly on that account Lord and Lady Templeton avoided living there as much as possible.

He took pains, however, to assure me that he personally had never seen or heard of a supernatural character,—“nor for that matter has Lord Templeton; but the same cannot be said truthfully of her Ladyship, who is of a nervous, excitable temperament, and often declares that she can see and hear things which other people cannot.”

“I should say, Mr. Austin,” he remarked after a short pause, “that imagination plays a great part in these superstitious matters. And ladies, being weaker both mentally and physically, often become hysterical, and jump to the conclusion that they see spectres, or apparitions. I am, therefore, surprised to hear you defend the belief and affirm that you, also, have seen ghosts.”

"I beg to reiterate that assertion," I replied rather sharply. For, to tell the truth, I resented the inference that weakness of mentality, or hysteria, are essential qualifications to seeing ghosts. "I am proud to state that I have both seen and conversed—many times—with invisible beings, usually termed ghosts. And I must say that I have invariably found them highly intelligent, if not intellectual. And in one case, to my knowledge, a positively charming and cultured being has manifested to me innumerable times.

"Now, Mr. Lennox, I do not suffer from hallucinations, or mental aberration, nor do I consider myself at all weak-minded. Yet I am absolutely certain that I have conversed familiarly with an ancestor of Lord Templeton, quiet recently."

"Indeed."

"Yes," I continued, with increasing warmth. "I might say, indeed, that my visit to Hornsworth is due to Sir Francis Whynn—that it is he who is mainly responsible for my presence here today. And according to his own account, and also to family records, he has been "dead" over two hundred years."

"Pray do not excite yourself, Mr. Austin. I have no desire to argue about it. It seems to me to be purely a matter of belief—or fancy. And just one of those subjects which cannot be settled by dispute. However, I am quite content to accept your statement and let it rest at that for the present." And with a somewhat compasisonate smile on his face, Mr. Lennox took his leave.

I much regretted having broached the subject; but perhaps I was influenced to do so. We do not always realize when we are.

My mission having been accomplished and the documents now safely in my possession, my visit to Hornsworth drew to its close.

Judging by the manner of the Agent, the housekeeper, and old John, it would seem that I had created a favourable impression, and that my departure was regretted. Mr. Lennox drove me in a smart dog-cart to the railway station and waited to see me off. In due course—amid snorts, whistles and agonizing shrieks—the huge locomotive started; the watchers on the platform waving adieu

to their respective friends became smaller and smaller and were lost to sight. I took my last look at the beauty of the surrounding country; and drawing up the window of the first-class compartment, settled myself comfortably in its well-padded seat, and gave myself up to solid reflection on the incidents of my visit to Hornsworth.

Amongst other things, I cogitated upon the queer apparition of the rough spirit-man who used his plumb-line with such magical results; and gravely wondered if he had been a burglar in his day and generation. Thinking thus recalled a story which a friend of mine relates: His business premises were cleverly broken into, and a large safe forced open and rifled; but fortunately the thief was captured just as he was making off with his booty. The surprising part of the tale is that the only tools found in the burglar's possession were a jemmy, a handful of nails, and a piece of copper wire Had spirits helped him, I wondered.

But then,—I argued to myself, as I followed this train of thought,—that kind of thing is altered by death, of course. Surely there is no necessity for burglars to practice their art in the spirit realm? Yet burglary might be useful even to spirit-people, for when one comes to think of it, practically speaking, the documents now in my possession were stolen by that spirit-man and me!

The problem became too perplexing—I felt I had better leave it.

I now became aware of an almost insuperable desire to break the seals and view the contents of my precious charge; and it was necessary to battle fiercely with the temptation in order not to yield to it. But I am thankful to say I did ultimately triumph over it; and when I at last arrived home, it was with the seals intact. And the much-prized documents were safely deposited, as requested, in my desk; to be removed by other hands than mine.

I received a most cordial welcome from my wife, who, full of excitement and anticipation, was longing to hear a detailed account of my visit to Westmorland. We talked together for hours, and I told her everything I could remember of the Castle, and its people. And of my visitors from the Spirit Universe.

The unabated interest with which she listened, and the intelligent comments which she made from time to time, were to me a source of great encouragement, and gratification.

CHAPTER III

My wife's interest in Spiritual Science had so far developed, and her attitude towards Sir Francis Whynn had so greatly changed, that she was most willing to co-operate with me in arranging for a series of meetings to be held consecutively throughout the Winter months.

We decided on a definite number of Seances.

To these we invited old, and—we fondly imagined—tried and trusted friends.

Alas! for the sacred bond of friendship! It will not always bear the strain of dark adversity—or New Ideas. At least, that is the conclusion I am driven by experience to accept.

The Seances began.

And now commenced a truly amazing development of physical power exhibited by spirit-people. Who, by their knowledge of the subtle force termed "psychic", made known their presence in unmistakable manner.

At our meetings my physical organism became the instrument of quite a number of mysterious manifestations. There were heard loud and startling raps; and sounds incident to the labours of a carpenter,—such as the sawing of wood, hammering of nails, planing and boring. At other times came the falling of heavy weights; the ringing noise of an anvil struck with tremendous force; at others, the melody of a musical instrument skillfully played. And wearing apparel, ornaments, pictures, and so forth, would be removed from their position and taken to different parts of the house.

Occasionally, in full view of the sitters, small articles would be taken from my person,—such as keys, coins, studs; a tie pin, a watch and chain. These things, leaving their places, would go forth towards the gathering,—greatly to the alarm of the ladies present.

By no means did we keep these enigmatical happenings secret; all our intimate friends were invited to be witnesses of these marvels.

About this time I made the discovery that,—however much people may appear to respect, and unequivocally accept one's word upon mundane matters; directly one declares belief in the activity of those called "dead", the genuineness of their affirmations and acceptance is severely tested.

I was soon voted a "crank", and practically called "insane" by those who had known me all my life and shared my hospitality innumerable times.

They went further. They were so very skeptical concerning those same spiritual marvels that they openly declared that I had arranged the whole affair,—fixing up an elaborate apparatus of invisible wires, and so forth—in order to deceive them. They unanimously declared me to be a fool or a rogue. And this from those who designated themselves my "friends"!

Ah, me!

The most trying part was that no amount of evidence or argument would convince them that their conclusions were wrong.

Finally, therefore, I refused to have anything more to do with such intolerant persons. And in a paper devoted to Spiritual Science I advertised for honest investigators.

The result proved most satisfactory. Thenceforth, with a number of earnest truth-seekers around, my mediumship grew apace.

I should like my readers to understand that all replies were not accepted. No! not by any means. The letters were all most carefully examined; and only those selected by spirit direction were permitted to attend the sittings.

The Spirit-persons who are most regularly in communication with a Medium are spoken of as "Counselors", "Familiar Spirits" or "Guides".

Hence those spirit-men to whom Sir Francis introduced me,—namely, Father Piercy, Rochester Hilton, and Dr. Kellier,—became as elder brothers. Giving me always their protection and instruction; and introducing me to bright and beautiful angel forms, who demonstrated from time to time their proximity by materializing fully. Revealing their presence chiefly by the use

of a phosphorescent disc,—or slate, and the aid of a ruby lamp.

The luminous slate and the crimson lamp were the only material accessories the spirit-people asked me to employ.

Surrounded now by seekers after knowledge of the occult life, our Seances met with results beyond all expectation—the manifestations being of a really perfect order.

With regard to spiritual phenomena, I am, indeed, but a neophyte; the little I know has, in truth, been forced upo me by spirit-beings. I did not seek the living dead; without my invocation they discovered me. And in spite (at first) of protest, insisted on enlightening me concerning their spiritual existence, for which I am now truly grateful.

And,—without egotism, I may say that my mediumship has unfolded until many marvels were transmitted through me. Amongst which were levitation, floating, matter passing through matter, direct speaking and writing; and other forms of psychic power.

And many loved friends of those investigating—friends who had passed the gates of death—made their presence convincingly felt and seen. On such occasions I was often bound and fastened in a wire cage; and therefore, could in no way help in these direct manifestations; which were incontestably genuine.

The band of “Guides” was presently augmented by a jolly spirit-man,—a French clown, named Adolphe,—who always caused much diversion. He was usually accompanied by a stoical Maori Chief, called Tomshaw, who invariably developed for inspection in full war array decorated with a number of weapons.

“Literally dressed to kill!” Adolphe declared.

Despite the comical contrast of these two, the manifestations were considered marvellous; the grim old New Zealand Chief in his fearsome, primitive costume, and Adolphe in his funny, clownish garb, both wonderful in a weird fashion.

About this time there came into our circle, by spiritual request, two wealthy foreigners, connected, it was

said, with the Russian Embassy. Following their advent spirits of a decidedly military aspect began to appear.

Also, to the number of guides were added two lovely and delightful females—one, giving the name of Valerie; the other, a young girl calling herself Virginia—who charmed and interested the sitters beyond expression.

Our meetings, having exceeded the original number, had lasted through the Winter and well on into the Spring. Summer was now approaching. The gentlemen from the Russian Embassy were returning to their native land. And it was decided that the sittings should be discontinued for a period.

CHAPTER IV

The early Autumn brought me an important foreign communication.

It was penned by Baron Milhail Ortinsky, and purported to be an invitation from the Czar of Russia!

It was a request that I would visit the Russian Court, to enable the Emperor and Empress to witness the wonderful manifestations which occurred through my mediumship.

At the same time came a letter from Lord Templeton desiring me to go immediately to Hornsworth Castle.

I had no hesitation in accepting Lord Templeton's invitation; but experienced the greatest difficulty in deciding for, or against, the call to Russia.

I pleaded the length of the journey; the difficulties of travel,—the season; and also, domestic reasons.

The reply to all this was an imperative note, signed by the Czar himself, commanding me to visit him, as soon as possible, at his Winter Palace in Moscow. With it was a letter from Baron Ortinsky, stating that all expenses connected with my transit to Russia would be amply covered, and those of my wife,—should she desire to accompany me; that every arrangement would be made for our comfort, and that no refusal would be accepted.

I therefore, re-considered my decision; and finally submitted to His Imperial Majesty's command.

But before going to Russia I visited Lord William Templeton, whom I found to be an exceptionally agreeable man, and very easy to get on with. Lady Templeton was less affable; she appeared to me rather cold, self-opinionated and distant. Nevertheless, I must not complain altogether of her demeanour towards me; she could, I found, be very gracious when she pleased.

As Lord Templeton engaged me after dinner "across the walnuts and the wine," I discovered his special reason for desiring my presence was that he had heard from Mr. Lennox that I was somewhat versed in ghost-lore.

"Ah, by the way, Mr. Austin," he remarked, "I understand that you believe in ghosts?"

"Yes, my Lord, I do. It was, indeed, a very special ghost who first induced me to write to you for permission to visit Hornsworth Castle."

"Really," replied Lord Templeton. "How very interesting! Have you any objection to telling me the story?"

"Not in the least, my Lord. The ghost in question should be well known by name to you. He is indeed a remote ancestor of yours, named Whynn. He calls himself 'Sir Francis Whynn.' Is not Whynn one of your race, my Lord?"

"Yes, certainly. The name of Whynn appears in the family tree. His half-sister, Lady Ann Templeton, née Whynn, is a direct ancestress of mine."

"It was, my Lord, at the urgent request of Sir Francis Whynn that I came to Hornsworth Castle last Autumn;—and for a specific purpose. Though previous to his visitations and advice, I must confess, I did not know of its existence. I followed his directions; and during my visit witnessed extraordinary happenings, which, at present, I am not permitted to disclose."

"Quite so, Mr. Austin. I shall not press you. I do not in the least doubt your word respecting your ghostly orders. My own peculiar experience with the conduct of such beings precludes my doing so. Re-fill your glass, have a cigar, and tell me the whole story."

"Many thanks, my Lord, but I rarely smoke, and I drink but little wine."

"All right, then. Tell me the story."

"I shall be delighted, my Lord, to unfold all I can concerning that most interesting phantom; although I am not at liberty to reveal his motives,"—and I proceeded with a full account of my first meeting with Sir Francis Whynn and the numerous interviews which followed.

"I can quite believe all you have told me, Mr. Austin," was his Lordship's comment. "And I don't mind confessing to you that Lady Templeton had been—is still, in fact,—persistently haunted by a ghost, who, much to our annoyance, compels her to listen to a recital of

what he calls his wrongs. He declares he has been injured by someone connected with the Templeton family; and that he is seeking revenge. He asserts that papers relating to the affair are hidden in a rather pretty cabinet we possess. We have searched most carefully, but can find no vestige of papers of any kind."

"Of course not! my Lord," I exclaimed. "They have been removed." "At least," I added, instantly regretting my impulsive utterance,—"so I am given to understand."

Without noticing the lameness of the latter part of my remark Lord Templeton continued:

"Then you fancy there really is some truth in the tiresome phantom's story!"

"It seems probable, my Lord. I feel that there is a mystery attached to some documents that once reposed in a secret receptacle somewhere in the Castle—is the cabinet you mentioned, here, my Lord?"

"Oh, yes; it is still in the library. You might like to know how it came into the family possession. I must admit I am somewhat at a loss to understand how you come to hear about the missing papers, Mr. Austin?" I made no reply; and Lord Templeton went on.—"The late Sir Francis Whynn, of whom we are speaking, was born at Llangollen Castle quite two hundred and fifty years ago and died abroad at the age of twenty-seven. There appears to have been something tragic in his death,—the nature of which is not exactly known. His father, Sir David, was twice married; there were children by each marriage. Ann, the daughter of the first wife, married Lord Hector Templeton and bore him many children; the eldest of whom—a son—is my direct ancestor.

"Francis was the only son of the second wife, and came into the Baronetcy at the age of nineteen. At the time of his succession he seems to have been traveling on the Continent accompanied by a trusted tutor. He was recalled by his father's death to take up his position as head of the family, and owner of a considerable estate in Wales. His conduct towards his tenants and peasantry was marked by justice and consideration. Many improvements resulted; and he was held in great affection by his tenantry. But having formed a taste for

travel; after a few years spent on the improvement of his land and the betterment of his people, he returned to the Continent.

"From that time his history becomes obscure, and nothing definite is known beyond his letters to his half-sister, Lady Ann,—who loved him devotedly, and sincerely mourned his absence from their country; and who almost died of grief when she heard of his untimely end.

"By her wish his body was brought from Italy and laid in the Chapel of Llangollen Castle. In Lady Ann's diary is also mentioned the advent of the walnut cabinet, sent her from Rome by General Stanhope; containing, it was said, defamatory statements concerning her brother's life abroad. Attached to the cabinet were a key and a label; upon the label were inscribed symbols directing the manipulation of the key.

"Whether Lady Ann opened the secret drawer, or not, cannot as yet be determined—she makes no further reference in her diary to the cabinet. I intend to leave no stone unturned, however; but to discover those papers, if possible.

"And if, by your occult powers, Mr. Austin, you could obtain tidings of the key; I should be under the greatest obligation to you."

As I listened, a strange, unaccountable tremor seized me; and a strong desire came upon me to visit the library at once; so I replied:

"I shall be delighted to assist you occultly, if I can, my Lord. And I should very much like to view the interesting and remarkable cabinet."

We repaired immediately to the library and had scarcely reached it when strange noises startled us—cracking and creaking of a most eerie character. On entering the room we were amazed by a terrific bang in the direction of the walnut cabinet. Then, to our astonishment, we saw two small doors open towards us; and a shelf tilt forward, as though worked upon a spring. Upon the floor there dropped—apparently out of space—a bundle of documents which I immediately recognized as the very packets I thought were securely fastened in my *escrotoire* at home!!

A blinding dizziness seized me, causing me to stagger against the wall and cling to it for support. I learned later I had been the instrument for the physical manifestation.

Just then a door opened suddenly, and Lady Templeton entered, demanding to know what had happened.

"Nothing serious, my dear," replied Lord Templeton, quietly, as stooping he secured the fallen documents and advanced to meet his wife. "I will endeavour to explain the unusual sounds which, no doubt, you heard, my love. They were caused by some psychic force; and something, or someone, precipitated this packet" (extending it towards her) "in a most mysterious manner, out of space."

"Heavens, William! What have you been doing?" exclaimed her ladyship, "Surely you are not tampering with invisible powers? It is a dangerous pastime at best; and you know my strong aversion to such practices."

"Be assured, my darling, I will tamper with nothing of an unpleasant character, if I can possibly avoid so doing," replied Lord Templeton.

"I am glad to hear you say so, William," answered her Ladyship, "But tell me, were you not invoking psychic aid when this occurred?"

"No, my dear. Mr. Austin and I had scarcely entered the library when this amazing thing happened."

"It is really most mysterious," Lady Templeton persisted, "Because the Voice warned me that something of this nature would take place; and assured me that important secret papers had been disturbed; and that Mr. Austin was the instrument for this purpose. And I now find on entering the library that a great deal of the warning is quite true. Therefore I must request Mr. Austin to apologize for his intrusion and interference; and I hope, William, you will arrange for him to leave immediately."

"I am extremely sorry, my Lady, if my presence causes you annoyance," I stammered,—crimson and confused. "But if you will permit me,—I will endeavour to explain—"

"Marion, my love," interposed Lord Templeton, "Mr. Austin is our guest. And he has in no way infringed the laws of hospitality. There is no reason for such severity."

"I am afraid, William, I am the more competent judge. Will you please ask him to account for his extraordinary conduct respecting the stolen documents? I should very much like to know his reason for assisting in the theft."

Lady Templeton's words transfixed me with amazement,—her accusation was astounding! I endeavoured to clear myself by uttering an incoherent statement protesting my innocence of evil intent.

"Marion, my dear," remonstrated Lord Templeton, "pray calm yourself. I wish you would realize that Mr. Austin's priceless knowledge of the supernormal can immensely assist us in making important discoveries concerning that voice which has troubled us both for years. Therefore, I beg of you, Marion, leave us together for awhile." Thus saying, he opened for her the door through which her Ladyship had entered; and closing it after her, turned to me with profuse apologies for accusations.

"I beg you will not think that I agree with anything which has been uttered to your discredit, Mr. Austin. I feel confident you would not practice deception upon us. Nor, indeed, does it seem that there could have been any opportunity, had you so desired."

"Wait, my Lord! I may be less innocent than you imagine; and Lady Templeton may not be so far wrong after all. Let me explain my position."

And I hurriedly related all I knew in connection with the annoying papers.

Lord Templeton's incredulous gaze was fixed upon me; and before I could add anything to my story,—or his thoughts find utterance, I felt consciousness slipping from me. I seemed to be enveloped in a mist and lost all knowledge of material things.

On coming to myself I found Lord Templeton bending over me; his worn, kindly face very close to mine.

"Better now, Mr. Austin?" he enquired solicitously, as I gazed at him in bewilderment.

"I don't know," I answered. "I feel very strange—what has happened?"

"You have been entranced and controlled. And I have had a long, and intensely interesting conversation with the spirit of Francis Whynn. Through you he has given me valuable—most valuable—information.

"Your mediumship must be of a remarkably high order, Mr. Austin. Your Spirit-guides have told me that your psychic powers are of the greatest value to your Control and to the spirit-friends who use you. I will not weary you now, but I must tell you that the psychic terms I use were given to me during your trance, and that your amiable Control has most kindly advised me upon an expeditious method of riding ourselves of the annoying spirit who has haunted Lady Templeton and Hornsworth for so many weary years.

"I am unable to adequately express my gratitude for the privilege of meeting you, Mr. Austin; and your wonderful Control."

As may be imagined, I, also, felt grateful and delighted at the happy turn of events.

And next day, on leaving Hornsworth Castle, I was in an excellent frame of mind. Well satisfied that, in spite of Lady Templeton's prejudice against me, attributed—and rightly, I believe—to spirit influence, I had been the instrument of beneficial labour.

My perplexity concerning the reappearance of the documents in such a mysterious manner, I wisely decided to leave until I should receive an explanation from my beloved Sir Francis Whynn.

CHAPTER V

There was now the Russian visit to consider. Still feeling unwilling to face the ordeal, I was debating my course of action; when I received a further, impressive message from Baron Ortinsky; saying that the Czar was anxiously awaiting my presence, and proof of my mediumship, and requesting me to start imemdiately for Russia.

Permitting this letter to decide me, I put my house in order; and accompanied by Mrs. Austin, began the journey. We crossed from London to Ostend, and thence proceeded overland through Germany to Russia.

I will pass over the incidents *en route*, attempting no description of the journey; but by remarking that we were not altogether charmed with the Russian country. The whole place appeared to be dominated by red-tape officialism which made it very inconvenient for ordinary travellers. Though we, certainly, had no reason to complain of the passports supplied to us. They were a veritable "Open Sesame;" a talisman for all the might-have-been difficulties of the way, naturally the Government officials were impressed by them, and were accordingly most civil. And, indeed, the politeness we received everywhere was most gratifying and remarkable, due—I feel sure—to the fact that our passports bore the Imperial signature.

These things occurred in 1903.

On arriving at Moscow, my wife and I were greatly affected by the sublime magnificence of the Czar's Winter Palace. It completely entranced us when we first made acquaintance with it; but by degrees we grew accustomed to the splendours of our surroundings.

Baron Ortinsky was solicitous for our personal comfort; and gave all possible orders respecting our requirements. Fortunately for us both he spoke English well, which greatly added to our ease, and interest; and the pleasantness of our visit.

The Baron coached us carefully in the necessary points of etiquette. So that, when at last the great moment

arrived, my wife and I conducted ourselves correctly on our presentation to Their Imperial Majesties, the Czar and the Czarina.

We were most affably and kindly received; and returned from the august audience filled with the conviction that the Czar and Crazina were a delightful, charming, noble and gracious pair.

By His Majesty's command I was to hold a seance on the evening following our presentation.

In order to prepare myself for such an important occasion, I locked myself in the study set apart for my especial use, where, resting in the comfort of its quiet and rich seclusion, I invoked the presence and aid of those ministering angels whose plastic instrument I believed myself to be.

Earnestly I prayed that my familiar spirit and intimate Control would—as he had so often in the past—directly manifest.

Waiting thus, I tried to decipher the peculiar calligraphy of a missive recently delivered to me, and purporting to be in English. But try as I would, I could not read it. The signature only was intelligible to me—“Alexander Vasilý Rusakóff.”

Suddenly—to my unbounded delight—there fell upon my ear the slight rustling sound so closely associated with the presence of my chief control; my heart began to beat fast with pleasurable anticipation and, raising my eyes expectantly from perusal of the letter, I encountered the merry gaze of Sir Francis Whynn.

“Still studying, Austin,” he observed. “Though I see the matter in hand is beyond you this time. Permit me to be interpreter,” and, without giving time for a reply, or appearing even to read the letter, he continued, “This is written by one General Alexander Rusakóff, and says: ‘Sir, I should esteem it a favour if, by your occult powers, you could discover, and assist in bringing to justice, the assassins of my brother, Count Gregory Rusakóff, who was foully murdered in his bed-chamber three years ago. I shall be greatly obliged by your assistance. It is believed that Nihilists have been the perpetrators of the dastardly crime. Alexander Rusakóff.’ ”

"Dear me, that's cool! The gallant General has set you a very difficult task, Austin. It is quite evident that he knows more about warfare than mediumship. Now, if you are willing to be advised by me, I should say decisively: Have as little as possible to do with such investigations; keep off the Fortune-telling plane."

"Without your full sanction, Sir Francis," I hastened to assure him, "I would never dream of aiding sensational investigations."

"That is well!" he replied. "I see you are wise in your generation, Austin, old fellow!"

"Now, I must tell you that we, my friends and I, have an important task before us.

"At the coming seance we intend to present the doctrine of Spirit-return—which is the ancient belief in the direct manifestation of the so-called Dead—in a manner which will leave no room for doubt. For this purpose we have gathered together a special band of controls, some of whom are clever magnetizers and linguists. They will be under the personal direction of such noted Spirit-beings as Father Piercy, Dr. Kellier, Rochester Hilton and others.

"The important labor of preparing the room for the seance and arranging for the presence of spirit-friends of august personages, is now progressing. For such a great occasion you also, as our medium, must be very specially strengthened. The spirit-magnetizers will work upon you before the sitting. And, let me beg of you, do not swallow too much of that pernicious black mixture stewing in the *samovar* there, termed 'tea.' An excess will injure your delicate nerves, which it is my duty to protect, if possible!"

"Now keep up your courage, Austin. All will be well."

With these words he faded from my sight. Leaving me cheered, though anxious still, lest at the important hour my mediumship should fail me or fall below the best.

Once more alone I reflected upon the experience of the past. Recalling how from time to time truths have been borne in upon me respecting spiritual matters, truths which are marvellous. Through which I have discovered that spirit-power, namely, reserved or unseen forces, can be evolved, prepared and conveyed from place to place, and by means thereof, under the direction of invisible intelligences, extraordinary manifestations can occur.

"If only", I said, speaking aloud my thoughts, "one could realize fully what Sir Francis expresses so often, that 'The Spiritual realm into which we enter through the change named Death *is a replica of this*; and therefore the very human world'. But our early training and conditions lead us to very different conclusions and cause us to believe the departed who die in holy faith are at once transformed into angels. This, of course, is more particularly true of Calvinism, Evangelism and Nonconformity generally than of the other forms of Christianity. For both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Churches believe in an intermediate state."

My meditations were interrupted by a message from the Countess Olga Androvisky, maid of honor to the Czarina, requesting a private interview. Not knowing how to refuse I acceded to the lady's request.

I was conscious of a little flutter of excitement and I must admit that on her arrival I was somewhat overwhelmed at finding myself alone in the immediate presence of an acknowledged court beauty.

To my consternation I learned that the lovely countess, like the brave general, imagined me to be a first-rate Fortune-teller. And were I to reveal the object of her mission I should, I fear, be making public an important court secret.

A few minutes later I was bowing out in my very best manner a lady whose beauty was heightened, rather than diminished, by her palpable annoyance.

After this experience I was decidedly "not at home" to any applicants whosoever.

I do not think I can ever forget my first seance held in the presence of an imperial assembly.

On entering the room, which, according to directions, had been furnished with a curtained cabinet containing a couch and chair, my heart beat almost to suffocation. This was followed immediately by a remarkable calmness.

Making my obeisance to the Czar and Czarina and their distinguished circle—amongst whom I noticed Baron Ortinsky, I entered the cabinet with a firm step.

By gracious invitation of the Czar, Mrs. Austin also was present. And the knowledge that my wife and Baron Ortinsky both thoroughly appreciated and believed in

Spiritual Science, and would be in harmony with the wishes of my spirit-guides, enabled me to give myself at once to spirit-influences.

I quickly fell into a trance-like sleep, during which I was absolutely unconscious of external happenings.

At the end of a long trance I was still in the cabinet. As I slowly regained consciousness I could feel myself being magnetized by spirit-people and I heard the low, sweet voice of my chief control, saying encouragingly:

"Do not fear, Austin; you are all right now. The seance has been a magnificent success! Keep up your heart, old fellow! We shall all turn up trumps!"

And before I could frame a reply Sir Francis was gone.

I essayed to rise and to move from the cabinet. At that moment Baron Ortinsky entered enquiring solicitously: "Mr. Austin, are you quite conscious yet?"

I answered that I felt normal but rather weak.

The baron hastened to my assistance and as he led me from the cabinet he informed me that their Imperial Majesties and the court had all retired, thoroughly satisfied with the spirit-manifestations which they had witnessed during the seance.

When I had recovered sufficiently my wife greatly enlightened me as to the seance, giving me many particulars of the manifestations. Being myself unconscious the whole time I am, of course, dependent upon others for an account of what had occurred.

She said that four fully materialized forms presented themselves to the sitters—*all being present at the same time*. That one of the spirit-beings drew aside the curtains of the cabinet and revealed the form of the medium (myself) lying in deep slumber on the couch. That these spirit-persons claimed their friends among the sitters, conversing with them in their own language.

That the Czar and Czarina received indubitable proof of their dear ones. The father of the Czar, Alexander the Third, being one of the spirits materializing.

That the little French clown, Adolphe, relieved the gravity of the proceedings by his amusing antics.

And that Sir Francis Whynn, in gorgeous attire sparkling with jewels, appeared, accompanied by a beauti-

ful brunette and a charming blonde, whom, supporting on either arm, he introduced as his wife and daughter, Valerie and Virginia.

That the three together made a tour of the room, and drawing near to each sitter they permitted a close inspection of themselves.

So concluded, in the presence of the Imperial Romanoffs, the manifestations of the first seance, of which the humble medium was myself.

Then followed "by command" a series of sittings, to test the spiritual phenomena, prove beyond a doubt there is life of a human character beyond the tomb, the last of which was marked by a very special incident.

I will relate only the striking events, which are, indeed, to a certain extent public property, having been translated into several languages and extracts published in a number of periodicals.

On this occasion spirit-friends of many of the illustrious sitters manifested, claiming their kinship and giving evidence of identity and relationship impossible to refute.

A Russian Admiral and a Russian General materialized.

The Russian General held a conversation with the Czar, delivering what he declared was "an important message". Whatever the subject it was evident that the Czar of all the Russians was deeply interested and listened with marked attention. Before his demise the general had been well known to the emperor and was, therefore, absolutely identified. Part of his message was to the effect that many remarkable changes were in store for Russia.

"I can perceive, sire," said the spirit impressively, "that in the near future there will be the outbreak of a terrible war, and unless great care be exercised it will mean ignominy, sorrow, destruction for your country, your family and yourself."

More followed which I am unable to repeat, being myself dependent upon the accounts recited to me. But it seemed a warning of some great national or family disaster.

Many controls and guides manifested.

One handsome young spirit-man walked boldly from the cabinet and manipulating a valuable violin, played in

mastery style. Then placing the instrument on a table near to and in full view of the sitters, bowed to them and retired.

Then came a little ,dusky Indian maiden, who danced to the airs played by a musical-box wound by spirit-hands. Four times in succession did she materialize and de-materialize, thrilling the audience by her wonderful form and action.

Suddenly the portieres were thrown back. A spirit clothed in the uniform of an English general of the Eighteenth century strode toward the Czar, addressing to him a demand for the "immediate imprisonment of that villain, Francis Whynn," shouting angrily, "He stole my wife!"

At that moment within and without the cabinet there was a great commotion. The words "Traitor" and "Treason" were reiterated with great vehemence, whether by visible or invisible persons no one could tell.

Instantly the whole circle was in confusion. Many present, fearing some diabolical plot, essayed to remove their Majesties to safety. But before this could be done the spirit of Father Piercy manifested, imploring all to be calm and on no account to break the circle.

As the priest appeared the English general vanished. The smooth, impressive and gentle demeanor of Father Piercy restored quiet and confidence. He assured those present that all was well respecting their personal safety. Explaining that General Stanhope, who had so rudely broken through the band of guides and forced himself upon the Czar, was endeavoring to pay off an ancient score against the chief control, Sir Francis Whynn, "who has nobly and ably accomplished an important labor during these remarkable seances."

And now appeared Sir Francis, unruffled, handsome, smiling, bland. Apologizing in courtly manner for the startling interruption and hoping that their Majesties would feel no further alarm concerning it.

"It certainly would not have happened," he commented lightly, "had not the gentleman in question successfully evaded the vigilance of my subordinates, and forced himself upon you, sire, in this unseemly manner. He is now, sire, under secure restraint."

Then, with a characteristic wave of the hand, he reminded the Czar and Czarina of the marvellous manifestations of spirit-power which they had witnessed during the seaance and by his charming personality succeeded in placing everyone at ease.

The seance concluded with the materialization of the lovely Valerie and her daughter Virginia, who, with their husband and father, Sir Francis Whynn, bid their Majesties adieu, and, making their farewell to the whole circle, faded from their sight.

I had remained unconscious during the whole of this lengthy seance and for a considerable period after—how long I know not.

As I slowly came to myself I was aware of the voice of Mrs. Austin speaking. Gazing languidly around I discovered that I had been conveyed to my study and that my wife and Baron Ortinsky were anxiously awaiting my recovery, filled with fear lest, having been used so hard and so long, I should be unable to regain my usual physical vitality.

After partaking of suitable nourishment I retired to my sleeping apartment for very necessary and long repose.

My wife later told me that she had been greatly alarmed at the length of time I had been entranced and feared I would never be myself again, and that she hoped she would not be called upon to be present when I was subjected to such an exhausting and protracted trance.

I assured her that my chief control would never allow me to be injured, but that, in this case, he had been very anxious to make a deep impression upon the Czarina and the Czar.

The seances being over and my work at the Winter Palace concluded I took my leave of Russia.

But before going I had the honor of a second interview with the Czar, at which I received his personal thanks for my services as a medium. He most graciously declaring that he had been much interested and enlightened, and that he wished me every success in my labors for what he was pleased to term “a glorious cause”.

By favor of Baron Ortinsky I was permitted to view one of the despatches sent abroad, in which, by approval

of the Czar, I was described as a sensible, unassuming, gentle young man, endowed with marvellous gifts and abilities of a unique order.

In addition to valuable cheque, I received a signed photograph of the Emperor and Empress in a jeweled frame, and a magnificent diamond ring. To Mrs. Austin was presented a lovely necklace of jewels as a souvenir of our remarkable visit.

Commands and invitations from other royalties and nobility reached me before I left Russia. The creme de la creme of society in various countries sought to engage me. But to all of these I could make no immediate response, being too fatigued for a considerable period of time to comply with any.

The only course open to me was to return by easy stages to my home and there recuperate.

My name, apparently, had become rapidly known and I was now, what I presume is called, "famous".

But, without the full consent of my chief control I would not visit any place, nor take the dear spirit-friends whither they might not wish to go. Therefore, I awaited orders. And only by the express desire of Sir Francis Whynn would I undertake any further mediumistic engagements.

Well and truly had he kept his word to me!

Well and truly would I keep faith with him—sweetest, best, most fascinating and admirable of spirit-men!

CHAPTER VI

I had but shortly returned to Austinlea, my country home, when an invitation to visit him in Westmorland came from Lord William Templeton.

He assured me that I should have rest and leisure in abundance and that I should not be called upon to exercise any mediumistic powers. He well understood how necessary relaxation and every opportunity of regaining strength must be to one who had gone through so much stress and strain, and thinking that Hornsworth might offer more seclusion than my own well-known home, he begged I would not refuse. He added "Lady Templeton also hopes you will accept."

I confess to a sense of pleasurable anticipation at the thought of again staying in that grand old castle and revelling in its wealth of interests. And now that her ladyship would make me welcome I felt strongly impelled to accept the proffered hospitality.

Steadfast to my decision, however, I waited for the approval of my dear old control. I soon received his welcome permission and commendation.

"I am desirous, nay, anxious, you visit Templeton," he said; "I am proud for you to know him, and it gives me pleasure and also provides opportunity for my subordinates to do some unseen work."

And hastening northwards on my arrival at Hornsworth was cordially welcomed by Lord and Lady Templeton. To my great relief I found that her ladyship's attitude towards me had changed entirely—she was frankness and graciousness itself.

During the earlier part of my visit all ghostly conversation was forbidden. But, naturally, as I gradually recovered my usual strength and vigor, it was impossible for me to refrain from touching on the subject closest to my heart.

The outstanding incidents of my services to the Czar had been published in many papers, and were, therefore,

no news to my host and hostess. But it was, of course, inevitable that sooner or later we should go again over that wonderful series of experiences. Though utterly unconscious myself of all happenings during my periods of trance I yet knew from my wife's account and from reports of others many details of what occurred.

And the marvel of it filled me at times with almost as much amazement as it did my audiences. Amazement, full of delight, profound and well-nigh inexpressible, compelling me to share my emotions with Lord William and his wife.

From manifestations abroad we came to those near home. And eventually to the past annoying hauntings of Hornsworth Castle and the happy discontinuance of the same. Both Lord and Lady Templeton heartily thanked me as the instrument of my special control for the absence, as promised by him, of the former vexatious ghostly disturbances.

"I am glad to tell you, Mr. Austin, we have not had the slightest repetition of those troublesome experiences since your last visit here," remarked Lord Templeton in tones of thankfulness as we sat conversing after dinner.

"That is good news, my lord," I answered. "I trust you will never be thus annoyed again."

No sooner had I uttered the words than to my confusion and consternation a voice said—so audibly and so harshly that I started and stammered with surprise and alarm:

"Don't be too confident of my absence. I have not finished with my lord, his lady, nor yourself. With you I have an account to settle. I know all that is transpiring. I'll make things hum as you will quickly see, unless I get proper redress for my wrongs."

Lord Templeton, noticing my movement and not realizing the cause of my uneasiness, enquired with concern if there was anything he could do for me.

"No, thank you, my lord," I replied. "There is really nothing the matter with me. I was perturbed by hearing a spirit-voice which menaces my peace, and I am constrained to believe that it is the very Voice which has annoyed her ladyship so long."

"Indeed! How extremely vexatious. I really thought we were entirely rid of the nuisance."

"I fear not altogether, my lord. It would seem by his statements that he will vary his form of attack."

"Ah, well—a short respite is better than none; so don't worry over us, Mr. Austin. In any case he cannot have the same power. Knowledge properly used becomes a great protection. And through you, Mr. Austin—thanks to the spirit of Francis Whynn—I now possess valuable information and know what method to employ should our tormentor revive his nuisance. Knowledge being power I have my weapon at command."

No further sounds disturbing us we resumed our conversation, and for my host's information I related the incident of General Stanhope's intrusion at the last of the Russian seances. Lord William seemed greatly interested, expressing to me his intention of shortly closely examining the contents of the documents which had so mysteriously appeared on the occasion of my last visit.

"I believe those papers will throw considerable light upon this peculiar affair. It has been clearly demonstrated that there has been and still is a bitter feud between the opposing spirits. After I have carefully perused the papers I should be very glad if you could visit us again, Mr. Austin, so that we may the better discuss this matter. I feel convinced that we shall eventually lay the ghost."

It was, therefore, arranged that so soon as Lord Templeton should have completed his investigations and get at the contents of the mystifying documents I should return to Hornsworth for a brief period, when, we hoped, we should be able to clear up all remaining difficulties and permanently quiet the spirit of General Stanhope.

But I was not permitted to leave Hornsworth without a demonstration of psychic power.

On the morning of my departure Lord and Lady Templeton were bidding me "Goodbye" and I was about to enter the carriage to be driven to the station when I was thrown into a trance, though not rendered entirely unconscious, my host having saved me from abrupt contact with the ground and supported me in a reclining position in his arms.

There, from my person, materialized two lovely female forms, who courtesied deeply with much grace to Lord William and his wife. One, kneeling to Lady Templeton for a moment, raised her hands as though in supplication. Then both faded from the sight.

Though dazed and uncertain, with Lord Templeton's assistance I struggled to my feet, when, as if by magic, I immediately recovered full strength and consciousness.

The manifestation seemed so unreal an incident that but for the confirmation of my host and hostess, who declared that it had been a marvellous spirit-demonstration, I should have inclined to the belief that it was an imagination of my brain. For there were no accessories, no conditions of any kind, and the sun shone brightly in an azure sky.

Truly my experience of spiritual phenomena has been of special character!

Without any personal knowledge or volition I have been chosen and developed as a spirit-medium. The so-called Dead were never sought by me. But they, the very much alive Spirit-people, not only sought but found me, and seem little inclined to discard me since my capture.

CHAPTER VII

How strange is life—as Mortals know it on this varying Earth! How impossible for us to gauge tomorrow by today! True, there are many times when “Coming events cast their shadows before.” But how much oftener does the unexpected happen. Certainly this has been true of my Psychic experience. And now, when I seemed to have journeyed so far along the path of Supernormal knowledge, there came a sudden halt. Not only was my active membership set aside, but a time of strange trial and temptation was before me.

Perhaps it was to test the genuineness of my allegiance, the depth of my faith, the strength of my resistance of evil suggestion, the endurance of my patience. To try me whether I were, indeed, a fit subject for the confidence of a Spirit who has passed beyond.

Hitherto I had never been annoyed, or tempted, by any description of irritating or vexatious spirits from the invisible universe.

“A land flowing with milk and honey” had been offered to my mental vision. Benefits, friendship, welfare, greatness and fame were to be my guerdon, surrounding me with their blessings as the reward for my services to Sir Francis Whynn.

This had indeed been so. All that he had foretold me had been heaped upon me; not one promise, but all had been fulfilled. I could look back upon the period since he first with sweet and polished accents addressed me in the dingy parlour of a great hotel and trace, step by step, each incident since that meeting, and give evidence that nothing had failed of all that he predicted and desired.

And now, almost at the pinnacle of fame, with wonderful knowledge and power and strength, born of the spiritual enlightenment and the marvels I had experienced through the development of those Psychic powers—which from earliest childhood had been dormant within me,

waiting the unfolding influence of my chief control—I was suddenly checked, brought to a standstill. It seemed as though I would get “no whither” ever again.

Stagnation and inertia were thrust upon me. A slough of despond spread slowly out before me, covering all, battling through which seemed well nigh impossible because of its intangible and irritating nature.

Without the least apparent reason my mediumship seemed to be at an end, and sore temptations beset me.

The sense of hearing was wrought into an instrument of torture by the persistent haunting of a hoarse, grating voice which poured forth vile insinuations and bitter vituperation against Sir Francis. The invisible speaker declared himself to be General Stanhope who, by his eerie presence, had so many years disturbed the peace of Lady Templeton.

But, finding his abuse failed signally in its object, he changed his tactics and endeavoured by persuasion to cause me to accept him as my chief control instead of him I knew and loved and trusted.

No allurements he could suggest could move me to consider, even for a moment, disloyalty to Sir Francis. Nor, for one moment even, to contemplate the acceptance of such a substitute for my beloved control.

So, finding his attempts of no avail, he proceeded as before, to utter abuse against that refined and charming personality of whom I am so fond and proud.

“You believe Francis Whynn to be a good man,” the rasping voice would say. “You are entirely mistaken. Let me inform you he is a dishonourable, villainous fellow, a libertine, a deep-dyed scoundrel who took advantage of a sacred trust reposed in him, and stole a wife’s affections. He is a snake in the grass, a coward. Never will I rest until I have unmasked him.”

This and much more. And on and on the wearying voice continued.

The perpetual anathematizing of one I so reverenced and so loved drove me almost mad at times. But never once were my favourable opinions of Sir Francis altered, nor did I swerve in my allegiance to him, although his long-continued absence tried me sorely.

Diligently I sought the only refuge. I found my safety and my strength in prayer. And earnestly I supplicated the intervention of the Supreme Power whom all the unseen worlds obey. Invoking the presence of angel-ministers to guide and guard and help me in this period of severe and unexpected and continued trial.

Nor were my prayers in vain. Those silent prayers to God and to spirit-guides brought me presently the longed-for answer, and some measure of relief and comfort were afforded me.

One evening at the usual hour, as I was sitting in my study, I perceived I was not alone. The appearance of the bright yet softly-spreading illumination warned me of an approaching manifestation. And e'er long slowly materialized, very distinctly, two lovely female forms, the elder of whom, addressing me in a tender and sympathetic manner, spoke reassuringly to me.

"We have heard your prayers for help and comfort, and are bidden to come to your relief. We are to tell you that though you cannot pierce the atmosphere of difficulty surrounding you at present, you will be helped. Take courage therefore. Believe that Divine aid will be given to you. Have faith that you will be sustained until we come again."

Then with sweet smiles of cheer and encouragement they faded from my view.

It was indeed to me an angels' visit, Bringing me holy tidings of another world where strength flows out to aid the soul in trial—whence fresh supplies of life succour the fainting spirit. How changed I felt! How rested! How refreshed and strengthened by their angelic presence! A delicious sense of calm security pervaded my whole being. It seemed as though a new world of rest and peace at last received me. And that night I retired to rest in absolute contentment and slept as though no evil spirit had ever beset my path.

And indeed, for many days at least, I was free from that disturbing voice and presence.

Then began a new period of invisible annoyance. The tormenting voice manifested itself again, giving me to clearly understand that I was to be the victim of a fresh

attack. And now more weary days and nights passed by, and faith and strength and patience wrestled on.

Would it ever change? Would it ever end?

I was cogitating thus in my study, and trying to devise some means for evading my enemy, when my attention was attracted by a bright, phosphorescent light, completely dimming the electric glow which illuminated the room.

Within that powerful brightness focussed into view two lovely faces, fresh as the morning, fair as the dawn of day. The sweet, ethereal conutencances from intangible uncertainty, developed so completely that all their beauty and variety of colour were perfectly distinguishable. I then realized that the angelic beings were two beautiful females—one a brunette and one a blonde. The younger was the embodiment of eternal youth. A wealth of golden hair framed the perfect face. The clear blue eyes shone like the brightest stars. A wild-rose bloom enhanced the dimpled cheeks, and red lips parted in a seraph's smile showing the pearly teeth. A child just touching girlhood.

The other, a regal beauty, perfect in form and stature, the contour of her features such it seemed impossible to cease to gaze upon them. The large, expressive deep-violet eyes entranced me by their splendour, their sweetness and their pleading gaze. And with a witchery of sound, her gentle voice fell upon my ear:

"Austin, staunch friend, I desire you to know surely who I am. My name is Valerie. I am the wife of Francis Whynn. This (placing her arm around the young maiden at her side) is our child, Virginia, the light of our souls, the joy of our existence.

"I would have you know, true friend, that I, the wife of him you love and honour, am neither wicked nor depraved. On the contrary, I love the good, the true, the brave, love life, light and liberty and all Divine things.

"My life is spent in helping mortals. Nursing the sick. Guarding the innocent. Assisting the fallen. Strengthening and cheering the weak. Protecting the helpless. I have visited earthly homes, so-called. Hovels they are, more often, of crime and misery. Endeavouring to aid those who dwell there to leave the sin, the vice,

and degradation. And by the help of spirits and of mortals, enter the paths of rectitude. Giving them hope and courage to strive therein. To these self-chosen tasks I dedicate my life.

"Many whom I have rescued look upon me as their Guardian-spirit and Messenger of Light. Our fair child is as a star of glory. And trusting Mortals love us.

"I tell you this, good Austin, not to praise myself, or my sweet daughter. But because I would have you know I do not flinch from the trials and difficulties of a deluded world. As an enlightened spirit I will ever do my duty towards mortals in distress, who seek Spiritual aid.

"We come, too, from our fair celestial home to impart to you strength and perseverance. And we ask you to retain your faith in the goodness of Francis Whynn. Though he is unable to be with you now, and the time may seem strangely long e'er he can return to you, believe nothing to his discredit, for he is true and just and faithful. A brave man, to whom the highest praise is due for his trustworthy conduct. A genuine friend. A generous, loyal and devoted husband. A most loving and tender father. He is, truly, worthy of your highest opinion and esteem, and my soul delights to know you love and trust him. We thank you heartily for your fidelity to his cause. Nor shall your steadfastness go unrewarded. Be strong, be patient, continue in your well-placed confidence."

"Oh, Glorious Spirit," I exclaimed, "I have never faltered in my allegiance to Sir Francis."

The sweet smiles of peace and contentment which rested upon the lovely, angel faces told me how well they knew I spoke the truth. Then slowly the vision faded and the spirit-light waned away.

I felt much strengthened by this visit, and more determined than ever to remain steadfast in my loyalty to my dear control.

Although much pressure was brought to bear upon me I would not consent to make any engagements until I received the full permission of Sir Francis Whynn. But this being still withheld, I had to possess my soul in patience; and I must confess that during this waiting

period I was often sorely tempted. Wealthy persons made me seductive offers to hold seances. Royalty sought me for my medial powers. Even my wife found it difficult to understand my continued inaction. Still, through it all, my decision remained unchanged.

The tormenting Voice now jeered at me, taunting me with the assertions that I was discarded, and cast aside.

"Whynn has no further use for you. He has gained his point. You are only a lump of clay! Once a useful instrument to him, now you are no longer needed you are cast out. He has worked his will, and you are of so little interest to him that he cares not what becomes of you."

This continued until I was sick and weary in the extreme, worn into illness by the reiteration of the monster's voice.

At last there came an evening when, to my inexpressible relief, I was again blessed with the dear presence of Francis Whynn. In a soft, phosphorescent light, illuminating the dimness of my sanctum, where, before the haunting of that evil voice of General Stanhope, I had delighted to sit alone and hour by hour to meditate upon the World which is the Real and True, appeared once more the well-beloved for whom my soul was craving. The old, gay self, smiling and *bedonair!* And once again his cheery salutation sounded in my ear:

"Ah! Austin, old fellow! You are burning the midnight oil I see. Too bad, when you should be resting on your virtuous couch!"

"Sir Francis!" I exclaimed. "How can I express my delight at seeing you again!"

My words must have conveyed something of the intense relief his visit brought me, for a serious expression passed across his features, and for a moment he seemed agitated. Then with a sigh, quickly followed by one of his compelling smiles, he replied:

"Austin, dear friend. I desire to thank you sincerely for your loyalty, your sympathy, and your faith. I am well aware you have been severely tried and tempted on my account. I trust you fully realize that I thoroughly appreciate your disinterested resistance of evil insinua-

tions, and of bribes. I shall not forget, nor fail you, though I seem to have done both during this recent time of cerebral distress.

"I know, too, that my sweet wife and our darling child have visited you to encourage and support you in my continued absence. Your eyes have seen their beauty and their worth, and therefore, you may judge their pricelessness to me; you can understand how precious to me is their welfare, and that I will do everything in my power to uphold, untarnished, their good name. They are my bright, particular stars. My hope. The greater part of my living self, my soul's soul, the essence of my purest being. And I will, if possible, shield them from all harm.

"Some day, Austin, I will reveal to you the secret of the trouble existing between General Stanhope and myself. But that must wait a little longer. In the meanwhile, preserve your faith in me. Exercise patience yet a little while and the whole mystery shall be made clear to you, and the trouble set at rest.

"Ah! here come my dear ones! To leave a benediction with you, e'er I go."

And to my astonished gaze appeared, at that precise moment, the spirit-forms who had visited me before, and whom I immediately recognized as the wife and daughter of Sir Francis Whynn. Clasping each other's hands they stood before me, a trio of celestial beauty, their faces illuminated with ethereal joy. Then my eyes beheld the form of Father Piercy, who raised his hands above them as in blessing. And making their adieux to me, I watched them fade from sight, till only the normal atmosphere surrounded me, and I knew myself alone once more.

Shortly after this I received a visit from the spirit of Doctor Kellier, who charged me strictly not to accept engagements for spiritual manifestations until I received direct permission from Sir Francis.

He said he had been sent to warn me. Because it was foreseen that pressure would be brought to bear by incarnate persons of exalted rank. And that the trying conditions in which the Spirit-band, guided by my chief control, were labouring, prevented them from being present to enable me to obtain satisfactory and sure results.

Therefore, it would be most unwise to attempt any form of demonstration, or to endeavour to summon them to my aid.

I accepted this spirit-message as a sacred injunction; adhering rigidly to its directions. And when a remarkable invitation reached me to display my mediumistic powers before a very charming and popular young Prince and his beautiful and gracious bride—the future King and Queen of a notable country—at their delightful palace, I was compelled to send a negative reply, which, I need hardly say, was an extremely difficult thing to do. And my inability to respond to this particular Royal invitation caused me very genuine regret.

Day by day I fulfilled the necessary conditions for spirit-manifestation—awaiting the materialization of my dear control. Hour after hour I sat alone, meditating and speaking, maintaining my continued vigil. Until the weary period ended, and my senses thrilled once more to his return.

"My faithful friend," he said, cheerily, as was his wont, "I take great pleasure in visiting you again! I know how much you sacrifice for me. But nothing is lost—although it seems so at the time, perhaps. Nor can I tell you all the conditions, or the reasons which have kept me from you for so long. But—I have tried and tested you. And now I know that I may trust you with the story of my life. You shall take down with pen or pencil, my confession. I desire you should hear it from my lips, rather than others should give you a garbled and untrue account. I am willing you shall be my judge. In the near future you will visit Hornsworth Castle and be called upon to inspect the papers sent thither originally by General Stanhope; and it is quite probable he will endeavour further to influence your mind against me—"

"That he will discover to be impossible," I cried.

"Good!" he ejaculated, with a smile; but he gently shook his head as if doubtful of the result. "I thank you for your brave expressions, Austin, and appreciate your faith and loyalty to my cause and me."

Gazing upon him, I could not but observe, in spite of his apparent gaiety, a sadness in his tone; a depression in the glance of his erstwhile merry dark-blue eyes, and

an unusual suppression in his words and actions, though he seated himself in the old, familiar way.

I seriously conjectured what could be troubling him, and evidently he knew my thoughts, for springing to his feet he paced the floor in an agitated manner; then stopping abruptly, he exclaimed:

"As you surmise, Austin, I am troubled. In spirit, not in conscience you must understand. I have not done wrong—at least, no evil. I regret no action of the past. But having followed a course that seemed clear and open, I thereby unwittingly made a bitter enemy. So bitter, indeed, that his hostile spirit follows me still; and until I am able to find a witness to the innocence of my intentions and my conduct, my spirit may not wholly leave your world. A century to you, Austin, seems an amazing time, but to the discarnate spirit it is but a short period. There is no such thing as Time, for us, as mortals know it. Only the accomplishment of deeds counts in the eternal life—we know no other measure.

"Therefore, I seek a mortal who will understand; know and feel intuitively I speak the truth; to clear me in the eyes of those remaining of my family—who, through false accusation, can but brand me as a villain. Not for my own sake, but for those most precious to me, whom you have seen. Whose worth, whose beauty of form and spirit you now know. I mean my wife and child. Those lovely spirits who appeared to you to give you strength and comfort in time of need.

"You, Austin, are a thoroughly honourable man; reliable, faithful, true. By research I testify that you have never been guilty of a mean action in your life; each deed, since you became conscious of your individuality, will bear inspection; therefore I choose you as my earthly instrument; and you have passed successfully through Psychic tests. I know the immense value of your true opinion. The knowledge of which I can obtain—if necessary—~~independent~~ of your will.

"The veil will be lifted from the past and I shall stand exposed. Whether I shall be condemned as guilty of a heinous crime or commended as an honest fellow, I must leave to you and abide by your decision. But be slow

to judge, be well assured of your own, true opinion, whether the sentence should be 'Guilty' or 'Not Guilty.'

"Bear in mind these facts; That time, opportunity, a combination of mighty forces, a web of circumstances, can play havoc with the best of good intentions, and the very strongest will of man.

"Remember, also, that neither the past or the present conditions are of my seeking. General Stanhope would disgrace my memory and blacken it for aye. To this end he inscribed certain documents with his version of my actions, making me vile indeed; but failing, only through an accident, to do the harm he meant. He has never ceased to haunt those of my relations whose psychic constitution enabled him to do so. While he has diligently sought the ear of such in hope of gaining their belief, I, too, have been seeking the mediation of one like you to clear me. I have tried many, but in some point each has always failed. You are the first to answer every test—especially the last and hardest test of all—that of complete desertion. None have sustained that trial and retained full faith save you and therefore all save you have failed me.

"As General Stanhope maintains his hostile attitude, and I am confident in your ability and allegiance, the hour draws near for victory, or defeat. Remember, too, that this position—the bringing to all mortal minds of all long passed, long 'dead' as men say, is not sought by me. My adversary will have it so. As he professes to be the injured person he has a perfect right to call to arms for the redress of what he still persists in stating are his wrongs. I am prepared to face the music, nor will I shirk responsibility in the least degree. In gaining you, I am accused by him of getting an undue advantage. I cannot see that this is so. However, I will lay that whole matter before you—you must judge.

"Prepare yourself and one week from today we will begin my story. Till then adieu, adieu."

The week passed and at an appointed hour, closeted in my study free from all fear of interruption, Sir Francis Whynn, the loved control, the gay, the handsome inhabitant of a supernormal world, through whose agency my

own psychic consciousness had been awakened, sat facing me, revealing the history of his life.

My favourite pen sped over the smooth surface of the paper, keeping pace with the clear words he uttered. Sheet after sheet was filled to his dictation, and evening after evening passed away, until at last the story was completed.

CHAPTER VIII

THE STORY

"My earliest recollections are of a pleasant character, and though no startling incident disturbed my childhood's complacency, all that was bright, beautiful and enjoyable to a lively youngster was mine.

"You must know, Austin, that I was born and brought up at Llangollen Castle. That charming home of my childhood's days set far in a lovely retreat in the Welsh mountains. I was endowed with the spirit and fire of unconquered ancestors, who, for centuries, fought and died for freedom, and filled with the romance and poetry of my native land and the wild free spirit of the mountains where I first saw light.

"I do not remember my mother. But my father and my step-sister, Ann, showered love and tenderness upon me, and though she was but six years my senior she smothered me in her quaint little, old-fashioned way, and through my boyhood and my youth blessed me with her sweet guardianship and care. She was tender, sympathetic and self-sacrificing. Even as a very young girl the innate goodness of her character was as unmistakably apparent. In her our father had a devoted daughter, and I, the most affectionate of sisters.

"I shared my adoring love for Ann with two magnificent St. Bernards and a bonny Welsh pony. We played and gamboled in the castle grounds—we rode, we wrestled, and often, un-attended, we roamed the mountain side or found our joys upon the lake. Daring and fearless, admired and beloved, happy at studies or at play, I passed through boyhood into youth. And through those years my sister's deep regard for the welfare of all living things had its effect upon my mind, controlling any unconscious cruelty which might have lain dormant in me.

"So passed the joyous days of youth, and all too soon I grew to man's estate.

"It was the fashion of those times, Austin, for a young man of wealth and position to travel abroad for some years under the guardianship and continued instruction of a tutor, and there the final formation of his character would be made. At last the day came when I was to leave my fair Welsh home, my devoted sister and our beloved father, and, for the sake of my education, visit the continent. In the Rev. Horace Myers as my tutor my father made a wise choice, and to his untiring efforts to inform my mind, his ethics, character and example I owed my manhood. On foreign soil, imbibing fresh ideas, widening the circle of my experience in the society of this good man I rapidly unfolded and learned the responsibility of life which claims us all.

"My father's somewhat sudden death cut short the three years to be spent abroad. I returned to Wales. I deemed it right to accept the responsibilities now laid upon me, and taking up my duties, endeavored to conduct myself according to the ideals which had been placed before me. Embodying in my person as far as possible the full meaning of the word 'gentleman' and maintaining an unvarying standard of justice and of honor.

"Needless to say dear Ann was delighted to have me home and great was our mutual joy at meeting, and with much delight she anticipated the day when, marrying, I should settle down and give Llangollen a worthy mistress.

"I assured her that as yet I had no thought of marriage, rather would I renew my travels in search of knowledge and adventure. That none could play the part of *chatelaine* so gracefully or faithfully as herself, and until some brave knight spirited her away I begged her to remain the doyenne of the castle. Hunting, steeple-chasing and hurdle-jumping took a portion of my time chiefly for its healthful exhilarating effects.

"Months went by. The claims of my estate were many. The improvements I desired took more time in their accomplishment than I anticipated. Determined to realize the ideals I set before myself I remained much longer at Llangollen than I originally intended. Then, finally, having tested my plans and put the whole estate in order, I placed the continuance of its working in the hands of

able persons whose integrity could not be doubted, and turned my thoughts again to travel.

"It was with the greatest reluctance that my sister bade me adieu. But despite her tears and supplications I persisted in my decision. It may be some premonition warned her of coming sorrow, of the finality of our parting, some foreboding of disaster, an intuition of the completeness of the separation. How well I remember the parting kiss I pressed upon her tear-stained face. Dear Ann! The last I ever gave her as an embodied spirit.

"Often my thoughts were with her. Not only in solitary meditation, but in merry moments also would my mind turn homewards.

"Journeying upon the sea in those days, Austin, was fraught with dangers and discomforts of which your modern mind knows nothing; filled with excitements also by reason of the risks we ran, and sailing was a greater art than now. Twice was I wrecked and how I escaped drowning seemed a miracle. On land I had even more adventures and, of course, more intellectual interests.

"I think, perhaps, of all the countries I visited, I loved mostly those Latin states you know collectively as Italy. But then, of course, as separate from each other as separate countries, each with its own laws and customs and each usually fighting against the other. This rather added to the variety of my experience for I was as good for a fray as I was for a rout!

"The great variety displayed in those days interested me deeply. Each place was foreign to the next. And wandering idly through the different countries I feasted on enchanting scenery, picturesque surroundings, handsome peasantry and bright-eyed children. Quaint village festivals or civic banquets, processions by day and night; in fact, all the medley that foreign cities then offered to the eye. Filled with the keen observation of omnivorous youth, each day brought fresh interests with it, and incidentally I learned not a little in this manner.

"I think the Italian cities were my great delight, though Vienna held me for a period, but Venice, Milan, Florence, Rome and Naples exercised the most charm over me. Its ancient history filled my mind, its present doings caught me in their web; its past magnificence; its present

glory; its art in stone—in marble and in pigment. Exploring and inspecting I visited again and again its architectural building and all its points of special interest past and present. I was greatly attracted also by its social life and was a recipient of that especial honor—an interview with His Holiness, the Pope.

"But Venice, loveliest city of the Adriatic, drew me back. And after going south as far as Naples, I retraced my steps from state to state, a long and dangerous and difficult journey in my time, Austin, and found myself again in the Queen City.

"Lovely days and hours and weeks and months I lived through—half in the past, half in the present. Surrounded by an atmosphere of natural beauty, interested and amused by the spectacle of love, intrigue, of jealousy and also crime I daily gazed upon, I lived the easy life of a beholder rather than a participant of that kaleidoskopic panorama. What lovely colors passed before my eyes. What simple spaces. What infinite delights.

"Young, handsome, fascinating, rich and generous, well-grounded in sound principles of life, small wonder that I found the world so pleasant.

"But being all these things I naturally did not escape the eye of mating mothers. And though at twenty-five I was heart whole and fancy free, I can say with absolute truth that I had had no light flirtations, no careless love declared which might have pained the heart or lacerated the feelings or broken the affection of those who would have wooed and won me.

"I revelled in all forms of beauty and enjoyed them to the full. I kept my name and soul unsullied, and chiefly to the teaching of my sister and my tutor was the possibility of such condition due.

"Doubtless the romance which on all sides surrounded me in Venice had some effect upon me, nor could I deny that I experienced sensations of mingled pleasure and amusement as I observed the captivating fair ones, in gaily decked gondolas, gliding beneath the bridge of sighs and past the terrace where I sat half screened by foliage, casting coquettish, languishing glances in my direction.

"The half-daring, half-shy coquetry and enticing cajolery exercised so often upon me must certainly have

encouraged the awakening of those incipient germs of love dormant in every human heart, which afterwards in my own developed to their best and fullest in the one great passion of my life.

"That passion did not awake in Venice. But when, at length, I decided to re-visit home and bade a temporary adieu to the most alluring of all cities I stayed awhile in Milan, and there I met my fate.

"A bewildering pair of lustrous dark eyes, a rosy mouth, a tender smile, electrified the current of my thoughts and had the power to overthrow all past determinings, and with a magic key open the golden gate. At one single glance of mute eloquence from a pair of glorious eyes I had succumbed to the fever of undying love.

"Yes, Austin, five minutes before meeting the owner of those enchantments I was unaware of her existence!

"Is it possible, think you, to analyze thoroughly the cause and effect of love? Alas! Alas! Love's sway is so enchanting, so bewitching, that wisdom is lost in its exciting grasp!

"Trembling with emotion, I bowed over a soft white hand which I held in ecstasy. And at that moment, quite unbidden, an arrow from Love's bow pierced two quivering hearts through and through.

"Thus we met, fair Valerie and I, at the villa of a handsome and intriguing countess, leader of fashion and of polities in Milan. I had, of course, letters of introduction to important personages. Also some reputation as an Englishman of means and standing, and, being still unwed, was ever welcome.

"So enamored was I, I had not heard the lady's name, or knew that I retained the lovely hand within my own until I heard my hostess saying: "Lady Stanhope's soldier husband, of whom your countrymen are so proud."

"I hastily released the dainty fingers. In as courtly a manner as possible in my agitated condition, I murmured some common-place remark and turned to respond to the new introduction, a turmoil raging in my heart.

My paradise was lost! The lovely creature was a wife already, and therefore not at liberty to be wooed and won. A chilling blast swept across my soul—a dark and wintry region lay before me.

"My emotion must have been written on my face, for the rich flood of color which enhanced the beauty of my innocent captor receded rapidly, leaving her deathly pale as she bowed and passed me.

"It must be placed to my credit, Austin, that from the moment I knew that Lady Stanhope was a wife I avoided meeting her whenever possible, even to declining invitations I would otherwise gladly have accepted.

"Of course, in these circumstances Milan ceased to give me pleasure. And yet I felt unable to continue the homeward journey.

"Valerie's lovely face—the knowledge which those few seconds had conveyed to me, the certainty of her interest in me, if only for a moment—made it impossible for me to anticipate delight or enter with any zest into the sweet and tranquil life waiting me in Wales.

"I could not rest. Distraction became imperative. I must put distance between myself and her whom I could never hope to marry.

"So leaving Milan I pursued a different route, and moving southwards I came again to Naples, my intention being to visit Northern Africa.

"But Fate interposed.

CHAPTER IX

THE STORY

(Continued)

"I had not been one day in Naples when to my amazement and inexpressible distress I found myself face to face with General Stanhope and his wife.

"The meeting was so sudden there was no time to collect my thoughts, or be upon my guard. In the excitement of the moment I unwittingly admitted I had no imperative engagement or demands upon my time—in fact, that I had ample leisure. Nor was it possible for me to explain why I so earnestly desired to refuse the cordial invitation extended to me to join them for the day. So in the end I accompanied them, reluctantly enough, to the charming residence they had taken for the season, a white marble, balconied and terraced villa, some distance from the city.

"My host insisted upon my remaining to admire the beauties of the exquisite Neapolitan night, and on the next day some slight incident prolonged the visit. I discovered later that General Stanhope, for private reasons, looked upon my advent as a special act of Providence in his behalf. I vainly struggled in the web wherein I was entangled. The General seemed to sense that once I left his roof my return would be more than doubtful, and not in the least knowing my excellent reasons for longing to escape, he made every effort to detain me. Against my better judgment—nay, against my will—I became the Stanhopes' guest.

"Alas, alas, what moth resists the candle when its compelling light burns brightly?

"And truly, the peace pervading those sweet and exquisite surroundings of loveliness and health which—all unbidden—settled on my fevered spirit, was beyond my power to repel. With an abandonment of truth might I have exclaimed, 'My spirit lies within the arms of Paradise!'

After the hot fever of my recent wanderings I should have been more than mortal could I have turned my back upon the Paradise—not merely proffered for my acceptance—but thrust upon me.

"I was still morally strong enough to keep my good resolutions and guard my words and actions in Valerie's bewitching presence, yet I acknowledge frankly I measured time only by those hours when my eyes could feast upon her. To make things worse I found that General Stanhope, many years the senior of his wife, was very ready to delegate to me the torturing joy of acting Cavalier whenever he felt more inclined for the companionship of his books than a visit to a palace or an excursion in the country. Though nearly thirty years older than his wife he was by no means an elderly or decrepit man—on the contrary, he was an early riser and active walker and a fine horseman, but beyond all this, he was an ardent student of his profession and Europe was full of war! He gave at least one-half of every day to conning charts of battle-fields, plans of warfare and methods of attack. He was evidently extremely glad to have happened upon someone who would relieve him of the duty of accompanying Lady Valerie on the many and varied explorations she desired to make all round that wonderfully interesting and historical old city.

"And so it came about that, in spite of all my wan resistance, or fertility of excuses, I was deputed to escort the lovely wife whenever her husband was unable, or disinclined to do so. With all the naturalness in the world we glided imperceptibly into the easy ways of daily intercourse, approved and smiled upon by General Stanhope.

"We walked, we climbed, we visited stately palaces, churches and temples, castles and wonderful gardens, and all the marvellous outlying loveliness from Ischia to Salerno we explored. We floated idly over the famous bay, reveling in the incomparable beauty of the Neapolitan moonlight and listened dreamily to serenades sung in the soft dialect of Naples:

"Beauty before me and around me,
Beauty below me and above,
Loveliest thoughts and tones surround me.
Is it a marvel if I love?"

"Exquisite colors, soft and blended,
 Stars below me and stars above.
 Songs of love, which shall never be ended—
 Is it a marvel if I love?"

A sweet intimacy, ripening e'er long into a great friendship, was thus established, and truly, in Fields Elysian, the joyous days and beauteous nights went by.

"I set a watch upon my heart, and, exercising strong self-control, succeeded in maintaining a mutual friendship, and either with her husband or without him, Valerie and I were constantly in each other's society.

"I really think Stanhope admired me himself; he used to call me "The Handsome Cavalier", and often said, as an excuse for not accompanying his wife, "you make a handsome couple." A noted portrait painter, Pomes, Gieolamo Baloni, was visiting Naples, and nothing would satisfy him but that we should be painted by this artist. To this I would not consent—some inward warning caused me to be immovable in my decision. But to satisfy my friends I sat alone to the great man, delighted to have such an opportunity of giving joy to my sweet sister to whom I intended to send the portrait. Before it was completed General Stanhope expressed an ardent desire to possess it, or at least retain it while he stayed in Naples, and reading the same emotion in Lady Valerie's face, I consented to its remaining at their villa for an indefinite period—as you know, Austin, it was eventually despatched to my sister with the fatal cabinet.

"And yet, by accident, our portraits *were* painted on the same canvas, by an unknown artist.

"I had brought Lady Valerie a gift of flowers—a bouquet of exquisite roses. Not finding her in the house I sought her on the balcony where we often sat looking down upon the Bay of Naples. As she toyed with the fragrant blooms I must have bent somewhat over them, gazing at her as I did so. She drew forth one lovely rose and delicately removed the petals slowly, one by one, letting them fall upon the marble pavement in petty profusion.

"Unknown to us, other eyes beheld her action and read into the whole a translation of their own, and greatly daring a handsome itinerant artist came cap in hand to

beg permission to complete in colors the wonderful sketch his memory had produced on canvas.

"The talent of this unknown fellow and the suavity of his Italian tongue gained his point, and Lady Valerie was easily persuaded to sit for him each day as he had seen her from his screen of myrtles. Promising, moreover, not to behold the painting until completely finished.

The painter gave me the first view. To my dismay I discovered that the whole scene had been depicted with infinite skill and inspiration. That—artist, as he undoubtedly was—he had portrayed Love's golden dream in sunshine under an azure sky!

"Valerie, as the central interest, was most exquisitely defined. Her peerless grace and beauty, the bewitching contour of her form were perfectly displayed; the light and atmosphere, the glow and color of flowers, foliage and drapery with unerring skill produced a rare and delightful picture, truly a masterpiece of executive ability.

"But the exquisite picture could not be shown as promised.

"Too accurately had the clever fingers painted me as the ardent wooer, eagerly awaiting the decision of the Fates! Too accurately had pierced the innermost recesses of my soul and with infinite skill revealed its secret longing on the canvas.

"That picture must be hidden from the glances of all comers. The story which it told must go no further—must not be breathed to the winds even, lest the idle breezes lightly carry it and disclose my secret to the world!

"Willingly did I pay the price asked by the clever artist for his labors, and unhesitatingly despatched the painting to my sister in Llangollen, who, woman-like, in voluminous writings poured out herself in admiration of her handsome brother and the lovely 'bride-to-be.' Expressing her hope of my return to Wales accompanied by the lovely lady of the picture to whom she would accord her warmest welcome and honor her as the mistress of my home.

"To explain successfully to Lady Valerie the disappearance of the painting was no easy task; she had taken the most lively interest in its progress and most honorably kept her word in not endeavoring to glimpse it at the sittings. I had the greatest difficulty in covering up my

action, only by placing the blame upon the innocent artist could I hide the deception. I spoke the truth in saying that the finishing touches were added in his studio and that after receiving payment for his work he had disappeared from Naples—for I had paid him a goodly sum to leave the city—suggesting he intended, doubtless, to sell the picture for a higher sum in one of the neighboring states or even out of Italy altogether; virtually branding him a rogue and a liar. That he had left the city I knew full well. But the picture went to Ann.

"Mean as you must think me, Austin, it seemed then the only thing to do. I believed I was preventing an unhappy awakening for Lady Valerie, and making possible the continuance of our friendship, which I realized added much pleasure to her life, for her soldier husband was so engrossed in studying battles, past and present, that without me much loneliness must have been hers.

"You saw the pictures, Austin, when you first visited Hornsworth and can therefore judge if I was right. By the removal of that painting I fondly hoped to keep my secret intact.

"The Wars of Austrian Secession were in progress and Britain taking the field in favor of the empress-queen, Theresa. General Stanhope was recalled to duty, having to leave Naples immediately to rejoin his troops.

"To my dismay he begged me to remain in order to leave with me the responsibility of the safe keeping of his wife. Obviously any attempt to travel to Great Britain at such a time would be fraught with many dangers, moreover his military duty not calling him much further than the western borders of Bavaria, he deemed it better in every way for Lady Valerie to stay in Naples, feeling confident of his own swift and safe return.

"There certainly was some truth in his declaration that knowing I was on the spot would make him feel much happier than if he left his wife with none but foreigners surrounding her.

"All my protests were in vain.

"Lady Valerie herself took the news very badly, begging piteously not to be left behind; rather to be taken to the neighborhood of the seat of war. A request to which her husband was, of course, utterly unable to accede. He

tried to appear as sanguine as possible when leaving, in order, no doubt, to raise her drooping spirits. She embarrassed him considerably by vehemently renewing her pleading to accompany him. Though, naturally, he felt delighted by her great desire to be with him, he was perforce compelled to tear himself away.

"‘Remember, Sir Francis,’ he said, ‘I leave my sweet Valerie in your keeping. Make her as happy as possible. Do not on any account permit her to mope and fret. I trust you to amuse her. It will not be long e'er I return and relieve you of your responsibility.’

“I had always imagined General and Lady Valerie Stanhope to be an affectionate couple in spite of the disparity of their ages, but I was quite unprepared for the outburst of feeling displayed by the lady on the occasion of her husband’s departure for the war. Afterwards I believed I better understood it.

“I had been the guest of the Stanhope’s now for a considerable time, but before the departure of the general I betook myself to other quarters.

“I endeavored to fulfill, honorably, the sacred trust imposed upon me.

“Every day I called at the villa to enquire for Lady Valerie, not attempting to disturb her in her grief. When at last I saw her I did my best to cheer and raise her spirits, assuring her that the war would not be lasting. That her husband’s reputation and tried ability would be a check upon the enemy and hasten victory. And that it was quite possible he would soon be by her side again to protect and cheer her.

“To all of which she listened with averted face, with hands clasped, listless and unmoved, making no reply, grief and weary patience expressed in every line of her drooping figure.

“I had the mortification of seeing her grow daily more pale, thin and languid. All my efforts proved of no avail. Nor could I induce her to take a reasonable interest in life, or brighten her depressed condition in the least degree. It seemed to me a cruel fate that one so young and fair should be compelled to eat her heart out in solitude and despair with no relief forthcoming.

"As time passed and matters did not improve and I failed to arouse even a little interest in her life I at last offered to escort her in an attempt to reach Great Britain—the journey would be perilous in the extreme, but I would risk everything for her safe.

"She thanked me, but, shaking her head dejectedly, declared she had no desire to return. I became entirely at a loss to know what course to follow in order to change her moods, and feeling at so great a disadvantage at last I visited the villa less. I could have volunteered for war, but Lady Valerie was a sacred charge—I could not leave her.

"I now spent much time alone, making daily excursions into the history-charged environs of Naples, wherein truly the mind of man may find food for unending thought, or rest his brain and refresh his weary spirit by gazing from above the city upon one of the richest landscapes in the world. There, upon the high rock, on which is built the Castle of St. Elmo, he may look below upon the whole of Naples, shaped like a theatre, brinked by sparkling sea and set about with islands of rare beauty. Or climbing the steep hill which leads to the Monastery and Church of the Carthusians, invite his eyes to rest upon one of the most varied and extensive vistas it is possible to find.

"And while I mused, again and again, I questioned myself as to the cause of the strange, persistent melancholy which consumed my lady. Groping and searching always for some clue, so reasonable explanation of a condition so inexplicable and enduring.

"I recalled, as far as possible, past words and actions, conjuring up every detail memory would permit me, and finally I asked myself, 'Am *I* in any way the cause of this despondency?' I now felt confident I was.

"Then, in a very different frame of mind, I called on Lady Valerie.

CHAPTER X

THE STORY

(Continued)

"I could not recount to you, Austin, the words whereby I endeavored to express to General Stanhope's wife my new understanding of her sentiments. You will realize that but for the intimate and candidly happy friendship which had grown up between us during the long days spent together when, by her husband's wish we had left him to his books, while mounted upon the lovely white Neapolitan horses purchased when he first took the villa, we rode side by side far out from the city, that but for that, it would have been an almost impossible task to put into words, What I now realized regarding Lady Valerie.

"Believing that I understood the cause of her excessive emotions at the time of her husband's summons to the war and her earnest desire to accompany him, which neither General Stanhope, nor myself, had been able to appreciate rightly at the time, her husband's earnestly expressed wishes and compassion for her enforced loneliness, blinding me to possibilities, I felt I had at last grasped the true condition, and not even at the general's bidding would I, without his wife's full and complete consent, thrust my society upon her. Not even to act, as I so sincerely intended, the part of a protector and a friend. I loved her too much to willfully cause her the slightest pain or agitation which in any way I could possibly prevent.

"I now saw quite clearly that she had been placed in a very difficult, if not dangerous, position, and that her feminine intuition had warned her of the perils to be encountered. Therefore, in the best words at my command, I endeavored to express my continued devotion to her service, a devotion upon which she could ever and absolutely rely, and, while not in any way intruding upon her, to be sufficiently within call to be at hand should circum-

stances demand my presence. Thus could I keep faith with General Stanhope, while relieving Lady Valerie of a painful situation.

"I assured her I was still her willing slave—her most obedient servant. Her Knight Errant to fight for and protect her should necessity arise. Though out of sight, yet ever at her call.

"I looked upon my frequent visits of the past almost as an unwarrantable intrusion, though they were, indeed, made in good faith and with the most honorable intentions.

"To all of which Lady Valerie listened with downcast eyes, while her bosom rose and sank. But when I had finished speaking she stood upright before me and placing her lovely hand on mine, thanked me. Just once she raised her long, dark lashes and gave me one, mute glance, expressing with her glorious eyes that which she was unable to say in words. Then her lips quivered, her head drooped, and to my utter dismay she turned from me and wept.

"My courage fled. Man-like I was helpless in the face of tears. I concluded, naturally, that I must be the cause, and seeking wildly for some means of comfort and finding none, I threw myself impulsively at her feet and besought forgiveness for the grief I had unwittingly occasioned.

"As abruptly as she had lost her self-control did she regain it. And graciously, even tenderly, bidding me rise, she averred that there was nothing to forgive. That she entirely endorsed the wisdom of separation. Then, giving me her hand to kiss, she said, 'Farewell.'

"Though I replied 'Farewell, I will come again, Lady Valerie, only at your bidding.' It seemed to me as though I was dismissed—nay, banished—as I left the villa.

"All the happy friendship was at an end. All the joy of daily meetings, which, of late had, it is true, been growing far less frequent. All the hope of renewing our intimate companionship, was destroyed forever!

"Though it was at my own suggestion that all this ceased, I was far from satisfied or happy. The remembrance of the fact that I had done my duty did, I confess, give me but little consolation.

"As the hours and days dragged by my misery deepened. The true value of that sweet friendship was borne in upon me now that it seemed irrevocably lost. Expelled

by circumstances from the Paradise which daily intercourse with Valerie had become to me it was a thousand times more precious to me than heretofore.

"In vain I endeavored to rejoice that a crisis had been avoided; that untold sorrow and trouble were prevented by this entire separation. Destiny seemed cruel and heartless and I railed, futile and wild, against my fate.

"Doubtless I added to my pain and prolonged my agony of soul unnecessarily by remaining too near the villa. I could have removed quite easily to a greater distance and yet have been within the reach of a courier should Lady Valerie have need for me. But I remained just out of the city on its northern slope. I felt I longed to gaze across the bay and know that, almost from my balconied window, I could descry the marble villa gleaming white amongst its glossy greens of citrons, orange and myrtle and inhale the perfumed breezes of its gardens, wafted from the south.

"Day by day I rode into the city, and, leaving my mount nearby, would wander in the dusk near Valerie's dwelling, in miserable frame of mind gazing intently at the cold, marble villa. I even ventured into the groves and gardens, so that, perchance, I might gain a closer view of that which had till now delighted my vision almost every day. My mind recalled the past, the pleasant hours spent herein, the mistress of this delightful haven, her beauty, her charm of voice and manner, acknowledging her fortitude and commanding her decision. Admitting fully that for me, the sweet torture of her presence would be as heaven, compared to this miserable experience of despair without it.

"Night after night I kept my vigil, playing at sentinel, imagining that I was guarding the fair mistress of the villa. Tormenting myself lest I should be discovered, and, indeed, the danger was no slight one, for had my presence become known I must not renew my nightly visits. Yet, must I gaze once more upon the window of my lady's boudoir, where, in that sweet room, even at this moment she might be reclining, and, perhaps, dreaming dreams of me?

"Even as my eyes rested in a lingering gaze, a flood of light streamed from the window. A figure in white stood looking forth into the midnight blue—the wonderful night-blue of Naples.

"Austin, I was transfixed! I could not move, I dare scarcely draw a breath! It seemed a direct answer to unspoken prayer, that, at this last vigil I should be vouchsafed a vision of my Valerie!

"Then, on the still, scented air there fell a sound, so soft, that only a sense of hearing made most acute by constant need of secrecy, could have distinguished the words that fell from those sweet lips:

"'Frank! O, Frank! Come back—come back!'

"Trembling and greatly agitated, every fibre of my being thrilled to the low intensity of that voice. Dare I reply to such a call? Should I not go before my presence was discovered? Yet how good it was to know I was remembered, nay, more, that Valerie longed for my return! How I had hungered for such knowledge. I hesitated, and on that moment rested all the future, for while I tarried a second utterance fell upon my ears:

"'O, Frank! Love of my heart—how can I live without thee!'

"'Valerie! Valerie!' I cried. And leaping from my ambush I hastened forward and gained the villa and by aid of a strong vine which clothed the wall beneath her window I reached the balcony before its terrified occupant had sufficiently recovered to call for protection. My movements in the shrubbery had caused her to retreat hastily from the window, so that by the time I reached the casement, Valerie, almost rigid with fear, was unable to summon aid.

"'Darling, forgive me!' I cried in a low voice. 'I could not help it—I had to come!'

"She gazed at me in terror. Recoiling from me and putting up her hands before her face as though she would shut out the sight or thrust me from her, exclaiming as she warned me back:

"'Wretched creature that I am! I little dreamed that any ears save mine could hear me. Go! Go! I beseech you—go!'

"'Darling, I cannot go, until you seal this glorious revelation with one, sweet token of your love,' I exclaimed fervently.

"Fearful of herself she sought my aid, crying out in a low voice:

"‘Oh, Frank! Help me—help me! I dare not express what I feel. I know you are a gentleman. Spare me!’

My answer was to take her in my arms and hold her to my heart. I pressed my lips on hers in one long kiss of love, to which her own responded. Then, releasing her I told her I would not burden her with my presence other than she desired. But that the dear assurance of her love for me, and mine for her, would change the world for both.

I descended as quickly as possible and passed into the night. Life took on a roseate hue. Valerie and I found a new heaven and a new earth; and light and hope and beauty glorified our lives.

"I will not burden you, Austin, with details of the days which followed. Suffice to say we never met alone; indeed, we did not often meet at all, but in our spirits we were ever in each other's presence.

"Time passed. The war was over. King George had led his troops to victory in Bavaria and General Stanhope was expected home. I felt my presence could be no longer needed after his return and decided to remain only until he should arrive to receive in safety his beautiful and faithful wife. Then I should be free to move from Naples, and I knew my wisest course lay in turning homewards.

"Valerie could not be my wife. Though we were
Note: King George II.
joined in spirit—and no distance, however great, could separate us—yet she belonged in body to another; and for our mutual peace it would be better for me to go. Calmly I made my plans; calmly I looked forward to the final discharging of that duty which General Stanhope laid upon me, and to taking my last physical view of the beloved and lovely countenance, which dwelt forever in my heart.

"So steadily had I put from me all thought—all possibility—of Valerie ever being mine, except at some far distant date, that I hardly realized its import when first the information came of General Stanhope's death, resulting from a wound received in battle. Unconsciously I lived, mentally, in the future. Knowing no other woman would ever take Valerie's place; no other ever oc-

cupy my heart—part of my soul and spirit; be the years many,—even to the full span of mortal life,—she would be mine for ever.

“And now this amazing thing had happened!

“Valerie was free!

“I will pass over the days of mourning. I respected Valerie’s grief, and did not see her.

“But as the weeks wore on, I felt I had the right to exercise that protection, which—where love is mutual—the heart’s devotion cannot fail to give. I confess I pressed my suit a little. And though, perhaps, in the world’s eyes it was hardly right,—I persuaded my beautiful Valerie to wed me before the long period of conventional mourning had elapsed. It seemed to me that full three months was time enough.

“So Valerie became my wife.

“We were married privately in the villa. Valerie had grown to love her foreign home, and though now Mistress of Llangollen Castle, she for the present could not bear the thought of leaving all the beauty of the surroundings where had been born and blossomed the real love of her life. But the exuberant joy which should have been ours was held in check until the full days of mourning should be over; then,—we told ourselves,—we would go forth together in no way hiding from the world our rapturous love.

“A cloud, however, appeared on our horizon. Valerie became unaccountably sad; unpleasant dreams and strange forebodings vexed her; and, in spite of every effort on my part, her depression became more marked and more enduring.

“So agitated and unnerved was she at last that I was not greatly astonished when, late one night, when we were alone together in her boudoir, she burst into a flood of hysterical weeping. I essayed to soothe, holding her closely to my breast, where she clung, sobbing convulsively.

“At last she raised her sweet, tear-stained face, and exclaimed, brokenly:

“‘Frank, my love, I fear some terrible catastrophe! A horrible dread of something happening to you! I do

not understand my feelings. They are nameless, but too real to me. Forgive, and bear with me!"

"Hardly had she ceased speaking than we were both startled by most unusual sounds,—as of horsemen, or a carriage, approaching the villa. The sounds came rapidly nearer, then stopped. The loud clanging of a bell announced the arrival of a belated and insistent visitor.

"'Oh, Frank! Who can it be—at this late hour?' whispered Valeria in terror. 'Let us arouse the servants!'

"'No, darling,' I answered. 'If they are not already awakened by such ringing, I will go down and interview the midnight visitant. Grazia shall come to you. It may be a special messenger from King George, my love, requesting your beauteous presence at his Court! And I must be the first to inform you of the honour, darling!' I spoke thus lightly to subdue her fears. Bending I kissed her sweet lips.

"Valerie clung to me, endeavoring to keep me with her; but I gently released myself from her embrace and hurried out—little prepared for what awaited me!

"Before I reached the hall the new-comer had been admitted, and was in the act of being relieved of his traveling cloak by a man—presumably his valet; some luggage was being carried in. And my astounded vision fell on the appalling sight of the form of him, whom we all believed to be deceased,—none other than General Stanhope!

"I understood Valerie's forebodings now.

"As I descended the broad staircase he turned and faced me.

"I recoiled with an exclamation of amazement! He appeared so changed, haggard and old.

CHAPTER XI

"The General did not speak for an appreciable length of time, but peered at me mistrustfully in the dim morning light. I stood in the middle of the grand staircase, that he had, before catching sight of me, essayed to ascend. I could distinguish clearly his altered appearance—his face pale, haggard, anxious and aged. His features appeared ghastly and the whole outline of his form and attitude was repellent to me: a premonition of his mental state, maybe. His uniform crumpled and travel-stained. When he realized who I was he shouted—

"Sir Francis Whynn, by all that's holy!—the meaning of your presence here, sir, at this hour? Speak, I command you!"

I could have better faced a hostile army just then than the General's natural, simple inquiry. It is so difficult to inform a living man that he is supposed to be dead.

He naturally felt bewildered, having expected a different reception. The old servant, who had arrived upon the scene, muttered an unintelligible something, which scarcely could be termed a welcome. It was dreadfully difficult for me to explain that I had been so certain he was gone for ever, that I had married his widow. To say the least of it, the situation was trying.

"Come, you do not speak. If you are honest, you will do so. I demanded an explanation. What are you doing here in my house, at midnight, sir, and trying to steal away?" he added, sneeringly.

As he spoke he drew and brandished his sword and made a feint that he would strike me. Recovering my equanimity, I ejaculated with dignity—

"Put up your sword, General; there is no need for passion. I understood you had been killed in battle. A message to that effect from England was so delivered, and accepted by everyone as truth; the servants can corroborate my statements."

The whole household by this time had been aroused, and the male and female retainers had gathered with scared faces, in a group; their countenances pale, their eyes gleaming darkly with bewilderment and apprehension in the gloom. I was conscious—acutely so—of their whispered wonderment. They said to each other—"the old master has come back; what will become of the young master and mistress now!"

Strange thoughts chased themselves wildly through my heated brain—my whole being throbbed with perplexed emotion. It was so unexpected, this trying difficulty that now confronted me, I scarcely knew what to do, what to say.

"You contend," interrupted the General, harshly, "that you believed me dead—that everybody understood I was defunct. By everybody, do you include my wife? Does she, also, believe me to be dead that you are made welcome here in my house at midnight, sir, ah!"

"Spare your taunts and insinuations, General. Yes, it is best you learn the whole truth. Valerie believes you to be dead, and by her you were sincerely mourned. Your memory is as yet revered; but, feeling herself at liberty, she became my wife. We were married just three months ago."

"Married! Valerie—to you! My wife no longer, but yours! Good Heavens, God above, can this be so?" he demanded brokenly.

"It is true," I reiterated.

"I will not believe that my Valerie would forget me so soon. No, no; I see through the scheme, the wish on your part was father to the thought. You took no particular pains to ascertain the facts, and you inveigled my fair young wife into marriage. Traitor that you are, I will not excuse you. The crime is yours, and you must pay the penalty. We cannot both live; you shall die, for I will kill you.

"General Stanhope, you forget yourself. Be calm—have patience, sir, and do not jump to hasty conclusions. We cannot discuss these matters here fully before the servants. I will dismiss them, and then we will converse."

So saying, I ordered the retainers to their respective quarters, and motioned the General that I would follow him into the study, but, wilfully blind to everything but his fury, he demanded reparation—as he termed it—immediately, and rushed upon me furiously with his drawn sword. I repelled the attack somewhat by my calm demeanour, I feel confident, but to small purpose, for he did not desist in his attempts to wound me.

His attitude was most threatening from the first. He was a solider, accustomed to dictate in a fighting mood, I presume. Anyway he refused to reason the matter out, so I suggested a duel, to take place when he was less fatigued. My considerate tone appeared only to further exasperate him.

"Protect yourself, now, sir coxcomb," he shouted, lashing himself into a fury. "I have no time to waste, and cannot wait your pleasure,"—so saying he made a desperate onslaught with his naked sword against me forcing me back on the stairway.

The noise of the altercation, or a desire to investigate the cause of my long absence brought Valerie on the scene at this juncture. If I could I would have spared the dear girl the shock, but the General's actions had been so bellicose from the very first, I had no alternative but to let matters take their course.

The sight of the fragile, affrighted Valerie, apparently added fuel to the fire of the General's rage, he bellowed rather than spoke:

"Ah!—here you come, madam! You presumed my death—an old man—glad to be rid of me, no doubt, but I'm here, alive, and determined to avenge my wrongs. Sir Francis Whynn—not I—must die; and you must be quite sure he is dead too. You understand me? Dead, I say, killed by me. See!"

So saying, he turned abruptly, and without warning made a fierce lunge, buried his keen glistening sword many inches deep into my quivering flesh. Oh, God! the pain was agonizing. I realized at once I was done for. The torturing thought of Valerie's sad plight, and my helplessness was maddening, and caused me to writhe in agony of mind and body. Great Scott! Austin, Hell

hath not greater torments to offer than I suffered in that hour of my despair and physical pain.

My brain reeled—I dropped faint to the floor. I could hear my darling Valerie's screams of anguish and terror, which brought the alarmed servants again trooping upon the scene. I could distinguish their horrified cries and wild exclamations and anxieties to help me.

I made strenuous efforts, in spite of excruciating pain, to regain my feet, but all to no purpose. I was effectually pinned by the General's clever thrust and firm weapon—which fact appeared to give him great satisfaction for he laughed aloud in derision at my futile efforts to regain my feet.

Poor Valerie! She was nearly frantic with amazement, horror and grief, and as she cried aloud, “Oh! send for a surgeon, he must not die!”

The General's rage was boundless,—he acted like a madman! Would not,—even from Valerie,—listen to reason. All her endeavours were fruitless. She begged him piteously to obtain medical assistance before it was too late.

All this time I was suffering untold agony; I became weak and dizzy from the loss of blood; my head sank lower upon the stairway. Valerie, realizing my awful plight in compassion knelt beside me, and raising my drooping head, placed it tenderly upon her fair bosom, while her scalding tears rained in torrents upon my face.

In piteous tones she begged me to live. “Oh Frank! my love! don't leave me! don't die! stay with me.”

By Heavens! I died a thousand terrible deaths in my powerlessness and physical suffering as Valerie uttered those words. My life's blood was flowing freely, to the ebb, and staining Valerie's pretty white garments, in spite of her strenuous efforts to staunch its copious issue. We both felt in despair, yet there was no help for it! The deed was done.

The trouble had come so suddenly,—so unexpectedly,—and from such an unlooked-for quarter, that all we could do was resign ourselves to the parting. Valerie pressed her lovely rose-leaf lips to my burning brow, and whispered her lamentations and assurances of undying affection even if the worst came. “Frank, if you die, I

die too, I could not live without you," she declared and kissed me passionately.

I made one firm effort to raise myself to respond to her embrace, but discovered I was unable to move, or emit one sound. I heard only faintly now Stanhope's fierce curses. My power had fled,—my sight grew dim—I could no longer view sweet Valerie's exquisite features. All was black, black despair! and so I lost consciousness.

I remembered no more until I awoke to find myself upon a spotless couch in a still, cool room. Gazing around me in surprise, and to ascertain if possible where I was located, I encountered the sympathetic smile of a kind, motherly lady, who tenderly bent over me, raised my head, re-arranged my downy pillows, and gently enquired if I felt better?

"As far as health is concerned, Madam, I fell all right, thank you," I ejaculated. "Can you tell me what you presume ails me, and where I am?" for I fully realized I could not tell or even recall even in the faintest fashion past events.

The white-robed lady smiled and soothingly replied: "Here comes Dr. Kellier, he will give you the necessary information, I believe."

I glanced up to view the presence of a tall, fair, handsome young gentleman, whose bright, blue eyes peered quizzically into mine.

"I see you are improving, Sir Francis. My name is Rudolph Kellier, and at present I constitute myself your medical adviser. Accordingly I advise a little more rest. Compose yourself for sleep."

As he said this, with a winning smile, he waved a shapely white hand over my face, and some irresistible power compelled me to sink again into deep slumber. How long I slept I am unable to say, but when I awoke I felt greatly refreshed, quite strong, in fact. I moved and gazed around me to again encounter the kindly glances of both doctor and nurse. I vaguely wondered if they had kept vigil whilst I slept.

"Well, are you feeling all right?" the doctor cheerily enquired.

"Yes, quite well, thank you. Where am I, and how long have I been here?"

"Good: An excellent number of questions for an invalid. I feel confident you are quite strong now. But one question at a time, please." We both laughed, and the doctor continued: "You are in my home. You were brought here at my request in a helpless state, about four months ago."

"Four months ago, doctor; good heavens, I have been a serious patient. Whatever could have been the trouble? I cannot properly recall the past, though I have a dim recollection of being hurt somewhere, and somehow. But I feel much better now, so dismiss the nurse and I will rise and dress."

"Steady, the nurse has gone, but here, take these garments of mine, we are somewhere of a height and size. Your clothing was terribly cut up and dreadfully bloodstained, therefore of little service to you now."

"By Jove! yes, I remember Stanhope stabbed me. Ah! Valerie, Lady Stanhope, can you tell me what became of her? Is she safe and well? Give me as quickly as possible all the information that lies in your power," I exclaimed, excitedly.

"Calm yourself, Sir Francis Whynn. You see I know your full title. The lady was not killed; in fact, she was not physically harmed at all. She is fairly well."

"Thank God! I ejaculated, fervently.

"Amen. Please understand I am your firm friend, Sir Francis. I have really had a similar experience to your own. You see this, pointing with his finger to a deep livid mark on the cheek beneath the left eye. I received that wound in a duel. A lady in the case, of course. Altho' I vanquished my rival, my love affair had a different ending to your own. Anyway I did not get the prize, but I got the opportunity to fight a duel.

"The lady jilted you after that, Doctor?" I queried, solicitously.

"Not exactly that, but she certainly gave her favours to another man. I simply repeat my story to give you confidence that I understand and sympathize with your present condition. Now if you are ready and willing I

will at once accompany you to the home of your fair enchantress."

"Kellier, old fellow, I knew you were a gentleman. You never did me a greater service in your life. I would like the lady to know I am well and strong after the ugly thrust that might have killed me, and that I have in no way deserted her. I am quite ready.

"So is the carriage. Come along. I understand your feelings, we shall soon be there; at the villa, I mean."

Together we entered,—(Dr. Kellier and I) the old familiar grounds, and presented ourselves at the very portals. So eager was I for egress that I felt to be walking on air. I was on the very tip-toe of expectancy. My sweet love! What would she say? Would she accord me a warm welcome? Did she feel confident I was faithful to our plighted troth? Our Marrie. Our Love, of that she could have no doubt. Still uneasy for her sake, yet hopeful, I permitted the doctor to lead the way. Without an obstacle we reached Valerie's well-remembered chamber door when a torrent of thoughts overwhelmed me.

As we stood there, awaiting entrance, a page approached and passed us without a word or glance, or appearing in any way to notice our presence.

To my surprise upon entering the apartment, I found my love was lying upon a bed of sickness, her pale, wan, delicate features waxy in hue, her splendidly long silken dark curling lashes resting lightly upon her sunken cheeks. There she lay in a sleep that greatly resembled death, so cold and still was she. My heart felt frozen with grief and despair. She had been fretting, I felt sure, my darling Valerie!

My conjectures were interrupted by Kellier's voice whispering to me, "Speak and arouse her."

I eagerly obeyed, and in tender tones of love exclaimed, "Valerie, my angel awake. Your lover is here, look up, pet and live, get strong for my sake as well as for your own." With this a smile illuminated her pale countenance, and obediently her glorious orbs unveiled and gazed up with a pleading glance into mine. A be-

wildered expression, then a joyous gaze of recognition, a glad cry and she burst forth impulsively:

"Oh Frank, my love, my life. Is it you? I knew you would come. They told me you were dead and gone from me for ever, but I believed them not. I knew that God in His goodness, in answer to my heartfelt prayers, would let you come to me. I have suffered so much, but I can die happy now."

"My adorable angel, you must not die, I am here to assist you to recover. You must get well and strong. I need your sweet companionship, for we are truly one. I feel proud to know, darling, that in spite of false reports you had faith in my integrity. I will never desert you. Strive from now, brave heart, to recover your wonted health, and together we will leave Naples, and travel far away cross the deep blue sea to other lands and climes, and live in joy and peace together.

Her reply was an almost hysterical sobbing embrace. Entwining her shapely arms around my neck, she breathed rather than spoke:

"Frank, my love, I cannot find words to express my joy at this, our reunion. God is good, sweetheart. Have you seen our little treasure, the sweet darling babe? She is such a bonny wee thing, with eyes, hair and perfect features like your own."

"A babe, our child," I stammered in confusion. "My love what you must have suffered alone, apparently deserted. O Heaven, I can scarcely realize it all. Believe me, darling, I came to you directly I was conscious, strong and able to undertake the journey. Do forgive me, my love, my life, for all the sorrow and suffering I have caused you, although I feel I shall never be able to forgive myself."

Without particularly heeding my remarks, Valerie pleasantly continued: "You must see the child, Frank, and tell me if you do not agree with me, she is beautiful. Nurse, bring baby here," commanded Valerie.

To my astonishment—(for I thought we were alone, Dr. Kellier having most discreetly retired)—a tall young woman in nurse's attire, carrying apparently a bundle of linen, lace and furbelows, made her appearance and

calmly proceeded to unfold the snowy drapery and revealed to my bewildered gaze the tiny pink face of an infant.

Without professing to be an excellent judge of such matters, I'll confess that the little one certainly possessed an exquisitely perfect formation and features. The babe's presence was certainly a revelation to me. I was lost in wonderment. Breaking upon my reverie, Valerie gently enquired:

"There, Frank, is not our darling just perfectly lovely!"

I readily acknowledged that the little babe was a real beauty. The fact is, as I told her, I did not know, although possibly I ought to have done, that such an event as the birth of a child might have occurred. So, naturally, I felt confused. To my inexperienced eye the infant was such a pretty, fragile creature that I dare not touch it rashly, lest it would crumble or break. Dear Valerie, she just hugged, fondled and caressed the little treasure, handling it with such skill that I was lost in admiration at her deftness. It was a trial to me, I'll own, when the darling girl raised the tiny mite and presented its soft pink cheek for me to kiss. I nervously passed through the ordeal without discredit, I trust.

While thus interestingly engaged, we were interrupted by the entrance of a portly gentleman, who hustled into the room, and whom the nurse hailed as "Doctor". The gentleman in question appeared very solicitous respecting Valerie's welfare, scolded the nurse for permitting her to have the custody of the child. "I believe I gave you strict instructions to keep your patient quiet," he began sternly, "and here I find her in an excited state, nursing. Remove the infant at once."

The medical man had reckoned without his host. Valerie clung in a desperate fashion to her little one, protesting vigorously against the separation, wildly appealing to me in her extremity: "Frank, Frank, don't let them take the baby, I cannot permit them to take our pet from me, I cannot bear it. She is my very own, ours, let me keep her."

I strove to soothe Valerie, placed a detaining hand upon the child, and forbade the nurse to touch it. The

physician, seeing the trouble his order had caused, altered his tone, and in a more gentle fashion said:

"Very well, nurse, let your mistress have her own way just now." Then, sotto voice, which I distinctly heard, "It really does not matter, Lady Stanhope is dying. She can't last much longer, so prepare for the end."

The good natured nurse burst suddenly into tears, and turned abruptly away to hide her grief.

I then stepped up to the physician, exclaiming:

"Sir, you must be mistaken in your diagnosis. The lady will not die. She will — nay must — improve in health. I am here to remove her from these unhappy surroundings. The child and her, when she is stronger, will come to me."

But the man rudely pushed past me, and treated my remarks with silent contempt, and after assuring Lady Stanhope that the child should not be taken from her, left the room after giving instructions to the weeping nurse, without a glance in my direction.

I felt most indignant at being thus rudely ignored, and was seriously cogitating how to act under the circumstances, when Dr. Kellier, who had noiselessly as his wont, I noticed, re-entered the apartment, and touching me on the shoulder, gently yet commandingly said, "Raise Valerie in your arms bodily from the couch, the nurse will take the child."

I hastened, wonderingly to obey. I followed his instructions to the letter, for he was very explicit in his orders, advising me to be very careful not to give the body a shock.

"She has fainted, you observe," he commented, "but I want you to carry her to our carriage, and I will have her properly attended to on our arrival home."

This was good news. Kellier had done so very much for me that I had implicit faith in his ability to cure Valerie.

"Thanks, old fellow," I whispered, fervently, as I lifted my precious burden from her snowy bed. "She will soon recover from her indisposition, whatever it is, if you put your skill into operation."

Strange to say Valerie opened her eyes smiled sweetly when she saw me, re-entwined her arms lovingly around my neck, thus making my delightful task the lighter. She seemed to melt into my embrace as it were, and appeared so ethereal and pure like a waxen lily.

"Oh Frank," she whispered sweetly, "I am ready to accompany you, take me to heaven, but bring our baby too. Don't leave her love, to be sneered and scoffed at, let us take her now."

I hesitated, and glanced beseechingly at Kellier, as I asked about the infant. Valerie wants the baby, may we take her also?"

"One thing at a time," the Doctor answered, grimly.

"You do as I tell you at present, I will attend to the child's welfare later. The mother's wellbeing is of the greatest importance just now."

Without further parley I proceeded again to raise Valerie from her downy pillows. Her head at length rested upon my breast, her dark waving tresses fell around her perfect face in sweet profusion, stray strands coyly curled up and touched my cheeks. Her eyelids closed as though in sleep, which appeared as restful and peaceful as a child's.

To my utter amazement, however, as I removed my darling from the yielding bed, I saw there were two Valeries, one warm, living, lovingly clasped in my arms, the second lying cold and still rigid as in death, the countenance as white as the damask sheets it pressed. The sight alarmed me and for a moment I was unable to stir a limb. Dr. Kellier, observing my perplexity, smiled an enigmatical smile, but gently beckoned me forward with my precious burden.

Just then a number of persons passed me and rushed hurriedly into the room, and I heard the sounds of loud sobbing and lamentations, and the words distinct and clear rang out, "Lady Stanhope is dead." I glanced lovingly down at my charming love, and felt it was my turn to smile, for she was not dead, but sleeping. I hurried forward until I rested with her, still in my arms, in the waiting vehicle, which in a short span of time drew up at Dr. Kellier's imposing residence, and two female attendants relieved me of the unconscious Valerie. The

young Doctor followed them, motioning me to remain where I was.

I was alone with my burning thoughts. How very strange and mysterious the past events appeared.

I turned over in my mind the inexplicable matters I had witnessed without discovering an adequate solution to the mystery. I hailed the Doctor's return with delight—made enquiries after his patient, and then plunged at once into the subject that troubled my mind.

"Doctor, please explain the paradoxied appearance of two Valeries. I'll acknowledge I am truly mystified by that phenomenon beyond measure. I held one form, yet there was another alike yet unlike. If possible, tell me the meaning of such a remarkable occurrence."

"Yes, I will endeavor to explain, although I am not surprised you do not understand. You see, I have not yet informed you that you are also dead."

"Dead? What do you mean? Man! I am anything but dead or lifeless, inanimate, defunct, cold, still, etc. I fail to grasp the situation."

Kellier broke into a hearty if disconcerting laugh.

"It is an awkward task for me to try to persuade you that you are defunct, for appearances are against my statements, but for all that you are dead, demised, so considered by the denizens of the physical world. Your spirit or real self, left your body after that ugly wound you received from General Stanhope's sword, a few months ago, and your mortal remains,—just as your sweetheart's will be,—were interred in the burial grounds at Naples. The Ego or self-consciousness, is unable to retain a hold upon its fleshly tenement or body when the vital force is dispersed, which happened in your case through the loss of blood, but you,—like your fair lady,—have sustained the shock termed 'death', and you have renewed your wonted vigor, for it is quite evident 'Richard is himself again'. Do not forget, Whynn, that I was once pronounced dead; that was after the duel I mentioned to you."

"And Valerie, she, you say, has just passed through the same miraculous change, is she dead, and is that the reason why I saw the two forms of my fair love so distinctly?" I interruptingly inquired.

"Yes, that is so."

"Great heavens! Kellier, truly there are more things in earth and heaven than can be dreamed of in man's philosophy."

"Whynn, old fellow, although you may not realize it, we are ghosts. That is what our late associates, even your loved ones who mourned distractedly, your physical loss, would term us, if we again essayed to revisit our old haunts in the physical world! And yet there is very little of the unsubstantial about either of us, judging by appearances, now is there?"

"Well really, Doctor, it's very puzzling. How can I ever hope to successfully grapple with the problems, I wonder?" I blurted.

"Don't try my boy, let circumstances be your enlightener."

"Oh Kellier, I am fully cognizant of your kindness to both Valerie and myself, you are an angel, a tutor, and faithful, unselfish friend rolled into one. I feel just three times alive, anything but inanimate. My emotions are intense. I long to dive into these mysteries, ask a thousand questions concerning them. Therefore, I beg indulgence, I must upon your patience and kindness continue to draw if you will permit me. Pray tell me in that horseless carriage, by what power we travelled and arrived at the handsome old, familiar villa?"

"To give you some small idea of how we travelled, I may say, we were propelled through space by electricity in the quicker and clearer vibrations at lightning speed, my vehicle being fitted with mechanical appliances designed for the purpose. You and I had been prepared, magnetised, reclothed, with a semblance of flesh or matter, i. e., chemically prepared, solidified material, containing the component parts of the substances that go to form an ordinary human, physical organism. Thus equipped we were without difficulty enabled to re-enter the grosser atmosphere of the earth plane and successfully accomplish our mission."

Necessarily we were invisible to all, excepting those whose spiritual natures had been aroused, quickened and developed to perceive the denizens of the psychic world."

"Eh! Gad, Kellier, it's marvellous," I exclaimed.

"For instance, no one excepting your wife saw you in that chamber of death. The lady did not even see me, her deep love for you assisted considerably to arouse and unfold her dormant psychic faculties. You see her spiritual counterpart Ego, or real self, was preparing to vacate its mortal tenement; her grief at your tragic end and the premature birth of her child the cause. Your presence and undivided affection gave the necessary stimulus to fully awaken the latent powers of spirit perception, she saw and fully recognized you, ere she 'shuffled off the mortal coil' ", as Shakespeare puts it.

"That accounts then for that pompous physician's rude behavior to me. He did not know of my presence, I presume."

"That is so. The nurse and the doctor were both absolutely unconscious of your presence. Both seeing and hearing the invalid behave as though she was holding converse with empty air, they concluded her hour had come and refused her nothing, as is the custom at the death bed of mortals."

"Thanks ever so much, I thoroughly appreciate your lucid explanation, but it does appear strange to try to think of one's self as dead, for really, old chap, I must say I never felt more alive in the whole course of my existence."

"That's all right, you appear exceptionally lively, for one who has been ruthlessly killed and declared defunct, you know."

"Kellier you are a brick, I shall be eternally obliged to you. Believe me, I shall never forget, and if opportunity presents itself I shall endeavor to repay your kindness. I require a little more information, I trust you will bear with me. I would like to know how I am to acquaint Valerie with these marvellous truths, and convey the intelligence that she is considered a ghost or 'dead'?"

"Don't worry yourself too much concerning the lady's enlightenment. There will be no great difficulty to contend with, I assure you. Women naturally possess the intuitive faculty. They instinctively, as it were, understand these delicate matters. Men rarely relish the

idea of suddenly having become angels, or ghosts. Women take to the notion like ducks to water. You shall test the matter for yourself shortly. In the meantime, I would like to explain that being signalled for by the guardians of the watch-tower, whose pleasure and duty it is to keep vigil and guard the border-land in spirit life: to render aid or assist in any way those helpless souls who by accident or design have been ejected from their corporeal bodies into the psychic realm,—at the time of your cruel demise, I took your case in hand, made enquiries as to the cause of the quarrel, etc., and accordingly am prepared at the present time to offer you hospitality and advice.

"The reason you were not aware you had left your body was because I had taken precautions to have you thoroughly well magnetised, and by mental suggestion induced a deeper unconsciousness than what had taken place by loss of the vital force, etc. I aroused you from the trance only when I considered it necessary, again deepening your death sleep. The last time I took particular care to arouse memory so that you, without shock, could recall past events. Do not think me presumptuous. Not from idle curiosity, but to endeavor to become your benefactor, I have made myself fully acquainted with your past history, and will here and now predict a happy future for you and your soul's mate. I am delighted to have been the means of bringing about the pleasurable reunion, and be the first to bid you welcome to the bright celestial regions of Love and Life."

"Presumptious indeed! My dear Doctor, you have overwhelmed me with your noble consideration. I feel confident, althou' you have endeavored to so lightly pass over your magnificent work that you have accomplished a great deal, overcome tremendous obstacles for Valerie's and my sake. My feelings are too great for expression, I am truly grateful, believe me. I would like to ask you one very pertinent question: What am I to do, now I am here in Spirit-land?"

"Ah! that is a matter that will require further consideration. In the meantime consider yourself my very welcome guest. Look upon this establishment as your home. The lady to be installed as mistress. I shall oc-

cupy only a small corner. Now, Whynn, old fellow, spare me the thanks, I have been repaid a thousand times already. I am charmed to know I have been instrumental in assisting two such loving, faithful souls. Ah who comes here?"

At that moment a nurse glided into our presence and in dulcet tones ejaculated:

"The lady is awake, Doctor, and calling for Frank."

"All right nurse. Sir Francis, you are at liberty to visit your wife."

I needed no second bidding. Eagerly I pressed forward, rushed past the attendant, and once more clasped in loving embrace my darling Valerie. What a transformation from the pale, sickly appearance of the death-chamber, to that of a lovely goddess, the personification of beauty and health. Her incomparable beauty, heightened and enhanced by a million graces, her diaphanous snowy garments, tastefully draped to cunningly conceal, yet reveal her perfect form; her luxurious dark tresses simply arranged and prettily decorated with perfect specimens of the queen of flowers, while clusters of bright, delicate pink roses nestled tenderly at her faultless throat falling in profusion over the folds of her fleecy robe. To me she appeared an entrancing picture of idealistic youth and beauty, lovely beyond compare.

"Frank, my love," she blushing, exclaimed as she faltered under my admiring glances, "what a glorious change for us, we are really in Heaven now, we need never part, need we?"

"But husband mine, there is just one thing missing, our darling baby. I love her so, I could not be truly happy without her. Forgive me love, but it is the truth, she ought to be with us, let me have her. Frank, promise me, I know you will refuse me nothing. Let me have my child." This was said so coaxingly.

"My angel bride, you shall be denied nothing. If I have any power in Heaven here, or on the earth below, the little one shall be in your possession in quick time," I declared, rather boastfully, I fear.

Nevertheless I excused myself and had another interview with Kellier, and to my inexpressible joy, the Doctor agreed to take us with him to fetch the babe.

Once again together we traversed space in a magnificently fitted up conveyance and by means of a glistening lever we were, after being quickly propelled through waves of ether, brought to a standstill in the grounds of that well remembered tragical villa, and entered without interference a darkened chamber. Strange to relate we had returned to the ancient mansion at the precise period when the interment of my fair Valerie's body was taking place.

The tiny infant in a dainty cot was being faithfully guarded by Valerie's late maid—whose eyes, true soul, were red with weeping. As we drew near the cot and took a close survey of the innocent inmate we distinctly heard the maid's sobs and lamentations at the loss of her erstwhile mistress. We naturally relied upon Dr. Kellier's instructions how to order ourselves in this delicate task. It was, I can assure you, Austin, a marvellous experience for Valerie and myself.

The clever Doctor ordered the mother to speak to her child. This sweet Valerie did instantly, with the result that the tiny babe responded with a dimpling smile as though it recognized its mother was near. I could see the young mother's joy, her deep emotions, and felt convinced Valerie could never have consented to a long separation, even for the child to have gained what Dr. Kellier termed "An earthly experience."

"No, this pretty creature was the offspring of pure love, the babe of true desire, the first born of our pure affection, the mother's treasure. The earthly surroundings had faded from my mind as it were by the thrilling responses to my darling love's sweet emotions, so that I forgot where I was and our purpose, but I was aroused from my reverie. The maid was speaking with tears in her voice:

"Ah! poor child, I see you are laughing in your innocent sleep. Can you see angels, I wonder, that you smile so sweetly? Maybe your beautiful mother is near watching over you. Poor lamb, it's a pity she does not take you to heaven with her, you are not wanted here. I heard General Stanhope term you a squalling brat, he hates you I know."

I saw Valerie blanch and recoil, she felt faint with anguish. I hastened to support her, whispering words of consolation and affection for her and our babe. We needed no further stimulus after the nurse's remarks to determine our actions. To have the infant at once removed from such an unholy atmosphere was our desire. Dr. Kellier immediately responded to our request by inducing a deep mesmeric sleep to fall upon the faithful attendant. He then dexterously raised the child from its pretty bed, quickly severed the silver cord of physical life that bound the infant to its fleshy body. The babe gave one convulsive shudder, and pursed its features as though in pain, then gave up the ghost. The more beautiful spiritual counterpart was placed in Valerie's waiting arms, and the joyous young mother clasped to her palpitating bosom her precious babe.

"Need I enlarge upon this subject, Austin? Tell you how our infant grew in beauty, repeat her childish prattle, tell of her cuteness, winsomeness and love, and her first lisping words when she faltered 'Mamma', 'Dadda'. With confidence I can say as she grew she daily unfolded in grace and beauty. Our greatest difficulty was to devise a suitable name, for she was such a Juno, Diana, Venus, and Hebe rolled into one. The personification of purity, beauty, love and perfection, a delightful and charming companion for us both. By mutual agreement at last we named her 'Virginia.'"

CHAPTER XII

"Now you would imagine we would have settled down to live happy ever after; not so; peace, perfect peace, was not ours yet. Some time after I had become settled with my wife and child in our spiritual home, a real and substantial dwelling, and had received a special visit from my angelic and beloved parents, a host of relatives and friends, at the request of my sister Anne I undertook the task of preparing for a long journey to earth; my sister was desirous—anxious—that I should obtain possession of those defamatory papers which had been sent to her, and still reposed in the walnut cabinet at Hornsworth Castle.

"Frank, I want you to go and destroy those papers," Anne asserted, and her desire was a command. I conferred with Father and Mother and Valerie, who readily agreed to the plan.

In the first place, before entering upon such an important task as abstracting, handling and altering material documents, however important or detrimental to one's good name, it was very necessary to take a course of lessons, to study the laws governing spirit manifestations and power, to successfully combat earth force and use all physical substances. The ethereal body, although very substantial, is more delicate in texture and more highly tuned to quicker vibrations than the corporeal one. Therefore, the difficulties to be encountered in the grosser atmosphere, or air pressure of the physical realm must,—if one out of the physical body is to remain in it for any length of time,—be overcome by practical knowledge of weight and resistance, experience of which can only be gauged and acquired by expert experiments.

Our kind friend and noble adviser Doctor Kellier again came to my assistance and readily undertook the task of enlightening me into the mysteries of rehabilitation of the fleshy body. Also together we formulated a plan of campaign in respect to the whole matter of repara-

tion or restitution for my past injuries. Before I ventured into the physical realm I had perforce to learn the science of anatomy and reproduction of human flesh and bony structure, with the nucleus or protoplasms for muscles, sinews, tissues, blood, skin, etc., all the material that goes to chemically construct a human physical frame. Dr. Kellier carefully prepared and liquidized all of the essential chemical compounds, the constituent elements that go to compose the component parts of a fully developed corporeal form for my use. I had the whole body of a real fleshy man in liquid form, sealed in a psychic receptacle.

By this material it was possible with knowledge of correct proportions, etc., to clothe oneself with a substantial coating, or semblance of flesh for manifesting, that is, being seen by mortals in a substantial way.

I was duly instructed by the Doctor how to manipulate these precious compounds. How to deftly handle the chemical substances, liquids, and luminosity, so as to manifest myself in a fully materialized body, even to correct proportions of height, shape and minute details of original style of dress, etc. In darkness or full light of day, to do the work regally, you understand.

I may tell you a spirit-man is much larger in proportion, than a physical one. He unfolds or develops after discarding his fleshy tenement and becomes larger and more perfect.

I was now prepared for quite an achievement. A fascinating study of the practical methods of artistic plastic clay work. Like a good actor, I had to learn how to make up. I can assure you, Austin, manifesting on the mundane plane would have been very simple, easy in the extreme, if I had been content to follow the line of the least resistance and appear to human eyes in the regulation garb of a voluminous white robe with hood or cowl pulled well over head and face to partially conceal, yet reveal the upper part of the features—be a phantom —play the ghost, as it were.

From the first intimation of the idea of personally visiting General Stanhope, I determined to accomplish my purpose, in my own particular fashion, by discard-

ing the spectre idea and substituting my own method of procedure.

Therefore, I departed after a protracted farewell of my loved one, fully equipped from the spiritual realm and with knowledge, material, and a retinue of spirit-men, that were experts, yet were my willing attendants. These included adepts, masters in the past arts of mysticism, occultism, magnetism and a scientific understanding of the elements and substances of the two worlds, psychic and physical. These guides were made up of Egyptians, Hindoos, Chinese, aborigines and numerous Europeans. Thus prepared for all emergencies, my gifted attendants and I journeyed earthwards. In due time we settled ourselves and our belongings in the spiritual counterpart of the home of General Stanhope in Naples, Italy.

The forces we employed among others during our protracted stay in the psychic part of Naples, were the electric, magnetic and hypnotic; marvellous forces these when rightly understood, Austin!

The apartments, especially General Stanhope's private suite of rooms, were carefully,—by these qualified spiritual attendants,—magnetized daily. This process was often employed for the purpose of disintegrating atoms of matter which impeded our freedom or access to other parts of the premises.

Also the magnetic force was very useful to us when we required to raise ponderable bodies or remove obstacles or carry hard or light substances around. For instance, pass a heavy oak dining table through a stone-wall, or lift it from the floor,—tilt and drop it to produce noises, or simply to scatter beautiful flowers upon visitors,—pass matter through matter,—you know,—as the scientifically inclined investigator into the realms of spiritual phenomena delights so much to quote.

Now for practise or more often for the amusing purpose of mystifying the inmates of the villa, my attendants would remove sundry articles of wearing apparel taken from a lower suite of rooms to a higher, or vice versa. And to an assembly of guests.

Introduce Apports in the shape of singing birds, insects, giant moths, lovely butterflies, bouquets of flowers,

Eastern curios, foreign coins, jewels, etc., and during their exclamations of surprise, bewilderment or consternation, make the whole paraphernalia invisible to their sight for a few seconds or entirely disappear from view altogether.

In this way the villa got a rather peculiar reputation. To us, these preliminary performances clearly demonstrated that we had succeeded in producing a psychic

Note: (See Scientific Reports of Spiritual Manifestations.)

atmosphere, and had established a connecting link between the spiritual and physical realms.

All this was very necessary to the furthering of my plans. Now our combined efforts were to be directed upon individuals. General Stanhope first, of course. Every time he entered his sanctum he was hypnotised by one of us, and would complain to himself of feeling so unaccountably "sleepy". I took this matter fully in hand at last and gradually got the General under my complete influence and control. I discovered I could induce in him a profound trance-like state of mind.

Thus I had access to General Stanhope's mental state. I was enabled to review his secret thoughts. The mind which is opaque to mortals under the circumstances I have described becomes as crystal,—I diligently searched the archives of the past. I found what I required, and more, I read tiny tablets, i. e.,—minute records of the brain, many times duplicated and docketed for future reference at his Memory's command,—I had my scribes magnify and take copies of such as I required. I could disclose many secrets, passions, fears, pure and evil desires, for without impediment the General's mind was entirely at my disposal. I knew every thought, every action, all he had ever done or contemplated doing. My what I could reveal!

"In that hour of triumph I could have entirely altered his future career by strong mental suggestion if I had so desired. I am not posing as a Saint, Recording Angel, Accuser, or Judge,—but there were unlimited possibilities within my grasp. To the man out of the body, in possession of sufficient data and knowledge, there

are infinite opportunities and possibilities, believe me, Austin!

I am simply a disseminator of facts and I did not interfere with one possession of General Stanhope's mind more than was necessary for the preservation of the good names of my family nad myself. I merely took notes of all I required.

By this particular method of reviewing the past, thoughts and actions of General Stanhope and that critical period of him and my career, I read his statements made to the physician who had been hastily summoned to the scene of events, after my demise. His story was a pure fabrication. Also his sworn testimony: i. e.—the account given to the coroner and jury who attended the inquest held upon my body.

Stanhope falsely stated that I had armed myself with a keen weapon immediately upon realizing that he had returned intact from the seat of war, and that it was entirely due to his own skill and prowess he was enabled to overcome my villainous attacks, and ran me through and so caused my death in self-defence.

In lieu of witnesses, for the servants had not seen the act of violence directed against me, he was believed, especially when he pleaded I had already presupposed him dead and on the strength of a supposed rumor had induced his young wife to believe my statements and inveigled her into marriage.

He made a decided impression upon the minds of the susceptible jury-men by the pathetic rehearsing of his dilemma. How he had returned victorious from a cruel war to discover that his home had been wrecked, his wife taken from him—and from shock of the tragic affair—passing from swoon upon swoon—Lady Stanhope had remained in an unconscious state so that her life was now despaired of.

To be brief, the verdict was death by 'misadventure,' the jurymen adding a rider. That my demise was brought about by my own folly and guilty knowledge; that without proper investigation I had hastened to marry his wife, etc., etc.

These statements were made in authorized documents and were sent—much to her dismay—to my sister in Wales.

... Incidentally I realized by an examination of mind records that General Stanhope intensely loved Valerie. Still loved her, in fact, although his affection did not extend to her tiny babe when it was born, that was naturally on my account, for he really hated me, and was secretly delighted he had robbed me of my existence, as he fondly believed.

Now there is one important item I must mention. There had been one eye-witness to the scene of my murder, and that was the General's Soldier valet, Antonio Castello, the one who had arrived with him at the villa that memorable night. He had hidden when bidden with the other servants to depart and had peeped from behind the heavy curtains that screened the hall from the stairway. He had watched the whole scene. He knew I was unarmed, therefore unable to defend myself at that critical moment, but the fellow Costello, although a Roman Catholic, was not a good one. At least he did not regularly attend the Confessional Box and he readily accepted a bribe from General Stanhope to disappear just before the inquest; for the General, according to the secret records I now read, had considered it expedient to get rid of this man for fear his evidence would be damaging to his—Stanhope's—Sworn Evidence. Like all such policies it did not wear well, for Castello was a disreputable character, drank and gambled and annoyed the General by turning up at intervals and demanding more money—blackmail, really.

I mention this to enlighten you as to the fact that General Stanhope lived somewhat in fear of revelations and was not truly happy. I came to this conclusion, that not only would I surprise General Stanhope by discovering myself to him in fully materialized form, but that I would speak to him direct and make my spirit voice audible to his physical senses. After a lot of preliminary work, my attendants and I perfected a wireless apparatus for conveying sounds based upon the practical knowledge of spiritual and mundane acoustics. By practical application we obtained evidence that our schemes had succeeded, for by practising calls upon the pages, and visitors, we knew we had been heard. It was really amusing to witness the results of a sharp query or the call of a

name, to see many of them running in all directions, seeking the caller or endeavoring to locate the sounds. Now I considered the time ripe for a seance. So at a prearranged period, when General Stanhope was one evening alone in his study, I manifested my presence in an unmistakable fashion. I stood visibly before him quite in my old style, smiling and debonair, and attired in an elaborate Court dress, perfect in detail and glittering with jewels. I had taken the precaution to well anoint myself with a sufficiency of luminosity. Hence I stood out in bold relief from the dark background of heavy plush hangings, with which the apartment was adorned. I congratulated myself. I had achieved a perfect reproduction of my old self, especially when I saw the General's perturbed expression. He rubbed his eyes in a bewildered fashion, shook himself to be quite sure he was not dreaming, then he became alarmed, half rose from his chair and tried to speak, but his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. No words could he utter for an appreciable length of time; he trembled with doubt and fear. Here was the man he had thought dead. He had killed, in fact, alive! Ha! could it be true? A denizen of another world, a spirit come to accuse him, and a strong spirit at that. The situation was fascinating and most dramatic. I, now invisible, sent a wireless impression, awakened his thoughts and tried to impress him with the idea of repentance, reminded him by transmission of thought that there was such a thing as "Justice." Aroused his religious sentiments, recalled to his mind the Commandment, especially the Sixth,—"Thou shalt not kill," and the declaration that "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord," etc.

In response he writhed in agony of soul; he recalled instantly and vividly his early religious teachings. His mind was now on the rack. This was my hour of triumph, it was his turn to have a taste of Hell, Austin.

Suddenly he recovered himself sufficiently to find speech. "By heavens, it is Sir Francis Whynn, the Devil!" I responded politely with a lowly bow and my left hand covering that part of my anatomy known as the heart. I retorted in a clear ringing voice:

"Not the Devil, General, but Frank Whynn, very much at your service, Sir."

"My! This electrified him: he would much rather have received a visit from His Satanic Majesty at that precise moment, I firmly believe. Quite confident he was not mistaken now, and that I was alive and speaking to him in firm and clear tones, his eyes bulged, his hair moved, and he stammered incoherently, and then collapsed and cried piteously and cringingly:

"Why do you come, what do you want? Are you spirit, man or Devil that you thus affright me? Go away, leave me alone in peace."

I replied impressively: "General Stanhope, I come to remind you that the day of reckoning is at hand," then with a lowly obeisance vanished from his sight.

I had no inclination to further prolong his agony, for I realized fully I had left his mind on the rack. It is a cruel position even for an enemy. He knew now there was no escape, even in death, and he would live in fear of a future state.

When we went for our next interview, it was under very different circumstances.

This was some time after General Stanhope's demise—and he had been entombed with all the pomp and ceremony of Militarism befitting his rank; he had now become quite comfortably settled in his spiritual home—that I descended into his sphere. Marvel not I say 'descend', Austin! There are numerous states of being in that Holy Summerland where Angels dwell. Each goes to his own particular sphere at the change of death, the one each is most fitted for.

There are no secrets hidden from Angel's gaze. The pure and true alone are permitted to enter the Courts of Purity and Love. From these exalted states one may descend into the lower regions. But those souls dwelling in these places of unrest may not, until purified of all dross, ascend to the joys above. Therefore, with the twofold purpose of enlightening and assisting him and receiving redress, I approached General Stanhope. But he was not in a penitent mood. He refused spiritual assistance and received my request for reparation with jeers, and scoffing. There we stood face to face, man to

man, stripped of all material trappings, as men on equal terms of power and condition. I appealed to him to cease to do evil, to endeavor to undo the wrongs, "Remove or destroy the false documents now resing in that walnut cabinet in Westmoreland, which had been sent to my sister Anne in Wales," I pleaded.

To no purpose,—without a moment's hesitation he refused. "You be 'damned,' Whynn," he rudely ejaculated. "I'll correct nothing. What I have done and said shall remain forever. Those precious documents you are so deucedly interested in, shall remain intact in the secret drawer until such time one of your descendants shall discover them and know of your perfidy. Thus your real character shall be exposed to public view. I will never forgive you, never, for stealing my wife's affections. Go! I refuse your request, unless you immediately release Valerie, who I feel confident will return to me."

I did not attempt to leave or argue, so he blustered on:

"Don't attempt to force me; I'll not be compelled by you. Go! or fight it out with me." I bowed and ejaculated:

"As you please, I am ready for action, Stanhope.

Thus the challenge, and matters were brought to a crisis. The battle commenced and ultimately the conflict was of necessity transferred to the earthly sphere, I to get the coveted papers, he to try to prevent my obtaining them.

Mentally you ask, Austin, why was this warfare necessary? Especially when you realize as I do, that we shall know as we are known over there and that no blame rested upon me. I was exonerated from evil intent by spiritual judges as well as my own conscience.

Well, to explain, I am naturally chivalrous where women are concerned, and the only rift in the lute to my sister Anne's happiness, also my beloved parents' satisfaction was the sorrowful thought that the once revered name of 'Whynn' could be dragged in the mire and wrongfully besmirched. So for their (my own dear ones') sake, as well as my own, I undertook the Herculean task of compelling restitution, and I fought the good fight to the finish.

As you may well imagine, a man's nature is not entirely transformed,—that is, he does not become a pure angel in the twinkling of an eye by the simple method of discarding his fleshy body. No! Whatsoever a man thinketh, that shall he become! is a truism much nearer the mark than the general belief that death hath the power to make sinners into Saints.

General Stanhope's ideas of justice and mine were at variance. So perforce warfare, that is, there was a trial of will power, they were of course the battling forces.

Our duelling weapons were, deliberate actions and facts; our base, and mighty fortresses were our very useful physical mediums. You were one of my strongholds of course, Austin. For neither he nor I could get possession of those precious documents without the physical aid of a good medium.

In the eyes of justice, Motive plays an important part. A man may commit a crime with a pure motive, nevertheless, he will be called upon to pay the full penalty of his act, but goodness and mercy will support and strengthen him to make full reparation; and he will not in angels' eyes be accounted 'guilty', or at least not as much so as the man who deliberately of malice and aforethought commits depredations and evil actions.

I often congratulated myself that I had done nothing really wicked; I had to acknowledge to myself my intentions had been honourable all the way through my physical career. Nevertheless, in carefully examining the pros and cons of the case,—my trouble with General Stanhope,—I had to confess I had made mistakes. As a matter of fact, who has not?

I was certainly remiss in not endeavouring to ascertain from an authorized source the truth or otherwise, of the rumoured demise of General Stanhope. I had accepted without question the message delivered at the Villa, in a dispatch brought by a courier to the effect that General Stanhope had died of fatal wounds in a Hospital in the Old Land.

I had also pressed forward hastily to obtain the precious prize—the fair Valerie's hand in marriage. Her heart's best love I already possessed. This then was "The

head and front of my offending no more." General Stanhope absolutely refused to accept my statements, especially as he professed to believe Valerie would return to him if he defeated me. Hence the opening of the formidable battle to prove my truth and compel redress.

At this particular period of my career I was seeking for, and with indifferent results, a good psychic instrument, a spiritual minded man, a very necessary aid to a spirit-man as you well know, Austin.

I used many psychics from time to time but discovered each one most unsatisfactory for my purpose. So many difficulties presented themselves in this respect that I lost faith a little in my own ability to obtain one. I got rather weary of the apparently endless task of preparatory stages and an invariable collapse. I would find as I thought the "Rara-Avis", a spirit medium who really loved his work, and obeyed spiritual injunctions, responded readily to inspiration, good and true in every way, I fondly imagined. To catch him tripping at the very first small temptation—alas, for good intentions.

Well, as I was saying, I kept trying and gradually I became very cosmopolitan in my views, and could easily associate with Tom, Dick or Harry, and be a "hail fellow well met" in spirit circles; gaining experience by object lessons, arranged by ardent enquirers, etc. "How Psychic Mediums are obtained and used in such gatherings." It is all a matter of blended knowledge and experience. I discovered that it requires prompt action and tact. Also a goodly amount of proper persuasion.

Then I had the good fortune, quite unknown to yourself, to meet you, Austin. I had you spiritually magnetized times without number long ere I made you acquainted with myself. I naturally encountered many invisible difficulties before I could get you into a proper state of mind.

When a Spirit being requires to manifest in a material way—that is demonstrates his power and presence to anxious mortals, a good psychic medium is indispensable.

To obtain a perfect Human Instrument I had often to use extreme measures, surprise or overpower him. It was practically by knowledge, force and the liberal use

of mundane material,—such as wealth, position and fame.

I gained your co-operation in my endeavors to obtain redress. Eh Austin! My quest for a suitable Medium was not mere child's play. All the same, some of my experiences were quite amusing. Other times the labour became irksome, if not flat, stale and unprofitable.

My searching brought me in touch with distinct phases of human existence, some of which were sad indeed. I have dwelt in celestial eminence in "The Summerland" as our part of the Spiritual Realm is termed,—but from that sphere of joy and brightness and bliss I descended into the physical regions of mental darkness, appalling misery, suffering and despair, Hells indeed! I have run the gamut of human experience from Heaven to Hades, I firmly believe, Austin.

Having been born and reared in the lap of luxury with the proverbial "silver spoon", it was a great surprise to me to be brought so directly and materially in touch with poverty in its worst form, and to realize that myriads of fellow creatures were suffering untold misery and disease. I knew by the sights I witnessed that numberless souls were existing in hovels without sufficient food or the common necessities of life. This was a deplorable state of affairs, my fullest compassions were aroused, and I seriously cogitated how I could possibly alleviate some of the awful mundane suffering. I sent forth wireless messages of fervent prayer and true desire, and I was privileged to receive responses from Angels of light. By-and-by I was called upon to co-operate with a host of ministering spirits who had also left their celestial dwellings to assist to remedy existing mundane evils. Their greatest endeavours were to inspire the men in political authority to legislate justly for the redress of the poor and needy.

These were matters of vital importance and naturally retarded my personal affairs. My darling wife and child were my constant companions during these exciting times. All through I had protected and endeavored to shield them from such terrible knowledge. My sweet Valerie emphatically declared that a true wife should be by her husband's side to cheer and sustain him in his manifold duties, and added,—"Frank, I want

to be a real helpmeet to you." Hence Valerie and Virginia joined me in my spiritual efforts.

My dear ones would visit the prison houses. Their pure presence, like very sanctity, would illuminate the four walls of a condemned man's cell, altho' his physical sight could not discern them, until he, poor sinner would unconsciously respond to the celestial glory, and recall early religious precepts. My sweet wife and tender child would not relax their spiritual efforts for signs of repentance until such time they acquired sufficient evidence of the poor man's desire for spiritual mercy, strength and goodness. Thus in a much more penitent state of mind, open to receive the shafts of spiritual truth and light,—he prepared for his coming doom to some extent regenerated.

At last free to resume my own particular duties I was, as before stated, quite determined to secure if at all possible an efficient spiritual medium, and my efforts in this quest brought me in personal touch with a number of spirit people—dwellers on the borderland.

In spiritualistic circles these individuals are known as "earth bound spirits" and they are as numerous as the sands of the sea, and also they endeavor to use any medium they can take possession of, or gain an influence over, on account of the fact that they are more often than not quite content to remain psychically undeveloped; their soul's interest being in the earth realm. Their passions and appetites still unappeased. I made the acquaintance of one in particular, whom I will call "David." Remember these earth bound spirits are not all wicked, no, far from it.

"David"—he was an exceptionally unselfish being. Frequently he assisted me by his musical ability,—he was a clever musician, and could manipulate a variety of musical instruments,—to subdue the physical vibrations in my self-imposed seance work.

It is necessary to study the laws of correct vibration to facilitate perfect full form manifestations; thus I was enabled to give demonstrations of spirit power. And the spirit child "Primrose", a dusky Indian maiden,—was by musical vibration empowered to fully materialize, de-materialize, that is, appear in diaphanous

draped personality; then gradually disappear before the assemblies' gaze, until only a small portion of her luminous drapery was visible on the floor, then to gradually regain her full proportions. This very interesting and very convincing class of phenomena required very fine conditions and true vibrations; music of heavenly sweetness, so to speak; and "David" played the fairy bells and auto-harp divinely!

I was grateful for David's assistance. He surprised me one time by remarking abruptly that he knew a very important reason why I was not very successful in gaining the full confidence of physical men, those that I required as instruments for my special spiritual work. In his own words I will relate the incident.

"I know the reason why you cannot impress a suitable person to become your medium," he said.

"Tell me the cause, David, and if it lies in my power," etc.—

"Yes, Frank, you can apply a remedy I know, if you will. In spite of your ability and adroitness you never, owing to your aristocratic heredity traits of birth and breeding, I presume,—really understand mundane requirements. If a man is struggling with inadequate monetary means, it is utterly impossible for that individual to give proper time and attention to the development of his spiritual gifts. Your true medium is proverbially poor. Hence it is spondulicks he requires."

"What did you say he required?" I faltered,—

"Spondulicks," was the amazing reply.

"Heavens, man! What fell malady may that be?" I interrogated. Without attempting to reply to my query, David continued:

"I can tell you exactly where you can obtain the goods to alter conditions if you will accept them."

"I pray thee furthen enlighten me, David," I pleaded, quite bewildered, yet amused by his earnestness.

"I certainly will," he quickly answered. "It's small use preaching spiritual advancement to a hungry man; first feed him, and when he feels secure from pecuniary needs, he will willingly respond to spiritual teachings."

"Impecuniosity is the trouble, and a very embarrassing difficulty I should say," I retorted in relieved tones.

"Call it what you will," said David. "I believe I have the key to the situation, which is in the shape of hidden treasures,—two bags of yellow gold coins. How does that strike you?"

"To whom does this treasure belong?" I doubtfully inquired.

"To me as a direct descendant of a bold, bad buccaneer, a regular cut-throat pirate, who made it his business to kill men, scuttle ships and steal all he could lay his hands on, and when the vessel was moored safely in harbour, he would come ashore and hide and spend his ill-gotten gains in drinking, gambling, or worse. He was as dextrous with a chisel and hammer as he was with a cutlass. He took pains to make stone plugs to fit the excavations he made in numerous massive stone chimneys in Inns,—where he resided from time to time,—there he hid bags of yellow coin. I know where there are two bags of coins still intact. If you will take the trouble to use it. It rests snugly in a secret hiding place in the commodious flue in the Roebuck Inn, Wales."

"Well, I must say, David, this information is very interesting, and gold may be the remedy for penury, but I fail to see how the vagaries and crimes of your very free lance, too free, progenitor and his predilections for hoarding gold coin,—can possibly effect me or assist me in my endeavours to obtain a reliable medium. I want a conscientious Being, not one gold will buy, David," I averred.

"Ah! That's the crux! You are quite mistaken if you imagine coin of the realm, *money*, has no influence. An object lesson in the shape of two bags of gold would impress a physical man more thoroughly than a thousand tongues that you possessed reliable supernormal powers, and had real intentions towards his worldly advancement. You endeavour to impress your desired mediums that you will materially benefit them, don't you?"

"Yes! Spoken like a philosopher, David; I realise what you say. There may be great advantage in material wealth and I will accept your offer in the spirit in which it is meant. Let us go and investigate the treasure. Lead on, my friend, lead on!"

Unseen by mortals, together we journeyed to the old-fashioned village of Brecon, Wales, and reached the Roe-

buck Inn, thoroughly examined exterior and interior of premises, discussed possibilities, and there and then decided upon the best methods to employ to accomplish our purpose. Needless to remind you of the impression made upon your mind at our first and subsequent interviews, and the discovery of the bags of gold, Austin.

There is, however, one matter of importance I have omitted,—the return of those valued documents that were stolen and so mysteriously reappeared at the home of Lord Templeton. I sent them there and you must at some time read them.

I felt determined to leave no stone unturned to accomplish my purpose, after the transferrance of the documents to your home at "Austinklea." This accounts for my enforced absence, my personal affairs kept me busy.

I instructed my spirit scribes who invisibly arrived at your Homestead in due course, and used your escritoire for the purpose of erasing all objectionable matter and inserting by clever imitation of original handwriting, the truth, with especial reference to the facts of my untimely demise. When finished the papers were carried to their original resting place, through space, by my magnetizers, the Hindoos. The methods of transference exactly the same as used for the transmission of sounds and conveying of apports,—rehabilitated yet invisible the spirit-men with psychic electric appliances travel through either physical matter or invisible ethereal space.

By this bold stroke of diplomacy I decided there was a good chance of posterity being enlightened, and if any more of my descendants had heard legends regarding my case, in the face of tabulated facts in documentary form, those false stories would quickly be relegated to the scrap pile of discarded myths. As you know, Lord Templeton received the revised historical papers, and my earthly work was accomplished.

There are a few things regarding the ethereal existence I may mention that might interest you, Austin, then I close. There are spheres upon spheres; realms of interests and activity over there.

The spiritual form of Government is quite superior to the mundane. The unseen authorities invariably mete out truth and justice. These laws are immutable and Man-

kind after death, gradually learns to obey them. They recognize the wisdom of so doing.

I have heard it said that we get our deserts on the other side of life,—pain,—pleasure,—rewards or punishment are relative terms; our Souls do not go to Heaven or Hell. What we sow, we reap; personal responsibility is the keynote of salvation. In the course of time, the fruits of our endeavours reward us, or the mental pain, the results, of wrong actions, remorse, afflict us. But puissant life with all its attributes is a Divine gift to Mankind. That is rebirth comes to each one of us as a heritage; every soul is treated alike. There are no favourites, God is no respecter of persons. Therefore, it is easy to conjecture that “the Kingdom of God is within us” or that we are Gods in embryo, and must develop our selfhood. Man cannot get anything for nothing. He pays an equivalent every time.

There are great possibilities, and nothing to fear,—by knowledge, everything to gain, after the death of the physical organism. In fact transition is a mere incident in man’s marvellous career. There are numerous rebirths and other worlds to conquer in man towards perfection’s upward march.

A sane, healthy man dislikes the idea of being transformed into an angel with wing appendages. There is no danger of such a catastrophe; a man cannot lose his manhood by passing out of his fleshly body. He is re-born with a more perfect shape. There are no defects in his spiritual counterpart. Whatever there may have been in his physical body he realizes quickly or slowly as the case may be, that he is perfectly shaped, free, capable, conscious, and powerfully equipped; if he uses his intelligence rightfully he discovers myriads of potent possibilities. He may become a ruler, monarch of a mighty realm, the world within himself. He may become a creator; there is no lack of spiritual material. He may profit by past experience; all the knowledge he has gained on earth is of service to him in the ethereal realm. And those hard lessons he learned, the wisdom he so laboriously acquired in his first conscious stage of existence,—his physical life,—are invaluable assets to his spiritual advancement, for

there are positions to be filled and duties to be performed in spirit life.

All knowledge rightly used gives man immense power, and this is especially true, if during his fleshly tenure he has taken the pains to awaken and develop his intuitional aspirations and inspirational faculties. And Humanity see God today as much as they will a thousand years hence. God is within himself.

Spiritual phenomena give man a greater insight into his present and future state than anything I know. Life is an eternal sequence. Here in the mundane sphere man lays his foundation for his future state. Therefore, it is necessary to build character, good, true, firm and strong; the rest is easy.

"Are the spiritual realms substantial?" you mentally inquire. Of a surety they are. Into a world of realities just outside the physical world,—at death,—all Mankind, in common with all living creatures, all forms of life, enter into this real world, exactly as the butterfly leaving the shattered chrysalis enters its new realm, or the chicken bursting forth from the egg, the bud into blossom. The spirit world is quite close to you, Austin; to enter it fully you must burst your fleshly bonds. I may add that growth, unfoldment, development is a necessity; for instance, infants grow to maturity in spirit life.

I have poured out my innermost soul to you, so think well over all I have said and form your own conclusions, Austin.

I have now fulfilled my earthly mission. We must separate for a period,—separate to meet again when your time comes to enter the spirit world. Reluctantly I bid you adieu! for you I know will miss me, and to me you have been a faithful friend and willing instrument. Do not grieve too deeply for my absence, (I read your unspoken thought) I shall be near you in spirit, be assured of that. Evil cannot change truth. You have been true to yourself, to me, and all others you have been in contact with. You will be remembered and revered for your spiritual truth and actions as a spirit medium. By angels you will be blessed, and when the time arrives for your departure from earthly cares, you will receive a warm wel-

come,—from your loved ones gone before and your true friends.

"I shall be awaiting you, Austin, and shall endeavour to be the first to clasp your hand as you enter the spirit life and give you welcome. You have my gratitude and truest blessings.

Au Revoir."

With a characteristic wave of his hand and a tender smile illuminated his countenance as he slowly disappeared, faded out, as it were.

So ended the presence of Sir Francis Whynn, my spiritual instructor and benefactor. The memory of that true-hearted, noble-minded man will permanently remain with me. He came mysteriously. He saw. He conquered my mentality and affections; and although I shall miss his charming presence, as one who has been suddenly bereaved, I will not mourn his absence (it would not be fair to him I so deeply revere,) for I know he has entered into his "Perfect Day" and my best thoughts and fervent prayers are for his spiritual welfare and happiness.

Finis.