

ETIDORHPA

OR
THE END OF EARTH

THE STRANGE HISTORY OF A MYSTERIOUS BEING
AND
THE ACCOUNT OF A REMARKABLE JOURNEY



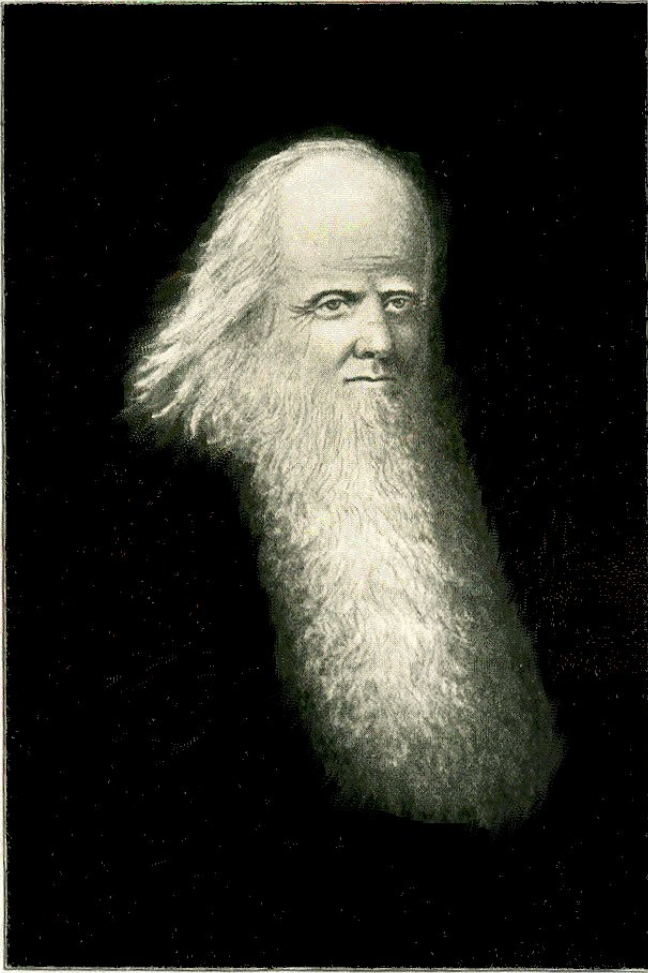
THE MASTERPIECE EDITION

JOHN URI LLOYD

ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS BY

J. AUGUSTUS KNAPP

Edited by Jim Bennett



I am the man

ETIDORHPA

OR

THE END OF EARTH.

THE STRANGE HISTORY OF A MYSTERIOUS BEING

AND

The Account of a Remarkable Journey

AS COMMUNICATED IN MANUSCRIPT TO

LLEWELLYN DRURY

WHO PROMISED TO PRINT THE SAME, BUT FINALLY EVADED THE RESPONSIBILITY

WHICH WAS ASSUMED BY

JOHN URI LLOYD

WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS BY

J. AUGUSTUS KNAPP

CINCINNATI

THE ROBERT CLARKE COMPANY

1897

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ASCRPTION.

To Prof. W. H. Venable, who reviewed the manuscript of this work, I am indebted for many valuable suggestions, and I call not speak too kindly of him as a critic.

The illustrations, excepting those mechanical and historical, making in themselves a beautiful narrative without words, are due to the admirable artistic conceptions and touch of Mr. J. Augustus Knapp.

Structural imperfections as well as word selections and phrases that break all rules in composition, and that the care even of Prof. Venable could not eradicate, I accept as wholly my own. For much, on the one hand, that it may seem should have been excluded, and on the other, for giving place to ideas nearer to empiricism than to science, I am also responsible. For vexing my friends with problems that seemingly do not concern ill the least men in my position, and for venturing to think, superficially, it may be, outside the restricted lines of a science bound to the unresponsive crucible and retort, to which my life has been given, and amid the problems of which it has nearly worn itself away, I have no plausible excuse, and shall seek none.

JOHN URI LLOYD.

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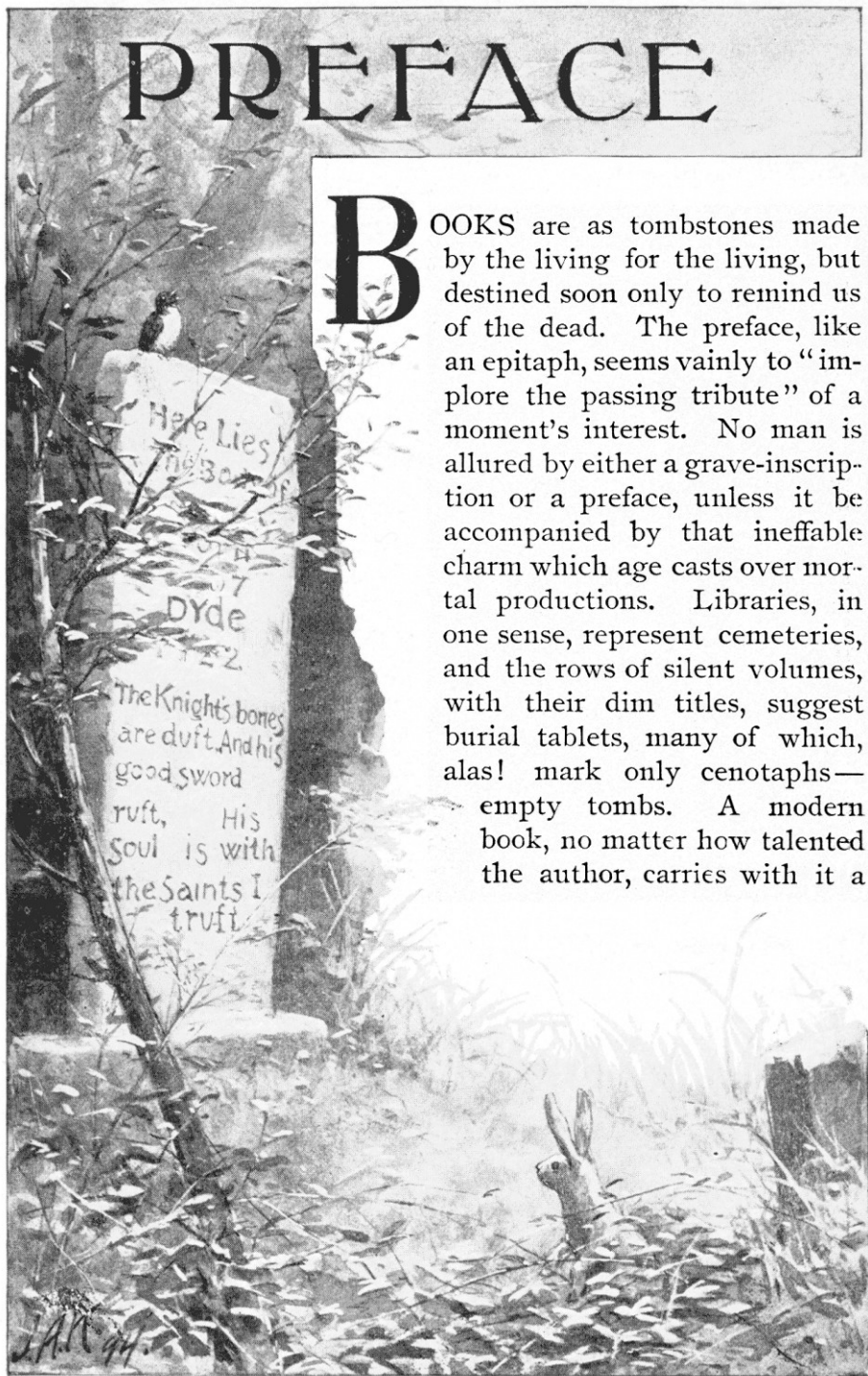
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PREFACE

BOOKS are as tombstones made by the living for the living, but destined soon only to remind us of the dead. The preface, like an epitaph, seems vainly to "implore the passing tribute" of a moment's interest. No man is allured by either a grave-inscription or a preface, unless it be accompanied by that ineffable charm which age casts over mortal productions. Libraries, in one sense, represent cemeteries, and the rows of silent volumes, with their dim titles, suggest burial tablets, many of which, alas! mark only cenotaphs—empty tombs. A modern book, no matter how talented the author, carries with it a



familiar personality which may often be treated with neglect or even contempt, but a volume a century old demands some reverence; a vellum-bound or hog-skin print, or antique yellow parchment, two, three, five hundred years old, regardless of its contents, impresses one with an indescribable feeling akin to awe and veneration,—as does the wheat from an Egyptian tomb, even though it be only wheat. We take such a work from the shelf carefully, and replace it



"THE STERN FACE. ACROSS THE GULF."

gently. While the productions of modern writers are handled familiarly, as men living jostle men yet alive; those of authors long dead are touched as though clutched by a hand from the unseen world. The reader feels that a phantom form opposes his own, and that spectral eyes scan the pages as he turns them.

The stern face, the penetrating eye of the personage whose likeness forms the frontispiece of the yellowed volume in my hand, speak across the gulf of two centuries, and bid me beware. The title page is read with reverence, and the great tome is replaced with care, for an almost superstitious sensation bids me be

cautious and not offend. Let those who presume to criticize the intellectual productions of such men be careful; in a few days the dead will face their censors—dead.

Standing in a library of antiquated works, one senses the shadows of a cemetery. Each volume adds to the oppression, each old tome casts the influence of its spirit over the beholder, for have not these old books spirits? The earth-grave covers the mind as well as the body of its moldering occupant, and while only a strong imagination can assume that a spirit hovers over and lingers around inanimate clay, here each title is a voice that speaks as though the heart of its creator still throbbed, the mind essence of the dead writer envelops the living reader. Take down that vellum-bound volume,—it was written in one of the centuries long past. The pleasant face of its creator, as fresh as if but a print of yesterday, smiles upon you from the exquisitely engraved copper-plate frontispiece; the mind of the author rises from out the words before you. This man is not dead and his comrades live. Turn to the shelves about, before each book stands a guardian spirit, - together they form a phantom army that, invisible to mortals, encircles the beholder.

Ah! This antique library is not like a church graveyard, being only a cemetery for the dead; it is also a mansion for the living. These alcoves are trysting places for elemental shades. Essences of disenthralled minds meet here and revel. Thoughts of the past take shape and live in this atmosphere—who can say that pulsations unperceived, beyond the reach of physics or of chemistry, are not as ethereal mind-seeds which, although unseen, yet, in living brain, exposed to such an

atmosphere as this, formulate embryonic thought-expressions destined to become energetic intellectual forces?



"THE PLEASANT FACE OF ITS CREATOR...SMILES UPON YOU."

I sit in such a weird library and meditate. The shades of grim authors whisper in my ear, skeleton forms oppose my own, and phantoms possess the gloomy alcoves of the library I am building.

With the object of carrying to the future a section of thought current from the past, the antiquarian libraries of many nations have been culled, and purchases made in every book market of the world.

These books surround me. Naturally many persons have become interested in the movement, and, considering it a worthy one, unite to further the project,

— for the purpose is not personal gain. Thus it is not unusual for boxes of old chemical or pharmlacal volumes to arrive by freight or express, without a word as to the donor. The mail brings manuscripts unprinted, and pamphlets recondite, with no word of introduction. They come unheralded. The authors or the senders realize that in this unique library a place is vacant if any work on connected subjects is missing, and thinking men of the world are uniting their contributions to fill such vacancies.

Enough has been said concerning the ancient library that has bred these reflections, and my own personality does not concern the reader. He can now formulate his conclusions as well perhaps as I, regarding the origin of the manuscript that is to follow, if he concerns himself at all over subjects mysterious or historical, and my connection therewith is of minor importance.



“SKELETON FORMS OPPOSE MY OWN.”

Whether Mr. Drury brought the strange paper in person, or sent it by express or mail,—whether it was slipped into a box of books from foreign lands, or whether my hand held the pen that made the record,—whether I stood face to face with Mr. Drury in the shadows of this room, or have but a fanciful conception of his figure,—whether the artist drew upon his imagination for the vivid likeness of the several personages figured in the book that follows, or from reliable data has given facsimiles authentic,—is immaterial. Sufficient be it to say that the manuscript of this book has been in my possession for a period of seven years, and my lips must now be sealed concerning all that transpired in connection therewith outside the subject-matter

recorded therein, And yet I cannot deny that for these seven years I have hesitated concerning my proper course, and more than once have decided to cover from sight the fascinating leaflets, hide them among surrounding volumes, and let them slumber until chance should bring them to the attention of the future student.

These thoughts rise before me this gloomy day of December, 1894, as, snatching a moment from the exactions of business, I sit among these old volumes devoted to science-lore, and again study over the unique manuscript,

and meditate; I hesitate again: Shall I, or shall I not?—but a duty is a duty. Perhaps the mysterious part of the subject will be cleared to me only when my own thought-words come to rest among these venerable relics of the past—when books that I have written become companions of ancient works about me—for then I can claim relationship with the shadows that flit in and out, and can demand that they, the ghosts of the library, commune with the shade that guards the book that holds this preface.

JOHN URI LLOYD.

A VALUABLE AND UNIQUE LIBRARY.

From the Pharmaceutical Era, New York, October, 1894.

In Cincinnati is one of the most famous botanical and pharmacial libraries in the world, and by scientists it is regarded as an invaluable store of knowledge upon those branches of medical science. So famous is it that one of the most noted pharmacologists and chemists of Germany, on a recent trip to this country, availed himself of its rich collection as a necessary means of completing his study in the line of special drug history. When it is known that he has devoted a life of nearly eighty years to the study of pharmacology, and is an emeritus professor in the famous University of Strassburg, the importance of his action will be understood and appreciated. We refer to Prof. Frederick Flueckiger, who, in connection with Daniel Hanbury, wrote *Pharmacographia* and other standard works. Attached to the library is an herbarium, begun by Mr. Curtis Gates Lloyd when a schoolboy, in which are to be found over 30,000 specimens of the flora of almost every civilized country on the globe. The collections are the work of two brothers, begun when in early boyhood. In money they are priceless, yet it is the intention of the founders that they shall be placed; either before or at their death, in some college or university where all students may have access to them without cost or favor, and their wills are already made to this end, although the institution to receive the bequest is not yet selected. Eager requests have been made that they be sent to foreign universities, where only, some persons believe, they can receive the appreciation they deserve.

The resting place of this collection is a neat three-story house at 204 West Court street, rebuilt to serve as a library building. On the door is a plate embossed with the name Lloyd, the patronymic of the brothers in question. They are John Uri and Curtis Gates Lloyd. Every hour that can be spent by these men from business or necessary recreation is spent here. Mr. C. G. Lloyd devotes himself entirely to the study of botany and connected subjects, while his brother is equally devoted to *materia medica*, pharmacy, and chemistry.

In the botanical department are the best works obtainable in every country, and there the study of botany may be carried to any height. In point of age, some of them go back almost to the time when the art of printing was discovered. Two copies of Aristotle are notable. A Greek version bound in vellum was printed in 1584. Another, in parallel columns of Greek and Latin, by Pacius, was published in 1607. Both are in excellent preservation. A bibliographical rarity (two editions) is the "*Historia Plantarum*," by Pinaeus, which was issued, one in 1561, the other in 1567. It appears to have been a first attempt at the production of colored plates. Plants that were rare at that time are colored by hand, and then have a glossy, fixative spread over them, causing the colors still to be as bright and fresh as the day that the three-hundred-years-dead workmen laid them on. Ranged in their sequence are fifty volumes of the famous author, Linnaeus. Mr. Lloyd has a very complete list of the Linnæan works, and his commissioners in Europe and America are looking out for the missing volumes. An

extremely odd work is the book of Dr. Josselyn, entitled "New England Rarities," in which the Puritan author discusses wisely on "byrds, beastes and fishes" of the New World. Dr. Carolus Plumierus, a French savant, who flourished in 1762, contributes an exhaustive work on the "Flora of the Antilles." He is antedated many years, however, by Dr. John Clayton, who is termed Johannes Claytonus, and Dr. John Frederick Gronovius. These gentlemen collated a work entitled the "Flora of Virginia," which is among the first descriptions of botany in the United States. Two venerable works are those of Mattioli, an Italian writer, who gave his knowledge to the world in 1586, and Levinus Lemnius, who wrote "De Miraculis Occultis Naturæ" in 1628. The father of modern systematized botany is conceded to be Mons. J. P. Tournefort, whose comprehensive work was published in 1719. It is the fortune of Mr. Lloyd to possess an original edition in good condition. His "Histoire des Plantes," Paris (1698), is also on the shelves. In the modern department of the library are the leading French and German works. Spanish and Italian authors are also on the shelves, the Lloyd collection of Spanish flora being among the best extant. Twenty-two volumes of rice paper, bound in bright yellow and stitched in silk, contain the flora of Japan. All the leaves are delicately tinted by those unique flower-painters, the Japanese. This rare work was presented to the Lloyd library by Dr. Charles Rice, of New York, who informed the Lloyds that only one other set could be found in America.

One of the most noted books in the collection of J. U. Lloyd is a *Materia Medica* written by Dr. David Schoepf, a learned German scholar, who traveled through this country in 1787. But a limited number of copies were printed, and but few are extant. One is in the Erlangen library in Germany. This Mr. Lloyd secured, and had it copied verbatim. In later years Dr. Charles Rice obtained an original print, and exchanged it for that copy. A like work is that of Dr. Jonathan Carver of the provincial troops in America, published in London in 1796. It treats largely of Canadian *materia medica*. Manasseh Cutler's work, 1785, also adorns this part of the library. In addition to almost every work on this subject, Mr. Lloyd possesses complete editions of the leading serials and pharmaceutical lists published in the last three quarters of a century. Another book, famous in its way, is Barton's "Collections Toward a *Materia Medica* of the United States," published in 1798, 1801, and 1804.

Several noted botanists and chemists have visited the library in recent years. Prof. Flueckiger formed the acquaintance of the Lloyds through their work, "Drugs and Medicines of North America," being struck by the exhaustive references and foot-notes. Students and lovers of the old art of copperplate engraving especially find much in the ornate title pages and portraits to please their æsthetic sense. The founders are not miserly, and all students and delvers into the medical and botanical arts are always welcome. This library of rare books, has been collected without ostentation and with the sole aim to benefit science and humanity. We must not neglect to state that the library is especially rich in books pertaining to the American Eclectics and Thomsonians. Since it has been learned that this library is at the disposal of students and is to pass intact to some worthy institution of learning, donations of old or rare books are becoming frequent.

2012 Editor's Note

Many years ago I purchased an original 1897 edition of *Etidorhpa* from a antique book store in Cincinnati, Ohio. Leafing through the pages and intrigued by the chapter titles and the many extraordinary illustrations, I could hardly wait to begin reading it. I was not disappointed. The story is incredibly fascinating, intriguing, and even thought-provoking. I became an ardent fan of this book.

The book was a joy to read except for a couple bothersome problems. The author takes responsibility stated on page IV for the “Structural imperfections as well as word selections and phrases that break all rules in composition,” It is precisely these two kinds of problems which I have attempted to correct. Even so, I have used a great deal of restraint in making these corrections. Some errors remain, and if these are a barrier to enjoying the story, I apologize.

There are many instances where portions of the text could have been written more clearly. There are also numerous instances where the author's choice of words is “quaint,” to say the least. However, I have left these unchanged. I have tried to change only that which would otherwise interfere with the pleasure of reading. Whenever I had a question about whether or not something should be changed, I always chose to leave it as it was.

My goal is to present *Etidorhpa* in the spirit of the original publication, with the complete text and all the illustrations faithfully reproduced. May each person who reads this edition also become a fan of this wonderfully fantastic adventure story.

Jim Bennett

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PROLOGUE.

My name was Johannes Llewellyn Llongollyn Drury. I was named Llewellyn at my mother's desire, out of respect to her father, Dr. Evan Llewellyn, the scientist and speculative philosopher, well known to curious students as the author of various rare works on occult subjects. The other given names were ancestral also, but when I reached the age of appreciation, they naturally became distasteful; so it is that in early youth I dropped the first and third of these cumbersome words, and retained only the second Christian name. While perhaps the reader of these lines may regard this cognomen with less favor than either of the others, still I liked it, as it was the favorite of my mother, who always used the name in full; the world, however, contracted Llewellyn to Lew, much to the distress of my dear mother, who felt aggrieved at the liberty. After her death I decided to move to a western city, and also determined, out of respect to her memory, to select from and rearrange the letters of my several names, and construct there from three short, terse words, which would convey to myself only, the resemblance of my former name. Hence it is that the Cincinnati Directory does not record my self-selected name, which I have no reason to bring before the public. To the reader my name is Llewellyn Drury. I might add that my ancestors were among the early settlers of what is now New York City, and were direct descendants of the early Welsh kings but these matters do not concern the reader, and it is not of them that I now choose to write. My object in putting down these preliminary paragraphs is simply to assure the reader of such facts, and such only, as may give him confidence in my personal sincerity and responsibility, in order that he may with a right understanding read the remarkable statements that occur in the succeeding chapters.

The story I am about to relate is very direct, and some parts of it are very strange, not to say marvelous; but not on account of its strangeness alone do I ask for the narrative a reading;—that were mere trifling. What is here set down happened as recorded, but I shall not attempt to explain things which even to myself are enigmatical. Let the candid reader read the story as I have told it, and make out of it what he can, or let him pass the page by unread—I shall not insist on claiming his further attention. Only, if he does read, I beg him to read with an open mind, without prejudice and without predilection.

Who or what I am as a participant in this work is of small importance. I mention my history only for the sake of frankness and fairness. I have nothing to gain by issuing the volume. Neither do I court praise nor shun censure. My purpose is to tell the truth.

Early in the fifties I took up my residence in the Queen City, and though a very young man, found the employment ready that a friend had obtained for me with a manufacturing firm engaged in a large and complicated business. My duties were varied and peculiar, of such a nature as to tax body and mind to the utmost, and for several years I served in the most exacting of business details. Besides the labor which my vocation entailed, with its manifold and multiform perplexities, I voluntarily imposed upon myself other tasks, which I pursued in the privacy of my own bachelor apartments. An inherited love for books on abstruse and occult subjects, probably in part the result of my blood connection with Dr. Evan Llewellyn, caused me to collect a unique library, largely on mystical subjects, in which I took the keenest delight. My business and my professional duties by day, and my studies at night, made my life a busy one.

In the midst of my work and reading I encountered the character whose strange story forms the essential part of the following narrative. I may anticipate by saying that the manuscript to follow only incidentally concerns myself, and that if possible I would relinquish all connection therewith. It recites the physical, mental, and moral adventures of one whose life history was abruptly thrust upon my attention, and as abruptly interrupted. The vicissitudes of his body and soul, circumstances seemed to compel me to learn and to make public.

ETIDORHPA

CHAPTER I

"NEVER LESS ALONE THAN WHEN ALONE."



MORE than thirty years ago occurred the first of the series of remarkable events I am about to relate. The exact date I cannot recall; but it was in November, and, to those familiar with November weather in the Ohio Valley, it is hardly necessary to state that the month is one of possibilities. That is to say, it is liable to bring every variety of weather, from the delicious, dreamy Indian summer days that linger late in the fall, to a combination of rain, hail, snow, sleet – in short, atmospheric conditions sufficiently aggravating to develop a suicidal mania in any one the least susceptible to such influences. While the general character of the month is much the same the country over, showing dull grey tones of sky, abundant rains that penetrate man as they do the earth, cold, shifting winds, that search the very marrow – it is always safe to count more or less upon the probability of the unexpected throughout the month.

The particular day which ushered in the event about to be chronicled, was one of these possible heterogeneous days presenting a combination of sunshine, shower, and snow, with winds that rang all the changes from balmy to blustery, a morning air of caloric and an evening of numbing cold. The early morning started fair and sunny; later came light showers suddenly switched by shifting winds into blinding sleet, until the middle of the afternoon found the four winds and all the elements commingled in one wild orgy with clashing and roaring as of a great organ with all the stops out, and all the storm-fiends dancing over the keyboards! Nightfall brought some semblance of order to the sounding chaos, but still kept up the wild music of a typical, November day, with every accompaniment of bleakness, gloom, and desolation.

Thousands of chimneys, exhaling murky clouds of bituminous soot all day, had covered the city with the proverbial pall which the winds in their sport had shifted hither and yon, but as, thoroughly tired out, they

subsided into silence, the smoky mesh suddenly settled over the houses and into the streets, taking possession of the city and contributing to the melancholy wretchedness of such of the inhabitants as had to be out of doors. Through this smoke the red sun when visible had dragged his downward course in manifest discouragement, and the hastening twilight soon gave place to the blackness of darkness. Night reigned supreme.

Thirty years ago electric lighting was not in vogue, and the system of street lamps was far less complete than at present, although the gas burned in them may not have been any worse. The lamps were much fewer and farther between, and the light which they emitted had a feeble, sickly aspect, and did not reach any distance into the moist and murky atmosphere. And so the night was dismal enough, and the few people upon the street were visible only as they passed directly beneath the lamps, or in front of lighted windows; seeming at other times like moving shadows against a black ground.

As I am like to be conspicuous in these pages, it may be proper to say that I am very susceptible to atmospheric influences. I figure among my friends as a man of quiet disposition, but I am at times morose, although I endeavor to conceal this fact from others. My nervous system is a sensitive weather-glass. Sometimes I fancy that I must have been born under the planet Saturn, for I find myself unpleasantly influenced by moods ascribed to that depressing planet, more especially in its disagreeable phases, for I regret to state that I do not find corresponding elation, as I should, in its brighter aspects. I have an especial dislike for wintry weather, a dislike which I find growing with my years, until it has developed almost into positive antipathy and dread. On the day I have described, my moods had varied with the weather. The fitfulness of the winds had found its way into my feelings, and the somber tone of the clouds into my meditations. I was restless as the elements, and a deep sense of dissatisfaction with myself and everything else, possessed me. I could not content myself in any place or position. Reading was distasteful, writing equally so; but it occurred to me that a brisk walk, for a few blocks, might afford relief. Muffling myself up in my overcoat and fur cap, I took the street, only to find the air gusty and raw, and I gave up in still greater disgust, and returning home, after drawing the curtains and locking the doors, planted myself in front of a glowing grate fire, firmly resolved to rid myself of myself by resorting to the oblivion of thought, reverie, or dream. To sleep was impossible, and I sat moodily in an easy chair, noting the quarter and half-hour strokes as they were chimed out sweetly from the spire of St. Peter's Cathedral, a few blocks away.

Nine o'clock passed with, its silver-voiced song of "Home, Sweet Home ." Ten, and then eleven strokes of the ponderous bell which noted

the hours, roused me to a strenuous effort to shake off the feelings of despondency, unrest, and turbulence, that all combined to produce a state of mental and physical misery now insufferable. Rising suddenly from my chair, without a conscious effort I walked mechanically to a bookcase, seized a volume at random, reseated myself before the fire, and opened the book. It proved to be an odd, neglected volume, *Riley's Dictionary of Latin Quotations*. At the moment there flashed upon me a conscious duality of existence. Had the old book some mesmeric power? I seemed to myself two persons, and I quickly said aloud, as if addressing my double: "If I cannot quiet you, turbulent Spirit, I can at least adapt myself to your condition. I will read this book haphazard from bottom to top, or backward, if necessary, and if this does not change the subject often enough, I will try Noah Webster." Opening the book mechanically at page 297, I glanced at the bottom line and read, "Nunquam minus solos quam cum solos" (Never less alone than when alone). These words arrested my thoughts at once, as, by a singular chance, they seemed to fit my mood; was it or was it not some conscious invisible intelligence that caused me to select that page, and brought the apothegm to my notice?

Again, like a flash, came the consciousness of duality, and I began to argue with my other self. "This is arrant nonsense," I cried aloud. "even though Cicero did say it, and, it is on a par with many other delusive maxims that have for so many years embittered the existence of our modern youth by misleading thought. Do you know, Mr. Cicero, that this statement is not sound? That it is unworthy the position you occupy in history as a thinker and philosopher? That it is a contradiction in itself, for if a man is alone he is alone, and that settles it?"

I mused in this vein a few moments, and then resumed aloud: "It won't do, it won't do; if one is alone, the word is absolute – he is single, isolated, in short, alone; and there can by no manner of possibility be any one else present. Take myself, for instance: I am the sole occupant of this apartment; I am alone, and yet you say in so many words that I was never less alone than at this instant." It was not without some misgiving that I uttered these words, for the strange consciousness of my own duality constantly grew stronger, and I could not shake off the reflection that even now there were two of myself in the room, and that I was not so much alone as I endeavored to convince myself.

This feeling oppressed me like an incubus; I must throw it off, and, rising, I tossed the book upon the table, exclaiming

"What folly! I am alone. Positively there is no other living thing visible or invisible in the room." I hesitated as I spoke, for the strange, undefined sensation that I was not alone had become almost a conviction; but the sound of my voice encouraged me, and I determined to discuss the

subject, and I remarked in a full, strong voice, "I am surely alone; I know I am! Why, I will wager everything I possess, even to my soul, that I am alone." I stood facing the smoldering embers of the fire which I had neglected to replenish, uttering these words to settle the controversy for good and all with one person of my dual self, but the other ego seemed to dissent violently, when a soft, clear voice claimed my ear:

"You have lost your wager; you are not alone."

I turned instantly towards the direction of the sound, and, to my amazement, saw a white-haired man seated on the opposite side of the room, gazing at me with the utmost composure. I am not a coward, nor a believer in ghosts or illusions, and yet that sight froze me where I stood. It had no supernatural appearance. On the contrary, it was a plain, ordinary, flesh-and-blood man, but the weather, the experiences of the day, the weird, inclement night, had all conspired to strain my nerves to the highest point of tension, and I trembled from head to foot. Noting this, the stranger said pleasantly: "Quiet yourself, my dear sir; you have nothing to fear; be seated." I obeyed, mechanically, and regaining in a few moments some semblance of composure, took a mental inventory of my visitor. Who is he? What is he? How did he enter without my notice, and why? What is his business? These were all questions that flashed into my mind in quick succession, and quickly flashed out unanswered.

The stranger sat eying me composedly, even pleasantly, as if waiting for me to reach some conclusion regarding him. At last I surmised, "He is a maniac who has found his way here by methods peculiar to the insane, and my personal safety demands that I use him discreetly."

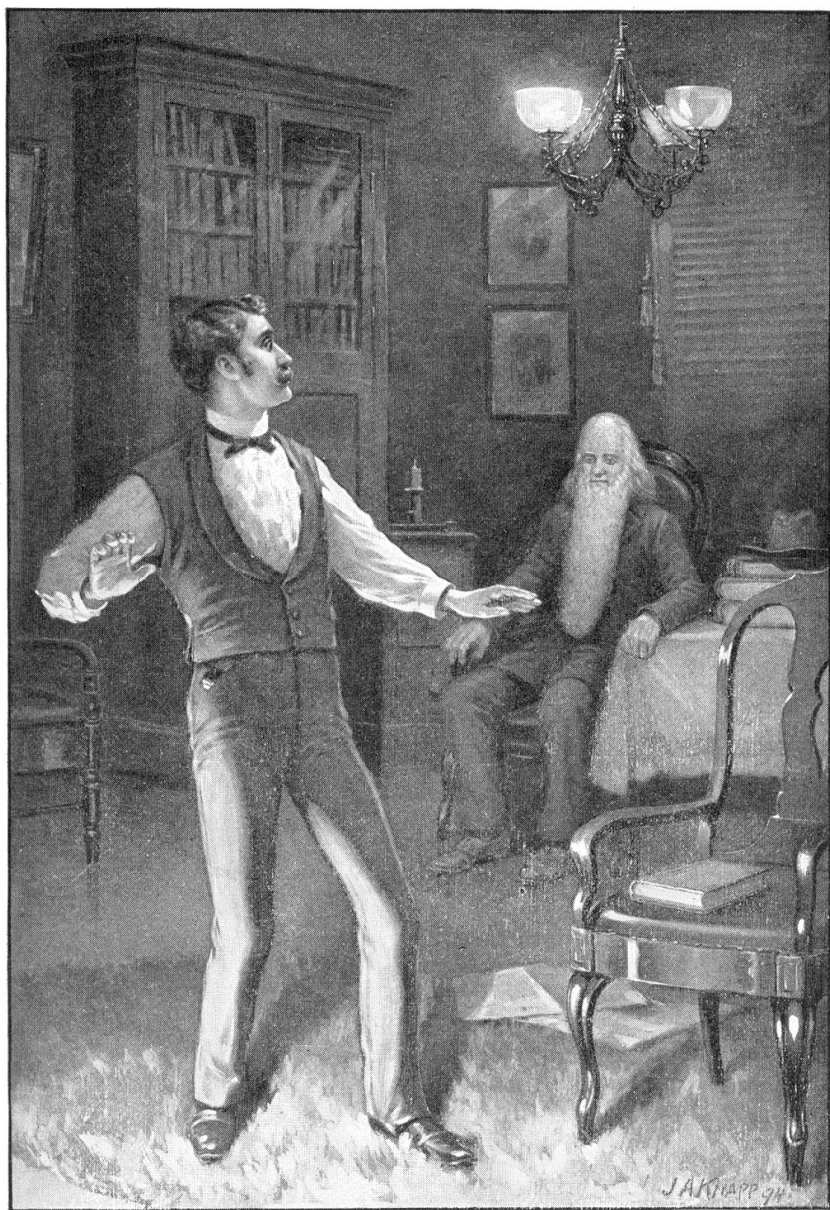
"Very good," he remarked, as though reading my thoughts. "As well think that as anything else."

"But why are you here? What is your business?" I asked.

"You have made and lost a wager," he said. "You have committed an act of folly in making positive statements regarding a matter about which you know nothing – a very common failing, by the way, on the part of mankind, and concerning which I wish first to set you straight."

The ironical coolness with which he said this provoked me, and I hastily rejoined: "You are impertinent; I must ask you to leave my house at once."

"Very well," he answered. "but if you insist upon this, I shall, on behalf of Cicero, claim the stake of your voluntary wager, which means that I must first, by natural though violent means, release your soul from



“AND TO MY AMAZEMENT SAW A WHITE-HAIRED MAN.”

your body." So saying he arose, drew from an inner pocket a long, keen knife, the blade of which quiveringly glistened as he laid it upon the table. Moving his chair so as to be within easy reach of the gleaming weapon, he sat down, and again regarded me with the same quiet composure I had noted, and which was fast dispelling my first impression concerning his sanity.

The sensation of fear, however, was fast leaving me ; there was something reassuring in my unbidden guest's perfect ease of manner, and the mild, though searching gaze of his eyes, which were wonderful in their expression. I began to observe his personal characteristics, which impressed me favorably, and yet were extraordinary. He was nearly six feet tall, and perfectly straight; well proportioned, with no tendency either to leanness or obesity. But his head was an object from which I could not take my eyes – such a head surely I had never before seen on mortal shoulders. The chin, as seen through his silver beard, was rounded and well developed, the mouth straight, with pleasant lines about it, the jaws square and, like the mouth, indicating decision, the eyes deep set and arched with heavy eyebrows, and the whole surmounted by a forehead so vast, so high, that it was almost a deformity, and yet it did not impress me unpleasantly; it was the forehead of a scholar, a profound thinker, a deep student. The nose was inclined to aquiline, and quite large. The contour of the head and face impressed me as indicating a man of learning, one who had given a lifetime to experimental as well as speculative thought. His voice was mellow, clear, and distinct, always pleasantly modulated and soft, never loud nor unpleasant in the least degree. One remarkable feature I must not fail to mention – his hair; this, while thin and scant upon the top of his head, was long, and reached to his shoulders; his beard was of unusual length, descending almost to his waist; his hair, eyebrows, and beard were all of singular whiteness and purity, almost transparent, a silvery whiteness that seemed an aureolar sheen in the glare of the gaslight. What struck me as particularly remarkable was that his skin looked as soft and smooth as that of a child; there was not a blemish in it. His age was a puzzle none could guess; stripped of his hair, or the color of it changed, he might be twenty-five – given a few wrinkles, he might be ninety. Taken altogether, I had never seen his like, nor anything approaching his like, and for an instant there was a faint suggestion to my mind that he was not of this earth, but belonged to some other planet.

I now fancy he must have read my impressions of him as these ideas shaped themselves in my brain, and that he was quietly waiting for me to regain a degree of self-possession that would allow him to disclose the purpose of his visit.

He was first to break the silence. "I see that you are not disposed to pay your wager any more than I am to collect it, so we will not discuss that. I admit that my introduction tonight was abrupt, but you cannot deny that you challenged me to appear." I was not clear upon the point, and said so. "Your memory is at fault," he continued, "if you cannot recall your experiences of the day just past. Did you not attempt to interest yourself in modern book lore, to fix your mind in turn upon history, chemistry, botany, poetry, and general literature? And all these failing, did you not deliberately challenge Cicero to a practical demonstration of an old apothegm of his that has survived for centuries, and of your own free will did not you make a wager that, as an admirer of Cicero's, I am free to accept?" To all this I could but silently assent. "Very good, then; we will not pursue this subject further, as it is not relevant to my purpose, which is to acquaint you with a narrative of unusual interest, upon certain conditions, with which if you comply, you will not only serve yourself, but me as well."

"Please name the conditions," I said.

"They are simple enough," he answered. "The narrative I speak of is in manuscript. I will produce it in the near future, and my design is to read it aloud to you, or to allow you to read it to me, as you may select. Further, my wish is that during the reading you shall interpose any objection or question that you deem proper. This reading will occupy many evenings, and I shall of necessity be with you often. When the reading is concluded, we will seal the package securely, and I shall leave you forever. You will then deposit the manuscript in some safe place, and let it remain for thirty years. When this period has elapsed, I wish you to publish this history to the world."

"Your conditions seem easy," I said, after a few seconds' pause.

"They are certainly very simple; do you accept?"

I hesitated, for the prospect of giving myself up to a succession of interviews with this extraordinary and mysterious personage seemed to require consideration. He evidently divined my thoughts, for, rising from his chair, he said abruptly: "Let me have your answer now."

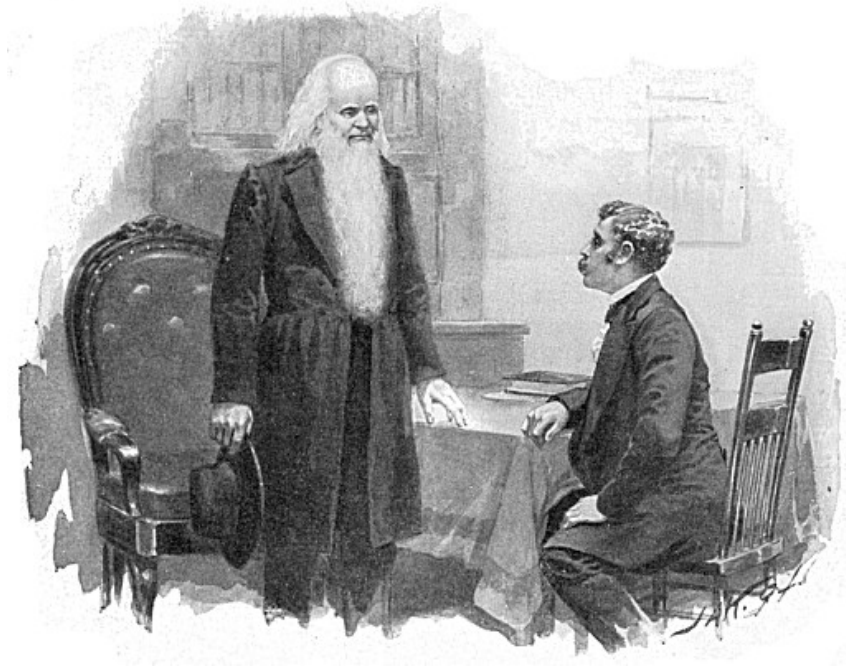
I debated the matter no further, but answered, "I accept, conditionally."

"Name your conditions," the guest replied.

"I will either publish the work, or induce some other man to do so."

"Good," he said. "I will see you again." With a polite bow; and turning to the door which I had previously locked, he opened it softly, and with a quiet "Good night" disappeared in the hallway.

I looked after him with bewildered senses; but a sudden impulse caused me to glance toward the table, when I saw that he had forgotten his knife. With the view of returning this, I reached to pick it up, but my finger tips no sooner touched the handle than a sudden chill shivered along my nerves. Not as an electric shock, but rather as a sensation of extreme cold was the current that ran through me in an instant. Rushing into the hallway to the landing of the stairs, I called after the mysterious being, "You have forgotten your knife," but beyond the faint echo of my voice, I heard no sound. The phantom was gone. A moment later I was at the foot of the stairs, and had thrown open the door. A street lamp shed an uncertain light in front of the house. I stepped out and listened intently



"LET ME HAVE YOUR ANSWER NOW."

for a moment, but not a sound was audible, if indeed I except the beating of my own heart, which throbbed so wildly that I fancied I heard it. No footfall echoed from the deserted streets; all was silent as a churchyard, and I closed and locked the door softly, tiptoed my way back to my room, and sank collapsed into an easy chair. I was more than exhausted; I quivered from head to foot, not with cold, but with a strange nervous chill that found intensest expression in my spinal column, and seemed to flash up and down my back vibrating like a feverous pulse. This active pain was

succeeded by a feeling of frozen numbness, and I sat I know not how long, trying to tranquilize myself and think temperately of the night's occurrence. By degrees I recovered my normal sensations, and directing my will in the channel of sober reasoning, I said to myself: "There can be no mistake about his visit, for his knife is here as a witness to the fact. So much is sure, and I will secure that testimony at all events." With this reflection I turned to the table, but to my astonishment, I discovered that the knife had disappeared. It needed but this miracle to start the perspiration in great cold beads from every pore. My brain was in a whirl, and reeling into a chair, I covered my face with my hands. How long I sat in this posture I do not remember. I only know that I began to doubt my own sanity, and wondered if this were not the way people became deranged. Had not my peculiar habits of isolation, irregular and intense study, erratic living, all conspired to unseat reason? Surely here was every ground to believe so, and yet I was able still to think consistently and hold steadily to a single line of thought. Insane people cannot do that, I reflected, and gradually the tremor and excitement wore away. When I had become calmer and more collected, and my sober judgment said, "Go to bed; sleep just as long as you can; hold your eyelids down, and when you awake refreshed, as you will, think out the whole subject at your leisure," I arose, threw open the shutters, and found that day was breaking. Hastily undressing I went to bed, and closed my eyes, vaguely conscious of some soothing guardianship. Perhaps because I was physically exhausted, I soon lost myself in the oblivion of sleep.

I did not dream – at least I could not afterwards remember my dream if I had one, but I recollect thinking that somebody struck ten distinct blows on my door, which seemed to me to be of metal and very sonorous. These ten blows in my semi-conscious state I counted. I lay very quiet for a time collecting my thoughts and noting various objects about the room, until my eye caught the dial of a French clock upon the mantel. It was a few minutes past ten, and the blows I had heard were the strokes of the hammer upon the gong in the clock. The sun was shining into the room, which was quite cold, for the fire had gone out. I arose, dressed myself quickly, and after thoroughly laving my face and hands in ice-cold water, felt considerably refreshed.

Before going out to breakfast, while looking around the room for a few things which I wanted to take with me, I espied upon the table a long white hair. This was indeed a surprise, for I had about concluded that my adventure of the previous night was a species of waking nightmare, the result of overworked brain and weakened body. But here was tangible evidence to the contrary, an assurance that my mysterious visitor was not a fancy or a dream, and his parting words, "I will see you again," recurred

to me with singular effect. "He will see me again; very well; I will preserve this evidence of his visit for future use." I wound the delicate filament into a little coil, folded it carefully in a bit of paper, and consigned it to a corner in my pocket-book, though not without some misgiving that it too might disappear as did the knife.



"I ESPIED UPON THE TABLE A LONG WHITE HAIR."

The strange experience of that night had a good effect on me; I became more regular in all my habits, took abundant sleep and exercise, was more methodical in my modes of study and reasoning, and in a short time found myself vastly improved in every way, mentally and physically.

The days went fleeting into weeks, the weeks into months, and while the form and figure of the white-haired stranger were seldom absent from my mind, he came no more.

CHAPTER II.

A FRIENDLY CONFERENCE.

It is rare, in our present civilization, to find a man who lives alone. This remark does not apply to hermits or persons of abnormal or perverted mental tendencies, but to the majority of mankind living and moving actively among their fellows, and engaged in the ordinary occupations of humanity. Every man must have at least one confidant, either of his own household, or within the circle of his intimate friends. There may possibly be rare exceptions among persons of genius in statecraft, war, or commerce, but it is doubtful even in such instances if any keep all their thoughts to themselves, hermetically sealed from their fellows. As a prevailing rule, either a loving wife or very near friend shares the inner thought of the most secretive individual, even when secrecy seems an indispensable element to success. The tendency to a free interchange of ideas and experiences is almost universal, instinct prompting the natural man to unburden his most sacred thought, when the proper confidant and the proper time come for the disclosure.

For months I kept to myself the events narrated in the preceding chapter. And this for several reasons: first, the dread of ridicule that would follow the relation of the fantastic occurrences, and the possible suspicion of my sanity, that might result from the recital; second, very grave doubts as to the reality of my experiences. But by degrees self-confidence was restored, as I reasoned the matter over and reassured myself by occasional contemplation of the silvery hair I had coiled in my pocketbook, and which at first I had expected would vanish as did the stranger's knife. There came upon me a feeling that I should see my weird visitor again, and at an early day. I resisted this impression, for it was a feeling of the idea, rather than a thought, but the vague expectation grew upon me in spite of myself, until at length it became a conviction which no argument or logic could shake. Curiously enough, as the original incident receded into the past, this new idea thrust itself into the foreground, and I began in my own mind to court another interview. At times, sitting alone after night, I felt that I was watched by unseen eyes; these eyes haunted me in my solitude, and I was morally sure of the presence of another than myself in the room. The sensation was at first unpleasant, and I tried to throw it off, with partial success. But only for a little while could I banish the intrusive idea, and as the thought took form, and the invisible presence became more actual to consciousness, I hoped

that the stranger would make good his parting promise, "I will see you again."

On one thing I was resolved; I would at least be better informed on the subject of hallucinations and apparitions, and not be taken unawares as I had been. To this end I decided to confer with my friend, Professor Chickering, a quiet, thoughtful man, of varied accomplishments, and thoroughly read upon a great number of topics, especially in the literature of the marvelous.

So to the Professor I went, after due appointment, and confided to him full particulars of my adventure. He listened patiently throughout, and when I had finished, assured me in a matter-of-fact way that such hallucinations were by no means rare. His remark was provoking, for I did not expect from the patient interest he had shown while I was telling my story, that the whole matter would be dismissed thus summarily. I said with some warmth:

"But this was not an hallucination. I tried at first to persuade myself that it was illusory, but the more I have thought the experience over, the more real it becomes to me."

"Perhaps you were dreaming," suggested the Professor.

"No," I answered. "I have tried that hypothesis, and it will not do. Many things make that view untenable."

"Do not be too sure of that," he said. "You were, by your own account, in a highly nervous condition, and physically tired. It is possible, perhaps probable, that in this state, as you sat in your chair, you dozed off for a short interval, during which the illusion flashed through your mind."

"How do you explain the fact that incidents occupying a large portion of the night, occurred in an interval which you describe as a flash?"

"Easily enough; in dreams time may not exist: periods embracing weeks or months may be reduced to an instant. Long journeys, hours of conversation, or a multitude of transactions, may be compressed into a term measured by the opening or closing of a door, or the striking of a clock. In dreams, ordinary standards of reason find no place, while ideas or events chase through the mind more rapidly than thought."

"Conceding all this, why did I, considering the unusual character of the incidents, accept them as real, as substantial, as natural as the most commonplace events?"

"There is nothing extraordinary in that," he replied. "In dreams all sorts of absurdities, impossibilities, discordances, and violation of natural law appear realities, without exciting the least surprise or suspicion."

Imagination runs riot and is supreme, and reason for the time is dormant. We see ghosts, spirits, the forms of persons dead or living – we suffer pain, pleasure, hunger – and all sensations and emotions, without a moment's question of their reality."

"Do any of the subjects of our dreams or visions leave tangible evidences of their presence?"

"Assuredly not," he answered, with an incredulous, half impatient gesture; "The idea is absurd."

"Then I was not dreaming," I mused.

Without looking at me, the Professor went on: "These false presentiments may have their origin in other ways, as from mental disorders caused by indigestion. Nicolai, a noted bookseller of Berlin, was thus afflicted. His experiences are interesting and possibly suggestive. Let me read some of them to you."

The Professor hereupon glanced over his bookshelf, selected a volume, and proceeded to read:

"I generally saw human forms of both sexes; but they usually seemed not to take the smallest notice of each other, moving as in a market place, where all are eager to press through the crowd; at times, however, they seemed to be transacting business with each other. I also saw several times, people on horseback, dogs, and birds.

"All these phantasms appeared to me in their natural size, and as distinct as if alive, exhibiting different shades of carnation in the uncovered parts, as well as different colors and fashions in their dresses, though the colors seemed somewhat paler than in real nature. None of the figures appeared particularly terrible, comical, or disgusting, most of them being of indifferent shape, and some presenting a pleasant aspect. The longer these phantasms continued to visit me, the more frequently did they return, while at the same time they increased in number about four weeks after they had first appeared. I also began to hear them talk: these phantoms conversed among themselves, but more frequently addressed their discourse to me; their speeches were uncommonly short, and never of an unpleasant turn. At different times there appeared to me both dear and sensible friends of both sexes, whose addresses tended to appease my grief, which had not yet wholly subsided: their consolatory speeches were in general addressed to me when I was alone. Sometimes, however, I was accosted by these consoling friends while I was engaged in company, and not infrequently while real persons were speaking to me. These consolatory addresses consisted sometimes of abrupt phrases, and at other times they were regularly executed."

Here I interrupted, "I note, Professor, that Mr. Nicolai knew these forms to be illusions."

Without answering my remark, he continued to read:

"There is in imagination a potency far exceeding the fabled power of Aladdin's lamp. How often does one sit in wintry evening musings, and trace in the glowing embers the features of an absent friend? Imagination, with its magic wand, will there build a city with its countless spires, or marshal contending armies, or drive the tempest-shattered ship

upon the ocean. The following story, related by Scott, affords a good illustration of this principle:

"Not long after the death of an illustrious poet, who had filled, while living, a great station in the eyes of the public, a literary friend, to whom the deceased had been well known, was engaged during the darkening twilight of an autumn evening, in perusing one of the publications which professed to detail the habits and opinions of the distinguished individual who was now no more. As the reader had enjoyed the intimacy of the deceased to a considerable degree, he was deeply interested in the publication, which contained some particulars relating to himself and other friends. A visitor was sitting in the apartment, who was also engaged in reading. Their sitting-room opened into an entrance hall, rather fantastically fitted up with articles of armor, skins of wild animals, and the like. It was when laying down his book, and passing into this hall, through which the moon was beginning to shine, that the individual of whom I speak saw right before him, in a standing posture, the exact representation of his departed friend, whose recollection had been so strongly brought to his imagination. He stopped for a single moment, so as to notice the wonderful accuracy with which fancy had impressed upon the bodily eye the peculiarities of dress and position of the illustrious poet. Sensible, however, of the delusion, he felt no sentiment save that of wonder at the extraordinary accuracy of the resemblance, and stepped onward to the figure, which resolved itself as he approached into the various materials of which it was composed. These were merely a screen occupied by great coats, shawls, plaids, and such other articles as are usually found in a country entrance hall. The spectator returned to the spot from which he had seen the illusion, and endeavored with all his power to recall the image which had been so singularly vivid. But this he was unable to do. And the person who had witnessed the apparition, or, more properly, whose excited state had been the means of raising it, had only to return to the apartment, and tell his young friend under what a striking hallucination he had for a moment labored."

Here I was constrained to call the Professor to a halt. "Your stories are very interesting," I said, "but I fail to perceive any analogy in either the conditions or the incidents, to my experience. I was fully awake and conscious at the time, and the man I saw appeared and moved about in the full glare of the gaslight."

"Perhaps not," he answered. "I am simply giving you some general illustrations of the subject. But here is a case more to the point."

Again he read:

"A lady was once passing through a wood, in the darkening twilight of a stormy evening, to visit a friend who was watching over a dying child. The clouds were thick – the rain beginning to fall; darkness was increasing; the wind was moaning mournfully through the trees. The lady's heart almost failed her as she saw that she had a mile to walk through the woods in the gathering gloom. But the reflection of the situation of her friend forbade her turning back. excited and trembling, she called to her aid a nervous resolution, and pressed onward. She had not proceeded far when she beheld in the path before her the movement of some very indistinct object. It appeared to keep a little distance ahead of her, and as she made efforts to get nearer to see what it was, it seemed proportionally to recede. The lady began to feel rather unpleasantly. There was some pale white object certainly discernible before her, and it appeared mysteriously to float along, at a regular distance, without any effort at motion. Notwithstanding the lady's good sense and unusual resolution, a cold chill began to come over her. She made every effort to resist her fears, and soon succeeded in drawing nearer the mysterious object, when, she was appalled at beholding the features of her friend's child, cold in death, wrapt in its shroud. She gazed

earnestly, and there it remained distinct and clear before her eyes. She considered it a premonition that her friend's child was dead, and that she must hasten to her aid. But there was the apparition directly in her path. She must pass it. Taking up a little stick, she forced herself along to the object, and behold, some little animal scampered away. It was this that her excited imagination had transformed into the corpse of an infant in its winding sheet."

I was a little irritated, and once more interrupted the reader warmly: "This is exasperating. Now what resemblance is there between the vagaries of a hysterical, weak-minded woman, and my case?"

He smiled, and again read:

"The numerous stories told of ghosts, or the spirits of persons who are dead, will in most instances be found to have originated in diseased imagination, aggravated by some abnormal defect of mind. We may mention a remarkable case in point, and one which is not mentioned in English works on this subject; it is told by a compiler of *Les Causes Celebres*. Two young noblemen, the Marquises De Rambouillet and De Precy, belonging to two of the first families of France, made an agreement, in the warmth of their friendship, that the one who died first should return to the other with tidings of the world to come. Soon afterwards De Rambouillet went to the wars in Flanders, while De Precy remained at Paris, stricken by a fever. Lying alone in bed, and severely ill, De Precy one day heard a rustling of his bed curtains, and turning round, saw his friend De Rambouillet, in full military attire. The sick man sprang over the bed to welcome his friend, but the other receded, and said that he had come to fulfill his promise, having been killed on that very day. He further said that it behooved De Precy to think more of the after world, as all that was said of it was true, and as he himself would die in his first battle. De Precy was then left by the phantom; and it was afterward found that De Rambouillet had fallen on that day."

"Ah," I said, "and so the phantom predicted an event that followed as indicated."

"Spiritual illusions," explained the Professor, "are not unusual, and well authenticated cases are not wanting in which they have been induced in persons of intelligence by functional or organic disorders. In the last case cited, the prediction was followed by a fulfillment, but this was chance or mere coincidence. It would be strange indeed if in the multitude of dreams that come to humanity, some few should not be followed by events so similar as to warrant the belief that they were prefigured. But here is an illustration that fits your case: let me read it:

"In some instances it may be difficult to decide whether spectral appearances and spectral noises proceed from physical derangement or from an overwrought state of mind. Want of exercise and amusement may also be a prevailing cause. A friend mentions to us the following case: An acquaintance of his, a merchant, in London, who had for years paid very close attention to business, was one day, while alone in his counting house, very much surprised to hear, as he imagined, persons outside the door talking freely about him. Thinking it was some acquaintances who were playing off a trick, he opened the door to request them to come in, when to his amazement, he found that nobody was there. He again sat down to his desk, and in a few minutes the same dialogue recommenced. The language was very alarming. One voice seemed to say: 'We have the scoundrel in his own counting house; let us go in and seize him.' Certainly,' replied the other voice, 'it is right to

take him; he has been guilty of a great crime, and ought to be brought to condign punishment.' Alarmed at these threats, the bewildered merchant rushed to the door; and there again no person was to be seen. He now locked his door and went home; but the voices, as he thought, followed him through the crowd, and he arrived at his house in a most unenviable state of mind. Inclined to ascribe the voices to derangement in mind, he sent for a medical attendant, and told his case, and a certain kind of treatment was prescribed. This, however, failed; the voices menacing him with punishment for purely imaginary crimes continued, and he was reduced to the brink of despair. At length a friend prescribed entire relaxation from business, and a daily game of cricket, which, to his great relief, proved an effectual remedy. The exercise banished the phantom voices, and they were no more heard."

"So you think that I am in need of out-door exercise?"

"Exactly."

"And that my experience was illusory, the result of vertigo, or some temporary calenture of the brain?"

"To be plain with you, yes."

"But I asked you a while ago if specters or phantoms ever leave tangible evidence of their presence." The Professor's eyes dilated in interrogation. I continued, "Well, this one did. After I had followed him out, I found on the table a long, white hair, which I still have," and producing the little coil from my pocket-book, I handed it to him. He examined it curiously, eyed me furtively, and handed it back with the cautious remark:

"I think you had better commence your exercise at once."

CHAPTER III.

A SECOND INTERVIEW WITH THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR.

It is not pleasant to have one's mental responsibility brought in question, and the result of my interview with Professor Chickering was, to put it mildly, unsatisfactory. Not that he had exactly questioned my sanity, but it was all too evident that he was disposed to accept my statement of a plain matter-of-fact occurrence with a too liberal modicum of salt. I say "matter-of-fact occurrence" in full knowledge of the truth that I myself had at first regarded the whole transaction as a fantasia or flight of mind, the result of extreme nervous tension; but in the interval succeeding I had abundant opportunity to correlate my thoughts, and to bring some sort of order out of the mental and physical chaos of that strange, eventful night. True, the preliminary events leading up to it were extraordinary; the dismal weather, the depression of body and spirit under which I labored, the wild whirl of thought keeping pace with the elements – in short, a general concatenation of events that seemed to be ordered especially for the introduction of some abnormal visitor – the night would indeed have been incomplete without a ghost! But was it a ghost? There was nothing ghostly about my visitor, except the manner of his entrance and exit. In other respects, he seemed substantial enough. He was, in his manners, courteous and polished as a Chesterfield; learned as a savant in his conversation; human in his thoughtful regard of my fears and misgivings; but that tremendous forehead, with its crown of silver hair, the long, translucent beard of pearly whiteness, and above all the astounding facility with which he read my hidden thoughts – these were not natural.

The Professor had been patient with me – I had a right to expect that. He was entertaining to the extent of reading such excerpts as he had with him on the subject of hallucinations and their supposed causes, but had he not spoiled all by assigning me at last to a place with the questionable, unbalanced characters he had cited? I thought so, and the reflection provoked me; and this thought grew upon me until I came to regard his stories and attendant theories as so much literary trash.

My own reflections had been sober and deliberate, and had led me to seek a rational explanation of the unusual phenomena. I had gone to Professor Chickering for a certain measure of sympathy, and what was more to the point, to secure his suggestions and assistance in the further unraveling of a profound mystery that might contain a secret of untold use to humanity. Repulsed by the mode in which my confidence had been received, I decided to do what I should have done from the outset – to keep my own counsel, and to follow alone the investigation to the end, no

matter what the result might be. I could not forget or ignore the silver hair I had so religiously preserved. That was genuine; it was as tangible, as real, as convincing a witness as would have been the entire head of my singular visitant, whatever might be his nature.

I began to feel at ease the moment my course was decided, and the feeling was at once renewed within me that the gray head would come again, and by degrees that expectation ripened into a desire, only intensified as the days sped by. The weeks passed into months; summer came and went; autumn was fast fading, but the mysterious unknown did not appear. A curious fancy led me now to regard him as my friend, for the mixed and indefinite feelings I felt at first towards him had almost unaccountably been changed to those of sincere regard. He was not always in my thoughts, for I had abundant occupation at all times to keep both brain and hands busy, but there were few evenings in which I did not, just before retiring, give myself up for a brief period to quiet communion with my own thoughts, and I must confess at such times the unknown occupied the larger share of attention. The constant contemplation of any theme begets a feeling of familiarity or acquaintance with the same, and if that subject be an individual, as in the present instance, such contemplation lessens the liability to surprise from any unexpected development. In fact, I not only anticipated a visit, but courted it. The old Latin maxim that I had played with, "Never less alone than when alone" had domiciled itself within my brain as a permanent lodger – a conviction, a feeling rather than a thought defined, and I had but little difficulty in associating an easy-chair which I had come to place in a certain position for my expected visitor, with his presence.

Indian summer had passed, and the fall was nearly gone when for some inexplicable reason the number seven began to haunt me. What had I to do with seven, or seven with me? When I sat down at night this persistent number mixed itself in my thoughts, to my intense annoyance. Bother take the mystic numeral! What was I to do with seven? I found myself asking this question audibly one evening, when it suddenly occurred to me that I would refer to the date of my friend's visit. I kept no journal, but reference to a record of some business transactions that I had associated with that event showed that it took place on November seventh. That settled the importunate seven! I should look for whomever he was on the first anniversary of his visit, which was the seventh, now close at hand. The instant I had reached this conclusion the number left me, and troubled me no more.

November third had passed, the fourth, and the fifth had come, when a stubborn, protesting notion entered my mind that I was yielding to a superstitious idea, and that it was time to control my vacillating will.

Accordingly on this day I sent word to a friend that, if agreeable to him, I would call on him on the evening of the seventh for a short social chat, but as I expected to be engaged until later than usual, would he excuse me if I did not reach his apartments until ten? The request was singular, but as I was now accounted somewhat odd, it excited no comment, and the answer was returned, requesting me to come. The seventh of November came at last. I was nervous during the day, which seemed to drag tediously, and several times it was remarked of me that I seemed abstracted and ill at ease, but I held my peace. Night came cold and clear, and the stars shone brighter than usual, I thought. It was a sharp contrast to the night of a year ago. I took an early supper, for which I had no appetite, after which I strolled aimlessly about the streets, resolving how I should put in the time till ten o'clock, when I was to call upon my friend. I decided to go to the theater, and to the theater I went. The play was spectacular, *Aladdin; or, The Wonderful Lamp*. The entertainment, to me, was a flat failure, for I was busy with my thoughts, and it was not long until my thoughts were busy with me, and I found myself attempting to answer a series of questions that finally became embarrassing. "Why did you make an appointment for ten o'clock instead of eight, if you wished to keep away from your apartments?" I hadn't thought of that before; it was stupid to a degree, if not ill-mannered, and I frankly admitted as much. "Why did you make an appointment at all, in the face of the fact that you not only expected a visitor, but were anxious to meet him?" This was easily answered: because I did not wish to yield to what struck me as superstition. "But do you expect to extend your call until morning?" Well, no, I hadn't thought or arranged to do so. "Well, then, what is to prevent your expected guest from awaiting your return? Or, what assurance have you that he will not encounter you in the street, under circumstances that will provoke or, at the least, embarrass you?" None whatever. "Then what have you gained by your stupid perversity?" Nothing, beyond the assertion of my own individuality. "Why not go home and receive your guest in becoming style?" No; I would not do that. I had started on this course, and I would persevere in it. I would be consistent. And so I persisted, at least until nine o'clock, when I quit the theater in sullen dejection, and went home to make some slight preparation for my evening call.

With my latch-key I let myself into the front door of the apartment house wherein I lodged, walked through the hall, up the staircase, and paused on the threshold of my room, wondering what I would find inside. Opening the door I entered, leaving it open behind me so that the light from the hallway would shine into the room, which was dark, and there was no transom above the door. The grate fire had caked into a solid mass of charred bituminous coal, which shed no illumination beyond a faint red

glow at the bottom, showing that it was barely alive, and no more. I struck a match on the underside of the mantel shelf, and as I lit the gas I heard the click of the door latch. I turned instantly; the door had been gently closed by some unknown force if not by unseen hands, for there was no breath of air stirring. This preternatural interference was not pleasant, for I had hoped in the event of another visit from my friend, if friend he was, that he would bring no uncanny or ghostly manifestation to disturb me. I looked at the clock. The hands pointed to half past nine. I glanced about the room. It was orderly. Everything in proper position, even to the arm-chair that I had been wont to place for my nondescript visitor. It was time to be going, so I turned to the dressing case, brushed my hair, put on a clean scarf, and moved towards the wash-stand, which stood in a little alcove on the opposite side of the room. My self-command well-nigh deserted me as I did so, for there, in the armchair that a moment before was empty, sat my guest of a year ago, facing me with placid features! The room began to revolve, a faint, sick feeling came over me, and I reeled into the first convenient chair, and covered my face with my hands. This depression lasted but an instant, however, and as I recovered self-possession, I felt or fancied I felt a pair of penetrating eyes fixed upon me with the same mild, searching gaze I remembered so well. I ventured to look up; sure enough, there they were, the beaming eyes, and there was he! Rising from his chair, he towered up to his full height, smiled pleasantly, and with a slight inclination of the head, murmured, "Permit me to wish you good evening; I am profoundly glad to meet you again."

It was full a minute before I could muster courage to answer, "I wish I could say as much for myself."

"And why shouldn't you?" he said, gently and courteously. "You have realized, for the past six months, that I would return; more than that — you have known for some time the very day and almost the exact hour of my coming, have even wished for it, and, in the face of all this, I find you preparing to evade the requirements of common hospitality. Are you doing either me or yourself justice?"

I was nettled at the knowledge he displayed of my movements, and of my very thoughts; my old stubbornness asserted itself, and I was rude enough to say, "Perhaps it is as you say. At all events, I am obligated to keep an engagement, and with your permission will now retire."

It was curious to mark the effect of this speech upon the intruder. He immediately became grave, reached quietly into an inner pocket of his coat, drew thence the same glittering, horrible, mysterious knife that had so terrified and bewildered me a year before, and looking me steadily in the eye, said coldly, yet with a certain tone of sadness, "Well, I will not

grant permission. It is unpleasant to resort to this style of argument, but I do it to save time and controversy."

I stepped back in terror, and reached for the old-fashioned bell-cord with the heavy tassel at the end, that depended from the ceiling, and was on the point of grasping and giving it a vigorous pull.

"Not so fast, if you please," he said, sternly, as he stepped forward and gave the knife a rapid swish through the air above my head, causing the cord to fall in a tangle about my hand, cut cleanly, high above my reach!

I gazed in dumb stupor at the rope about my hand, and raised my eyes to the remnant above. That was motionless; there was not the slightest perceptible vibration, such as would naturally be expected. I turned to look at my guest who had resumed his seat, and had also regained his pleasant expression, but he still held the knife in his hand with his arm extended, at rest, upon the table, which stood upon his right.

"Let us have an end to this folly," he said. "Think a moment, and you will see that you are in fault. Your error we will rectify easily, and then to business. I will first show you the futility of trying to escape this interview, and then we will proceed to work, for time presses, and there is much to do." Having delivered this remark, he detached a single silvery hair from his head, blew it from his fingers, and let it float gently upon the upturned edge of the knife, which was still resting on the table. The hair was divided as readily as had been the bell-cord. I was transfixed with astonishment, for he had evidently aimed to exhibit the quality of the blade, though he made no allusion to the feat, but smilingly went on with his discourse: "It is just a year ago tonight since we first met. Upon that occasion you made an agreement with me which you are in honor bound to keep, and..." – Here he paused as if to note the effect of his words upon me and then added significantly, "...will keep. I have been at some pains to impress upon your mind the fact that I would be here tonight. You responded, and knew that I was coming, and yet in obedience to a silly whim, deliberately made a meaningless engagement with no other purpose than to violate a solemn obligation. I now insist that you keep your prior engagement with me, but I do not wish that you should be rude to your friend, so you had better write him a polite note excusing yourself, and dispatch it at once."

I saw that he was right, and that there was no shadow of justification for my conduct, or at least I was subdued by his presence, so I wrote the note without delay, and was casting about for some way to send it, when he said, "Fold it, seal it, and address it. You seem to forget what is proper." I did as he directed, mechanically, and, without thinking what I



"THE SAME GLITTERING, MYSTERIOUS KNIFE."

was doing, handed it to him. He took it naturally, glanced at the superscription, went to the door which he opened slightly, and handed the billet as if to some messenger who seemed to be in waiting outside – then closed and locked the door. Turning toward me with the apparent object of seeing if I was looking, he deftly drew his knife twice across the front of the door knob, making a deep cross, and then deposited the knife in his pocket, and resumed his seat.

As soon as he was comfortably seated, he again began the conversation: "Now that we have settled the preliminaries, I will ask if you remember what I required of you a year ago?" I thought that I did. "Please repeat it; I wish to make sure that you do, then we will start fair."

"In the first place, you were to present me with a manuscript."

"Hardly correct," he interrupted. "I was to acquaint you with a narrative which is already in manuscript, acquaint you with it, read it to you, if you preferred not to read it to me..."

"I beg your pardon," I answered. "That is correct. You were to read the manuscript to me, and during the reading I was to interpose such comments, remarks, or objections, as seemed proper; to embody as interludes, in the manuscript, as my own interpolations, however, and not as part of the original."

I noted afterward that the doorknob, which was of solid metal, was cut deeply, as though made of putty.

"Very good," he replied. "You have the idea exactly. Proceed."

"I agreed that when the reading had been completed, I would seal the complete manuscript securely, deposit it in some safe place, there to remain for thirty years, when it must be published."

"Just so," he answered, "we understand each other as we should. Before we proceed further, however, can you think of any point on which you need enlightenment? If so, ask such questions as you choose, and I will answer them."

I thought for a moment, but no query occurred to me. After a pause he said, "Well, if you think of nothing now, perhaps hereafter questions will occur to you which you can ask, but as it is late, and you are tired, we will not commence now. I will see you just one week from tonight, when we will begin. From that time on, we will follow the subject as rapidly as you choose, but see to it that you make no engagements that will interfere with our work, for I shall be more exacting in the future." I promised, and he rose to go. A sudden impulse seized me, and I said, "May I ask one question?"

"Certainly."

"What shall I call you?"

"Why call me aught? It is not necessary in addressing each other that any name be used."

"But what are you?" I persisted.



"DREW HIS KNIFE TWICE ACROSS THE FRONT OF THE DOOR KNOB."

A pained expression for an instant rested upon his face, and he said, sadly, pausing between the words, "I-Am-The-Man Who-Did-It."

"Did what?"

"Ask not; the manuscript will tell you. Be content, Llewellyn, and remember this, that I-Am-The-Man."

So saying he bade me good night, opened the door, and disappeared down the broad staircase.

One week thereafter he appeared promptly, seated himself, and producing a roll of manuscript, handed it to me, saying, "I am listening; you may begin to read."

On examination I found each page to be somewhat larger than a sheet of letter paper, with the written matter occupying a touch smaller space, so as to leave a wide white border. One hundred pages were in the package. The last sentence ending abruptly indicated that my guest did not expect to complete his task in one evening, and, I may anticipate by saying that with each successive interview he drew about the same amount of writing from his bosom. Upon attempting to read the manuscript I at first found myself puzzled by a style of chirography very peculiar and characteristic, but execrably bad. Vainly I attempted to read it. For even the opening sentence was not deciphered without long inspection and great difficulty.

The old man, whom I had promised that I would fulfill the task, observing my discomfiture, relieved me of the charge, and without a word of introduction, read fluently as follows:

THE MANUSCRIPT OF I – AM – THE – MAN.

CHAPTER IV.

A SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE. – THE ALCHEMISTIC LETTER.

I am the man who, unfortunately for my future happiness, was dissatisfied with such knowledge as could be derived from ordinary books concerning semi-scientific subjects in which I had long been absorbed. I studied the current works of my day on philosophy and chemistry, hoping therein to find something tangible regarding the relationship that exists between matter and spirit, but studied in vain. Astronomy, history, philosophy and the mysterious, incoherent works of alchemy and occultism were finally appealed to, but likewise failed to satisfy me. These studies were pursued in secret, though I am not aware that any necessity existed for concealment. Be that as it may, at every opportunity I covertly acquainted myself with such alchemical lore as could be obtained either by purchase or by correspondence with others whom I found to be pursuing investigations in the same direction. A translation of Geber's *De Claritate Alchemiae*, by chance came into my possession, and afterwards an original version from the Latin of Boerhaave's *Elementa Chemix*, published and translated in 1753 by Peter Shaw. This magnificent production threw a flood of light upon the early history of chemistry, being far more elaborate than any modern work. It inspired me with the deepest regard for its talented author, and ultimately introduced me to a brotherhood of adepts, for in this publication, although its author disclaims occultism, is to be found a talisman that will enable any earnest searcher after light to become a member of the society of secret *Chemical Improvers of Natural Philosophy*, with which I affiliated as soon as the key was discovered. Then followed a systematic investigation of authorities of the Alchemical School, including Geber, Morienus, Roger Bacon, George Ripley, Raymond Bully, Bernard, Count of Trevis, Isaac Hollandus, Arnoldus de la Villanova, Paracelsus, and others, not omitting the learned researches of the distinguished scientist, Llewellyn.

I discovered that many talented men are still firm believers in the lost art of alchemy, and that among the followers of the "thrice-famed Hermes" are to be found statesmen, clergymen, lawyers, and scientific men who, for various reasons, invariably conceal with great tact their connection with the fraternity of adepts. Some of these men had written scientific treatises of a very different character from those circulating

among the members of our brotherhood, and to their materialistic readers it would seem scarcely possible that the authors could be tainted with hallucinations of any description, while others, conspicuous leaders in the church, were seemingly beyond occult temptation.

The larger number, it was evident, hoped by studies of the works of the alchemists, to find the key to the alkahest of Van Helmont, that is, to discover the Philosopher's Stone, or the Elixir of Life, and from their writings it is plain that the inner consciousness of thoughtful and scientific men rebelled against confinement to the narrow bounds of materialistic science, within which they were forced to appear as dogmatic pessimists. To them scientific orthodoxy, acting as a weight, prohibited intellectual speculation, as rank heresy. A few of my co-laborers were expert manipulators, and worked experimentally, following in their laboratories the suggestions of those gifted students who had pored over precious old manuscripts, and had attempted to solve the enigmatical formulas recorded therein, puzzles familiar to students of Hermetic lore. It was thus demonstrated (for what I have related is history) that in this nineteenth century there exists a fraternity, the members of which are as earnest in their belief in the truth of Esoteric philosophy, as were the followers of Hermes himself - savants who, in secret, circulate among themselves a literature that the materialism of this selfsame nineteenth century has relegated to the deluded and murky periods that produced it.

One day a postal package came to my address, this being the manner in which some of our literature circulated, which, on examination, I found to be a letter of instruction and advice from some unknown member of our circle. I was already becoming disheartened over the mental confusion into which my studies were leading me, and the contents of the letter, in which I was greatly interested, made a lasting impression upon me. It seemed to have been circulating a long time among our members in Europe and America, for it bore numerous marginal notes of various dates, but each and every one of its readers had for one reason or another declined the task therein suggested. From the substance of the paper, which, written exquisitely, yet partook of the ambiguous alchemistic style, it was evident that the author was well versed in alchemy, and, in order that my position may be clearly understood at this turning point in a life of remarkable adventure, the letter is appended here in full.

THE ALCHEMISTIC LETTER.

TO THE BROTHER ADEPT WHO DARES TRY TO DISCOVER
ZOROASTER'S CAVE, OR THE PHILOSOPHERS' INTELLECTUAL ECHOES, BY
MEANS OF WHICH

THEY COMMUNICATE TO ONE ANOTHER FROM THEIR CAVES.

Know thou, that Hermes Trismegistus did not originate, but he gave to our philosophy his name — the Hermetic Art. Evolved in a dim, mystic age, before antiquity began, it endured through the slowly rolling cycles to be bandied about by the ever-ready flippancy of nineteenth century students. It has lived, because it is endowed with that quality which never dies — truth. Modern philosophy, of which chemistry is but a fragment, draws its sustenance from the prime facts which were revealed in ancient Egypt through Hermetic thought, and fixed by the Hermetic stylus.

"The Hermetic allegories," so various in interpretable susceptibility, led subsequent thinkers into speculations and experimentations, which have resulted profitably to the world. It is not strange that some of the followers of Hermes, especially the more mercurial and imaginative, should have evolved nebulous theories, no longer explainable, and involving recondite spiritual considerations. Know thou that the ultimate on psychochemical investigation is the proximate of the infinite. Accordingly, a class came to believe that a projection of natural mental faculties into an advanced state of consciousness called the "wisdom faculty" constitutes the final possibility of Alchemy. The attainment of this exalted condition is still believed practicable by many earnest savants. Once on this lofty plane, the individual would not be trammelled by material obstacles, but would abide in that spiritual placidity which is the exquisite realization of mortal perfection. So exalted, he would be in naked parallelism with Omniscience, and through his illuminated understanding, could feast his soul on those exalted pleasures which are only less than deific.

Notwithstanding the exploits of a number of these philosophers, in which, by reason of our inability to comprehend, sense seemed lost in a passage of incohesive dreamery and resonance of terminology, some of the purest spiritual researches the world has ever known, were made in the dawn of history. The much abused alchemical philosophers existed upon a plane, in some respects above the level of the science of today. Many of them lived for the good of the world only, in an atmosphere above the materialistic hordes that people the world, and toiling over their crucibles and alembics, died in their cells "uttering no voice." Take, for example, Firenaeus Philaethes, who, bore in 1623, lived contemporaneously with Robert Boyle. A fragment from his writings will illustrate the purpose which impelled the searcher for the true light of alchemy to record his discoveries in allegories, and we have no right to question the honesty of his utterances:

"The Searcher of all hearts knows that I write the truth; nor is there any cause to accuse me of envy. I write with an unfettered quill in an unheard of style, to the honor of God, to the profit of my neighbors, with contempt of the world and its riches, because Elias, the artist, is already born, and now glorious things are declared of the city of God. I dare affirm that I do possess more riches than the whole known world is worth, but I cannot make use of it because of the snares of knaves. I disdain, loathe, and detest the idolizing of silver and gold, by which the pomps and vanities of the world are celebrated. Ah! Filthy evil! Ah! vain nothingness! Believe ye that I conceal the art out of envy? No, verily, I protest to you; I grieve from the very bottom of my soul that we (alchemists) are driven like vagabonds from the face of the Lord throughout the earth. But what need of many words? The thing that we have seen, taught, and made, which we have, possess, and know, that we do declare; being moved with compassion for the studious, and with

Lead on my friend & cried "lead on to
then, under these scenes, the
accute moralist that —"
He interrupted me almost indolently,
and in a serious manner said,
"Have you not learned that murder
is an exemplification of ignorance? The
child murders at a goblin story,
the savage at a trinket, the man of
science at an unexplained manifesta-
tion of a phenomenon he perceives nat-
ural law, each murders in ignorance
and because of ignorance. Accept
now, that all you have seen, from
the day of your birth on the surface of
the earth, to the present, and all
that you will meet here are
wonderful only because the finite
mind of man is confronted with
evidence that from whatever
direction we meet them
spring from an unend-
able infinity."

FACSIMILE OF PAGE OF MANUSCRIPT

indignation of gold, silver, and precious stones. Believe me, the time is at the door, I feel it in spirit, when we, adepts, shall return from the four corners of the earth, nor shall we fear any snares that are laid against our lives, but we shall give thanks to the Lord our God. I would to God that every ingenious man in the whole earth understood this science; then it would be valued only for its wisdom, and virtue only would be had in honor."Of course there was a more worldly class, and a large contingent of mercenary impostors (as science is always encumbered), parasites, whose animus was shamefully unlike the purity of true esoteric psychologists. These men devoted their lives to experimentation for selfish advancement. They constructed alchemical outfits, and carried on a ceaseless inquiry into the nature of solvents, and studied their influences on earthly bodies, their ultimate object being the discovery of the Philosopher's Stone, and the alkahest which Boerhaave asserts was never discovered. Their records were often a verbose *mélange*, purposely so written, no doubt, to cover their tracks, and to make themselves conspicuous. Other Hermetic believers occupied a more elevated position, and connected the intellectual with the material, hoping to gain by their philosophy and science not only gold and silver, which were secondary considerations, but the highest literary achievement, the *Magnum Opus*. Others still sought to draw from Astrology and Magic the secrets that would lead them to their ambitious goal. Thus there were degrees of fineness in a fraternity, which the science of today must recognize and admit.

Boerhaave, the illustrious, respected Geber, of the alchemistic school, and none need feel compromised in admiring the talented alchemists who, like Geber, wrought in the twilight of morn for the coming world's good. We are now enjoying a fragment of the ultimate results of their genius and industry in the materialistic outcomes of present-day chemistry, to be followed by others more valuable; and at last, when mankind is ripe in the wisdom faculty, by spiritual contentment in the complacent furthering beyond. Allow me briefly to refer to a few men of the alchemistic type whose records may be considered with advantage.

Rhasis, a conspicuous alchemist, born in 850, first mentioned orpiment, borax, compounds of iron, copper, arsenic, and other similar substances. It is said, too, that he discovered the art of making brandy. About a century later, Alfarabe (killed in 950), a great alchemist, astonished the King of Syria with his profound learning, and excited the admiration of the wise men of the East by his varied accomplishments. Later, Albertus Magnus (born 1205), noted for his talent and skill, believed firmly in the doctrine of transmutation. His beloved pupil, Thomas Aquinas, gave us the word amalgam, and it still serves us. Contemporaneously with these lived Roger Bacon (born 1214), who was a man of most extraordinary ability. There has never been a greater English intellect (not excepting his illustrious namesake, Lord Bacon), and his penetrating mind delved deeper into nature's laws than that of any successor. He told us of facts concerning the sciences, that scientific men cannot fully comprehend today; he told us of other things that lie beyond the science proving of today, that modern philosophers cannot grasp. He was an enthusiastic believer in the Hermetic philosophy, and such were his erudition and advanced views, that his brother friars, through jealousy and superstition, had him thrown into prison — a common fate to men who in those days dared to think ahead of their age. Despite (as some would say) of his mighty reasoning power and splendid attainments, he believed the Philosopher's Stone to be a reality; he believed the secret of indefinite prolongation of life abode in alchemy; that the future could be predicted by means of a mirror which he called *Almucheze*, and that by alchemy an adept could produce pure gold. He asserted that by means of Aristotle's "Secret of Secrets," pure gold can be made; gold even purer and finer than what men now know as gold. In connection with other predictions he made an assertion that may with other seemingly unreasonable predictions be verified in time to come. He said: "It is equally possible to construct cars which may be

set in motion with marvelous rapidity, independently of horses or other animals." He declared that the ancients had done this, and he believed the art might be revived.

Following came various enthusiasts, such as Raymond, the ephemeral (died 1315), who flared like a meteor into his brief, brilliant career; Arnold de Villanova (1240), a celebrated adept, whose books were burned by the Inquisition on account of the heresy they taught; Nicholas Flamel, of France (1350), loved by the people for his charities, the wonder of his age (our age will not admit the facts) on account of the vast fortune he amassed without visible means or income, outside of alchemical lore; Johannes de Rupecissus, a man of such remarkable daring that he even (1357) reprimanded Pope Innocent VI., for which he was promptly imprisoned; Basil Valentine (1410) he author of many works, and the man who introduced antimony (antimonachos) into medicine; Isaac of Holland who, with his son, skillfully made artificial gems that could not be distinguished from the natural; Bernard Trevison (born 1406), who spent \$30,000 in the study of alchemy, out of much of which he was cheated by cruel alchemic pretenders, for even in that day there were plenty of rogues to counterfeit a good thing. Under stress of his strong alchemic convictions, Thomas Dalton placed his head on the block by order of the virtuous (?) and conservative Thomas Herbert, 'squire to King Edward; Jacob Bohme (born 1575), the sweet, pure spirit of Christian mysticism, "The Voice of Heaven," than whom none stood higher in true alchemy, was a Christian, alchemist, theosophist; Robert Boyle, a conspicuous alchemical philosopher, in 1662 published his " Defense of the Doctrine touching the Spring and Weight of the Air," and illustrated his arguments by a series of ingenious and beautiful experiments, that stand today so high in the estimation of scientific men, that his remarks are copied verbatim by our highest authorities, and his apparatus is the best yet devised for the purpose. Boyle's " Law " was evolved and carefully defined fourteen years before Mariotte's " Discours de la Nature de l'Air " appeared, which did not, however, prevent French and German scientific men from giving the credit to Mariotte, and they still follow the false teacher who boldly pirated not only Boyle's ideas, but stole his apparatus.

Then appeared such men as Paracelsus (born 1493), the celebrated physician, who taught that occultism (esoteric philosophy) was superior to experimental chemistry in enlightening us concerning the transmutation of baser metals into gold and silver; and Gueppo Francisco (born 1627), who wrote a beautiful treatise on " Elementary Spirits," which was copied without credit by Comte de Gabalis. It seems incredible that the man (Gueppo Francisco), whose sweet spirit-thoughts are revived and breathe anew in " Undine " and " The Rape of the Lock," should have been thrown into a prison to perish as a Hermetic follower; and this should teach us not to question the earnestness of those who left us as a legacy the beauty and truth so abundantly found in pure alchemy.

These and many others, cotemporaries, some conspicuous, and others whose names do not shine in written history, contributed incalculably to the grand aggregate of knowledge concerning the divine secret which enriched the world. Compare the benefits of Hermetic philosophy with the result of bloody wars ambitiously waged by self-exacting tyrants – tyrants whom history applauds as heroes, but whom we consider as butchers. Among the workers in alchemy are enumerated nobles, kings, and even popes. Pope John XXII was an alchemist, which accounts for his bull against impostors, promulgated in order that true students might not be discredited; and King Frederick of Naples sanctioned the art, and protected its devotees.

At last, Count Cagliostro, the chequered "Joseph Balsamo" (born 1743), who combined alchemy, magic, astrology, sleight of hand, mesmerism, Free Masonry, and remarkable personal accomplishments, that altogether have never since been equalled, burst upon the world. Focusing the gaze of the church, kings, and the commons upon himself, in many respects the most audacious pretender that history records, he raised the

Hermetic art to a dazzling height, and finally buried it in a blaze of splendor as he passed from existence beneath a mantle of shame. As a meteor streams into view from out the star mists of space, and in coruscating glory sinks into the sea, Cagliostro blazed into the sky of the eighteenth century, from the nebula of alchemistic speculation, and extinguished both himself and his science in the light of the rising sun of materialism. Cagliostro the visionary, the poet, the inspired, the erratic comet in the universe of intellect, perished in prison as a mountebank, and then the plodding chemist of today, with his tedious mechanical methods, and cold, unresponsive, materialistic dogmas, arose from the ashes, and sprang into prominence.

Read the story backward, and you shall see that in alchemy we behold the beginning of all the sciences of today; alchemy is the cradle that rocked them. Fostered with necromancy, astrology, occultism, and all the progeny of mystic dreamery, the infant sciences struggled for existence through the dark ages, in care of the once persecuted and now traducers alchemist. The world owes a monument today more to Hermetic heroes, than to all other influences and instrumentalities, religion excepted, combined, for our present civilization is largely a legacy from the alchemist. Begin with Hermes Trismegistus, and close with Joseph Balsanto, and if you are inclined towards science, do not criticize too severely their verbal logorrhea, and their romanticism, for your science is treading backward; it will encroach upon their field again, and you may have to unsay your words of hasty censure. These men fulfilled their mission, and did it well. If they told more than men now think they knew, they also knew more than they told, and more than modern philosophy embraces. They could not live to see all the future they eagerly hoped for, but they started a future for mankind that will far exceed in sweetness and light the most entrancing visions of their most imaginative dreamers. They spoke of the existence of a "red elixir," and while they wrote, the barbarous world about them ran red with blood — blood of the pure in heart, blood of the saints, blood of a Savior; and their allegory and wisdom formulae were recorded in blood of their own sacrifices. They dreamed of a "white elixir" that is yet to bless mankind, and a brighter day for man, a period of peace, happiness, long life, contentment, good will and brotherly love, and in the name of this "white elixir" they directed the world towards a vision of divine light. Even pure gold, as they told the materialistic world who worship gold, was penetrated and whelmed by this subtle, superlatively refined spirit of matter. Is not the day of the allegorical "white elixir" nearly at hand? Would that it were!

I say to you now, brothers of the eighteenth century, as one speaking by authority to you, cease (some of you) to study this entrancing past, look to the future by grasping the present, cast aside (some of you) the alchemical lore of other days, give up your loved allegories; it is a duty, you must relinquish them. There is a richer field. Do not delay. Unlock this mystic door that stands hinged and ready, waiting the touch of men who can interpret the talisman; place before mankind the knowledge that lies behind its rivets. In the secret lodges that have preserved the wisdom of the days of Enoch and Elias of Egypt, who propagated the Egyptian Order, a branch of your ancient brotherhood, is to be found concealed much knowledge that should now be spread before the world, and added to the treasures of our circle of adepts. This cabalistic wisdom is not recorded in books nor in manuscript, but has been purposely preserved from the uninitiated, in the unreadable brains of unresponsive men. Those who are selected to act as carriers thereof, are, as a rule, like dumb water bearers, or the dead sheet of paper that mechanically preserves an inspiration derived from minds unseen: they serve a purpose as a child mechanically commits to memory a black verse to repeat to others, who in turn commit to repeat again — neither of them speaking understandingly. Search ye these hidden paths, for the day of mental liberation approaches, and publish to the world all that is locked within the doors of that antiquated organization. The world is nearly ripe for the wisdom faculty, and men are ready to unravel the golden threads that mystic wisdom has woven in her web of secret

knowledge. Look for knowledge where I have indicated, and to gain it do not hesitate to swear allegiance to this sacred order, for so you must do to gain entrance to the brotherhood, and then you must act what men will call the traitor. You will, however, be doing a sacred duty, for the world will profit, humanity will be the gainer, "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Man," will be closer to mankind, and at last, when the sign appears, the "white elixir" will no longer be allegorical; it will become a reality. In the name of the Great Mystic Vase-Man, go thou into these lodges, learn of their secrets, and spread their treasures before those who can interpret them.

Here this letter ended. It was evident that the writer referred to a secret society into which I could probably enter; and taking the advice, I did not hesitate, but applied at once for membership. I determined, regardless of consequence, to follow the suggestion of the unknown writer, and by so doing, for I accepted their pledges, I invited my destiny.

My guest of the massive forehead paused for a moment, stroked his long, white beard, and then, after casting an inquiring glance on me, asked, "Shall I read on?"

"Yes," I replied, and The-Man-Who-Did-It, proceeded as follows...

CHAPTER V.

THE WRITING OF MY CONFESSION.

Having become a member of the Secret Society as directed by the writer of the letter I have just read, and having obtained the secrets hinted at in the mystic directions, my next desire was to find a secluded spot where, without interruption, I could prepare for publication what I had gathered surreptitiously in the lodges of the fraternity I designed to betray. This I entitled "My Confession." Alas! Why did my evil genius prompt me to write it? Why did not some kind angel withhold my hand from the rash and wicked deed? All I can urge in defense or palliation is that I was infatuated by the fatal words of the letter, "You must act what men will call the traitor, but humanity will be the gainer."

In a section of the state in which I resided, a certain creek forms the boundary line between two townships, and also between two counties. Crossing this creek, a much traveled road stretches east and west, uniting the extremes of the great state. Two villages on this road, about four miles apart, situated on opposite sides of the creek, also present themselves to my memory, and midway between them, on the north side of the road, was a substantial farm house. In going west from the easternmost of these villages, the traveler begins to descend from the very center of the town. In no place is the grade steep, as the road lies between the spurs of the hill abutting upon the valley that feeds the creek I have mentioned. Having reached the valley, the road winds a short distance to the right, then turning to the left, crosses the stream, and immediately begins to climb the western hill; here the ascent is more difficult, for the road lies diagonally over the edge of the hill. A mile of travel, as I recall the scene, sometimes up a steep, and again among rich, level farm lands, and then on the very height, close to the road, within a few feet of it, appears the square structure which was, at the time I mention, known as the Stone Tavern. On the opposite side of the road were located extensive stables, and a grain barn. In the northeast chamber of that stone building, during a summer in the twenties, I wrote for publication the description of the mystic work that my oath should have made forever a secret, a sacred trust. I am the man who wantonly committed the deplorable act. Under the infatuation of that alchemical manuscript, I strove to show the world that I could and would do that which might never benefit me in the least, but might serve humanity. It was fate. I was not a bad man, neither malignity, avarice, nor ambition forming a part of my nature. I was a close student, of a rather retiring disposition, a stonemason by trade, careless

and indifferent to public honors, and so thriftless that many trifling neighborhood debts had accumulated against me.

What I have reluctantly told, for I am forbidden to give the names of the localities, comprises an abstract of part of the record of my early life, and will introduce the extraordinary narrative which follows. That I have spoken the truth, and in no manner overdrawn, will be silently evidenced by hundreds of brethren, both of the occult society and the fraternal brotherhood, with which I united, who can (if they will) testify to the accuracy of the narrative. They know the story of my crime and disgrace; only I and God know the full retribution that followed.



"I WROTE FOR PUBLICATION THE DESCRIPTION OF THE MYSTIC WORK."

CHAPTER VI.

KIDNAPPED.

The events just narrated occurred in the prime of my life, and are partly matters of publicity. My attempted breach of faith in the way of disclosing their secrets was naturally infamous in the eyes of my society brethren, who endeavored to prevail upon me to relent of my design which, after writing my "Confession," I made no endeavor to conceal. Their importunities and threatening had generally been resisted, however, and with an obliquity that cannot be easily explained, I persisted in my unreasonable design. I was blessed as a husband and father, but neither the thought of home, wife, nor child, checked me in my inexplicable course. I was certainly irresponsible, perhaps a monomaniac, and yet in the subject in which I was absorbed, I preserved my mental equipoise, and knowingly followed a course that finally brought me into the deepest slough of trouble, and lost to me forever all that man loves most dearly. An overruling spirit, perhaps the shade of one of the old alchemists, possessed me, and in the face of obstacles that would have caused most men to reflect, and retrace their steps, I madly rushed onward. The influence that impelled me, whatever it may have been, was irresistible. I apparently acted the part of agent, subject to an ever-present master essence, and under this dominating spirit or demon my mind was powerless in its subjection. My soul was driven imperiously by that impelling and indescribable something, and was as passive and irresponsible as lycopodium that is borne onward in a steady current of air. Methods were vainly sought by those who loved me, brethren of the lodge, and others who endeavored to induce me to change my headstrong purpose, but I could neither accept their counsels nor heed their forebodings. Summons by law were served on me in order to disconcert me, and my numerous small debts became the pretext for legal warrants, until at last all my papers (excepting my "Confession"), and my person also, were seized, upon an execution served by a constable. Minor claims were quickly satisfied, but when I regained my liberty, the aggression continued. Even arson was resorted to, and the printing office that held my manuscript was fired one night, that the obnoxious revelation which I persisted in putting into print, might be destroyed. Finally I found myself separated by process of law from home and friends, an inmate of a jail. My opponents, as I now came to consider them, had confined me in prison for a debt of only two dollars, a sufficient amount at that time, in that state, for my incarceration. Smarting under the humiliation, my spirit became still more rebellious, and I now, perhaps justly, came to view

myself as a martyr. It had been at first asserted that I had stolen a shirt, but I was not afraid of any penalty that could be laid on me for this trumped-up charge, believing that the imputation and the arrest would be shown to be designed as willful oppression. Therefore it was, that when this contemptible arraignment had been swept aside, and I was freed before a justice of the Peace, I experienced more than a little surprise at a re-arrest, and at finding myself again thrown into jail. I knew that it had been decreed by my brethren that I must retract and destroy my "Confession," and this fact made me the more determined to prevent its destruction, and I persisted sullenly in pursuing my course. On the evening of August 12th, 1826, my jailer's wife informed me that the debt for which I had been incarcerated had been paid by unknown "friends," and that I could depart; and I accepted the statement without question. Upon my stepping from the door of the jail, however, my arms were firmly grasped by two persons, one on each side of me, and before I could



"MY ARMS WERE FIRMLY GRASPED BY TWO PERSONS."

realize the fact that I was being kidnapped, I was thrust into a closed coach, which immediately rolled away, but not until I made an outcry which, if heard by anyone, was unheeded.

"For your own sake, be quiet," said one of my companions in confinement, for the carriage was draped to exclude the light, and was as dark as a dungeon. My spirit rebelled. I felt that I was on the brink of a

remarkable, perhaps perilous experience, and I indignantly replied by asking:

"What have I done that you should presume forcibly to imprison me? Am I not a freeman of America?"

"What have you done?" he answered. "Have you not bound yourself by a series of vows that are sacred and should be inviolable, and have you not broken them as no other man has done before you? Have you not betrayed your trust, and merited a severe judgment? Did you not voluntarily ask admission into our ancient brotherhood, and in good faith were you not initiated into our sacred mysteries? Did you not obligate yourself before man, and on your sacred honor promise to preserve our secrets?"

"I did," I replied, "but previously I had sworn before a higher tribunal to scatter this precious wisdom to the world."

"Yes," he said, "and you know full well the depth of the self-sought solemn oath that you took with us – more solemn than that prescribed by any open court on earth."

"This I do not deny," I said, "and yet I am glad that I accomplished my object, even though you have now, as is evident, the power to pronounce my sentence."

"You should look for the death sentence," was the reply, "but it has been ordained instead that you are to be given a lengthened life. You should expect bodily destruction; but on the contrary, you will pass on in consciousness of earth and earthly concerns when we are gone. Your name will be known to all lands, and yet from this time you will be unknown. For the welfare of future humanity, you will be thrust to a height in our order that will annihilate you as a mortal being, and yet you will exist, suspended between life and death, and in that intermediate state will know that you exist. You have, as you confess, merited a severe punishment, but we can only punish in accordance with an unwritten law, that instructs the person punished, and elevates the human race in consequence. You stand alone among mortals in that you have openly attempted to give broadly to those who have not earned it, our most sacred property, a property that did not belong to you, property that you have only been permitted to handle, that has been handed from man to man from before the time of Solomon, and which belongs to no one man, and will continue to pass in this way from one to another, as a hallowed trust, until there are no men, as men now exist, to receive it. You will soon go into the shadows of darkness, and will learn many of the mysteries of life, the undeveloped mysteries that are withheld from your fellows, but which you, who have been so presumptuous and anxious for

knowledge, are destined to possess and solve. You will find secrets that man, as man is now constituted, cannot yet discover, and yet which the future man must gain and be instructed in. As you have sowed, so shall you reap. You wished to become a distributor of knowledge; you shall now by bodily trial and mental suffering obtain unsought knowledge to distribute, and in time to come you will be commanded to make your discoveries known. As your pathway is surely laid out, so must you walk. It is ordained; to rebel is useless."

"Who has pronounced this sentence?" I asked.

"A judge, neither of heaven nor of earth."

"You speak in enigmas."

"No, I speak openly, and the truth. Our brotherhood is linked with the past and clasps hands with the antediluvians. The flood scattered the races of earth, but did not disturb our secrets. The great love of wisdom has from generation to generation led selected members of our organization to depths of study that our open work does not touch upon, and behind our highest officers there stand, in the occult shades between the here and the hereafter, unknown and unseen agents who are initiated into secrets above and beyond those known to the ordinary craft. Those who are introduced into these inner recesses acquire superhuman conceptions, and do not give an open sign of fellowship; they need no talisman. They walk our streets possessed of powers unknown to men, they concern themselves as mortals in the affairs of men, and even their brethren of the initiated, open order are unaware of their exalted condition. The means by which they have been instructed, their several individualities as well, have been concealed, because publicity would destroy their value, and injure humanity's cause."

Silence followed these vague disclosures, and the carriage rolled on. I was mystified and alarmed, and yet I knew that, whatever might be the end of this nocturnal ride, I had invited it – yes, merited it – and I steeled myself to hear the sentence of my judges, in whose hands I was powerless. The persons on the seat opposite me continued their conversation in low tones, audible only to themselves. An individual by my side neither moved nor spoke. There were four of us in the carriage, as I learned intuitively, although we were surrounded by utter darkness. At length I addressed the companion beside me, for the silence was unbearable. Friend or enemy though he might be, anything rather than this long silence. "How long shall we continue in this carriage?"

He made no reply.

After a time I again spoke.

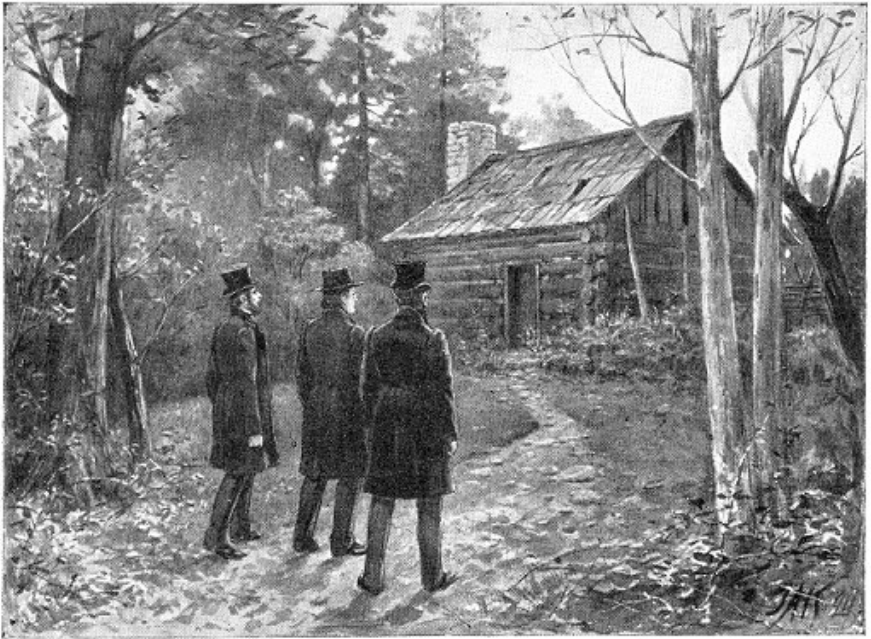
"Can you not tell me, comrade, how long our journey will last? When shall we reach our destination?"

Silence only.

Putting out my hand, I ventured to touch my mate, and found that he was tightly strapped – bound upright to the seat and the back of the carriage. Leather thongs held him firmly in position; and as I pondered over the mystery, I thought to myself, if I make a disturbance, they will not hesitate to manacle me as securely. My custodians seemed, however, not to exercise a guard over me, and yet I felt that they were certain of my inability to escape. If the man on the seat was a prisoner, why was he so reticent? Why did he not answer my questions? I came to the conclusion that he must be gagged as well as bound. Then I determined to find out if this were so. I began to realize more forcibly that a terrible sentence must have been meted me, and I half hoped that I could get from my partner in captivity some information regarding our destination. Sliding my hand cautiously along his chest, and under his chin, I intended to remove the gag from his mouth, when I felt my flesh creep, for it came in contact with the cold, rigid flesh of a corpse. The man was dead, and stiff.

The shock unnerved me. I had begun to experience the results of a severe mental strain, partly induced by the recent imprisonment and extended previous persecution, and partly by the mysterious significance of the language in which I had recently been addressed. The sentence, "You will now go into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and learn the mysteries of life," kept ringing through my head, and even then I sat beside a corpse. After this discovery I remained for a time in a semi stupor, in a state of profound dejection. How long I cannot say. Then I experienced an inexplicable change, such as I imagine comes over a condemned man without hope of reprieve, and I became unconcerned as a man might who had accepted his destiny, and stoically determined to await it. Perhaps moments passed, it may have been hours, and then indifference gave place to reviving curiosity. I realized that I could die only once, and I coolly and complacently revolved the matter, speculating over my possible fate. As I look back on the night in which I rode beside that dead man, facing the mysterious agents of an all-powerful judge, I marvel over a mental condition that permitted me finally to rest in peace, and slumber in unconcern. So I did, however, and after a period, the length of which I am not able to estimate, I awoke, and soon thereafter the carriage stopped, and our horses were changed, after which our journey was resumed, to continue hour after hour, and at last I slept again, leaning back in the corner. Suddenly I was violently shaken from slumber, and commanded to alight. It was in the gray of morning, and before I could realize what was happening, I was transferred by my captors to

another carriage, and the dead man also was rudely hustled along and thrust beside me, my companions speaking to him as though he were alive. Indeed, as I look back on these maneuvers, I perceive that, to all appearances, I was one of the abducting party, and our actions were really such as to induce an observer to believe that this dead man was an obstinate prisoner, and myself one of his official guards. The drivers of the carriages seemed to give us no attention, but they sat upright and unconcerned, and certainly neither of them interested himself in our transfer. The second carriage, like that other previously described, was securely closed, and our journey was continued. The darkness was as of a dungeon. It may have been days, I could not tell anything about the passage of time; on and on we rode. Occasionally food and drink were handed in, but my captors held to their course, and at last I was taken from the vehicle, and transferred to a block-house. I had been carried rapidly and in secret a hundred or more miles, perhaps into another state, and probably all traces of my journey were effectually lost to outsiders. I was in the hands of men who implicitly obeyed the orders of their superiors, masters whom they had never seen and probably did not know. I needed no reminder of the fact that I had violated every sacred pledge



“I WAS TAKEN FROM THE VEHICLE, AND TRANSFERRED TO A BLOCK HOUSE”

voluntarily made to the craft, and now that they held me powerless,

I well knew that, whatever the punishment assigned, I had invited it and could not prevent its fulfillment. That it would be severe, I realized. That it would not be in accordance with ordinary human law, I accepted.

Had I not in secret, in my little room in that obscure Stone Tavern, engrossed on paper the mystic sentences that never before had been penned and were unknown excepting to persons initiated into our sacred mysteries? Had I not previously, in the most solemn manner, before these words had been imparted to my keeping, sworn to keep them inviolate and secret? And had I not deliberately broken that sacred vow and scattered the hoarded sentences broadcast? My part as a brother in this fraternal organization was that of the holder only of property that belonged to no man, that had been handed from one to another through the ages, sacredly cherished, and faithfully protected by men of many tongues, always considered a trust, a charge of honor, and never before betrayed. My crime was deep and dark. I shuddered.

"Come what may," I mused, reflecting over my perfidy, "I am ready for the penalty, and my fate is deserved; it cannot but be a righteous one."

The words of the occupant of the carriage occurred to me again and again - that one sentence kept ringing in my brain. I could not dismiss it: "You have been tried, convicted, and we are of those appointed to carry out the sentence of the judges."

The black silence of my lonely cell beat against me; I could feel the absence of sound, I could feel the dismal weight of nothingness, and in my solitude and distraction I cried out in anguish to the invisible judge: "I am ready for my sentence, whether it be death or imprisonment for life"; and still the further words of the occupant of the carriage passed through my mind: "You will now go into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and will learn the mysteries of Life."

Then I slept, to awake and sleep again. I kept no note of time; it may have been days or weeks, so far as my record could determine. An attendant came at intervals to minister to my wants, always masked completely, ever silent.

That I was not entirely separated from mankind, however, I felt assured; for occasionally sounds of voices came to me from without. Once I ventured to shout aloud, hoping to attract attention, but the persons whom I felt assured overheard me, paid no attention to my lonely cry. At last one night, my door opened abruptly, and three men entered.

"Do not fear," said their spokesman. "We aim to protect you. Keep still, and soon you will be a free man."

I consented quietly to accompany them, for to refuse would have been in vain; and I was conducted to a boat, which I found contained a corpse – the one I had journeyed with, I suppose. Embarking, we were silently rowed to the middle of the river, our course being diagonally from the shore, and the dead man was thrown overboard. Then our boat returned to the desolate bank.

Thrusting me into a carriage, that, on our return to the river bank we found awaiting us, my captors gave a signal, and I was driven away in the darkness, as silently as before, and our journey was continued I believe for fully two days. I was again confined in another log cabin, with but one door, and destitute of windows. My attendants were masked, they neither spoke to me as they day after day supplied my wants, nor did they give me the least information on any subject, until at last I abandoned all hope of ever regaining my liberty.



“THE DEAD MAN WAS THROWN OVERBOARD.”

CHAPTER VII.

A WILD NIGHT. — I AM PREMATURELY AGED.

In the depths of night I was awakened by a noise made by the opening of a door, and one by one seven masked figures silently stalked into my prison. Each bore a lighted torch, and they passed me as I lay on the floor in my clothes (for I had no bedding), and ranged themselves in a line. I arose, and seated myself as directed, upon the only stool in the room. Swinging into a semi-circle, the weird line wound about me, and from the one seat on which I rested in the center of the room, I gazed successively upon seven pairs of gleaming eyes, each pair directed at myself. As I turned from one to another, the black cowl of each deepened into darkness and grew more hideous.

"Men or devils," I cried, "do your worst! Make me, if such is your will, as that sunken corpse beside which I was once seated, but cease your persecutions. I have atoned for my indiscretions a thousand fold, and this suspense is unbearable. I demand to know what is to be my doom, and I desire its fulfillment."

Then one stepped forward, facing me squarely — the others closed together around him and me. Raising his forefinger, he pointed it close to my face, and as his sharp eyes glittered from behind the black mask, piercing through me, he slowly said: "Why do you not say brothers?"

"Horrible," I rejoined. "Stop this mockery. Have I not suffered enough from your persecutions to make me reject that word as applied to yourselves? You can but murder. Do your duty to your unseen masters, and end this prolonged torture!"

"Brother," said the spokesman, "you well know that the sacred rules of our order will not permit us to murder any human being. We exist to benefit humanity, to lead the wayward back across the burning desert into the pathways of the righteous - not to destroy or persecute a brother. Ours is an eleemosynary institution, instructing its members, helping them to seek happiness. You are now expiating the crime you have committed, and the good in your spirit rightfully revolts against the bad, for in divulging to the world our mystic signs and brotherly greetings, you have sinned against yourself more than against others. The sting of conscience, the biting of remorse punish you."

"True," I cried, as the full significance of what he said burst upon me, "too true; but I bitterly repent my treachery. Others can never know how my soul is harrowed by the recollection of the enormity of that breach of

confidence. In spite of my open, careless, or defiant bearing, my heart is humble, and my spirit cries out for mercy. By night and by day I have in secret cursed myself for heeding an unhallowed mandate, and I have long looked forward to the judgment that I should suffer for my perfidy, for I have appreciated that the day of reckoning would surely appear. I do not rebel, and I recall my wild language; I recant my Confession, I renounce myself! I say to you in all sincerity, brothers, do your duty, only I beg of you to slay me at once, and end my suspense. I await my doom. What might it be?"

Grasping my hand, the leader said, "You are ready as a member of our order. We can now judge you as we have been commanded. Had you persisted in calling us devils in your mistaken frenzy, we should have been forced to reason with you until you returned again to us, and became one of us. Our judgment is for you only. The world must not now know its nature, at least so far as we are concerned. Those you see here, are not your judges; we are agents sent to labor with you, to draw you back into our ranks, to bring you into a condition that will enable you to carry out the sentence that you have drawn upon yourself, for you must be your own dooms man. In the first place, we are directed to gain your voluntary consent to leave this locality. You can no longer take part in affairs that interested you before. To the people of this state, and to your home, and kindred, you must become a stranger for all time. Do you consent?"

"Yes," I answered. For I knew that I must acquiesce.

"In the next place, you must help us to remove all traces of your identity. You must, so far as the world is concerned, leave your body where you have apparently been drowned, for a world's benefit, a harmless mockery to deceive the people, and also to make an example for others that are weak. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Then remove your clothing, and replace it with this suit."

I obeyed, and changed my garments, receiving others in return. One of the party then, taking from beneath his gown a box containing several bottles of liquids, proceeded artfully to mix and compound them, and then to paint my face with the combination, which after being mixed, formed a clear solution.

"Do not fear to wash," said the spokesman. "The effect of this lotion is permanent enough to stay until you are well out of this state."

I passed my hand over my face; it was drawn into wrinkles as a film of gelatin might have been shriveled under the influence of a strong tannin or astringent liquid. Beneath my fingers it felt like the furrowed face of a

very old man, but I experienced no pain. I vainly tried to smooth the wrinkles. Immediately upon removing the pressure of my hand, the furrows reappeared.

Next, another applied a colorless liquid freely to my hair and beard. He rubbed it well, and afterward wiped it dry with a towel. A mirror was thrust beneath my gaze. I started back, the transformation was complete. My appearance had entirely changed. My face had become aged and wrinkled, my hair as white as snow.

I cried aloud in amazement, "Am I sane - is this a dream?"

"It is not a dream; but, under methods that are in exact accordance with natural physiological laws, we have been enabled to transform your appearance from that of one in the prime of manhood into the semblance of an old man, and that, too, without impairment of your vitality." Another of the masked men opened a curious little casket that I perceived was surmounted by an alembic and other alchemical figures, and embossed with an Oriental design. He drew from it a lamp which he lighted with a taper; the flame that resulted, first pale blue – then yellow, next violet and finally red, seemed to become more weird and ghastly with each mutation, as I gazed spellbound upon its fantastic changes. Then, after these transformations, it burned steadily with the final strange blood-red hue, and he now held over the blaze a tiny cup, which, in a few moments, commenced to sputter and then smoked, exhaling a curious, epipolic, semi-luminous vapor. I was commanded to inhale the vapor. I hesitated; the thought rushed upon me, "Now I am another person, so cleverly disguised that even my own friends would perhaps not know me. This vapor is designed to suffocate me, and my body, if found, will not now be known and could not be identified when discovered."

"Do not fear," said the spokesman, as if divining my thought. "There is no danger," and at once I realized, by quick reasoning, that if my death were demanded, my body might long since have been easily destroyed, and all this ceremony would have been unnecessary.

I hesitated no longer, but drew into my lungs the vapor that arose from the mysterious cup, freely expanding my chest several times, and then asked, "Is not that enough?" Despair now overcame me. My voice, no longer the full, strong tone of a man in middle life and perfect strength, squeaked and quavered, as if impaired by palsy. I had seen my image in a mirror, an old man with wrinkled face and white hair; I now heard myself speak with the voice of an octogenarian.



“A MIRROR WAS THRUST BENEATH MY GAZE.”

If you should now stand in the streets of your village home, and cry to your former friends, “It is I for whom you seek,” they would smile, and call you a madman. “Know,” continued the voice, “that there is in Eastern metaphysical lore, more true philosophy than is embodied in the sciences of today, and that by means of the ramifications of our order it becomes possible, when necessary, for him who stands beyond the inner and upper Worshipful Master, to draw these treasures from the occult Wisdom possessions of Oriental sages who forget nothing and lose nothing. Have we not been permitted to do his bidding well?”

“Yes,” I squeaked. “and I wish that you had done it better. I would that I were dead.”

“When the time comes, if necessary, your dead body will be fished from the water,” was the reply. “Witnesses have seen the drowning tragedy and will surely identify the corpse.”

“And may I go? Am I free now?” I asked.

“Ah,” said he, “that is not for us to say. Our part of the work is fulfilled, and we can return to our native lands, and resume again our several studies. So far as we are concerned, you are free, but we have been

directed to pass you over to the keeping of others who will carry, forward this judgment – there is another step."

"Tell me," I cried, once more desponding. "Tell me the full extent of my sentence."

"That is not known to us, and probably is not known to any one man. So far as the members of our order are concerned, you have now vanished. When you leave our sight this night, we will also separate from one another, we shall know no more of you and your future than will those of our working order who live in this section of the country. We have no personal acquaintance with the guide that has been selected to conduct you farther, and who will appear in due season, and we make no surmise concerning the result of your journey, only we know that you will not be killed, for you have a work to perform, and will continue to exist long after others of your age are dead. Farewell, brother; we have discharged our duty, and by your consent, now we must return to our various pursuits. In a short time all evidence of your unfortunate mistake, the crime committed by you in printing our sacred charges, will have vanished. Even now, emissaries are ordained to collect and destroy the written record that tells of your weakness, and with the destruction of that testimony, for every copy will surely be annihilated, and with your disappearance from among men, for this also is to follow, our responsibility for you will cease."

Each of the seven men advanced and grasped my hand, giving me the grip of brotherhood, and then, without a word, they severally and silently departed into the outer darkness. As the last man disappeared, a figure entered the door, clad and masked exactly like those who had gone. He removed the long black gown in which he was enveloped, threw the mask from his face and stood before me, a slender, graceful, bright looking young man. By the light of the candle I saw him distinctly, and was at once struck by his amiable, cheerful countenance, and my heart bounded with a sudden hope. I had temporarily forgotten the transformation that had been made in my person, which, altogether painless, had left no physical sensation, and thought of myself as I had formerly existed. My soul was still my own, I imagined. My blood seemed unchanged, and must flow as rapidly as before; my strength was unaltered, indeed I was in self-consciousness still in the prime of life.

"Excuse me, Father," said the stranger, "but my services have been sought as a guide for the first part of a journey that I am informed you intend to take."

His voice was mild and pleasant, his bearing respectful, but the peculiar manner in which he spoke convinced me that he knew that, as a

guide, he must conduct me to some previously designated spot, and that he purposed to do so was evident, with or without my consent.

"Why do you call me Father?" I attempted to say, but as the first few words escaped my lips, the recollection of the events of the night rushed upon me, for instead of my own, I recognized the piping voice of the old man I had now become, and my tongue faltered. The sentence was unspoken.

"You would ask me why I called you Father, I perceive; well, because I am directed to be a son to you, to care for your wants, to make your journey as easy and pleasant as possible, to guide you quietly and carefully to the point that will next prove of interest to you."

I stood before him a free man, in the prime of life, full of energy, and this stripling alone interposed between myself and liberty. Should I permit the slender youth to carry me away as a prisoner? Would it not be best to thrust him aside, if necessary, crush him to the earth? Go forth in my freedom? Yet I hesitated, for he might have friends outside; probably he was not alone.

"There are no companions near us," said he, reading my mind, "and, as I do not seem formidable, it is natural you should weigh in your mind the probabilities of escape, but you cannot evade your destiny, and you must not attempt to deny yourself the pleasure of my company. You must leave this locality and leave without a regret. In order that you may acquiesce willingly, I propose that together we return to your former home, which you will, however, find no longer to be a home. I will accompany you as a companion, as your son. You may speak, with one exception, to whomever you care to address - may call on any of your old associates, may assert openly who you are or whatever and whoever you please to represent yourself - only I must also have the privilege of joining in the conversation."

"Agreed," I cried, and extended my hand. He grasped it, and then by the light of the candle, I saw a peculiar expression flit over his face, as he added:

"To one person only, as I have said, and you have promised, you must not speak - your wife."

I bowed my head, and a flood of sorrowful reflections swept over me. Of all the world the one whom I longed to meet, to clasp in my arms, to counsel in my distress, was the wife of my bosom, and I begged him to withdraw his cruel injunction.

"You should have thought of her before; now it is too late. To permit you to meet, and speak with her would be dangerous; she might pierce your disguise. Of all others there is no fear."

"Must I go with you into an unknown future without a farewell kiss from my little child or from my babe scarce three months old?"

"It has been so ordained."

I threw myself on the floor and moaned, "This is too hard, too hard for human heart to bear. Life has no charm to a man who is thrust from all he holds most dear - home, friends, and family."

"The men who relinquish such pleasures and such comforts are those who do the greatest good to humanity," said the youth. "The multitude exist to propagate the race, as animal progenitors of the multitudes that are to follow, and the exceptional philanthropist is he who denies himself material bliss and punishes himself in order to work out a problem such as it has been ordained that you are to solve. Do not argue further. The line is marked, and you must walk direct."

Into the blaze of the old fireplace of that log house, for although it was autumn, the night was chilly; he then cast his black robe and false face, and, as they turned to ashes, the last evidences of the vivid acts through which I had passed, were destroyed. As I lay moaning in my utter misery, I tried to reason with myself that what I experienced was all a hallucination. I dozed, and awoke startled, half conscious only, as one in a nightmare; I said to, myself, "A dream! a dream!" and slept again.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LESSON IN MIND STUDY.

The door of the cabin was open when I awoke, the sun shone brightly, and my friend, apparently happy and unconcerned, said, "Father, we must soon start on our journey. I have taken advantage of your refreshing sleep and have engaged breakfast at yonder farmhouse; our meal awaits us."

I arose, washed my wrinkled face, combed my white hair, and shuddered as I saw in a pocket mirror the reflection of my figure, an aged, apparently decrepit man.

"Do not be disturbed at your feeble condition," said my companion. "Your infirmities are not real. Few men have ever been permitted to drink of the richness of the revelations that await you; and in view of these expectations the fact that you are prematurely aged in appearance should not unnerve you. Be of good heart, and when you say the word, we will start on our journey, which will begin as soon as you have said farewell to former friends and acquaintances."

I made no reply, but silently accompanied him, for my thoughts were in the past, and my reflections were far from pleasant.

We reached the farmhouse, and as I observed the care and attention extended me by the pleasant-faced housewife, I realized that, in one respect at least, old age brought its compensation. After breakfast a man appeared from the farmer's barn, driving a team of horses attached to an open spring-wagon which, in obedience to the request of my guide, I entered, accompanied by my young friend, who directed that we be driven toward the village from which I had been abducted. He seemed to know my past life as I knew it. He asked me to select those of my friends to whom I first wished to bid farewell, even mentioning their names. He seemed all that a patient, faithful son could be, and I began to wonder at his audacity, even as much as I admired his self-confidence.

As we journeyed onward we engaged in familiar talk. We sat together on the back seat of the open spring-wagon, in full sight of passers, no attempt being made to conceal my person. Thus we traveled for two days, and on our course we passed through a large city with which I was acquainted, a city that my abductors had previously carried me through and beyond. I found that my "son" possessed fine conversational power and a rich mine of information, and he became increasingly interesting as he drew from his fund of knowledge, and poured into my listening ears an entrancing strain of historical and metaphysical information. Never at a

loss for a word or an idea, he appeared to discern my cogitations, and as my mind wandered in this or that direction he fell into the channel of my fancies, and answered my unspoken thoughts, my questions or meditations, as pertinently as though I had spoken them.

His accomplishments, for the methods of his perception were unaccompanied by any endeavor to draw me into word expression, made me aware at least, that, in him, I had to deal with a man unquestionably possessed of more than ordinary intellect and education, and as this conviction entered my mind he changed his subject and promptly answered the silent inquiry, speaking as follows:

"Have you not sometimes felt that in yourself there may exist undeveloped senses that await an awakening touch to open to yourself a new world, senses that may be fully developed, but which saturate each other and neutralize themselves; quiescent, closed circles which you cannot reach, satisfied circuits slumbering within your body and that defy your efforts to utilize them? In your dreams have you not seen sights that words are inadequate to describe, that your faculties cannot retain in waking moments, and which dissolve into intangible nothingness, leaving only a vague, shadowy outline as the mind quickens, or rather when the senses that possess you in sleep relinquish the body to the returning vital functions and spirit? This unconscious conception of other planes, a beyond or betwixt, that is neither mental nor material, neither here nor located elsewhere, belongs to humanity in general, and is made evident from the insatiable desire of men to pry into phenomena latent or recondite that offer no apparent return to humanity. This desire has given men the knowledge they now possess of the sciences; sciences yet in their infancy. Study in this direction is, at present, altogether of the material plane, but in time to come, men will gain control of outlying senses which will enable them to step from the seen into the consideration of matter or force that is now subtle and evasive, which must be accomplished day means of the latent faculties that I have indicated. There will be an unconscious development of new mind-forces in the student of nature as the rudiments of these so-called sciences are elaborated. Step by step, as the ages pass, the faculties of men will, under progressive series of evolutions, imperceptibly pass into higher phases until that which is even now possible with some individuals of the purified esoteric school, but which would seem miraculous if practiced openly at this day, will prove feasible to humanity generally and be found in exact accord with natural laws. The conversational method of men, whereby communion between human beings is carried on by disturbing the air by means of vocal organs so as to produce mechanical pulsations of that medium, is crude in the extreme. Mind craves to meet mind, but cannot yet thrust matter aside,

and in order to communicate one with another, the impression one mind wishes to convey to another must be first made on the brain matter that accompanies it, which in turn influences the organs of speech, inducing a disturbance of the air by the motions of the vocal organs, which, by undulations that reach to another being, act on his ear, and secondarily on the earthly matter of his brain, and finally by this roundabout course, impress the second being's mind. In this transmission of motions there is great waste of energy and loss of time, but such methods are a necessity of the present slow, much-obstructed method of communication.

There is, in cultivated man, an innate craving for something more facile, and often a partly developed conception, spectral and vague, appears, and the being feels that there may be for mortals a richer, brighter life, a higher earthly existence that science does not now indicate. Such intimation of a deeper play of faculties is now most vivid with men during the perfect loss of mental self as experienced in dreams, which as yet man in the wakened state cannot grasp, and which fade as he awakens. As mental sciences are developed, investigators will find that the medium known as air is unnecessary as a means of conveying mind conceptions from one person to another; that material sounds and word pulsations are cumbersome; that thought force unexpressed may be used to accomplish more than speech can do, and that physical exertions as exemplified in motion of matter such as I have described will be unnecessary for mental communication. As door after door in these directions shall open before men, mystery after mystery will be disclosed, and vanish as mysteries to reappear as simple facts. Phenomena that are impossible and unrevealed to the scientist of today will be familiar to the coming multitude, and at last, as by degrees, clearer knowledge is evolved, the vocal language of men will disappear, and humanity, regardless of nationality, will, in silence and even in darkness, converse eloquently together in mind language. That which is now esoteric will become exoteric. Then mind will meet mind as my mind now impinges on your own, and, in reply to your unuttered question regarding my apparently unaccountable powers of perception, I say they are perfectly natural, but while I can read your thoughts, because of the fact that you cannot reciprocate in this direction, I must use my voice to impress your mind. You will know more of this, however, at a future day, for it has been ordained that you are to be educated with an object that is now concealed. At present you are interested mainly in the affairs of life as you know them, and cannot enter into these purer spheres. We are approaching one of your former friends, and it may be your pleasure to ask him some questions and to bid him farewell."

CHAPTER IX.

I CANNOT ESTABLISH MY IDENTITY

In surprise I perceived coming towards us a light spring wagon, in which rode one of my old acquaintances. Pleasure at the discovery led me to raise my hat, wave it around my head, and salute him even at the considerable distance that then separated us. I was annoyed at the look of curiosity that passed over his countenance, and not until the two vehicles had stopped side by side did it occur to me that I was unrecognized. I had been so engrossed in my companion's revelations, that I had forgotten my unfortunate physical condition.

I stretched out my hand as I leaned over almost into the other vehicle and earnestly said:

"Do you not know me? Only a short time ago we sat and conversed side by side."

A look of bewilderment came over his features. "I have never seen you that I can recall," he answered.

My spirit sank within me. Could it be possible that I was really so changed? I begged him to try and recall my former self, giving my name. "I am that person," I added; but he, with an expression of countenance that told as plainly as words could speak that he considered me deranged, touched his horse, and drove on.

My companion broke the awkward silence. "Do you know that I perceived between you two men an unconscious display of mind-language, especially evident on your part? You wished with all the earnestness of your soul to bring yourself as you formerly appeared, before that man, and when it proved impossible, without a word from him, his mind exhibited itself to your more earnest intellect, and you realized that he said to himself, "This person is a poor lunatic." He told you his thoughts in mind language, as plainly as words could have spoken, because the intense earnestness on your part quickened your perceptive faculties, but he could not see your mental state, and the pleading voice of the apparent stranger before him could not convince the unconcerned lethargic mind within him. I observed, however, in addition to what you noticed, that he is really looking for you. That is the object of his journey, and I learn that in every direction men are now spreading the news that you have been kidnapped and carried from your jail. However, we shall soon be in the village, and you will then hear more about yourself."

We rode in silence while I meditated on my remarkable situation. I could not resign myself without a struggle to my approaching fate, and I felt even yet a hope, although I seemed powerless in the hands of destiny. Could I not, by some method, convince my friends of my identity? I determined, forgetting the fact that my guide was even then reading my mind, that upon the next opportunity I would pursue a different course.

"It will not avail," my companion replied. "You must do one of two things: you will voluntarily go with me or you will involuntarily go to an insane asylum. Neither you nor I could by any method convince others that the obviously decrepit old man beside me was but yesterday hale, hearty, young, and strong. You will find that you cannot prove your identity, and as a friend, one of the great brotherhood to which you belong, a craft that deals charitably with all men and all problems, I advise you to accept the situation as soon as possible after it becomes evident to your mind that you are lost to former affiliations, and must henceforth be a stranger to the people whom you know. Take my advice, and cease to regret the past and cheerfully turn your thoughts to the future. On one side of you the lunatic asylum is open; on the other, a journey into an unknown region, beyond the confines of any known country. On the one hand, imprisonment and subjection, perhaps abuse and neglect; on the other, liberation of soul, evolution of faculty, and a grasping of superior knowledge that is denied most men – yes, withheld from all but a few persons of each generation, for only a few, unknown to the millions of this world's inhabitants, have passed over the road you are to travel. Just now you wished to meet your jailer of a few hours ago. It is a wise conclusion, and if he does not recognize you, I ask in sincerity, who will be likely to do so? We will drive straight to his home; but, here he comes."

Indeed, we were now in the village, where my miserable journey began, and perhaps by chance – it seems that it could not have been otherwise – my former jailer actually approached us.

"If you please," said my companion, "I will assist you to alight from the wagon, and you may privately converse with him."

Our wagon stopped, my guide opened a conversation with the jailer, saying that his friend wished to speak with him, and then assisted me to alight and retired a distance. I was vexed at my infirmities, which embarrassed me most exasperatingly, but which I knew were artificial. My body appeared unwilling although my spirit was anxious. But do what I could to control my actions; I involuntarily behaved like a decrepit old man. However, my mind was made up. This attempt to prove my personality should be the last. Failure now would prove the turning point, and I would go willingly with my companion upon the unknown journey if I could not convince the jailer of my identity.

Straightening myself before the expectant jailer, who, with a look of inquisitiveness, regarded me as a stranger, I asked if he knew my former self, giving my name.

"That I do," he replied, "and if I could find him at this moment I would be relieved of a load of worry."

"Would you surely know him if you met him?" I asked.

"Assuredly," he replied; "and if you bring tidings of his whereabouts, as your bearing indicates, speak, that I may rid myself of suspicion and suspense."

Calling the jailer by name, I asked him if my countenance did not remind him of the man he wished to find.

"Not at all."

"Listen, does not my voice resemble that of your escaped prisoner?"

"Not in the least."

With a violent effort I drew my form as straight as possible, and stood upright before him, with every facial muscle strained to its utmost, in a vain endeavor to bring my wrinkled countenance to its former smoothness, and with the energy that a drowning man might exert to grasp a passing object, I tried to control my voice, and preserve my identity by so doing, vehemently imploring him, begging him to listen to my story. "I am the man you seek; I am the prisoner who, a few days ago, stood in the prime of life before you. I have been spirited away from you by men who are leagued with occult forces, which extend forward among hidden mysteries, into forces which illuminate the present, and reach backward into the past unseen. These persons, by artful and damnable manipulations under the guidance of a power that has been evolved in the secrecy of past ages and transmitted only to a favored few, have changed the strong man you knew into the one apparently feeble, who now confronts you. Only a short period has passed since I was your unwilling captive, charged with debt, a trifling sum; and then, as your sullen prisoner, I longed for freedom. Now I plead before you, with all my soul, I beg of you to take me back to my cell. Seal your doors, and hold me again, for your dungeon will now be to me a paradise." I felt that I was becoming frantic, for with each word I realized that the jailer became more and more impatient and annoyed. I perceived that he believed me to be a lunatic. Pleadings and entreaties were of no avail, and my eagerness rapidly changed into despair until at last I cried: "If you will not believe my words, I will throw myself on the mercy of my young companion. I ask you to consider his testimony, and if he says that I am not what I

assert myself to be, I will leave my home and country, and go with him quietly into the unknown future."



"I AM THE MAN YOU SEEK."

He turned to depart, but I threw myself before him, and beckoned the young man who, up to this time, had stood aloof in respectful silence. He came forward, and addressing the jailer, called him by name, and corroborated my story. Yes, strange as it sounded to me, he reiterated the substance of my narrative as I had repeated it. "Now, you will believe it," I cried in ecstasy; "Now you need no longer question the facts that I have related."

Instead, however, of accepting the story of the witness, the jailer upbraided him:

"This is a preconceived arrangement to get me into ridicule or further trouble. You two have made up an incredible story that on its face is fit only to be told to men as crazy or designing as yourselves. This young man did not even overhear your conversation with me, and yet he repeats his lesson without a question from me as to what I wish to learn of him."

"He can see our minds," I cried in despair.

"Crazier than I should have believed from your countenance," the jailer replied. "Of all the improbable stories imaginable, you have attempted to inveigle me into accepting that which is most unreasonable. If you are leagued together intent on some swindling scheme, I give you warning now that I am in no mood for trifling. Go your way, and trouble me no more with this foolish scheming, which villainy or lunacy of some description must and trouble." He turned in anger and left us.

"It is as I predicted," said my companion. "You are lost to man. Those who know you best will turn from you soonest. I might become as wild as you are, in your interest, and only serve to make your story appear more extravagant. In human affairs men judge and act according to the limited knowledge at command of the multitude. Witnesses who tell the truth are often, in our courts of law, stunned, as you have been, by the decisions of a narrow-minded jury. Men sit on juries with little conception of the facts of the case that is brought before them; the men who manipulate them are mere tools in unseen hands that throw their several minds in antagonisms unexplainable to man. The judge is unconsciously often a tool of his own errors or those of others. One learned judge unties what another has fastened, each basing his views on the same testimony, each rendering his decision in accordance with law derived from the same authority. Your case is that condition of mind that men call lunacy. You can see much that is hidden from others because you have become acquainted with facts that their narrow education forbids them to accept, but, because the majority is against you, they consider you mentally unbalanced. The philosophy of men does not yet comprehend the conditions that have operated on your person, and as you stand alone, although in the right, all men will oppose you, and you must submit to the views of a misguided majority. In the eyes of a present generation you are crazy. A jury of your former peers could not do else than so adjudge you, for you are not on the same mental plane, and I ask, will you again attempt to accomplish that which is as impossible as it would be for you to drink the waters of Seneca Lake in one gulp? Go to those men and propose to drain that lake at one gulp, and you will be listened to as seriously as when you beg your former comrades to believe that you are another person than what you seem. Only lengthened life is credited with the production of physical changes that under favorable conditions, are

possible of accomplishment in a brief period, and such testimony as you could bring, in the present state of human knowledge, would only add to the proof of your lunacy."

"I see, I see," I said, "and I submit. Lead on, I am ready. Whatever my destined career may be, wherever it may be, it can only lead to the grave."

"Do not be so sure of that," was the reply.

I shuddered instinctively, for this answer seemed to imply that the stillness of the grave would be preferable to my destiny.

We got into the wagon again, and a deep silence followed as we rode along, gazing abstractedly on the open fields and lonely farm houses. Finally we reached to a little village. Here my companion dismissed the farmer, our driver, paying him liberally, and secured lodgings in a private home (I believe we were expected), and after a hearty supper we retired. From the time we left the jailer I never again attempted to reveal my identity. I had lost my interest in the past, and found myself craving to know what the future had in store for me.

CHAPTER X.

MY JOURNEY TOWARDS THE END OF EARTH BEGINS. THE ADEPTS' BROTHERHOOD.

My companion did not attempt to watch over my motions or in any way to interfere with my freedom.

"I will for a time necessarily be absent," he said, "arranging for our journey, and while I am getting ready you must employ yourself as best you can. I ask you, however, now to swear that, as you have promised, you will not seek your wife and children."

To this I agreed.

"Hold up your hand," he said, and I repeated after him:

"All this I most solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, with a firm and steadfast resolution to keep and perform my oath, without the least equivocation, mental reservation, or self-evasion whatever."

"That will answer. See that you keep your oath this time," he said, and he departed. Several days were consumed before he returned, and during that time I was an inquisitive and silent listener to the various conjectures others were making regarding my abduction which event was becoming of general interest. Some of the theories advanced were quite near the truth, others wild and erratic. How preposterous it seemed to me that the actor himself could be in the very seat of the disturbance, willing, anxious to testify, ready to prove the truth concerning his position, and yet unable even to obtain a respectful hearing from those most interested in his recovery. Men gathered together discussing the "outrage." Even the women and children talked of little else, and it was evident that the entire country was aroused. New political issues took their rise from the event, but the man who was the prime cause of the excitement was for a period a willing and unwilling listener, as he had been a willing and unwilling actor in the tragedy.

One morning my companion drove up in a light carriage, drawn by a span of fine, spirited, black horses.

"We are ready now," he said, and my unprecedented journey began.

Wherever we stopped, I heard my name mentioned. Men combined against men, brother was declaiming against brother, neighbor was against neighbor, everywhere suspicion was in the air.

"The passage of time alone can quiet these people," said I.

"The usual conception of the term Time, an indescribable something flowing at a constant rate, is erroneous," replied my comrade. "Time is humanity's best friend, and should be pictured as a ministering angel, instead of a skeleton with hourglass and scythe. Time does not fly, but is permanent and quiescent, while restless, force-impelled matter rushes onward. Force and matter fly; Time reposes. At our birth we are wound up like a machine, to move for a certain number of years, grating against Time. We grind against that complacent spirit, and wear not Time but ourselves away. We hold within ourselves a certain amount of energy, which, an evanescent form of matter, is the opponent of Time. Time has no existence with inanimate objects. It is a conception of the human intellect. Time is rest, perfect rest, tranquility such as man never realizes unless he becomes a part of the sweet silences toward which human life and human mind are drifting. So much for Time; now for Life.

Disturbed energy in one of its forms, we call Life, and this Life is the great enemy of peace, the opponent of steadfast perfection. Pure energy, the soul of the universe, permeates all things with which man is now acquainted, but when at rest is imperceptible to man, while disturbed energy, according to its condition, is apparent either as matter or as force. A substance or material body is a manifestation resulting from a disturbance of energy. The agitating cause removed, the manifestations disappear, and thus a universe may be extinguished, without unbalancing the cosmos that remains. The worlds known to man are conditions of abnormal energy moving on separate planes through what men call space. They attract to themselves bodies of similar description, and thus influence one another – they have each a separate existence, and are swayed to and fro under the influence of the various disturbances in energy common to their rank or order, which we call forms of forces. Unsettled energy also assumes numerous other expressions that are unknown to man, but which in all perceptible forms is characterized by motion. Pure energy cannot be appreciated by the minds of mortals. There are invisible worlds besides those perceived by us in our planetary system, unreachable centers of ethereal structure about us that stand in a higher plane of development than earthly matter which is a gross form of disturbed energy. There are also lower planes. Man's acquaintance with the forms of energy is the result of his power of perceiving the forms of matter of which he is a part. Heat, light, gravitation, electricity and magnetism are ever present in all perceivable substances, and, although purer than earth, they are still manifestations of absolute energy, and for this reason are sensible to men, but more evanescent than material bodies. Perhaps you can conceive that if these disturbances could be removed, matter or force would be resolved back into pure energy, and would vanish. Such a dissociation is an ethereal existence, and as pure energy the

life spirit of all material things is neither cold nor hot, heavy nor light, solid, liquid nor gaseous – men cannot, as mortals now exist, see, feel, smell, taste, or even conceive of it. It moves through space as we do through it, a world of itself as transparent to matter as matter is to it, insensible but ever-present, a reality to higher existences that rest in other planes, but not to us an essence subject to scientific test, nor an entity. Of these problems and their connection with others in the unseen depths beyond, you are not yet in a position properly to judge, but before many years a new sense will be given you or a development of latent senses by the removal of those more gross, and a partial insight into an unsuspected unseen, into a realm to you at present unknown.

"It has been ordained that a select few must from time to time pass over the threshold that divides a mortal's present life from the future, and your lot has been cast among the favored ones. It is or should be deemed a privilege to be permitted to pass farther than human philosophy has yet gone, into an investigation of the problems of life; this I say to encourage you. We have in our order a handful of persons who have received the calculated fruits of the close attention others have given to these subjects which have been handed to them by the generations of men who have preceded. You are destined to become as they are. This study of semi-occult forces has enabled those selected for the work to master some of the concealed truths of being, and by the partial development of a new sense or new senses, partly to triumph over death. These facts are hidden from ordinary man, and from the earth-bound workers of our brotherhood, who cannot even interpret the words they learn. The methods by which they are elucidated have been locked from man because the world is not prepared to receive them. Selfishness being the ruling passion of debased mankind, and publicity, until the chain of evidence is more complete, would embarrass their further evolutions, for man as yet lives on the selfish plane."

"Do you mean that, among men, there are a few persons possessed of powers such as you have mentioned?"

"Yes, they move here and there through all orders of society, and their attainments are unknown, except to one another, or, at most, to but few persons. These adepts are scientific men, and may not even be recognized as members of our organization; indeed it is often necessary, for obvious reasons, that they should not be known as such. These studies must constantly be prosecuted in various directions, and some monitors must teach others to perform certain duties that are necessary to the grand evolution. Hence, when a man has become a member of our brotherhood, from the promptings that made you one of us, and has been as ready and determined to instruct outsiders in our work as you have

been, it is proper that he should in turn be compelled to serve our people, and eventually, mankind."

"Am I to infer from this," I exclaimed, a sudden light breaking upon me, "that the alchemistic manuscript that led me to the fraternity to which you are related may have been artfully designed to serve the interest of that organization?" To this question I received no reply. After an interval, I again sought information concerning the order, and with more success.

"I understand that you propose that I shall go on a journey of investigation for the good of our order and also of humanity."

"True, it is necessary that our discoveries be kept alive, and it is essential that the men who do this work accept the trust of their own accord. He who will not consent to add to the common stock of knowledge and understanding, must be deemed a drone in the hive of nature. But few persons, however, are called upon to serve as you must serve. Men are scattered over the world with this object in view, and are unknown to their families or even to other members of the order; they hold in solemn trust our sacred revelations, and impart them to others as is ordained, and thus nothing perishes. Eventually humanity will profit.

"Others, as you soon will be doing, are now exploring assigned sections of this illimitable field, accumulating further knowledge, and they will report results to those whose duty it is to retain and formulate the collected sum of facts and principles. So it is that, unknown to the great body of our brotherhood, a chosen number, under our esoteric teachings, are gradually passing the dividing line that separates life from death, matter from spirit, for we have members who have mastered these problems. We ask, however, no aid of evil forces or of necromancy or black art, and your study of alchemy was of no avail, although to save the vital truths alchemy is a part of our work. We proceed in exact accordance with natural laws, which will yet be known to all men. Sorrow, suffering, pain of all descriptions, are enemies to the members of our order, as they are to mankind broadly, and we hope in the future so to control the now hidden secrets of Nature as to be able to govern the antagonistic disturbances in energy with which man now is everywhere thwarted, to subdue the physical enemies of the race, to affiliate religious and scientific thought, cultivating brotherly love, the foundation and capstone, the cement and union of this ancient fraternity."

"And am I really to take an important part in this scheme? Have I been set apart to explore a section of the unknown for a bit of hidden knowledge, and to return again?"

"This I will say," he answered, evading a direct reply, "you have been selected for a part that one in a thousand has been required to undertake.

You are to pass into a field that will carry you beyond the present limits of human observation. This much I have been instructed to impart to you in order to nerve you for your duty. I seem to be a young man; really I am aged. You seem to be infirm and old, but you are young.

Many years ago, cycles ago as men record time, I was promoted to do a certain work because of my zealous nature. Like you, I also had to do penance for an error. I disappeared, as you are destined to do, from the sight of men. I regained my youth. Yours has been lost forever, but you will regain more than your former strength. We shall both exist after this generation of men has passed away, and shall mingle with generations yet to be born, for we shall learn how to restore our youthful vigor, and will supply it time and again to earthly matter. Rest assured also that the object of our labors is of the most laudable nature, and we must be upheld under all difficulties by the fact that multitudes of men who are yet to come will be benefited thereby.

CHAPTER XI

MY JOURNEY CONTINUES. — INSTINCT

It is unnecessary for me to give the details of the first part of my long journey. My companion was guided by a perceptive faculty that, like the compass, enabled him to keep in the proper course. He did not question those whom we met, and made no endeavor to maintain a given direction; and yet he was traveling in a part of the country that was new to him. I marveled at the accuracy of his intuitive perception, for he seemed never to be at fault. When the road forked, he turned to the right or the left in a perfectly careless manner, but the continuity of his course was never interrupted. I began mentally to question whether he could be guiding us aright, forgetting that he was reading my thoughts, and he answered: "There is nothing strange in this self-directive faculty. Is not man capable of following where animals lead? One of the objects of my special study has been to ascertain the nature of the instinct-power of animals, the sagacity of brutes. The carrier pigeon will fly to its cote across hundreds of miles of strange country. The young pig will often return to its pen by a route unknown to it; the sluggish tortoise will find its home without a guide, without seeing a familiar object; cats, horses and other animals possess this power, which is not an unexplainable instinct, but a natural sense better developed in some of the lower creatures than it is in man. The power lies dormant in man, but exists, nevertheless. If we develop one faculty we lose acuteness in some other power. Men have lost in mental development in this particular direction while seeking to gain in others. If there were no record of the fact that light brings objects to the recognition of the mind through the agency of the eye, the sense of sight in an animal would be considered by men devoid of it as adaptability to extraordinary circumstances, or instinct. So it is that animals often see clearly where to the sense of man there is only darkness; such sight is not irresponsible action without consciousness of a purpose. Man is not very magnanimous. Instead of giving credit to the lower animals for superior perception in many directions, he denies to them the conscious possession of powers imperfectly developed in mankind. We egotistically aim to raise ourselves, and do so in our own estimation by clothing the actions of the lower animals in a garment of irresponsibility. Because we cannot understand the inwardness of their power, we assert that they act by the influence of instinct. The term instinct, as I would define it, is an expression applied by men to a series of senses which man possesses, but has not developed. The word is used by man to characterize the mental superiority of other animals in certain directions where his own senses are

defective. Instead of crediting animals with these, to these, invaluable faculties, man conceitedly says they are involuntary actions. Ignorant of their mental status, man is too arrogant to admit that lower animals are superior to him in any way. But we are not consistent. Is it not true that in the direction in which you question my power, some men by cultivation often become expert beyond their fellows? And such men have also given very little systematic study to subjects connected with these undeniable mental qualities. The hunter will hold his course in utter darkness, passing inequalities in the ground, and avoiding obstructions he cannot see. The fact of his superiority in this way, over others, is not questioned, although he cannot explain his methods nor understand how he operates. His quickened sense is often as much entitled to be called instinct as is the divining power of the carrier pigeon. If scholars would cease to devote their entire energies to the development of the material, artistic, or scientific part of modern civilization, and turn their attention to other forms of mental culture, many beauties and powers of Nature now unknown would be revealed. However, this cannot be, for under existing conditions, the strife for food and warmth is the most important struggle that engages mankind, and controls our actions. In a time that is surely to come, however, when the knowledge of all men is united into a comprehensive whole, the book of life, illuminated, thereby, will contain many beautiful pages that may be easily read, but which are now not suspected to exist. The power of the magnet is not uniform - engineers know that the needle of the compass inexplicably deviates from time to time as a line is run over the earth's surface, but they also know that aberrations of the needle finally correct themselves. The temporary variations of a few degrees that occur in the running of a compass line are usually overcome after a time, and without a change of course, the disturbed needle swerves back, and again points to the calculated direction, as is shown by the vernier. Should I err in my course, it would be by a trifle only, and we could not go far astray before I would unconsciously discover the true path. I carry my magnet in my mind."

Many such dissertations or explanations concerning related questions were subsequently made in what I then considered a very impressive, though always unsatisfactory, manner. I recall those episodes now, after other more remarkable experiences which are yet to be related, and record them briefly with little wonderment, because I have gone through adventures which demonstrate that there is nothing improbable in the statements, and I will not consume time with further details of this part of my journey.

We leisurely traversed state after state, crossed rivers, mountains and seemingly interminable forests. The ultimate object of our travels, a

location in Kentucky, I afterward learned, led my companion to guide me by a roundabout course to Wheeling, Virginia, by the usual mountain roads of that day, instead of going, as he might perhaps have much more easily done, via Buffalo and the Lake Shore to Northern Ohio, and then southerly across the country. He said in explanation, that the time lost at the beginning of our journey by this route, was more than recompensed by the ease of the subsequent Ohio River trip. Upon reaching Wheeling, he disposed of the team, and we embarked on a keel boat, and journeyed down the Ohio to Cincinnati. The river was falling when we started, and became very low before Cincinnati was reached, too low for steamers, and our trip in that flat-bottomed boat, on the sluggish current of the tortuous stream, proved tedious and slow. Arriving at Cincinnati, my guide decided to wait for a rise in the river, designing then to complete our journey on a steamboat. I spent several days in Cincinnati quite pleasantly, expecting to continue our course on the steamer "Tecumseh," then in port and ready for departure. At the last moment my guide changed his mind, and instead of embarking on that boat, we took passage on the steamer, "George Washington," leaving Shipping-Port Wednesday, December 13, 1826.

During that entire journey, from the commencement to our final destination, my guide paid all the bills, and did not want either for money or attention from the people with whom we came in contact. He seemed everywhere a stranger, and yet was possessed of a talisman that opened every door to which he applied, and which gave us unlimited accommodations wherever he asked them. When the boat landed at Smithland, Kentucky, a village on the bank of the Ohio, just above Paducah, we disembarked, and my guide then for the first time seemed mentally disturbed.

"Our journey together is nearly over," he said. "In a few days my responsibility for you will cease. Nerve yourself for the future, and bear its trials and its pleasures manfully. I may never see you again, but as you are even now conspicuous in our history, and will be closely connected with the development of the plan in which I am also interested, although I am destined to take a different part, I shall probably hear of you again."

CHAPTER XII.

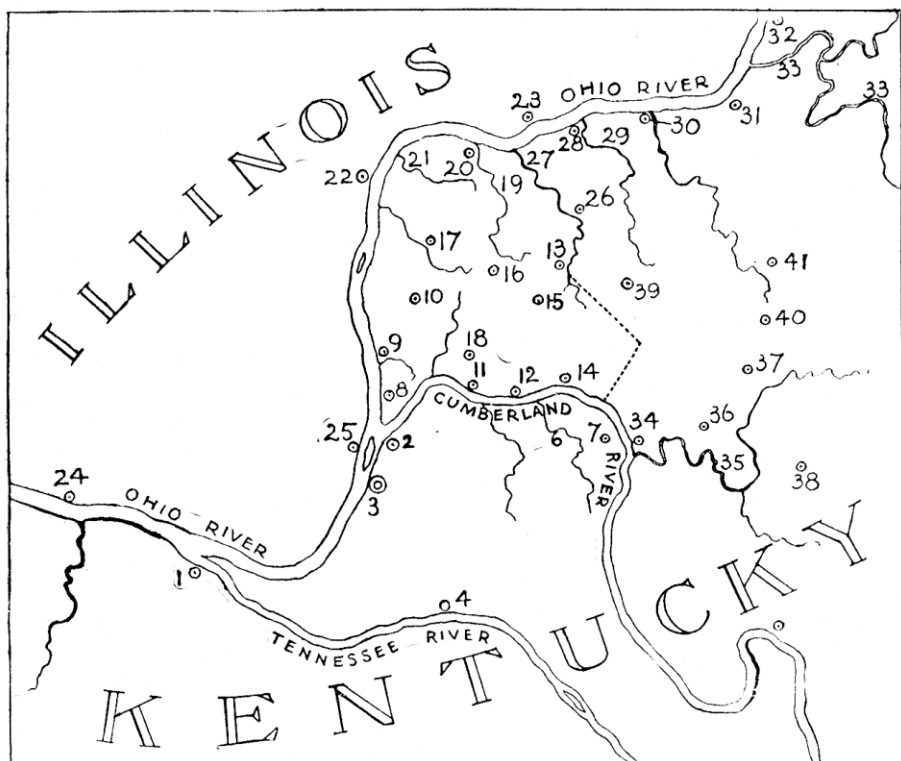
A CAVERN DISCOVERED. — BISWELL'S HILL.

We stopped that night at a tavern in Smithland. Leaving this place after dinner the next day, on foot, we struck through the country, into the bottom lands of the Cumberland River traveling leisurely, lingering for hours in the course of a circuitous tramp of only a few miles. Although it was the month of December, the climate was mild and balmy. In my former home, a similar time of year would have been marked with snow, sleet, and ice, and I could not but draw a contrast between the two localities. How different also the scenery from that of my native State. Great timber trees, oak, poplar, hickory, were in majestic possession of large tracts of territory, in the solitude of which man, so far as evidences of his presence were concerned, had never before trodden. From time to time we passed little clearings that probably were to be enlarged to thrifty plantations in the future, and finally we crossed the Cumberland River. That night we rested with Mr. Joseph Watts, a wealthy and cultured land owner, who resided on the river's bank. After leaving his home the next morning, we journeyed slowly, very slowly, my guide seemingly passing with reluctance into the country. He had become a very pleasant companion, and his conversation was very entertaining. We struck the sharp point of a ridge the morning we left Mr. Watts' hospitable house. It was four or five miles distant, but on the opposite side of the Cumberland, from Smithland. Here a steep bluff broke through the bottom land to the river's edge, the base of the bisected point being washed by the Cumberland River, which had probably cut its way through the stony mineral of this ridge in ages long passed. We climbed to its top and sat upon the pinnacle, and from that point of commanding observation I drank in the beauties of the scene around me. The river at our feet wound gracefully before us, and disappeared in both directions, its extremes dissolving in a bed of forest. A great black bluff, far up the stream, rose like a mountain, upon the left side of the river. Bottom lands were about us, and hills appeared across the river in the far distance towards the Tennessee River. With regret I finally drew my eyes from the vision, and we resumed the journey. We followed the left bank of the river to the base of the black bluff, "Biswell's Hill," a squatter called it, and then skirted the side of that hill, passing along precipitous stone bluffs and among stunted cedars. Above us towered cliff over cliff, almost perpendicularly; below us rolled the river.

I was deeply impressed by the changing beauties of this strange Kentucky scenery, but marveled at the fact that while I became light-hearted and enthusiastic, my guide grew correspondingly despondent and gloomy. From time to time he lapsed into thoughtful silence, and once I caught his eye directed toward me in a manner that I inferred to imply either pity or envy. We passed Biswell's Bluff, and left the Cumberland River at its upper extremity, where another small creek empties into the river. Thence, after ascending the creek some distance, we struck across the country, finding it undulating and fertile, with here and there a small clearing. During this journey we either camped out at night, or stopped with a resident, when one was to be found in that sparsely settled country. Sometimes there were exasperating intervals between our meals; but we did not suffer, for we carried with us supplies of food, such as cheese and crackers, purchased in Smithland, for emergencies. We thus proceeded a considerable distance into Livingston County, Kentucky. I observed remarkable sinks in the earth, sometimes cone-shaped, again precipitous. These cavities were occasionally of considerable size and depth, and they were more numerous in the uplands than in the bottoms. They were somewhat like the familiar "sink-holes" of New York State, but monstrous in comparison. The first that attracted my attention was near the Cumberland River, just before we reached Biswell's Hill. It was about forty feet deep and thirty in diameter, with precipitous stone sides, shrubbery growing therein in exceptional spots where loose earth had collected on shelves of stone that cropped out along its rugged sides. The bottom of the depression was flat and fertile, covered with a luxuriant mass of vegetation. On one side of the base of the gigantic bowl, a cavern struck down into the earth. I stood upon the edge of this funnel-like sink, and marveled at its peculiar appearance. A spirit of curiosity, such as often influences men when an unusual natural scene presents itself, possessed me. I clambered down, swinging from brush to brush, and stepping from shelving-rock to shelving-rock, until I reached the bottom of the hollow, and placing my hand above the black hole in its center, I perceived that a current of cold air was rushing there from, upward. I probed with a long stick, but the direction of the opening was tortuous, and would not admit of examination in that manner. I dropped a large pebble-stone into the orifice; the pebble rolled and clanked down, down, and at last, the sound died away in the distance.

"I wish that I could go into the cavity as that stone has done, and find the secrets of this cave," I reflected, the natural love of exploration possessing me as it probably does most men. My companion above, seated on the brink of the stone wall, replied to my thoughts: "Your wish shall be granted. You have requested that which has already been laid out for you. You will explore where few men have passed before, and will

have the privilege of following your destiny into a realm of natural wonders. A fertile field of investigation awaits you, such as will surpass your most vivid imaginings. Come and seat yourself beside me, for it is my duty now to tell you something about the land we are approaching, the cavern fields of Kentucky."



SECTION OF KENTUCKY, NEAR SMITHLAND, IN WHICH THE ENTRANCE TO THE KENTUCKY CAVERN IS SAID TO BE LOCATED.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Paducah. | 15. Salem. | 29. Hurricane Creek. |
| 2. Smithland. | 16. Hampton. | 30. Ford's Ferry. |
| 3. Old Smithland. | 17. Faulkner. | 31. Weston. |
| 4. Patterson. | 18. Mullikin. | 32. Caseyville. |
| 5. Frenchtown. | 19. Back Creek. | 33. Tradewater River. |
| 6. Hickory Creek. | 20. Carrsville. | 34. Dycusburgh. |
| 7. Underwood. | 21. Given's Creek. | 35. Livingstone Creek. |
| 8. Birdsville. | 22. Golconda. | 36. Francis. |
| 9. Bayou Mills. | 23. Elizabethtown. | 37. Harrold. (View.) |
| 10. Oak Ridge. | 24. Metropolis City. | 38. Crider. |
| 11. Moxley's Landing. | 25. Hamletsburgh. | 39. Levias. |
| 12. Kildare. | 26. Sheridan. | 40. Crayneville. |
| 13. Lola. | 27. Deer Creek. | 41. Marion. |
| 14. Pinckneyville. | 28. Hurricane. | |

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PUNCH-BOWLS AND CAVERNS OF KENTUCKY."INTO THE UNKNOWN COUNTRY."

"This part of Kentucky borders a field of caverns that reaches from near the state of Tennessee to the Ohio River, and front the mouth of the Cumberland, eastward to and beyond the center of the state. This great area is of irregular outline, and as yet has been little explored. Underneath the surface are layers of limestone and sandstone rock, the deposits ranging from ten to one hundred and fifty feet in thickness, and often great masses of conglomerate appear. This conglomerate sometimes caps the ridges, and varies in thickness from a few feet only, to sixty, or even a hundred, feet. It is of a diversified character, sometimes largely composed of pebbles cemented together by iron ore into compact beds, while again it passes abruptly into gritty sandstone, or a fine-grained compact, rock destitute of pebbles. Sometimes the conglomerate rests directly on the limestone, but in the section about us, more often argillaceous shale or veins of coal intervene, and occasionally inferior and superior layers of conglomerate are separated by a bed of coal. In addition, lead-bearing veins now and then crop up, the crystals of galena being disseminated through masses of fluorspar, talc-spar, limestone and clay, which fill fissures between tilted walls of limestone and hard quartzose sandstone. Valleys, hills, and mountains, grow out of this remarkable crust. Rivers and creeks flow through and under it in crevices, either directly upon the bedstone or over deposits of clay which underlie it. In some places, beds of coal or slate alternate with layers of the lime rock; in others, the interspace is clay and sand. Sometimes the depth of the several limestone and conglomerate deposits is great, and they are often honeycombed by innumerable transverse and diagonal spaces. Water drips have here and there washed out the more friable earth and stone, forming grottoes which are as yet unknown to men, but which will be discovered to be wonderful and fantastic beyond anything of a like nature now familiar. In other places cavities exist between shelves of rock that lie one above the other – monstrous openings caused by the erosive action of rivers now lost, but that have flowed during unnumbered ages past. Great parallel valleys and gigantic chambers, one over the other, remaining to tell the story of these former torrents. Occasionally the weight of a portion of the disintegrating rock above becomes too great for its tensile strength and the material crumbles and falls, producing caverns sometimes reaching so near to the earth's surface, as to cause sinks in its crust. These sinks, when first formed, as a rule, present clear rock fractures, and immediately after

their formation there is usually a water-way beneath. In the course of time soil collects on their sides, they become cone-shaped hollows from the down-slidings of earth, and then vegetation appears on the living soil; trees grow within them, and in many places the sloping sides of great earth bowls of this nature are, after untold years, covered with the virgin forest. Magnificent timber trees growing on soil that has been stratified over and upon decayed monarchs of the forest whose remains, imbedded in the earth, speak of the ages that have passed since the convulsions that made the depressions which, notwithstanding the accumulated debris, are still a hundred feet or more in depth. If the drain or exit at the vortex of one of these sinks becomes clogged, which often occurs, the entire cavity fills with water, and a pond results. Again, a slight orifice reaching far beneath the earth's surface may permit the soil to be gradually washed into a subterranean creek, and thus are formed great bowls, like funnels sunk in the earth – Kentucky punchbowls.

"Take the country about us, especially towards the Mammoth Cave, and for miles beyond, the landscape in certain localities is pitted with this description of sinks, some recent, others very old. Many are small, but deep; others are large and shallow. Ponds often of great depth, curiously enough overflowing and giving rise to a creek, are to be found on a ridge, telling of underground supply springs, not outlets, beneath. Chains of such sinks, like a row of huge funnels, often appear; the soil between them is slowly washed through their exit into the river, flowing in the depths below, and as the earth that separates them is carried away by the subterranean streams, the bowls coalesce, and a ravine, closed at both ends, results. Along the bottom of such a ravine, a creek may flow, rushing from its natural tunnel at one end of the line, and disappearing in a gulf at the other. The stream begins in mystery, and ends in unfathomed darkness. Near Marion, Hurricane Creek thus disappears, and, so far as men know, is lost to sight forever. Near Cridersville, in this neighborhood, a valley such as I have described, takes in the surface floods of a large tract of country. The waters that run down its sides, during a storm form a torrent, and fence-rails, timbers, and other objects are gulped into the chasm where the creek plunges into the earth, and they never appear again. This part of Kentucky is the most remarkable portion of the known world, and although now neglected, in a time to come is surely destined to an extended distinction. I have referred only to the surface, the skin formation of this honeycombed labyrinth, the entrance to the future wonderland of the world. Portions of such a superficial cavern maze have been traversed by man in the ramifications known as the Mammoth Cave, but deeper than man has yet explored, the subcutaneous structure of that series of caverns is yet to be investigated. The Mammoth Cave as now traversed is simply a superficial series of

grottoes and passages overlying the deeper cavern field that I have described. The explored chain of passages is of great interest to men, it is true, but of minor importance compared to others yet unknown, being in fact, the result of mere surface erosion. The river that bisects the cave, just beneath the surface of the earth, and known as Echo River, is a miniature stream: there are others more magnificent that flow majestically far, far beneath it. As we descend into the earth in that locality, caverns multiply in number and increase in size, retaining the general configuration of those I have described. The layers of rock are thicker, the intervening spaces broader, and the spaces stretch in increasingly expanded chambers for miles, while high above each series of caverns the solid ceilings of stone arch and inter-arch. Sheltered under these subterranean alcoves are streams, lakes, rivers and waterfalls. Near the surface of the earth such waters often teem with aquatic life, and some of the caves are inhabited by species of birds, reptiles and mammals as yet unknown to men, creatures possessed of senses and organs that are different from any we find with surface animals, and also apparently defective in particulars that would startle persons acquainted only with creatures that live in the sunshine. It is a world beneath a world, a world within a world..." My guide abruptly stopped at this point in his description.

I sat entranced, marveling at the young-old adept's knowledge, admiring his accomplishments. I gazed into the cavity that yawned beneath me, and imagined its possible but to me invisible secrets, enraptured with the thought of searching into them. Who would not feel elated at the prospect of an exploration, such as I foresaw might be pursued in my immediate future? I had often been charmed with narrative descriptions of discoveries, and book accounts of scientific investigations, but I had never pictured myself as a participant in such fascinating enterprises.

"Indeed, indeed," I cried exultingly, "lead me to this Wonderland. Show me the entrance to this Subterranean World, and I promise willingly to do as you bid."

"Bravo!" he replied, "Your heart is right; your courage sufficient. I have not disclosed a thousandth part of the wonders of which I have knowledge and which await your research, and probably I have not gained even an insight into the mysteries that, if your courage permits, you will be privileged to comprehend. Your destiny lies beyond, far beyond that which I have pictured or experienced. For I, notwithstanding my opportunities, have no conception of its end, for at the critical moment my heart faltered – I can therefore only describe the beginning."

Thus at the lower extremity of Biswell's Hill, I was made aware of the fact that, within a short time, I should be separated from my sympathetic

guide, and it was to be my duty to explore alone, or in other company, some portion of these Kentucky cavern deeps, and I longed for the beginning of my underground journey. Heavens! How different would have been my future life could I then have realized my position! Would that I could have seen the end. After a few days of uneventful travel, we rested, one afternoon, in a hilly country that before us appeared to be more rugged, even mountainous. We had wandered leisurely and were now at a considerable distance from the Cumberland River, the aim of my guide being, as I surmised, to evade a direct approach to some object of interest which I must not locate exactly, and yet which I shall try to describe accurately enough for identification by a person familiar with the topography of that section. We stood on the side of a stony, sloping hill, back of which spread a wooded, undulating valley.

"I remember to have passed along a creek in that valley," I remarked, looking back over our pathway. "It appeared to rise from this direction, but the source ends abruptly in this chain of hills."

"The stream is beneath us," he answered. Advancing a few paces, he brought to my attention, on the hillside, an opening in the earth. This aperture was irregular in form, about the diameter of a well, and descended perpendicularly into the stony crust. I leaned far over the orifice, and heard the gurgle of rushing water beneath. The guide dropped a heavy stone into the gloomy shaft, and in some seconds a dull splash announced its plunge into underground water. Then he leaned over the stony edge, and (could I be mistaken?) seemed to signal to someone beneath, but it must be imagination on my part, I argued to myself even against my very sense of sight. Rising and taking me by the hand, my guardian spoke:

"Brother, we approach the spot where you and I must separate. I serve my masters and am destined to go where I shall next be commanded. You will descend into the earth, as you have recently desired to do. Here we part, most likely forever. This rocky fissure will admit the last ray of sunlight on your path."

My heart failed. How often are we courageous in daylight and timid by night? Men unflinchingly face in sunshine dangers at which they shudder in the darkness.

"How am I to descend into that abyss?" I gasped, "The sides are perpendicular, the depth is unknown!" Then I cried in alarm, the sense of distrust deepening: "Do you mean to drown me; is it for this you have led me away from my native state, from friends, home and kindred? You have enticed me into this wilderness. I have been decoyed and, like a foolish child, have willingly accompanied my destroyer. You feared to murder me

in my distant home. The earth could not have hidden me. Niagara even might have given up my body to dismay the murderers! In this underground river in the wilds of Kentucky, all trace of my existence will disappear forever."

I was growing furious. My frenzied eyes searched the ground for some missile of defense. By strange chance someone had left, on that solitary spot, a rude weapon, providentially dropped for my use, I thought. It was a small iron bolt or bar, somewhat rusted. I threw myself upon the earth and, as I did so, picked this up quickly and secreted it within my bosom. Then I arose and resumed my stormy denunciation.

"You have played your part well, you have led your unresisting victim to the sacrifice, but if I am compelled to plunge into this black grave, you shall go with me!" I shrieked in desperation, and suddenly threw my arms around the gentle adept, intending to hurl him into the chasm. At this point I felt my hands seized from behind in a cold, clammy, irresistible embrace, my fingers were loosed by a strong grasp, and I turned, to find myself confronted by a singular looking being, who quietly said:

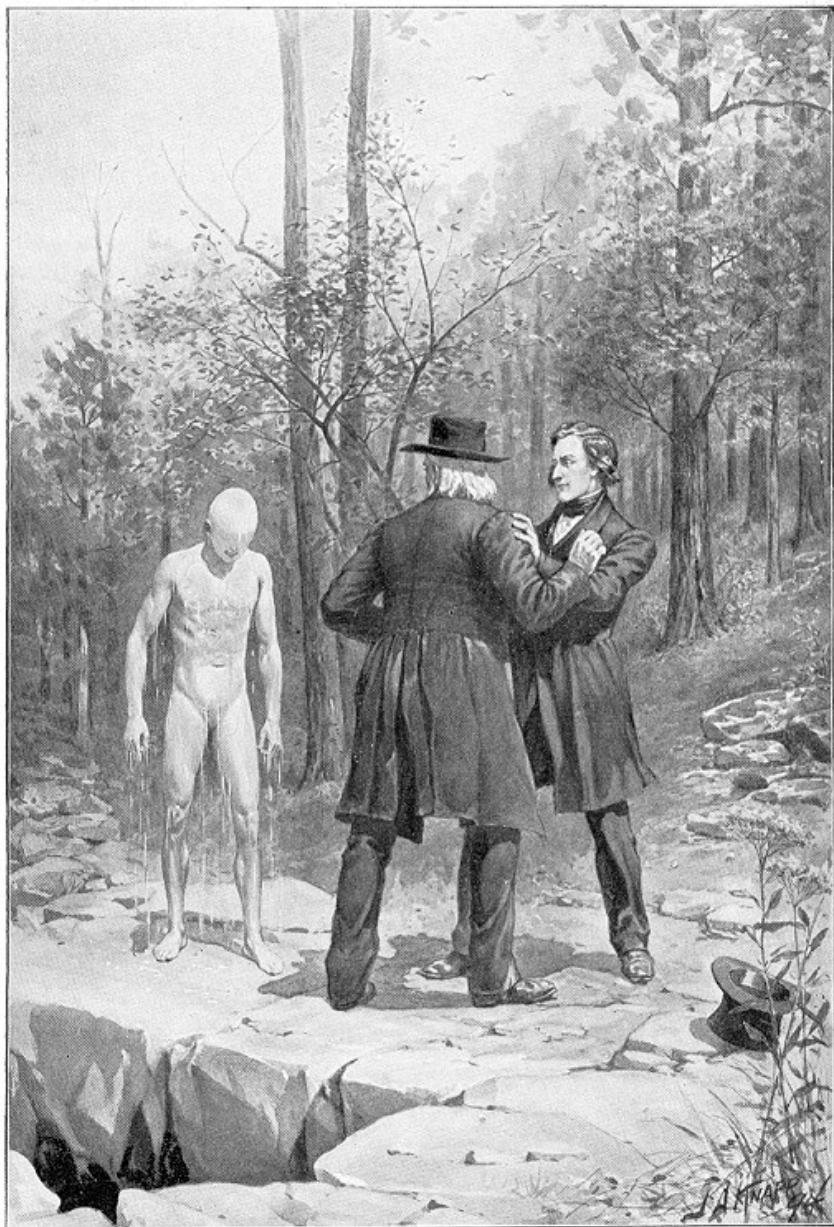
"You are not to be destroyed. We wish only to do your bidding."

The speaker stood in a stooping position, with his face towards the earth as if to shelter it from the sunshine. He was less than five feet in height. His arms and legs were bare, and his skin, the color of light blue putty, glistened in the sunlight like the slimy hide of a water dog. He raised his head, and I shuddered in affright as I beheld that his face was not that of a human. His forehead extended in an unbroken plane from crown to cheek bone, and the chubby tip of an abortive nose without nostrils formed a short projection near the center of the level ridge which represented a countenance. There was no semblance of an eye, for there were no sockets. Yet his voice was singularly perfect. His face, if face it could be called, was wet, and water dripped from all parts of his slippery person. Yet, repulsive as he looked, I shuddered more at the remembrance of the touch of that cold, clammy hand than at the sight of his figure, for a dead man could not have chilled me as he had done, with his sappy skin, from which the moisture seemed to ooze as from the hide of a water lizard.

Turning to my guide, this freak of nature said, softly:

"I have come in obedience to the signal."

I realized at once that alone with these two I was powerless, and that to resist would be suicidal. Instantly my effervescing passion subsided, and I expressed no further surprise at this sudden and remarkable



"CONFRONTED BY A SINGULAR LOOKING BEING."

apparition, but mentally acquiesced. I was alone and helpless. Rage gave place to inertia in the despondency that followed the realization of my hopeless condition. The grotesque newcomer, who, though sightless, possessed a strange instinct, led us to the base of the hill a few hundred feet away, and there, gushing into the light from the rocky bluff, I saw a magnificent stream issuing many feet in width. This was the headwaters of the mysterious brook that I had previously noticed. It flowed from an archway in the solid stone, springing directly out of the rock-bound cliff - beautiful and picturesque in its surroundings. The limpid water, clear and sparkling, issued from the unknown source that was typical of darkness, but the brook of crystal leaped into a world of sunshine, light and freedom.

"Brother," said my companion, "this spring emerging from this prison of earth images to us what humanity will be when the imprisoning walls of ignorance that now enthrall him are removed. Man has heretofore relied chiefly for his advancement, both mental and physical, on knowledge gained from so-called scientific explorations and researches with matter, from material studies rather than spiritual, all his investigations having been confined to the crude, coarse substance of the surface of the globe. Spiritualistic investigations, unfortunately, are considered by scientific men too often as reaching backward only. The religions of the world clasp hands with, and lean upon, the dead past, it is true, but point to a living future. Man must yet search by the agency of senses and spirit, the unfathomed mysteries that lie beneath his feet and over his head, and he who refuses to bow to the Creator and honor his handiwork discredits himself. When this work is accomplished, as it yet will be, the future man, able then to comprehend the problem of life in its broader significance, drawing from all directions the facts necessary to his mental advancement, will have reached a state in which he can enjoy bodily comfort and supreme spiritual perfection, while he is yet an earth-bound mortal. In hastening this consummation, it is necessary that an occasional human life should be lost to the world, but such sacrifices are noble - yes, even sublime, because they contribute to the future exaltation of our race. The secret workers in the sacred order of which you are still a member, have ever taken an important part in furthering such a system of evolution. This feature of our work is unknown to brethren of the ordinary fraternity, and the individual research of each secret messenger is not guessed, by the craft at large. Hence it is that the open workers of our order, those initiated by degrees only, who in lodge rooms carry on their beneficent labors among men, have had no hand other than as agents in your removal, and no knowledge of your present or future movements. Their function is to keep together our organization on earth, and from them only an occasional member is selected, as you have been, to perform

special duties in certain adventurous studies. Are you willing to go on this journey of exploration? And are you brave enough to meet the trials you have invited?"

Again my enthusiasm arose, and I felt the thrill experienced by an investigator who stands on the brink of an important discovery, and needs but courage to advance, and I answered, "Yes."

"Farewell, my friend. This archway is the entrance that will admit you into your arcanum of usefulness. This mystic brother, though a stranger to you, has long been apprised of our coming, and it was he who sped me on my journey to seek you, and who has since been waiting for us, and is to be your guide during the first stages of your subterranean progress. He is a friend, and, if you trust him, will protect you from harm. You will find the necessities of life supplied, for I have traversed part of your coming road. That part I therefore know, but, as I have said, you are to go deeper into the unexplored – yes, into and beyond the Beyond, until finally you will come to the gateway that leads into the 'Unknown Country.'"

CHAPTER XIV.

FAREWELL TO GODS SUNSHINE. — THE ECHO OF THE CRY.

Thus speaking, my quiet leader, who had so long been as a shepherd to my wandering feet, on the upper earth, grasped my hands tightly, and placed them in those of my new companion, whose clammy fingers closed over them as with a grip of iron. The mysterious being, now my custodian, turned towards the creek, drawing me after him, and together we silently and solemnly waded beneath the stone archway. As I passed under the shadow of that dismal, yawning cliff, I turned my head to take one last glimpse of the world I had known — that "warm precinct of the cheerful day," and tears sprang to my eyes. I thought of life, family, friends — of all for which men live, and a melancholy vision arose, that of my lost, lost home. My dear companion of the journey that had just ended stood in the sunlight on the banks of the rippling stream, gazing at us intently, and waved an affectionate farewell. My uncouth new associate (guide or master, whichever he might be), of the journey to come, clasped me firmly by the arms and waded slowly onward, thrusting me steadily against the cold current, and with irresistible force pressed me into the thickening darkness. The daylight disappeared, the pathway contracted, the water deepened and became more chilly. We were constrained to bow our heads in order to avoid the overhanging vault of stone. The water reached to my chin, and now the down-jutting roof touched the crown of my head. Then I shuddered convulsively as the last ray of daylight disappeared.

Had it not been for my companion, I know that I should have sunk in despair and drowned, but with a firm hand he held my head above the water, and steadily pushed me onward. I had reached the extreme of despondency. I neither feared nor cared for life nor death, and I realized that, powerless to control my own acts, my fate, the future, my existence depended on the strange being beside me. I was mysteriously sustained, however, by a sense of bodily security, such as comes over us as when in the hands of an experienced guide we journey through a wilderness, for I felt that my pilot of the underworld did not purpose to destroy me. We halted a moment, and then, as a faint light overspread us, my eyeless guide directed me to look upward.

"We now stand beneath the crevice which you were told by your former guide would admit the last ray of sunlight on your path. I also say to you, this struggling ray of sunlight is to be your last for years."

I gazed above me, feeling all the wretchedness of a dying man who, with faculties intact, might stand on the dark edge of the hillside of eternity, glancing back into the bright world, and that small opening far, far overhead, seemed as the gate to Paradise Lost. Many a person, assured of ascending at will, has stood at the bottom of a deep well or shaft to a mine, and even then felt the indescribable sensation of dread, often terror that is produced by such a situation. Awe, mystery, uncertainty of life and future superadded, may express my sensation. I trembled, shrinking in horror from my captor and struggled violently.

"Hold, hold," I begged, as one involuntarily prays a surgeon to delay the incision of the amputating knife, "Just one moment." My companion, unheeding, moved on. The light vanished instantly, and we were surrounded by total darkness. God's sunshine was blotted out.

Then I again became unconcerned. I was not now responsible for my own existence, and the feeling that I experienced when a prisoner in the closed carriage returned. I grew careless as to my fate, and with stolid indifference struggled onward as we progressed slowly against the current of water. I began to interest myself in speculations regarding our surroundings and the object or outcome of our journey. In places the water was shallow, scarce reaching to our ankles. Again it was so deep that we could wade only with exertion, and at times the passage up which we toiled was so narrow that it would scarcely admit us. After a long, laborious stemming of the unseen brook, my companion directed me to close my mouth, hold my nostrils with my fingers, and stoop. Diving with me beneath the water, he drew me through the submerged crevice, and we ascended into an open chamber and left the creek behind us. I fancied that we were in a large room, and as I shouted aloud to test my hypothesis, echo after echo answered, until at last the cry reverberated and died away in distant murmurs. We were evidently in a great pocket or cavern, through which my guide now walked rapidly. Indeed, he passed along with unerring footsteps, as certain of his course as I might be on familiar ground in full daylight. I perceived that he systematically evaded inequalities that I could not anticipate nor see. He would tell me to step up or down, as the surroundings required, and we ascended or descended accordingly. Our path turned to the right or the left from time to time, but my eyeless guide passed through what were evidently the most tortuous windings without a mishap. I wondered much at this gift of knowledge, and at last overcame my reserve sufficiently to ask how we could thus unerringly proceed in utter darkness. The reply was, "The path is plainly visible to me; I see as clearly in pitch darkness as you can in sunshine."

"Explain yourself further," I requested.

He replied, "Not yet;" and continued, "You are weary. We will rest."

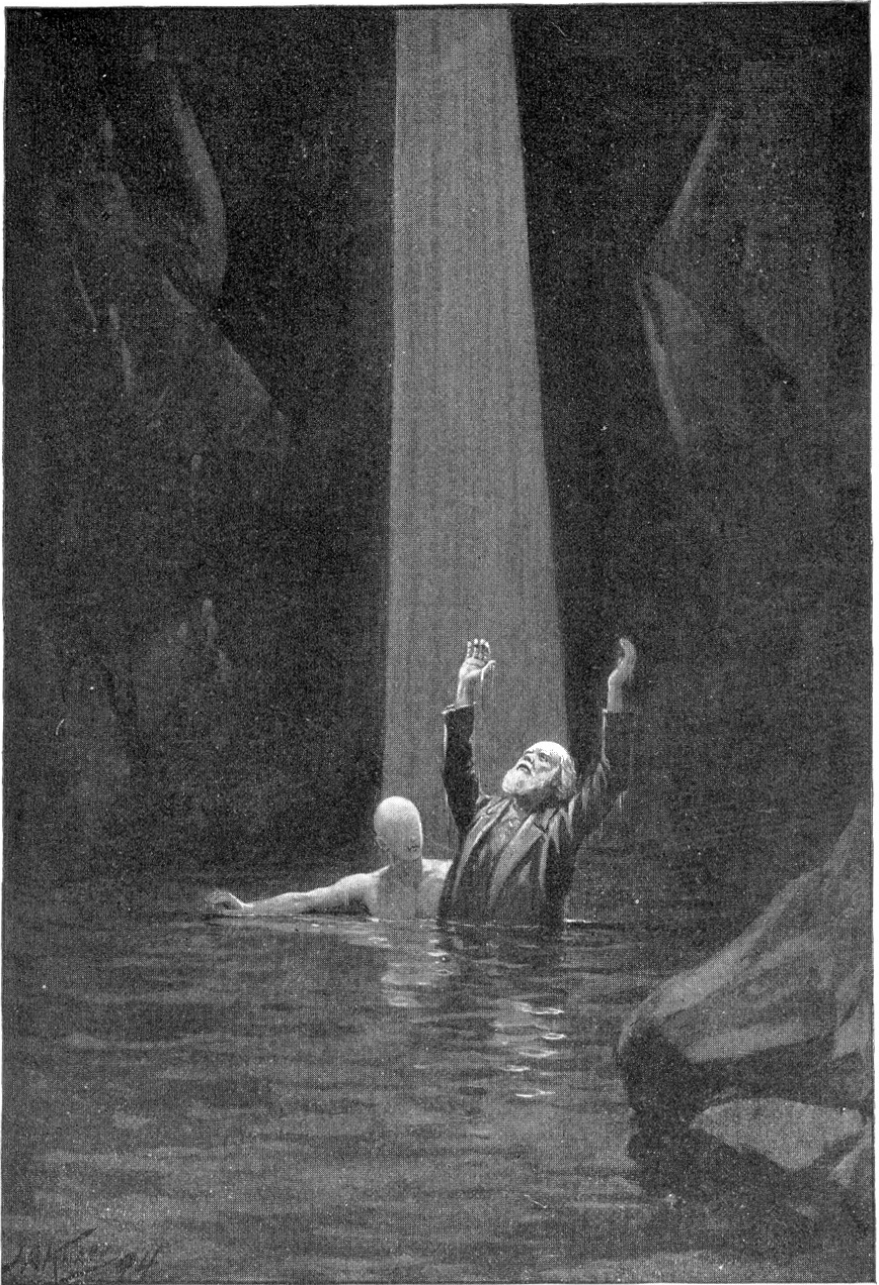
He conducted me to a seat on a ledge and left me for a time. Returning soon, he placed in my hands food which I ate with novel relish. The pabulum seemed to be of vegetable origin, though varieties of it had a peculiar flesh-like flavor. Several separate and distinct substances were contained in the queer foods, some portions savoring of wholesome flesh, while others possessed the delicate flavors of various fruits such as the strawberry and the pineapple. The strange edibles were of a pulpy texture, homogeneous in consistence, parts being juicy and acid like grateful fruits. Some portions were in slices or films that I could hold in my hand like sections of a velvet melon, and yet were in many respects unlike any other food that I had ever tasted. There was neither rind nor seed, and it seemed as though I were eating the gills of a fish. In answer to my question the guide remarked.

"Yes; it is the gill, but not the gill of a fish. You will be instructed in due time." I will add that after this, whenever necessary, we were supplied with food, but both thirst and hunger disappeared altogether before our underground journey was finished.

After a while we again began our journey, which we continued in what was to me absolute darkness. My strength seemed to endure the fatigue to a wonderful degree, notwithstanding that we must have been walking hour after hour, and I expressed a curiosity about the fact. My guide replied that the atmosphere of the cavern possessed an intrinsic vitalizing power that neutralized fatigue. "Or," he said, "there is here an inherent constitutional energy derived from an active gaseous substance that belongs to cavern air at this depth and sustains the life force by contributing directly to its conservation, taking the place of food and drink."

"I do not understand," I said.

"No, and you do not comprehend how ordinary air supports mind and vitalizes muscle and at the same time wears out both muscle and all other tissues. These are facts which are not satisfactorily explained by scientific statements concerning oxygenation of the blood. As we descend into the earth we find an increase in the life force of the cavern air." This reference to surface earth recalled my former life and led me to contrast my present situation with that I had forfeited. I was seized with an uncontrollable longing for home and a painful craving for the past took possession of my heart, but with a strong effort I shook off the sensations. We traveled on and on in silence and in darkness, and I thought again of the strange remark of my former guide who had said, "You are destined to go deeper into the unknown; yes, into and beyond the Beyond."



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