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THE MANIAC



THE MANIAC

A REALISTIC STUDY OF MADNESS

FROM

THE MANIAC'S POINT OF VIEW



LONDON

REBMAN LIMITED

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Sage

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THIS TRUE RECORD
TO
MY DOCTOR
AT WHOSE INSTIGATION IT WAS WRITTEN
AND
TO WHOM IT WAS PROMISED



“AYE, if a madman could have leave to pass a healthful day,
To tell his forehead's swoon and faint, when first began decay,
He might make tremble many a one . . .”

KEATS.

(Or make a cat laugh !)

AUTHOR.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE Publishers are perfectly satisfied that this book is a genuine record of a case of madness from the patient's point of view, and therefore have no hesitation in recommending it as a most valuable psychological study to all interested in such subjects, and especially to members of the medical profession. To the General Public it is offered as the most weirdly sensational of novels.

FOREWORD

THE following is a faithful account of a genuine attack of Acute Mania.

Nothing has been invented—from first to last this is a true record.

The whole was written down during the months immediately after the attack, and while remembrance of it was as vivid as at the actual time of its occurrence.

Throughout the narrative the words spoken by the various "Voices" to me, and my replies thereto, are given verbatim, and, I honestly believe, with as exact verbal accuracy as if they had been taken down by shorthand reporter at the time they were being uttered.

If any one doubts the possibility of such accuracy, I simply say that from first to last, throughout the attack of madness, everything *of which I was conscious at the time that it occurred*, and everything that was spoken either by me, or by the "Voices" to me, remained fixed on my memory with such curious indelibility it was as if it had been branded thereon. To transcribe the entire account, verbatim, has been but the smallest effort of memory on my part.

I emphasised the reservation, *of whatever I*

was conscious, because the most highly-trained "mental" doctors and nurses are, evidently, most utterly at sea with regard to a lunatic's *Consciousness*. The location, the extent, and, above all, the *limitations* of a mad patient's consciousness are so wholly misjudged and misapprehended.

That this is so, is indubitably proved to any one who has experienced madness—and will be apparent to any one who reads this narrative.

I am of opinion, personally, that it is unlikely I could have been better treated, medically (according to the present system of treatment of mania), than I was by the London Specialist who had charge of my "case." But, judging from their own public statements, those doctors who have studied the deepest and know the most on the subject are the first to admit that there is much concerning madness that they themselves are still seeking to learn. Perhaps some of them may even manage to learn something from this "Human Document."

AUTHOR.

CONTENTS

PART I

ALONE IN A LONDON LODGING	PAGE I
-------------------------------------	-----------

PART II

IN ROOM No. 1	89
-------------------------	----

PART III

IN ROOM No. 2	227
-------------------------	-----

PART I

ALONE IN A LONDON LODGING

“The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact :
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman.”

SHAKESPEARE.

CHAPTER I

I AM an unmarried woman, the wrong side of thirty. At the time the following occurrence took place I had lately begun working as a journalist on a London magazine, and worked all day at the office of the paper in the Strand. I lived alone in a one-room lodging near Regent's Park.

Working at the office in the same room and at the same table as myself was an elderly married woman, a non-professional, spiritualistic "medium."

She used to "see" all sorts of "spirits" and other phenomena surrounding the various people in the office, and whenever work was slack she used to beguile the time by giving me, and whomsoever happened to be in our room, detailed account of what she did see around each and all of us.

She also recounted a great many of her personal "spiritualistic" experiences, and several of these struck me as affording most excellent "copy" for a set of "borderland stories."

As such I had begun to use them, out of office hours.

I looked upon this "medium" as a perfect God-send in the way of "copy," and commenced

writing up at all hours of the day and night, whenever I could make time, the stories she narrated.

The tale I had just finished writing, immediately before I went off my head, was that of the haunting, for several years, of the Medium by the "spirit" of R. B. (a deceased celebrity), who wanted her (so she said) to write down at his dictation a book which he wished written, but with which (on account of its character) she refused to have anything to do.

The woman was most terrified of this "spirit," whom she declared to be an evil, and extraordinarily powerful, one. She was even alarmed at my temerity in daring to utilise him as "copy," as I informed her I had done.

I state the foregoing, as it explains much of the working of my mind during insanity. I would also add that I am not a "spiritualist." I have been, however, for very many years a wholly unprejudiced psychical researcher,—by reading, not by personal experiments,—and have read a large amount of "spiritualistic" literature in the investigation of "spiritualism." Nothing this Medium said was in any way new to me, as I was perfectly familiar with all the phenomena of "spiritualism." It occupied my mind solely so far as it afforded me "copy" for stories.

But the doing of all this story-writing out of office hours was a very great strain. I began to feel this, but was determined to finish my set of stories.

On the night of Wednesday, 27th September,

my eldest brother (who was in London for a short time only) took me out to a theatre. After the theatre he took me to supper at a restaurant. I went most unwillingly to the latter—I was feeling so dead tired I longed to get back and go straight to bed.

I do not know when I have ever felt so dead tired as I felt that night when at last, long past midnight, I returned to my one-room lodging off the Marylebone Road.

The whole way back, during the drive, my brother had been talking about a legal matter that was, and had been for some time past, a continual worry to me.

That, and my utter fatigue of body and mind, and the chill loneliness of my lodging-room on my return that night, combined to make me too miserable for words or for tears. I longed to be quit of it all. I longed to get quit of my physical body altogether, by sheer effort of Will. I longed with an intensity that made my head begin to feel quite queer and dizzy.

Then I undressed and went to bed.

The next day my head was curiously tired. All the former fatigue of my body seemed now concentrated in my head.

I had the greatest difficulty in going on with my work that day, and came to the conclusion that if I felt like that the following day I would ask for a week's leave.

My brain seemed like a cog-wheel that had stuck. It felt as if it wouldn't go on, but when I had to write anything I seemed able to make it

go on. I seemed literally to *push* it and make it go on.

(NOTE.—I would insert here a statement of the Medium's that, as a psychical researcher, strikes me now, as I look back upon and review the whole matter, as rather interesting. I think other psychical researchers may also be interested by it.

Some days before my nervous breakdown, the woman had stated she could see clairvoyantly that I was being accompanied by the "spirit" of a woman dressed all in gray, and extraordinarily resembling myself; and that bands of light were streaming from the "spirit" to me.

The Medium believed it to be the "spirit" of some near, dead relation of mine, who must have exactly resembled me.

I have lost no near relation resembling myself, and I do not in the least believe that the woman saw any "spirit." But I do believe she saw exactly what she described. And those who have studied the recorded facts concerning "Phantasms of the Living" (including the usual condition of body, namely, collapse—either in faint, trance, or at time of dissolution—the originals nearly always are in when their "doubles" are seen by people existing as independent entities apart from their originals)—will probably agree with me in thinking that what the Medium saw was simply an integral portion of my own constitution, and its extrusion indicated the state bordering on collapse, in which I then most certainly was.)

But to resume my narrative.

On Friday I came to the conclusion I couldn't carry on any longer without a rest—my head was so utterly, dead tired. I went and asked for a week's leave.

This was granted me—on the condition that the leave did not commence until the following Tuesday. As Saturday was always a whole holiday, that meant I had, after Friday, but one more day, namely Monday, to work, before getting my holiday.

Satisfied with this arrangement, I returned to my lodging.

That was Friday evening, 29th September.

All that day I had eaten very little food; everything solid seemed to stick in my throat and refuse to be swallowed.

I was too tired in the evening to attempt to go on with my writing.

I had practically no supper, and sat in the easy-chair, glancing through Robert Hichens' book, *Flames*, a 6d. edition of which I had bought a few weeks previously to read on a long journey (but had not read after all). I had read the book years ago, when it first came out, and this glancing through it brought the whole story vividly back to my mind. As every one knows, it is a most terrible tale of obsession, brought about by spiritualistic, séance-room experiments.

I went to bed early, being so tired.

On referring since to the calendar in my diary, I see that the day and hour at which I did get into bed that night is down in the calendar as

being the exact day and hour of the New Moon.

Is there really, as superstitiously believed by all nations, any connection between Luna and lunacy?

I did not read in bed, but blew out the candle immediately. My head had scarcely touched the pillow, when a man's voice—a very pleasant, bari-tone voice—proceeding apparently from the large arm-chair by the fire-place, asked clearly and aloud—

“Are you awake?”

I raised myself on my left elbow, and facing the direction whence the voice came, and feeling suddenly no longer tired, but brisk and most alert, I answered—

“Yes, wide awake. Who are you?”

(I have never in my life heard any “voices,” and should have been extremely startled at hearing one then had I been in my right senses. As it was, I was no more startled than one is startled by dreams, when the most astonishing and unlikely things seem quite natural and ordinary.)

The “Voice” ignored my question and went on—

“Are you not the author of ‘——’?” (mentioning a book which, five years previously, had taken me six months' incessant labour to write. It dealt largely with occultism.)

“Yes!” I exclaimed in surprise. “But how can you possibly know of it? It never was published.”

“Well, to prove to you that I do know it, is

not the motto to the book '——'?" (The voice quoted in full the three lines of poetry which I had put as a motto.)

"Perfectly correct! But how can you know? Are you ——?" (I mentioned a publisher who had offered to publish the book.)

"No, I am not."

"Are you one of his 'readers'?"

"No."

"Are you a 'reader' at any other publisher's?"

"No."

"Well, then, how on earth can you have read my book at all?"

"I did not say that I had read it."

This rather nonplussed me.

"Ah! Then you haven't read it?" I remarked after a pause.

"Yes I have—at least extracts from it. The fact is a friend of mine read it."

"Oh? Is he a 'reader' anywhere?"

"No."

"Then where could *he* have read it?"

"At ——'s."

"But if he isn't a 'reader' there I don't understand how he could have read the thing at all."

"He isn't a 'reader' there, but he works there. He read the book because they told him it was such an extraordinary one. It is he who told me about it, and showed me extracts he had copied from it."

"What is your friend's name?" I asked.

"He might not like me to tell you."

“Oh! I beg your pardon—I did not mean to be rudely inquisitive—but the whole thing seems to me so inexplicable. What did your friend think of the book?”

“It made the greatest impression on him—it changed his whole views of life.”

(“Now I wonder if it changed them for the better or the worse,” I thought to myself; “I am rather curious to know that, but I am not going to court a second snub by asking for any further information whatever about that friend.”)

“Yes, it changed his whole life. It made him join such-and-such a community.”

Again I longed to inquire whether joining that community had enabled that friend to find what he sought; but again, for the same reason as before, I refrained, and merely remarked—

“Oh?”

“Yes. He tells me everything, you know.”

“So it appears.” (I was determined not to evince the smallest further curiosity about that friend.)

In my room I had a copy of the work of art of a celebrated living artist—a man who is completely unknown to me personally, but for whose genius as an artist I have always had the greatest admiration.

The voice said to me—

“The young man depicted in such-and-such a position in that work of art in your room is this friend of mine about whom we have been speaking. He was the model from which that figure was drawn.”

This statement interested me very much. I said quickly—

“If you know so much about the creation of that work, you must be the artist? You must be ——?” (I named the artist’s name—which, for the remainder of this history, I will alter to the fictitious one of “Ray Hall.”)

The voice did not deny this indictment, and throughout the entire remainder of my attack of madness I was fully convinced that this man’s voice continually holding converse with me was the voice of that artist. I see now, on carefully reviewing the whole thing, that this voice never once actually admitted to being that artist; it merely never denied it, and always answered instantly to that name whenever I summoned it.

How long exactly the conversation lasted that night I cannot tell, but when the voice ceased talking to me I dropped off quietly to sleep.

CHAPTER II

THE next morning I was, apparently, perfectly normal, in every respect except one. I clearly remembered the conversation of the previous night, and it still seemed to me the most ordinary occurrence. I merely thought how pleasant it was to be able thus to hold converse with some one so entirely congenial to me in tastes, and that now I should never feel lonely any more in that lodging-room, as the voice had said we should always be able to talk to each other as we had done the previous night, whenever we wished—we were so completely *en rapport*.

I felt disinclined to commence the new story I had intended starting that morning, but I occupied myself with a variety of other usual occupations—lunched out at a restaurant (but quite forgot to order in any food to be sent to my lodging for that evening and for Sunday, as I should have done). No “voices” whatever talked to me that day. Again I went to bed early.

Again, immediately I blew out the light, the same man’s voice which had been conversing with me the previous evening recommenced. It asked gently—

“Darling, are you afraid?”

I raised myself in bed and looked in the direction whence the voice seemed unmistakably to proceed—namely the large table in the centre of the room—but I could see nothing. (The street lights would have enabled me to see objects in my room.) It sounded exactly as if the speaker were seated on the edge of that table nearest to my bed. I felt most wide-awake.

“No,” I answered, “I am not in the least afraid; why should I be afraid? But who are you?”

Again the voice evaded any direct reply. Again, when I asked him point-blank if he was “Ray Hall” he did not deny it. What he said was, that we were “twin souls,” as was proved by our being able to communicate like this when any distance apart, and that in less than three months’ time we should infallibly be united. He said it would be impossible for anything on earth to come between people who could converse direct with each other as we could, no matter what distance separated us. He then began talking about the Medium at the office. He said he wished, for a particular purpose, to engage her as his secretary. He asked me if I thought she would accept the billet?

I said I thought she would.

He then said I was to speak to her on the subject, and offer her the appointment.

I said I would when next I saw her. Afterwards I said to him—

“You aren’t here bodily, I know. It sounds

as if you were sitting on the edge of the big table in my room; where are you really?"

"In the easy-chair, smoking, in my own study. That is where I am bodily, and I am merely sending my thought to you. But shall we try an experiment?"

"What experiment?" I asked.

"Shall I try if I can send my spirit to you?" inquired the voice.

"Yes! That will be a most interesting experiment!" I exclaimed. "Try it!"

It seemed to me as if I were divided up into three distinct *layers* of being—layers that should, normally, interpenetrate each other, but now were arranged in three separate, superimposed strata. On the bed lay my physical body, fully awake and conscious. Directly over it, at the distance of a few feet up, was poised in mid-air my human soul, consisting of a replica of my physical body made of a substance like flame. Above that again, at about an equal distance up, was my spirit, which seemed to be composed of cold white light—more like electric light than anything else.

Almost immediately after the preceding remarks, I experienced a vivid and most distinct sensation; not in my physical body at all, but high up near the ceiling in my "top layer." As I have never felt any sensation in the least like it, I cannot describe it. It seemed as if two electric lights—my own spirit and another's—had merged into one light, with a sort of electric shock.

Directly I felt it I exclaimed excitedly (for I was most interested in the experiment)—

"You have managed it! I can feel you here!"

The voice answered—

"I feel absolutely nothing!"

"Oh, what a pity!" I exclaimed. "You don't know what you are missing! Evidently you must be unconscious in your spirit. That is most unfortunate. If you are unconscious you might as well not be here at all, as far as you are concerned. Try and send your soul, and see if you are conscious in that, apart from your body."

"The next instant I felt another, totally different sensation; this time in my "second layer." It was a warm, magnetic sort of sensation, and seemed caused by the mingling of two fiery flames.

"I can feel that!" exclaimed the voice. "This is good enough for me!"

"Ah! that is because you were unconscious in your spirit!" I said. "That utterly surpassed this! However, it is useless trying spirit-experiments if you are unconscious in the spirit,—you had better just stay here in your soul."

He stayed, talking, some time, and then remarked—

"Are you aware that I am still up and dressed, in my smoking-room, and that it must be between two and three in the morning now, I should think? I am afraid I shall have to leave and go and get into bed."

"Very well," I said. "Good-night! Try this experiment again to-morrow night—but go to bed first, as I have done."

"All right.—Good-night!"

"Good-night," I answered, and went off to sleep.

I slept very late into Sunday morning, not getting up when I was called, but only when my breakfast was brought up. As I had forgotten to order in any food, there was practically nothing for breakfast.

I began eating, but no sooner had I commenced than I heard a burst of music. It sounded as if massed bands were playing, out of doors, close to the open window.

I stopped eating and listened, entranced. After a few minutes the music ceased suddenly. I recommenced my breakfast. Again another burst of music occurred. I got up and looked out of the window in every direction, to see whence the music proceeded, but there was no band in sight, and apparently no place where any band could possibly be stationed, playing.

Again and again these short outbursts of music occurred. The music seemed familiar to me, but I could not quite put a name to it, and came to the conclusion it was something out of *Lohengrin* or *Tannhäuser*.

When the landlady came up to clear away the breakfast I asked her what band it was that had been playing so well outside?

She said she did not know, but perhaps it was a Volunteer band marching past. I said, No, it had been stationary music. I asked her if she had not heard it? She replied, No, she had heard nothing in the way of music that morning.

This surprised me very much, as I felt sure no one in the house could have helped hearing such loud playing so close by and noticing such a mag-

nificent band. Again I inquired if she was sure she had heard nothing, and again she assured me she had not.

I dressed leisurely, attended to several cages full of birds I possessed, and then went out to lunch with some people a little distance off. I heard no more talking nor music while out, and the people with whom I lunched apparently noticed nothing amiss with me.

I left soon after lunch to return to my lodging, but feeling disinclined to go in or to do any work, I went and walked alone in Regent's Park for about an hour, and then strolled back about four o'clock. I was tired, and threw myself down on the sofa without removing my out-door clothes.

Immediately my "twin-soul's" voice recommenced talking to me about the most ordinary, everyday affairs; I think he opened the conversation by some remark about the hat I had on! He talked to me for the remainder of the evening.

I ate no tea, and the landlady informed me I had ordered in nothing for supper. I said it didn't matter, I would eat some bread-and-butter; but I don't think I even did that. (I don't think there was any butter!)

All the evening I played hymn-tunes on my violin, each one suggested and remarked upon by "Ray Hall." Sometimes he called for a different tune to any special hymn. Once he called for a third tune to one hymn, and I said I only knew of two to it, and asked him to whistle the third tune and then I would play it. I could not hear the whist-

ling when he said he was whistling it, although I listened attentively.

He said that it was evident that although we had greatly improved on the Marconi system of wireless telegraphy, we had not yet by any means perfected it,—we could not transmit whistling as well as thoughts and talking.

Until I fell asleep in bed the talking continued incessantly.

About four o'clock in the morning I was suddenly woken up by feeling that same indescribable sensation (a sort of electric shock) in my "spirit" or "top layer," high up above me.

Immediately afterwards "Ray Hall's" voice announced—

"Are you awake? I am coming."

I said: "You are not *coming*, you have *come*! I feel you here now."

"No," he said, "I can't have come; I have not felt anything."

"Ah!" I said, "it is your spirit again, only, and you are still unconscious in it; you will have to send your soul instead, as you did before."

Again, the same second, totally different sensation occurred.

I stayed awake for some time, conversing with Ray Hall, who remained there the whole time, "in his soul" (which was tangible but not visible to me). Then I fell asleep again, and got up in the morning as usual.

It was Monday, and I remembered I had to go to office. I went on the top of a bus; and Ray Hall talked to me the whole time, and I

answered him. But, as he had explained to me (and I had found by experience), that *thought* produced a loud voice that was heard by him and by none of the people around me, I attracted no attention, as I did not utter a word aloud, but merely *thought* whatever I wanted to say. The voice produced by my thought sounded to my ears as loud, and in every respect the same, as my ordinary speaking voice.

I sat and did absolutely nothing at the office except draw patterns on my blotting-paper. Luckily, there happened to be very little requiring to be done. The voice talked to me occasionally. The Medium glanced up suddenly and looked at me in a most curious way when I was being spoken to once by the voice, and I wondered whether, perhaps, she had heard what was said to me. I saw none of the others in the room heard a thing.

I lunched at a restaurant with two other women journalists (not the Medium), but only spoke to them when they actually addressed me; and all the time I watched, with interested attention, some workmen demolishing a house opposite.

I was told by the voice to invite the Medium back to tea with me to tell her about the secretaryship.

She seemed disinclined to come; but I would take no refusal, and brought her back early with me.

I thought I would give her tea first, and tell her about the appointment afterwards.

I set to work boiling water in the etna, and

the Medium sat down on the sofa, took up the book *Flames*, which was lying on the table near, and began glancing through it.

As I waited for the kettle to boil, the voice recommenced talking to me. It told me to tell the Medium about the appointment, and to add that the following day there would be an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph* to say that Ray Hall was needing a secretary, but that the number of the house given in the advertisement was not the number to which the Medium was to go, as it was a private hotel consisting of three (or five, I forget which) houses, and the address to which the Medium was to apply was the house containing Ray Hall's private rooms, and that would be how he would know which was the right secretary to engage of all the applicants. The others would, of course, all go to the number put in the advertisement.

I turned round to the Medium and I said—

“Look here, I have never in my life before heard any ‘voices’ talking to me; but a voice that declares itself to be Ray Hall, the artist, is talking to me most distinctly now, and telling me to tell you the following.”

I recounted the whole instructions.

“What do you intend to do?” I asked, when I had delivered the message.

“I shall go,” she answered unhesitatingly.

“Well,” I said, “if you take my advice you won't go unless you see that advertisement in the paper mentioned. I tell you candidly I haven't a notion whether this voice *is* Ray Hall's, or

whose or what it is. I hear it as distinctly as I hear yours; but I have never heard anything of this sort before, and I can't possibly tell what it is. That advertisement will be a good test of its genuineness. If that advertisement isn't in, it will prove the whole thing to be a mistake. Don't you have anything to do with it unless that advertisement is actually in, as the voice says."

"Very well, I will wait and see the advertisement before calling. But if it isn't in, I shall get an introduction and call on Ray Hall next Saturday."

I exclaimed, "If you do that, I forbid you to mention my name in the matter! My opinion is that if you go to him, unless that advertisement has appeared as he says, you will make an utter ass of yourself. I won't be mixed up in the business. You understand?"

The woman acquiesced, and promised not to go unless the advertisement appeared.

We had tea, and the Medium was preparing to depart, when the voice began talking to me again.

"Take that book *Flames*, which is lying on your table," it said, "and give it to the Medium, and say to her that I have told you that that is a true story, and that she is to bring that book with her when she comes to call on me about the secretaryship, and I will tell her the whole truth about that obsession."

I did and said exactly as directed, and the Medium took the book and departed with it, having blindly swallowed as "spirit" messages

all I had told her, and being evidently fully determined to act on them!

From what the voice said to me, after the woman had left with this book *Flames*, I understood Ray Hall wanted to engage this woman as a Medium to enable him to catch the obsessing demon described in the book.

He had previously said that *Flames* was a true story and no invention, and now added that this obsessing demon was still at large, working havoc in the world. He meant to catch and destroy it by means of this Medium.

That whole evening talking went on incessantly.

CHAPTER III

ON Tuesday morning I was woken by the sound of men's voices disputing.

The "spirit" of R. B. (of whom the Medium was so afraid, and about whom I had just finished writing a story, upon which I had worked so much over-hours that it was certainly one of the chief causes of my break-down) was declaring angrily that the Medium had lied about him, that in consequence I had written a story about him that was not true, and that he intended to prevent me from publishing this story.

Ray Hall's voice was saying that I should do exactly as I chose with my own story.

This enraged R. B. more than ever, and he said I should do what he ordered me to do. He added that I only cared for Ray Hall because I believed he was the creator of a certain work of art, and that if I knew that that work had really not been created by Ray Hall at all, but by himself, R. B., I should cease to care for Ray Hall.

This made Ray Hall furious in his turn.

He called R. B. a liar, and said that he had nothing to do with the creation of the work in question, which was Ray Hall's own work, as he claimed.

R. B. said it was not, and that he was going to tell me so, and also order me to burn my own story.

Ray Hall exclaimed, "I forbid you to speak to that woman!—You are a dead man, and it will frighten her to be spoken to from the dead."

R. B. asked sneeringly, "Who will prevent my speaking to her?"

"I will!" retorted Ray Hall, in a voice that sounded as if the speaker were about to attack R. B.

I thought to myself, "These two men will be having a fight directly if I don't interfere; and as Ray Hall, I can hear, is frightened on my account, that will give R. B. an advantage over him, and he may perhaps kill him. I must stop this."

I sat up in bed, and said, "R. B., I have heard everything that you have said, and I am not in the least afraid of you. Please speak to me direct, and say what you want to say to me."

We had a long talk about my story, and he said the Medium had maligned him and told me what was not true, and that therefore I had written what was not true, and he asked me to burn the story.

I said if this was the fact I would certainly burn the story, because I did not wish to malign him or to publish any untruths, not because I was the least afraid of him.

He said, "Do you know *why* you are not afraid of me? It is because I have been imitating Ray Hall's voice the whole time and not talking to you in my real voice, which would very much have frightened you. Haven't you noticed that?"

"No!" I exclaimed; "but, of course, I do notice it now that you have called my attention to it! Speak to me in your own voice; I tell you I am not in the least afraid of you, in fact I rather like you—I always have. You are a *man* anyway, not a dressed-up doll like most of the present-day specimens calling themselves men!"

He began speaking in the deepest bass voice that sounded such leagues distant from me that I could not distinguish a word.

I said, "You are such a way off I can't hear a word you say. Where is your wife? Isn't she here? Ask her to tell me what you are saying."

Then a woman's voice chimed in, and said she was R. B.'s wife, and I had a long chat with her. She said if I would burn that story of mine I should never regret doing so, as in return she would always be willing to inspire me with as many stories as I wished to write.

I said, "Is it true what R. B. says about that celebrated work of art of Ray Hall's being really R. B.'s creation and not Ray Hall's?"

She said, "No, it is not true. It is Ray Hall's own work."

"Well," I remarked, "it is a pity R. B. doesn't confine himself to the truth."

"Yes," she said, "it is. And, unfortunately, it was not all perfectly true what he told you about the Medium's statements about himself being all untrue."

"Well," I said, "it doesn't matter; I'll burn the story anyway."

"I don't believe you mean to!" interposed

R. B.'s voice. "You want to get it published, I am certain."

I exclaimed, "How dare you doubt my word!" I was very angry.

R. B.'s wife interfered, and made her husband apologise, and said she was sure I did mean to burn the story, as I knew they would wish me to burn it.

"It seems to me," I remarked sarcastically to R. B., "that there is nothing in my story half as insulting to you as the insult you offered yourself in trying, as you admit you did, to get your book written by such an absolutely illiterate woman as that Medium! That's what it seems to me!"

He burst out laughing, and exclaimed, "I had never looked at it in that light before! Look here, you shall do what you like with that story of yours; you shan't burn it unless you wish to."

I said, "I do wish to, and I have told you I mean to."

"Well," said his wife, "if you really are willing to burn it, will you get up and burn it now?"

I replied, "I can't do that, because any minute the landlady may be coming in to call me, and she will wonder what on earth I am doing making such a bonfire. But I will burn it without fail later on, when I am sure of no interruption."

"But," remonstrated she, "if you leave it about, the landlady, or some of the people in the house, will probably read it."

I said, "I will get up now and lock the MS. up to prevent any one's getting it."

I got up, found the manuscript, and locked it up in a box under my bed. Then I got back into bed, and completely lost all consciousness.

The next thing I remember was suddenly coming to—long after I had been called, and my breakfast had been laid (of both of which I had been entirely unconscious)—and finding myself in my nightgown springing up on to the low box into which I had locked my MS.,—which box was now out in the room, and not under the bed where I had left it before losing consciousness,—and I was throwing up my arms above my head and exclaiming aloud, *à propos* of absolutely nothing—

"It is the man that is the coward!"

My words conveyed no meaning whatever to my own mind. I had no notion to what "man" I was alluding, not having any in my thought at all.

The instant I became conscious, I exclaimed—

"What am I saying and doing? How perfectly nonsensical, theatrical, ridiculous, and wholly unlike myself! That seemed like some sudden obsession! I am certain that was not myself—somebody else seized my body. How very extraordinary!"

I had a short, sharp tussle with this invisible obsessor for the possession of my body, and came off victorious. I stepped quietly off the box, walked across the room, and stared steadily at myself in the overmantel for several seconds.

"I *seem* to be myself all right," I remarked,

after this steady scrutiny; "I have certainly got my body back myself now from whomsoever that was that seized it, and I mean to keep it. I won't have this sort of thing! But that was most extraordinary. I have never experienced anything so extraordinary or like that in my life before!"

I turned away and began quietly to wash and dress myself.

When I had dressed as far as my dress, and was about to commence brushing my hair, a voice said to me—

"You have not put on clean clothes this morning!"

I answered, "No, I have not—but I put on everything clean on Monday morning."

"Exactly; but not this morning. Your clothes are not clean."

I looked at them, and said, "Well, I suppose they are not absolutely clean."

"No, they are not," said the voice. "Change them and put on clean ones. Never wear the same clothes for two days; put on everything clean every day."

"Well," I said, "if I am to do that I shall have to buy more clothes, that is evident; because I shan't have enough to change everything every day."

"Well, at any rate you can change now," said the voice. "You admit your clothes are dirty; you can't wish to wear dirty things. Change everything, to your vest."

I felt quite ashamed at having got into dirty clothes, and I undressed and changed everything,

including my vest. When I had re-dressed, and again arrived at the stage of brushing my hair, an unknown voice exclaimed suddenly—

“A fiend is coming!”

I paused, brush in hand, and looked quietly all round the room.

“I see no fiend,” I remarked deliberately; “and I don’t feel as if any were here.”

“Mr. ‘Jones’!” exclaimed another voice, so suddenly and so close to my left ear that it made me start and turn quickly to see who had spoken. It sounded to me like R. B.’s voice, close at my elbow. Finding there was no one to be seen, I answered quietly—

“Mr. ‘Jones’ is not a fiend, and he is not here.”

(NOTE.—With regard to this Mr. “Jones,” I would state that he and his wife are old friends of mine. They live in the country, and, at intervals, I see them when they are in London, or I go and stay at their house. Very shortly before I went off my head, I had a letter from Mr. “Jones” saying that, in the course of his duties (he is a clergyman) he would be obliged soon to be coming to London in order to see about some arrangements for getting a poor parishioner of his into the * * * * * Asylum. He hoped that, as he would be some hours in London, he might be able, if I was disengaged, to call and take me out to tea. This letter, arriving just at the time it did, put both Mr. “Jones” and the * * * * * Asylum fixedly into my head. I may add that,

previous to that letter, it had been fully six months or so since I had either seen Mr. "Jones," or heard from or of him. He is nothing to me beyond an ordinary friend, most exceptionally well-read, intellectual, and literary—and therefore, to me, interesting.)

After I had remarked to the unknown voice speaking to me that Mr. "Jones" was not a fiend—and that he was not here, the voice answered testily—

"Oh, well, if you are not afraid of a fiend, of course it doesn't matter!"

"But," I said, "I have never seen a fiend; if I did, I think I should be very much afraid. I am only a woman, and I don't pretend to be braver than any other woman. I shouldn't at all like to meet a fiend. What shall I do?"

"Kneel down and pray," said the voice.

"Where shall I kneel?"

"There, in the sunlight by the fireplace. Be sure and kneel in the sunlight."

I deposited the brush on the mantelpiece, and knelt down as directed.

"Lean more forward into the sunlight," ordered the voice.

I obeyed,

"Bend your head lower."

Again I obeyed; and my hair, which was hanging loose, fell all over my face.

"Push back your hair from off your face," the voice commanded.

"Oh! what *does* it matter where my hair is

when I am praying?" I exclaimed impatiently, for all these elaborate preparations were beginning to annoy me. However, I pushed back my hair as directed, but as my head remained in the bent position ordered, the hair immediately tumbled once more over my face, shutting out all view of everything except what was just directly beneath my eyes. This happened to be a small black coal-scuttle.

Reflected in this shiny surface, I saw quite distinctly a picture of a very well-known woman occultist. (She is unacquainted with me, but I am acquainted with her both through her books and her lectures.)

"Oh!" I thought, "this is all right. She understands all about these sort of things. Evidently this is part of some occult experiment, and when the fiend appears she means to tackle it."

I did not feel in the least afraid, and was racking my brain to think what prayer would be suited to this most unusual occasion, when suddenly I experienced a violent, physical sensation, inside my own body. It felt like some wholly extraneous object jumping energetically up and down inside me. It did not in the least hurt me, but it was so violent and unaccountable it frightened me. I could not understand what was happening to me. (I neither saw nor heard a thing.)

I thought to myself, "Has this perhaps anything to do with that fiend that they were warning me against?" And instantly the voices confirmed this fear, saying that the fiend had now

got inside my body, because I had not been resisting it; that the explanation of this whole mysterious sensation was that I had been seduced by a fiend, and that I should therefore have a fiend-child.

CHAPTER IV

THIS sent me off into a perfect frenzy.

I fully believed it to be the true explanation of the unaccountable sensation I had experienced.

I began calling on God, and everything and every one I could think of, in heaven and earth, to come to my rescue. I sobbed and cried and wrung my hands in agony of terror and despair. I got up off my knees and rocked myself to and fro on the arm of the big arm-chair, exclaiming—

“O God! What *have* I done, that such an awful thing should have happened to me? O God! O God! O God! O God!”

While I was going on thus, like the demented creature that I was, the wall of the room facing me seemed suddenly to fade away before my eyes, and up near the ceiling—but as if far away in the dim distance—I saw a crowd of people seated in what looked like a very large box at a theatre. They seemed to have been observing, from that great way off, all that had been taking place in my room. They seemed to be the people who had been conducting the experiment which had resulted in this awful catastrophe to me.

Seated in the centre of the box, I could dis-

tinguish the woman-occultist whose reflection I had seen in the japanned coal-scuttle, and I could hear her sobbing; whilst beside her, turning towards her so that his face was hidden from me, was a man standing up and denouncing her and these infernal experiments, in a voice that I instantly recognised as Ray Hall's.

He said, "Mrs. ——, you are a fiend, and this is your doing!"

I stopped sobbing, and exclaimed, "Ray Hall! Take care what you say! I am quite certain that Mrs. —— would never have harmed me intentionally. It may be nobody's fault, but I am simply done for!" and I recommenced sobbing.

He said, "I am going to drag all these fiends of people, with their infernal experiments, to justice! I swear I will denounce them and their practices, publicly, to the whole world! If I die for it, I will have vengeance on them for the fiendish wrong that they have committed!"

"What is the use of vengeance?" I moaned. "It will help nobody. Stop their experiments, to save other victims—not for any vengeance. As for me, anything now is too late to save me; I am done for!" And I sobbed and sobbed.

"No, you are not done for!" he exclaimed; "you are my wife, and I will never desert you!"

"Oh no!" I sobbed, "I am not fit now to be the wife of any decent man; but I call God to witness that I am a perfectly innocent woman!"

"You are! And you are my wife, and I will

never desert you, but stand by you through all this, and get to the bottom of this whole thing. I swear it!"

"Oh!" I said, "you have spoken like a true man, Ray Hall. I can never be your wife now; but I will live and not kill myself, in order that you and I together may get to the bottom of this whole awful affair."

I went on sobbing uninterruptedly, and moaning—

"Oh! why didn't you jump down from that gallery, Ray Hall, into the arena, to help me and save me from the fiend? Now all help is useless, and what am I to do? O God! What am I to do?"

I walked across to my bed and flung myself face-downwards upon it, sobbing ceaselessly. I paid no further attention to the crowd in the gallery, which seemed to vanish in the same manner in which it had appeared.

Presently, some voice exclaimed excitedly—

"Another fiend is coming!"

I started up in terror from the bed, and said—

"Where shall I pray?"

"There, in the sunlight by the sofa," answered the voice.

I threw myself upon my knees in the spot indicated, and was just about to commence frantic prayers, when suddenly I thought, "No! Why should I pray? Prayer is utterly useless! I prayed before and nobody helped me. I am perfectly innocent. I will not pray; I demand justice! Besides, what does it matter how many

fiends come now? I have nothing more to lose!"

I got up from my knees, burst into a wild laugh, and quoting—

“‘Come one, come all!’”—

I sat myself down on the sofa and gazed round the room, feeling that if I caught sight of any approaching fiend I would not wait for it to attack me, but would attack it with the courage and fury of despair, and frighten it a good deal more than any fiend whatever would now be able to frighten me.

I neither saw nor felt a thing.

Finding nothing was coming, I got up and was walking across the room to throw myself again upon the bed to sob, when suddenly thousands of mad voices commenced yelling in my ears.

What those voices are like defies description. No human being, who has not actually experienced it, can imagine such hell-torment.

The voices seemed to be legion, and each separate voice felt like a charge of dynamite exploding in my head, rending and shattering the living substance of my brain.

I stopped dead-short in the centre of the room, held my head between my two hands (for my very skull felt as if being blasted), and said aloud, quite quietly and slowly, these exact words—

“My God! This awful thing that has happened to me has sent me stark, staring mad! This is unmistakably madness. And yet I am sane enough to know that I *am* mad, and I shall

do nothing that these voices are yelling at me to do. I shall go and have a good square meal, for it is my belief that one half of this is sheer starvation."

It was midday, and I had not had a morsel of food.

In a perfect agony of mind and body, and with those screaming voices still shattering my brain, I finished my dressing. I hastily twisted up my hair and pinned it; I put on my dress, and hunted about for a lace tie and a brooch to finish it off. I thought—

"I must compose myself and dress myself properly; if I go out looking as wild as I am feeling, I shall attract every one's attention, and perhaps be taken up in the street as a madwoman before I have had time to get to the bottom of all this. I mean to live and get to the bottom of this."

Gradually the worst paroxysm of those voices passed off, and there remained only about three or four shouting at me and telling me to do different things. These voices seemed to me to be the voices of that crowd in the balcony, who were frightened at what had happened, and were telling me what to do: "Go to Ray Hall, he has said he will help you!" "Go to Mrs. ——" (the occultist), "she will understand!" were the two chief orders I could distinguish; but other voices seemed disputing together and yelling other orders out at me, which I could not catch.

I said aloud, quietly, "It is impossible to do simultaneously half a dozen different things, as

you all are telling me to do. I am not going to do what any one of you tells me; I am going to go and have a good meal."

"If you do, you will be too late to catch Ray Hall," shouted one voice. "He is leaving town. Go to him at once; if you wait to have a meal you will miss him, and then there will be no one in the world to help you!"

I put on my out-door clothes, and remarked, "I have no intention whatever of going to Ray Hall. I have told you I am going to have a good meal."

I walked to the nearest restaurant and ordered a plate of hot mutton and vegetables. All the time the voice continued shouting in my ear that I should be too late to catch Ray Hall if I stayed there any longer, and kept on urging me to go to him at once.

I took not the slightest notice of it.

A smartly-dressed woman, with a poodle tied up with gay red ribbons, came and sat at the table opposite mine. I watched the couple in a determined endeavour to distract my mind; observing how the dog sat up to the table on the chair beside his mistress, and all that he did. I ate my luncheon when it was brought, and then, finding I was absent-mindedly offering my money to pay at the lift-opening where the provisions came up from the kitchen, I pulled myself together resolutely, paid at the proper desk, and thought out what I had better do.

Some friends of mine were in lodgings near. I debated whether to go to them, but thought,

“They may not be in, and if they are they won’t understand anything about occult matters like this, or know what has happened or what to do. I must find some one who will understand, and get to the bottom of this whole inexplicable horror.”

I walked irresolutely up and down at Baker Street bus junction, wondering what bus I had better take, and where I had better go. A paper-seller was there. I asked him if he had the *Daily Telegraph*, as I thought I would buy one to see if the advertisement for a secretary were really in or not. The man had no *Daily Telegraph* left, he said.

All this time the voice never ceased urging me to go to Ray Hall, as the one person who did, and would, understand, and who meant to act.

I decided I could not do that, but would go to Mrs. ——. “She, at any rate, will know all that has happened,” I thought, “as she witnessed the whole thing. She will help me, I am sure, if she can, or advise me what I had better do, or, at any rate, explain to me what it is that has happened to me. I cannot endure this unknown and frightful uncertainty any longer.”

I took a bus, and went to the offices of the occult society to which Mrs. —— belongs. On the stairs I met a Mrs. X., with whom I am slightly acquainted, talking to some other lady. I said to her—

“Is Mrs. —— here to-day?”

She answered, “No; she has gone to California.”

I paused irresolutely. What should I do now? Mrs. X. I knew to be an intimate friend of Mrs. —'s, and I rather thought I had recognised her amongst that company in the gallery.

"As Mrs. — isn't in England, I think I had better try and find out from Mrs. X. what has happened," I concluded. "But if she doesn't already know the whole thing, what on earth am I to say to her? I really can't tell this woman, whom I know so slightly, what I believe has happened to me—that I have been seduced by a fiend; I will tell her I have been *obsessed* by a fiend."

I said to her, "Might I speak to you for a few minutes, if you are not busy?"

"Certainly," she said, and led the way into a private room near.

Without the smallest preliminary I said—

"I have been obsessed by a fiend; what am I to do?"

She glanced quickly at me, and then commenced tracing the pattern on the carpet with the point of her umbrella without answering a word.

"Well," I reiterated impatiently, "what am I to do?"

"I don't know," she said slowly. "Tell me, are you living in London?"

"Yes," I said, "I am. I am in a lodging; but I don't mean to go back there. I am certain the room is haunted by a fiend."

She said, "I am sorry I have no room to offer you, but Mrs. P." (a lady with whom I was also

very slightly acquainted) "will, I am sure, be very glad to put you up, if you will come to her."

I did not feel at all inclined to make myself so indebted to the lady mentioned, and I said, "Where does she live—in London?"

"No, but close outside. I know she would put you up."

"Oh, thanks, but I think I will go to some friends of my own, in London, for to-night. But what am I to do about this fiend?—That's what I want to know."

"Will you come with me and see Miss V.?" asked Mrs. X.

Miss V. is one of the most prominent members of that society; she is also one of the shrewdest and most level-headed business women I have ever come across. I thought to myself, "If any of these people know anything, or have any sense, she will have." Therefore I acquiesced readily, and accompanied Mrs. X. to Miss V.'s business address.

We were ushered into Miss V.'s private sitting-room, where she was seated alone. I shook hands with her, and said: "Look here, what am I to do? I have been obsessed by a fiend."

She looked me up and down from head to foot with an expression of the most unmitigated astonishment and contempt (her previous opinion of me having been much the same as mine of her), and remarked at last—

"Well, really, I would never have *believed* that a sensible girl like you would have come here to talk such utter rubbish!"

“But,” I said, “it is no rubbish! I tell you it is a fact. And I don’t know what on earth I am to do.”

“Why, put such idiotic ideas out of your head! —that’s what you had better do!” retorted Miss V. contemptuously.

I began walking up and down the room in great agitation. I thought, “This is hopeless! Either these women are perfectly ignorant and unable to help me, or else they know everything concerning this business, and are so frightened at what has happened that they are going to have nothing to do with me, and probably mean to leave me to the fate of being locked up as a mad-woman, to get me out of the way, and this whole disastrous affair hushed up. I would never have believed these two would have been guilty of such moral cowardice; certainly Mrs. — never would —but she is weeks’ journey distant, and I simply must get help somewhere at once. I can’t stand this any longer; I feel beside myself over this whole affair. It is evident I shan’t get any help here, and there is nobody to whom I can turn who will understand what has happened. I simply must go to Ray Hall—there is no one else left. If I don’t find out soon what really has happened to me, and get help, I shall go incurably mad.”

I recollected the name of the street in Bloomsbury which Ray Hall’s voice had told me to tell the Medium as his address, but I could not remember the number. I turned to Miss V. and said, “Have you got an *Artists’ Year Book* here?”

"No, I haven't."

I began looking at a large bookcase against the wall.

"I have got to go and see somebody, but I have forgotten his number," I said; "it would be in that book. Are you quite sure you haven't got that book?"

"Quite."

"Oh, well, I must go. I daresay I shall find the number," I said, and turned to leave.

"Look here," said Mrs. X., "will you come back here to me afterwards, when you have done what you have got to do? I will wait for you here in this room."

"All right," I said; but I had no intention of returning, as they could, or would, do nothing to help me.

CHAPTER V

I GOT into a cab, and ordered the man to drive to the street in Bloomsbury.

He drove to Bloomsbury, but there was no such street, he told me, after wandering about for some time seeking it. We were close to the British Museum.

“Never mind,” I said, “I will get out here.” I thought, “I will go into the Reading-Room, and look up the right address in the *Artists’ Year Book*, or *Celebrities of the Year*, or some book of that sort.”

I paid the cabman, and went into the Museum. Then I remembered that I had no Reading-Room ticket, and felt very nonplussed. A voice said I could get a day-ticket by applying to the Head Librarian. I thought how silly I was not to have thought of that myself. I went to the Head Librarian’s room, and said I wanted the *Artists’ Year Book*. I was told it was not there. I said, “I mean I want a ticket, please, for the Reading-Room, to see it there.”

I got the ticket duly filled in, and went to the library and began searching for the catalogue containing the number of the book. I could not find the right catalogue. A voice said to me—

“Apply to the man in the centre of the room, next to the man with the cap on, and ask him to find the right catalogue for you.”

I did this, and the man called up an assistant, and sent him to find the catalogue for me. Before I had time to copy the name and number of the book on to the order-slip, the voice said—

“Don’t wait to write that ; Ray Hall is in the Reading-Room now, sitting at desk K. 41. Go to him at once.”

I left the catalogue and my half-written slip, and searched round the Reading-Room until I found the row and number indicated. Seated at that desk was a white-haired, very ugly old man in spectacles.

I thought, “This is all rubbish ! That is no more Ray Hall than I am !”

Seeing a vacant desk in the opposite row, I went there and sat down, collecting blotting-paper and pens to make it appear as if I had merely come to find a desk at which to write.

I thought, “I had much better go back and look out that address properly, and not pay any attention to these people who tell me to do other things which turn out to be nonsense.”

I went back, but my catalogue had been removed. Again I searched and could not find it. Again I applied to the man at the central desk, saying I had insufficiently copied the slip for the book I wanted. Again an assistant was sent to get me the catalogue and find me the place in it.

I filled in the slip and put it in the right

receptacle, but I had forgotten to state to which desk the book was to be brought to me. The assistant came after me and asked me where I was sitting?

I indicated the nearest vacant desk in sight, and sat down there and waited. He brought the book after some time, and I turned over the pages and saw that there were no addresses given in it at all.

"Oh!" I said, "this is useless; it isn't what I require, I can see. Please take it back."

He took back the book and went away.

I sat there a few minutes, and thought, "It is getting very late; I can't find the correct address, and it is useless wandering aimlessly about not knowing at what house I want to arrive. I had better give up trying to find Ray Hall, and go back to Mrs X."

I left the Museum, and was walking away, when I remembered I had omitted to call for my umbrella in the hall. I returned and got it. I took a bus and went back to Miss V.'s office, where Mrs. X. was patiently awaiting me.

She said, "Did you find the address?"

I answered, "No; but it doesn't matter."

"Have you had any tea, or anything to eat?" she asked, looking scrutinisingly at me.

"No," I said.

"Then just you come and have something to eat with me," she said.

I agreed, and she took me to a restaurant and ordered cold fowl and coffee for me, which I ate and drank.

I said, "Would you mind coming back with me to my room? I think some friends near will put me up for the night, but I must go and get my night-clothes."

She said that she intended going back with me, and seeing me to my friends.

We drove to my room in a hansom. I entered the room fully prepared to see a fiend sitting there in possession—but I saw nothing. Mrs. X. waited while I hurriedly put together my night-clothes, sponge, brushes, etc., into a string-bag, which happened to be the first thing upon which I could lay hands.

Then I suddenly remembered I had never kept my promise and burnt the manuscript of my story about R. B.

I unlocked the box under my bed, into which I had put the MS., intending to take the latter along with me and burn it at my friends' lodgings.

There was no sign of the manuscript in the box. I turned the whole box out and couldn't find it.

I said to Mrs. X., "I am so sorry to detain you, but I *must* find a manuscript of mine; would you mind waiting while I hunt for it?"

"Certainly I will wait," she said.

I turned out my drawers, I unlocked and searched my boxes, I looked everywhere, and there was no trace of that manuscript.

I rang the bell and summoned the landlady.

"Have you seen any manuscript of mine about," I asked her; "or taken any manuscript out of this room?"

"No," she said.

"I don't think I shall be back to-night," I said, "so don't expect me if I haven't returned before nine."

I thought I could not detain Mrs. X. any longer, so gave up the search for my story. Together we went to my friends (two sisters), who had lodgings quite close to mine. They were in the middle of dinner when I walked in, string-bag in hand. I said—

"I have got the horrors in that room of mine. May I sleep here to-night?"

They were very much surprised, but politely did their best to conceal it. They welcomed me, and asked me to have dinner. I said I had just dined.

They settled me on the couch, made me comfortable with pillows, and said I looked fagged-out. What had I been doing?

I said I had been on the go all day, and was very tired. I told them nothing of what had happened,—partly because I felt so very much in the dark myself as to what really had happened, and partly because I was sure they would not understand if I did tell them, they not having ever studied occult matters.

They gave me the *Daily Telegraph* to read while they were eating; so I looked for that advertisement, but could not find it.

"These things are full of discrepancies everywhere," I thought. "Again and again I find I have been misinformed."

When the sisters had finished dinner, they made

me drink a cup of hot cocoa, and then suggested that I should go to bed, which I felt very glad to do. There was no spare room or bed, so I shared the large bed of the elder sister.

Then followed a night that only Dante could adequately describe.

No sooner had I laid head on the pillow than a voice began saying that the fiend which had seduced me in my lodging was coming here.

I started up in bed, and thought, "They said it got me last time because I was not resisting it. Well, I mean to be prepared for it this time! My will is stronger than any fiend's; it must be, because good is stronger than evil. I'll set my will against this fiend's!"

I said to Miss E., who was just getting into bed, "Don't lie down and go to sleep, I implore you! Sit up and pray with me! If you don't, something awful will happen to me."

She tried to soothe me, and get me to lie down, but nothing would induce me to do so.

The voice of the fiend kept on saying, "As long as you keep awake and resist me with this force of will I cannot touch you, but immediately you fall asleep you will be in my power!"

For hours I sat up in bed, and made Miss E. sit up too, while I alternately prayed to God, or defied the fiend, aloud, in a perfect frenzy of mind.

At intervals the fiend ceased threatening me, and feigned to have left, in order to entrap me into falling asleep in fancied security; but I knew this was only a ruse, and I never for one instant

relaxed the tension at which I was keeping myself; for every time, after a short lull, it would invariably return suddenly. It always found me in the same state of tense, frenzied preparedness.

At last it said, "Oh! very well! Keep awake if you choose, or do what you choose—you are lost anyway. When you fall asleep, I have you instantly. You cannot keep awake always, if you do you will go mad. So in any case you are lost."

These words struck despair into my soul, but I said, "I can keep awake for this one night anyway, and I will."

I thought, "Perhaps I shall find help somewhere after to-night; perhaps I shall find somebody who can understand, who can help me. I must not think about anything further than the present or I shall go mad. To-night I must simply resist this fiend to the death, and think of nothing else."

Suddenly R. B.'s voice chimed in. He said, "You have broken your promise; you have never burnt that story."

I said, "I remembered my promise, and I looked everywhere for that MS. to burn it, but I could not find it."

He said, "You must search again. Get up now and go back to that room and find that MS."

I said, "No. I refuse to go back to that room now. If I do, the fiend will certainly get me. Here I am stronger than it, and can keep it at bay; if I return to that room it haunts it will be too powerful for me. I will not go."

"I insist on your going," he said.

"I absolutely refuse to go, for the reason I have told you. I will go there to-morrow and have another search for the story; but you know you told me yourself I might do what I liked about destroying it; so I haven't broken any faith with you in not burning it, although I did remember and did try to find the thing. You contradict yourself each time you speak to me about that story."

"Well," replied R. B., "what you say is true, and as you tried to keep your word I consider you have had punishment enough, and I have come to help you. But I am still very angry with that Medium, and mean to punish her. Now, do what I tell you and you will be quit of this fiend. Say aloud to it commandingly—

"I order you to leave this room, and to return to the place whence you came!"

I declaimed those words aloud, as ordered.

Immediately after that the air was rent by the most blood-curdling screams and shrieks that I have ever heard or imagined.

I felt half-dead with horror at the sounds, and said to R. B., "What frightful thing is happening?"

He said, "Those are the Medium's screams. That fiend came from her. When you ordered it to return whence it had come, it was obliged to return to her, as I intended it should. Now it is attacking her, and those are her screams for help."

"But," I exclaimed, "this is something too

appallingly horrifying! I cannot stand this. That woman must be rescued, but I cannot have that fiend back here. Tell me what to do."

He said, "She doesn't deserve to have any help, but if you insist on her being delivered out of the clutches of that fiend, say aloud to it, 'I order you to quit that woman and go to Hell.'"

Again I declaimed the command ordered.

The screams, however, instead of abating seemed to become worse and worse. Shriek after shriek rent the air, until my blood felt curdled with horror.

I said to R. B., "What is this? Has not that fiend obeyed my orders and left that woman?"

He said, "Yes, it has gone to Hell as you commanded; but, you see, the woman has gone mad from terror. Nothing now will stop her screams; she believes the fiend is still attacking her."

And those shrieks, such as one might imagine a madwoman, who believed herself attacked by a fiend, might utter in her frenzies, went on and on, until, as it seemed to me, at last my own mind gave way.

Again those countless, yelling, mad voices shattered my brain, like exploding dynamite bombs; again I was fully aware that I had gone mad, and that knowledge was a mental agony such as no one can imagine.

I gave up the struggle, and lay back perfectly motionless upon the pillow, staring straight into vacancy with wide-open, glassy eyes, that felt to me as if they were half out of their sockets.

This was at four o'clock in the morning, Miss E.

says. She thought I intended to go to sleep at last, and she lay down herself and dozed off at intervals. Each time she woke and looked at me I was lying in the same motionless attitude, with the same fixed, glassy stare.

CHAPTER VI

INSTEAD of my horrors being over, the very worst of them were taking place as I lay there so silent and motionless.

As I have said, I was fully aware, from that indescribable shattering of my brain-substance by those screaming voices, that I had gone out of my mind.

I lay there enduring this most frightful torment, physical and mental, and wondering to what asylum I had better go and give myself up the next morning.

I thought, "I am hopelessly insane—I am not fit to be at large any longer. I must certainly go into some asylum. I don't suppose there is a chance of my ever getting cured; though I believe the doctors do cure mad people sometimes. My God! To think of the thousands of mad people in asylums all over the country, and every one of them enduring this frightful agony. It is too horrible to contemplate. But I cannot understand how they go on living and do not die; I do not think I shall live through much more of this. The screams of these other mad people will kill me before much longer; they have almost completely shattered my brain already. I suppose

in an asylum it will be worse even than this; mad people will be screaming all round me, always. Good God! I wonder how long I shall have to stand it before I die? Well, thousands of other people are standing it, and stand it for years and years; I suppose there is no reason why I, rather than any one else, should not be mad, as thousands are. And no one seems to bother about them. But then, no one has any conception what indescribable, unsupportable agony of torment madness is. I myself never understood it before—I understand it now!”

While I lay, thinking this, the screams continued ceaselessly.

In the distance, to the right of me, the Medium's shrieks—horrible, blood-curdling shrieks—rent the air. Away to the left, I could hear a voice talking to Ray Hall (who also was raving mad, like myself), and telling him every sort of lie about me: that it was I who had sent him mad, that I had said I detested and despised him as an impostor and a thief for trying to palm off R. B.'s work of art as his own—and so on. Close beside me another voice was shouting into my ear every sort of statement concerning Ray Hall; all of which I knew to be lies like those being told to him about me. Each of us could hear the lies about ourself being told the other, but could not speak direct to each other to contradict them. All round, other voices, which seemed to be the mad people in every asylum in the entire world, were shouting, screaming, and calling for help.

The whole of this went on simultaneously, and

I could distinguish and follow the four separate sets distinctly; namely, the Medium's shrieks, the voice talking to me, the voice talking to Ray Hall and his answers thereto, and the mad people's voices.

After this had been going on for a long time, I at last heard the voice that was speaking to Ray Hall say—

“Take a dagger and go and kill that woman who has sent you mad. She is lying there perfectly defenceless; go and murder her!”

“Thank God!” I thought, “this will end it! Pray Heaven he does come and kill me! He is raving mad, so it will not be any murder on his part, and I shall be put out of this agony. I cannot go on living as a mad woman, the torments are too unendurable. I do not think God can even expect any one to go on living through such excruciating torments.”

But the voice talking to me said, “No, he is not coming; not because he would not be only too delighted to murder you, he hates you so, but because he knows he will be revenged far more effectually by leaving you to live, mad, enduring these torments.”

At last R. B. returned.

He said, “I meant to punish Ray Hall for withstanding me yesterday morning as he did, and I meant to punish that Medium, but I think things have gone far enough now,—and I never meant you to have been sent mad again like this. The fact is, that when any one of you three goes mad all three go mad. However, now you and

Ray Hall are cured and are sane, because you faced the thing out, instead of screaming like that Medium has done nothing but do the whole time. She deserves to be mad, and I shall leave her so."

The yelling voices, and the shattering explosions they caused in my brain, gradually ceased. Innumerable voices were still speaking, and crying, and calling for help; but they sounded voices far away from me, and not voices inside my brain, shattering it, as had seemed to be the case those two times when the voices attained to a sort of paroxysm, almost resembling one long-continued explosion in my brain, making me know to a certainty that I had gone mad.

Each time when that shattering sensation passed, I fully believed I had regained sanity.

I said to R. B., "You are not to leave that Medium mad. You have cured Ray Hall and me, you are to cure her—and at once."

He grumbled and growled, but at last gave in, and went and stopped the Medium's shrieks. He said, "I have done what you ordered, and made that woman sane, but I don't think she will remain so for long. She is so terrified, and has no self-control because she is so under-bred. Whenever she goes mad again, it will send you two mad also, as one going mad sends all three mad."

"Well," I said, "then Ray Hall and I will have to pull through for the three of us again, that is all. But if the thing is explained to her, perhaps she will control herself and have a little courage, instead of being such an arrant coward. In the meantime, Ray Hall and I are going to

save all these other mad people. Now that we know what a ghastly torment madness is, we do not mean to leave one solitary person, in any asylum, unrescued."

I said to Ray Hall (whom I never saw, who was not, I believed, anywhere near me, but to whom I could speak at any distance with ease)—

"Begin now!—and go and stop the cries of those people down there who are calling for help."

One by one the cries ceased, as Ray Hall went time after time to the rescue of the different voices. At last only one voice remained.

It was a woman's voice, wandering to and fro, reiterating again and again, all on one note and in tones of the most blank and utter despair, the thrice repeated word—

"Lost! lost! lost!"

"Now I have saved them all!" said Ray Hall.

"What!" I exclaimed, "you say you have saved them all, while that voice, the very unhappiest, most despairful of the entire lot, is still crying like that! On no account are you to cease your efforts, or come to me, until you have saved that most desolate voice!"

"I cannot save that one," answered Ray Hall; "that is yourself."

"Myself?" I exclaimed in the most unmitigated astonishment. "But I am not crying at all! How can that voice be mine?"

"You are not crying *now*," said Ray Hall, "but that is your voice, nevertheless. You know, and have heard for yourself these last few days, what thought utters as loud and clear a voice as

speech; and you know that no sound that has once been uttered in the Universe can ever be lost. All your life you have been wandering through the world, seeking everywhere, vainly, for the Truth, and being unable to find it. That has been your Thought-cry as you sought, and it is still echoing through the Universe."

"But," I said, "this is too dreadful! There is not one soul in heaven or on earth that can ever be happy with that terrible cry ringing in their ears! If that really is my voice, I order you to go down and strangle it."

There was a short pause, and then the wailing voice was heard to change its cry to—

"Found! found! found!"

It was still all on that one same note, and did not sound to me very much happier than before. But there was far too much on hand for me to be able to devote any more time to one voice.

I said to Ray Hall, "Now we have saved all that lot, but there are still thousands of maniacs left. We must save all those—every one of them; and this is how we will do it. You and I together will write a book. Having experienced madness ourselves, we know exactly what it is, in a manner that no doctor can ever possibly know. We will now write a minute, accurate description of mania, *from the inside*, setting forth everything that we have learned from actual, agonising experience; we will publish that book, and send copies of it to every mental specialist in every asylum. Then the doctors will understand exactly what madness really is, and they will be

able to cure every mad person in the world. It will be worth having endured the awful torments we have endured, to be able to do such a work for the world."

Ray Hall cordially acquiesced, but said that before we could begin the book, or he could get to me, there were hundreds of wandering fiends to be strangled, and he was about to set to work upon them. He said I mustn't be frightened, as he could easily strangle them all, but that there would probably be tremendous noise and scuffings over the performance. I said I wasn't in the least afraid now that I knew he was here to help me, and I didn't mind what disturbance went on.

Until it was time to get up, these stranglings and scuffings continued. Sometimes Ray Hall said he was coming out of the wardrobe carrying the dead bodies of some of the strangled fiends, but that I mustn't be afraid. I said I was not at all afraid, and looked expectantly for the wardrobe door to open and the corpses to emerge; but although the most tremendous scuffings were going on inside the wardrobe, nothing and no one emerged.

Then his voice would come from the chair beside my bed, saying he was sitting there; and I would turn quickly to see, but again there was nothing, although the voice continued to talk to me from that chair.

I never closed an eye the entire night through.

In the morning, as I began dressing, Ray Hall was talking to me ceaselessly.

He would call out that a fiend was trying to

get one or other of my clothes as I was putting them on, and tell me to throw whatever garment it was as far away from me and Miss E. as I could, and to jump back quickly into bed until the fiend had satisfied itself that that was merely a discarded garment which did not contain me, and had taken its departure.

I obeyed, each time, with instantaneous alacrity. I realised it to be the sole way of eluding these swarms of wandering fiends.

The room was strewn with my garments, and the comicality of the whole performance—with my hurried incursions, at every stage of my toilette, back again into bed—so tickled my sense of the ludicrous, that I used to get under the bed-clothes each time and simply shake with laughter.

I said (in my thought-voice) to Ray Hall, between my spasms—

“For goodness’ sake don’t keep on making me act like this unless it is really absolutely necessary. This unfortunate little woman who is here is becoming quite alarmed, she thinks I have gone mad I am certain. The things you are telling me to do are making me appear so comically ridiculous that I can’t help splitting with laughter all the time, and that is making this woman believe more firmly than ever that I have gone mad. It’s my belief that you are simply playing a practical joke upon me!”

He answered, “I assure you I am not! If you had not followed my instructions instantly, as you did, one of these wandering fiends would certainly have got you. Each time one went for

the garment I told you to throw away; in fact, there is one there still, in the fender, on that sponge that you have just flung there. However, I think that is about the last one, so you can get up and finish your dressing in peace now. As for this girl, if you think she is frightened, explain to her the whole thing, and tell her it is I who am talking to you, and that we are engaged. Thank her very much, from me, for sitting up last night as she did."

I forthwith explained the situation to Miss E. I told her Ray Hall and I were engaged, and were so closely *en rapport* with each other that we could communicate uninterruptedly, no matter how far apart our physical bodies might be. I explained to her that she needn't be in the least alarmed at such a thing, that it was merely simple science—the Marconi system of wireless telegraphy applied to *thoughts* instead of sounds.

All the time I was talking, Ray Hall kept on interrupting me repeatedly, giving me further messages and instructions to give her. Sometimes, when she was speaking to me, he would begin, and then I would say to her—

"Hush! He is speaking to me again, wait till I have heard what he has to say." And then I would tell her what the voice had said.

At last she managed to get me down to breakfast. But no sooner were we inside the room than Ray Hall said to me—

"A fiend followed you downstairs, and will try to get into this room immediately the door is opened. Lock the door, and on no account allow

it to be opened at all for the next quarter of an hour. I am coming to your rescue as fast as I can, in a hansom. Don't quit that room until I arrive. Keep close together, all you three, and pray until I arrive."

I immediately locked the door, and told my two friends that we must on no account open it to any one until Ray Hall arrived, which he would be doing in a quarter of an hour's time, in a hansom. I said that unless we kept the door shut and sat close together and prayed, a fiend would certainly attack us.

They endeavoured to reassure me, but I felt their confidence was due merely to their ignorance of the danger; and when the younger sister went and opened the door to admit the servant who was bringing up the breakfast, I knew that the fiend had got in and was prowling about the room. However, I expected Ray Hall every moment, and he was talking to me and reassuring me all the way as he was driving along in his hansom.

I ate some breakfast, still in great fear of the fiend, which I knew to be in the room, but before I had got half through the meal, a voice (not Ray Hall's) began saying to me that some fiends had attacked Ray Hall, and would be killing him if I did not at once drive to his rooms to his rescue.

CHAPTER VII

I GOT up from the table, said I had had enough breakfast, and must at once drive to Ray Hall's.

The elder Miss E. got up too, and said she would drive with me.

I hesitated a moment, and then thought as she knew all about our engagement perhaps it would be just as well if I allowed her to come. This might be a ruse of the fiends' to allure me away from all protection again, in order to get me into their clutches; or if it was a *bonâ fide* thing, it would be better to have another woman with me, as I should outrage all the proprieties by going alone to Ray Hall's rooms,—though, really, to trouble about *les convenances* when a man was being set upon and killed by fiends was too despicably petty!

However, in either case it could do no harm to go accompanied, and might do good. So I said she might come.

She said, "I want to see my doctor this morning; will you come with me there on our way?"

"No," I said; "I will go anywhere with you *afterwards*, but I am driving straight, now, this instant, to Ray Hall's."

I hurried to the bedroom and put on my outdoor clothes, endeavouring vainly the while to get the correct address of his rooms from Ray Hall.

He kept on giving the same Bloomsbury address that I had before been unable to find, and I could not catch the number, strain my ears as I would.

Miss E., meanwhile, continued talking to me, driving me nearly distracted by preventing me more than ever from distinguishing what Ray Hall was saying.

At last I pretended to say my prayers, in order to secure absolute silence. I knelt down, and strained my ears to catch that number, and waited thus for several minutes; but it was all in vain. I concluded we must start for Bloomsbury, and I must try to get the right address as we went.

Miss E. and I got into a hansom and started for Bloomsbury.

I said (in thought-voice) to Ray Hall, "How is it that I can catch everything else you say, but never can catch this number of your house?"

He said, "Are you good at figures?"

I replied, "Hopelessly bad."

He said, "That's the whole trouble. I am equally bad. This is the reason we are in this quandary. It is because we are both no good at figures."

"Well," I said, "I did hope that the man I married would have been able to do all the arithmetic for the two of us. This is most disappointing."

"Well," he said, "it is just as disappointing to me *your* being as incapable as myself in this respect, because I had hoped the very same thing!"

"It seems to me we are merely an echo of each other," I said; "we are so extraordinarily alike. I tell you what we will do about this arithmetic business; we will engage my eldest brother to do our accounts—he is a splendid mathematician. By the way, you have never told me what your income is. What is it? I don't care tuppence myself what it is, but I shall look perfectly ridiculous if I can't tell my friends and relations what it is, because that is always one of the first things people ask when they are told of an engagement. Please tell me what it is."

Again I couldn't catch the figures.

I said, "For the life of me I can't make out what you say! One minute it sounds five hundred, the next five thousand, and now it sounds five million. Which is it?"

The voice said another figure which I couldn't distinguish.

"Oh!" I exclaimed impatiently, "let's drop the whole subject of figures. We can't communicate on that point, so let's give up trying! If your income is five million, all the better; it will be so much the more interesting for my brother to manage, and he can easily spend five million a year; but it doesn't matter to me whether it is five million or fifty pounds a year. I shall just tell any one who bothers me on the subject, that it fluctuates so much that you yourself can't tell

exactly what it is! But do, for goodness' sake, give me the number of your house, or I shall never be able to reach you."

All this time we had been driving about in the same wild manner in which I had carried on my search the previous day.

At last I said I would get out of the hansom and try and find the house on foot. Miss E. got out also.

I was becoming in a more and more frenzied state of mind, because now Ray Hall's voice had ceased talking to me, and other voices were saying that it had stopped because Ray Hall was rapidly being overpowered by the fiends,—that I had been so long in arriving that he had given up all hope of being saved; that he was lying just at death's door in his room, and that instant help was all that could possibly prevent his being killed by the powerful fiends who were now attacking him at that moment, whilst I was wandering about the streets.

My frenzy was reaching a climax, when suddenly I thought, "These things are nothing physical; why should I trouble about reaching these rooms in my physical body? I'll kill all these fiends, and rescue Ray Hall, now, this instant. Souls are flaming fires: I'll send my soul to his rooms as he sent his to mine. I'll blaze and burn until I utterly shrivel up every evil thing that does not flee at the sight of that fire, but remains in that room. I'll do it this instant."

I thought of the "Chakras," as described by

the Hindoos—those burning, “Fiery wheels” they believe each person to possess as their sense-organs in their subtler, super-physical body; in imagination I transported myself, in super-physical body, to that undiscoverable room where Ray Hall lay dying, beset by fiends, and I whirled and whirled my “wheels of fire” until every evil thing and entity within range of those revolving flames had been utterly blasted into nothingness.

It was a most stupendous nervous effort, and I felt as if my whole physical body and brain were whirling with those revolving fire-wheels. When it was over I was in a state of utter exhaustion; but I drew a deep breath of fresh air, and managed to prevent myself from fainting or collapsing.

I felt quite reassured as to Ray Hall. I knew I had successfully blasted everything there was to blast; and although that fiery demonstration had come with such sudden, unexpected shock that it had made Ray Hall himself faint dead away, he was so weak and ill, it had saved him from the fiends, and he would now soon get well again.

While I was still gasping for breath, Miss E. said that she was going to her doctor, and that I had promised to accompany her.

I said I was certain she didn't want me when she was interviewing her doctor, and that I thought I would take a cab and drive to Paddington Station and go straight down to my married sister, living in the country. I said, “The best train goes at midday. If I go to the

station now, I shall have time to have a good lunch there before I start."

I thought to myself, "The great thing seems to be to keep on eating as much as possible."

Miss E. said she would go with me.

I said my sister wasn't expecting me, and although I thought she would be able to put me up, I was sure she wouldn't be able to put two of us up suddenly, like this.

Miss E. said she wasn't going to stay at my sister's, but would see me there and then put up at an hotel. She found she hadn't enough money in her purse to pay the journey, and asked me what money I had with me? I hadn't a notion, but looked and found I had enough in cash to pay my fare but not hers—but that I had also a cheque for £7. I said, "We will go and ask them to cash this cheque at the booking-office, then we shall have plenty of money. But let us go and have a good meal first." (I was certain that regular, large meals were an absolute necessity if I was ever to cope successfully with all these attacking fiends.)

I hoped Miss E. would not notice that I was leaving without any of my belongings. I meant to throw away everything that had been in that room the fiend haunted, for fear anything that had once been in that room might attract it to me.

We took another cab and drove to Paddington, and went to the refreshment-room and had lunch.

I have never in my life had such an enjoyable meal. I do not allude to the food (which was

cold fowl, salad and celery, I remember) but to the company.

Throughout the meal I was carrying on a (thought) conversation with Ray Hall (still ill in bed) and Mrs. —, the occultist (in California).

My conversational brilliancy astounded myself.

Ray Hall and I kept up one uninterrupted flow of scintillating witticism and lightning-quick repartee.

I sat shaking with uncontrollable laughter; anon endeavouring to stifle it in my handkerchief, under pretence of blowing my nose—anon making some ordinary, commonplace remark to Miss E. to divert her attention—anon imploring Mrs. — to engage Ray Hall in conversation and make him desist from talking to me, as the woman I was with was getting more and more alarmed at my inexplicable hilarity and was fully convinced I was mad.

This was the sole reason I wished Ray Hall's killingly amusing talk with me stopped, as I have never in my life enjoyed such an intellectual feast of wit; and my own mental powers, and the ease with which I found I could carry on *three* conversations simultaneously (the one with the occultist a highly intellectual one), delighted me.

At last, when I had nearly split my sides with suppressed laughter, Mrs. — managed to engage Ray Hall in conversation with her, and I was left to attend, uninterrupted, to Miss E.

She suggested again our going to her doctor's, but I refused. Then she suggested my going

with her to the station-master's about getting that cheque cashed.

I began to get very suspicious of her, and to be convinced she believed me to be mad and was going to give me in charge. I thought I must get rid of her at all costs, and escape to my sister's. I was in terror at the thought of being put into an asylum, to hear again those screaming voices that had shattered my brain the previous night.

I thought, "If I hadn't told Miss E. about that cheque, and let her know I had enough money to pay her fare too, I might easily have gone alone, without her, by the train. Now I don't know how to get rid of her; she seems determined not to leave me."

I walked about irresolutely by the booking-office, debating whether to take a ticket or what to do, when a voice said to me—

"On no account leave London. Why are you leaving? You have not found or burnt your MS. as you promised. You have not discovered in the least what has happened to you, and whether you are going to have a fiend-child, or what it was that occurred that day in your room. On no account must you leave London until you have got to the bottom of this whole mystery. Elude that woman by slipping out of the station door and jumping into a cab."

Instantly I followed these directions, and was in the nearest empty hansom in two seconds' time.

Miss E. was in after me with equal celerity.

I jumped out at the opposite side of the hansom, walked straight to another, and jumped into that.

Miss E. followed me.

I jumped out again and got back into the first one. Again Miss E. followed.

I said to her I wouldn't have her with me, that I intended to drive alone, and that I shouldn't remain in any hansom into which she forced her way after me. I returned to the second hansom, and ordered the man to drive off at once to Bloomsbury.

He drove off—followed (unknown to me) by Miss E. in the other hansom.

CHAPTER VIII

AFTER touring around for a long time, my driver drew up at some house in a street I did not know. The other hansom wheeled round and drew up directly facing my hansom, and Miss E. jumped out and came up to me.

I sat still in my hansom, without budging or speaking a word, while Miss E. begged me to get out and come with her while she went to see her doctor.

I opened the trap-door and ordered my driver to drive on.

He said, "Yes, miss!" but never moved.

I thought, "As this cabman won't obey my orders or drive me away, the best thing I can do is to get out and go with this woman to this doctor's. I will prove to him, in five minutes' time, that I am quite sane now; then this woman will be obliged to stop persecuting me any more."

I got out and went to the door of the doctor's house with Miss E.

A maid answered the bell, and Miss E. instantly walked into the hall, telling me to follow.

I stepped inside, but gathering from what the maid was saying to Miss E. that the doctor was

out, I asked, "Is the doctor not in now?" and Miss E. said, "No, not just now——"

Before she could utter another word I had slipped out, ere the maid had time to shut the door, and jumped back into my hansom.

"Drive to Hampstead," I said, naming an address as far away from where we were, and from Miss E.'s own house, as I could think of. "Give that other hansom the slip, and you shall have a sovereign when we arrive. I won't be dogged any longer by that woman."

"All right, miss!" said the cabby, and drove away. He drove me about for some time, and then drew up again at that same doctor's, or another's in the same vicinity.

He said, "Here you are, miss!—This is where you want to go!"

Again Miss E.'s cab drew up beside mine.

I got out of my hansom, and remarking to the driver, "As you don't drive where you are ordered you can't expect to be paid," I walked quietly away.

Miss E. followed me, trying to persuade me to go with her.

I said if she didn't leave off following me I would give her in charge of the police.

Voices began telling me that not only was she trying to get me shut up in an asylum, but that she was also a very wicked woman. I refused to believe the latter, as I said I knew her to be a particularly good woman. But the voices continued to reiterate their assertions with such pertinacity that I began to think I myself

must have been deluded as to her character. They went on until at last I fully believed her to be a monster of iniquity, and became more determined than ever that I must be quit of her.

A deluge of rain came on, but I thought, "I won't trust myself again in any cab, I will walk the whole way to my destination."

I put up my umbrella, and walked quietly and steadily along the pavement, without hesitating a moment as to which street to take, although I was quite abroad as to whereabouts I was. I thought, "If I hesitate or look at all as if I don't know where I am going, they will think something is wrong; if I walk on quietly and steadily like this, no one can possibly mistake me for a mad-woman."

My hansom cabman followed along beside me, urging me at intervals to get back again into his cab.

I took no notice of him at all for a long time, but at last he said—

"Get in again, miss, and I promise I will drive you wherever you want to go."

He was close alongside of me, by the edge of the pavement.

I looked up at him, and remarked quietly, "If you think that I have any intention of employing you after your impertinent behaviour, you are very much mistaken."

And I gave that cabman a glance that I calculated was one that would wither any man.

It seemed to wither him.

He looked quite taken aback, hesitated irre-

solutely a second, then wheeled his horse out into the middle of the road and drove away, and I saw no more of him.

“Well!” I thought to myself, “I have proved pretty conclusively to that man that I am perfectly sane. I expect he wishes now that he hadn’t been so foolish as to throw away a sovereign, as he did by refusing to obey my orders.”

I had quite made up my mind where to go (namely, to the most Bohemian acquaintance I possessed, one living on the outskirts of London), and I knew I was making for that direction, and should arrive soon at some streets that I recognised.

At last I came to a street where a doctor whom I know lives. I hesitated a moment, thinking, “Shall I go in and see him, and tell him all these unaccountable things that have been happening to me, and ask him if he knows what it all means, and can help me?”

As I was hesitating, I remembered it was the afternoon, and the doctor would not be at home. That decided me. I thought, “I am drenched through, and looking most wild and untidy; I can’t go there, and perhaps be shown into the drawing-room as an afternoon caller, in this bedraggled state. No, I will go where I first intended. It doesn’t matter what state I am in, there; I am sure nothing would ever shock or surprise Mrs. W., and she knows all about me. I will get her to lend me some dry clothes, and tell her I have come to stay with her. She won’t in the least mind my not having brought even

a tooth-brush with me; but I have no other acquaintance in London to whom I could possibly go in this sort of state without their thinking something very extraordinary was the matter. Mrs. W. will soon rout Miss E. for me, or anybody else who attempts to get hold of me. Yes, I can't do better than go to her. If she is out, and there are no servants in either, I will climb in at the window and wait until Mrs. W. does come in."

After walking a long distance, I decided to make for the main road and get into a bus. That would certainly go to the destination to which it professed to be going, and would be quite safe for me to use.

I got into a bus.

After being in it for some time, I caught sight of Miss E. following the bus in her hansom. I pretended not to have seen her. I didn't mind how much she followed me now, as I thought I should soon escape from her, once I got to the house for which I was making. I kept on taking penny fares only, so that no one in the bus should know where I was going to alight.

A voice said to me, "That woman at the opposite end of the bus is a detective. Look how she is watching you!"

I looked, and saw a woman staring at me with what appeared to be an air of concern.

I asked in thought-voice, "What shall I do?"

The voice answered, "Just do something to appear quite at your ease and natural."

I put up my hands and began rearranging the pin in my hat.

The woman glanced away again.

I said to the voice, "I don't think she is a detective, I think she was only looking at me as if she thought I was ill or going to faint."

"Yes, it is all right," answered the voice. "She is a detective, but she has come to the conclusion that you are quite sane, and merely very tired. You needn't have any more fear of her."

When the bus arrived at the place at which I wanted to get out, I alighted. I walked to Mrs. W.'s house, which was some little distance from the bus route.

As I walked along a voice said to me, "When you arrive at Mrs. W.'s say you are Mrs. Ray Hall."

"But," I remonstrated, "*am* I Mrs. Ray Hall? I don't remember our ever having gone through any marriage ceremony."

"Oh yes!" answered the voice, "you were married that night you were both raving mad."

"Were we? I don't remember it. I seem to be able to remember everything that did happen, distinctly,—I don't remember any marriage."

"Oh yes! You were married at the * * * * * Asylum that night. Ray Hall insisted on it, and on the ceremony taking place immediately, without any delay. You don't remember it because you were so raving mad."

"Well," I said, "I certainly was so mad that night that anything *may* have happened, for all I can be certain; but, as far as I know, I have never even been to the * * * * * Asylum either."

"You know you have been so mad you can't be sure of anything that happened," said the voice. "But you are Ray Hall's wife. You heard him say so publicly before all those people in that gallery. Why are you denying it?"

I asked, "Does he wish me to say to Mrs. W. that I am his wife?"

"Yes, of course he does," said the voice testily. "He orders you to. He is coming to fetch you to-morrow from Mrs. W.'s house. You would have to tell her in any case then, and he wishes you to tell her at once."

"Very well," I said, "I will tell her, if you are sure he wishes it. I will say it to her when I arrive."

I still felt most doubtful about that ceremony, but decided to say what Ray Hall ordered me to say, and to go through a second ceremony when he fetched me away from Mrs. W.'s the following day.

I reached Mrs. W.'s house and rang the bell.

CHAPTER IX

MRS. W., dressed to go out, was standing in the hall, and she opened the door immediately, herself.

I said, "May I come in? Are you going out? Will you stay at home with me instead?"

She said, "I was just going out with my sister, who has called; but come in."

"Oh," I said, "don't stay in then, but let me wait here till you come back, will you?"

She was obviously much surprised at my appearance, and manner, and requests, and evidently thought something most unusual was the matter. She made me come in, and remarked how soaked I was. I said, Yes, it had been raining as I came along, and I had got rather wet, but thought she wouldn't mind lending me a skirt and some shoes and stockings while mine dried by the fire?

She took me upstairs, and helped me to change my wet clothes. Whilst we were thus occupied, I stated in a matter-of-fact way that I was Mrs. Ray Hall, and that Ray Hall was coming to fetch me from this house the following day.

She looked hard at me, but didn't make any remark.

I said my lodging-room was haunted, and that I had left it for good, and asked if I might stay here?

She said, "Of course."

I told her I had intended to climb in at the window and wait for her to return if she had not been at home.

She ordered up tea and a boiled egg for me, into the bedroom, and went down to her sister. She sent the sister to despatch a telegram to summon my eldest brother, who was putting up at his London club.

Miss E. (not being acquainted with Mrs. W., and being afraid lest, if she came to the house, I might rush away out of it to escape from her) went away when she saw me safely inside the door, and telegraphed to the house from the nearest post-office to ask if I was all right, left there? Mrs. W. wired back, "Yes"—but asked no questions of the E.'s concerning me.

Meanwhile I ate my tea alone upstairs. As I did so a voice said to me—

"You needn't be in the least afraid that you are going to have a fiend-child. It is going to be a most beautiful child. Those people made quite a mistake about there being any fiend. This child is Ray Hall's and your spirit-child, and the most beautiful human child that you have ever beheld will not be able to compare with this child, it will be so perfectly beautiful."

This announcement filled me with delight. My mind was completely set at rest, and I thought that after all the terrible vicissitudes that Ray

Hall and I had passed through, everything was going to come all right at last. I was quite safe where I was, and would remain quietly here until Ray Hall fetched me.

After tea Mrs. W. brought me down to the dining-room.

I lay on the sofa, and fell into a half-comatose sort of state.

Mrs. W.'s sister came in and said good-bye to me. I roused myself and shook hands with her, and replied to her good-bye, relapsing at once into the same half-comatose state.

Many spirits of the dead—of relations and friends who had died—seemed gradually to be congregating in the room, each one, as he or she arrived, speaking to me and greeting me. I recognised every one (by voice—I saw nothing), and greeted them and replied to whatever they were saying. All this went on in "thought-voice" only; I uttered no word aloud. My "thought-voice" sounded in every respect exactly the same to my sense of hearing as my ordinary, speaking voice.

Presently, in the midst of this mental conversation, I glanced up, and saw, seated on a chair at the foot of the sofa, directly facing me, my eldest brother, Oliver—the actual man, and no dead ghost.

Instantly I entered into conversation with him concerning that legal matter that he had been discussing with me the last time I had seen him—namely, the night he had taken me to the theatre, two evenings before I had gone off my head.

I had been a good deal worried over that matter, and I felt as if I couldn't stand any more bother about it. I said, "I told you the other evening exactly what I thought; add what I told you I wanted added to that document, and I will sign it, now, at once."

He said, "All right, that shall be done. But you can't sign it now, because it will take some time for the lawyers to draw it up."

A voice said to me, "He has got a draft of the document, all ready prepared, in his pocket at this instant. He is deceiving you—but don't tell him we have told you."

I said aloud to my brother, significantly—

"It doesn't take a long time to make a slight addition to a legal document which is already drafted. Just add what I stipulated, put the date, and I will sign it, either at once, or this evening, if you will bring it ready then."

"But, my dear girl, I have told you it will take a long time for the lawyers to draw up the deed," objected my brother. "I can't bring it this evening."

"Well, if you won't bring it either this evening, or to-morrow at latest, I can't sign it at all," I said wearily. "I shan't be able to—I am so dead-tired."

He got up, saying he would see about it. He wished me good-bye, and stooped and kissed my forehead.

The voice said, "That was a Judas kiss. He is really wishing you dead, because you are standing between him and that property."

This upset me very much, but I said nothing aloud. I went with Mrs. W. downstairs into the breakfast-room, which opened out into the garden. I felt so faint I thought it would be very nice to have some fresh air. I walked out into the garden, and stood in my (or, rather, Mrs. W.'s) thin, indoor shoes, out on the soaking wet grass, turning my face up to get the air.

Mrs. W. dragged me in—much against my will as I felt so revived in the fresh air.

As she brought me back, I thought again, with great distress, about my brother, and what the "voices" had told me concerning his feelings towards me. I thought, "There is so much good in him, it is a thousand pities that there should also be so much bad. There seems enough, both of good and bad, to make two men instead of one."

This suggested a brilliant idea to me.

I thought, "I can shatter anything with those fiery wheels of mine that blasted all those fiends—why shouldn't I shatter all that is evil in my brother Oliver, and leave nothing except what is good in him? Then he will be a splendid character. Yes, I will do that!"

I stood still by the sideboard, and made another of those stupendous nervous and mental efforts that I had made before, when shattering the enemies of Ray Hall. Again I felt as if my brain were whirling round like the wheels of a fiery windmill; and again, after the effort, I felt in a state of utter collapse.

Mrs. W. came and put her arms round me, and helped me upstairs to the dining-room.

While she was doing this a sudden horror struck me. I thought, "Suppose I was mistaken in believing there is enough good in Oliver, after all that is evil in him has been shattered, to make up an ordinary man! Suppose there isn't enough, and that in destroying the evil I have gone and destroyed him, and murdered my own brother!"

I felt most horrified, but realised that it was too late then to undo whatever had been done by that fiery effort of mine. I thought—

"I must wait and see what has happened, and face the consequences. If I have killed him, I must give myself up as a murderess, and shall certainly be hanged. However, if he is dead, he will know all, and he will know I am speaking the truth when I tell him I intended no harm to him, but only good, in doing what I did."

Mrs. W. conducted me back to the dining-room, and I sat down in an easy-chair there, and relapsed again into that comatose state.

Again the room seemed gradually filling with spirits of the dead, who kept on crowding in to speak to me. No sooner had one arrived and begun speaking to me than another would crowd on, until I had to beg them to wait their turn, and speak one at a time, it was so confusing. The spirits all seemed to be marshalled and introduced by the spirit of R. B.

How long I sat there I don't know. I was taken up to the bedroom later, and began to undress. I had on a dressing-gown of Mrs. W.'s, and was brushing my hair, when Mrs. W. entered

the room quickly, and said, in what seemed to me a somewhat excited way—

“Your brother, Oliver, has returned, and is asking to see you.”

I thought, “Now! Is he alive or dead?”

I stopped brushing my hair, and looked earnestly at Mrs. W.

She gazed equally earnestly and inquiringly at me.

I thought, “I had better not frighten her by asking her if this is a living man or an apparition—in either case he is sure to look, apparently, the same. She would be terrified if he turns out to be a dead man. I had better say nothing, and go and see for myself.”

I said to Mrs. W., “Where is he?”

She said, “Outside, in the passage.”

I walked to the door, which was ajar, and flung it open wide.

Confronting me, in the full blaze of the electric light on the landing, stood my brother. His eyes, which met mine, looked unnaturally bright and scared.

I felt wholly uncertain as to whether he were an actual, living man, or an apparition from the dead.

To say that I did not feel nervous would not be true, but my conscience being perfectly clear concerning my intentions towards him, I walked straight up to him and kissed him on the cheek.

It was warm, living flesh.

“He is alive and well!” I thought joyfully. “His eyes are so bright, he looks more full of life

than I have ever seen him! But he has such a scared expression I am afraid that shattering of his worser self has been a tremendous shock to him. I must reassure him, and convince him that he really is alive and safe, and that I wish him to be alive."

I said aloud to him, "Good-night, Oliver. Go and fetch my things from my lodgings for me, will you, and bring them here to-morrow? Be sure and bring them yourself, won't you?"

He said he would, and I turned back into the bedroom quite satisfied.

I thought, "He realises now that he is alive, and has not been killed with his worser self; and I have shown him that I want him by making him promise to come back to me. Now, that is all right."

I had no consciousness whatever of getting into bed, but I suddenly returned to consciousness to find myself in bed.

Standing beside me was a man—a complete stranger.

PART II
IN ROOM No. 1

“ . . . Never think on thy fate :
No Euclid yet has disentangled that snarl.”
HAFIZ.

CHAPTER I

I REALISED at once that this professional looking stranger standing at my bedside was a doctor. I sat up and said to him—

“Have you studied spiritualism?”

I thought, “If he understands spiritualism, he’ll understand my case, which has all to do with these superphysical things, and at last I shall have found some one able to help me out of all this incomprehensible muddle.”

He answered curtly, “That’s all nonsense!”

His tone was so brusque that I felt exactly as if he had slapped me in the face.

I thought, “What a snubbing person! I am sorry I spoke! Evidently it is hopeless for me to look for any help or comprehension of my ‘case’ from this man; it will be perfectly futile to attempt to tell him anything. What a misfortune for me that they have called in a doctor who hasn’t studied these matters—seeing that my whole ‘case’ is these matters only. I see that I shall be obliged to face and puzzle this entire thing out alone. And the dreadful part is, that I cannot understand what it is that has happened—so I never can make out what it is I ought to do.”

The doctor began talking to me and questioning me; amongst other things, as to what I had been reading lately? To which I replied that I had been *re-reading* Robert Hichens' book *Flames*, but that that had nothing to do with the present matter, as I had read the book years ago.

After the slap in the face he had given me when I had wanted to explain my case to him, I told him absolutely nothing of any of these things that I believed had happened to me and were still happening.

Whether, after some conversation, he went downstairs and then returned later, or whether I simply lost consciousness of him and lay down, I am not certain. Anyway it appeared to me to be some little time later that I again became aware of him. Mrs. W. was then standing by my side, and the doctor seemed to me to be prowling round the bed (perhaps he was just walking away).

I turned to him and asked—

“What is your name?”

“Smith,” he answered promptly. (The name is altered.)

“*Doctor* Smith,” supplemented Mrs. W. to me, with much emphasis.

The man was so unmistakably a doctor that her careful emphasis of the fact amused me.

“Oh! *Doctor* Smith, is he?—not *Mrs.* Smith?—or perhaps ‘*Mrs. Harris*’?” I thought facetiously, but I said nothing aloud for fear of seeming rude. “He certainly is a man, right enough,

and there is '*sich person*'—but really, there is so much hanky-panky going on, that I can't for the life of me make head or tail of anything, or be certain who does, or who does not, exist!" I thought.

I put my head down under the bedclothes, and asked mentally of the voices—

"Who is this man? He is a doctor, all right, isn't he? He is uncommonly good-looking; but he is not Ray Hall, I know, because he understands nothing about spiritualism, and he and I are antagonistic, mentally—so I am certain he is not Ray Hall. Who is he, really?"

The voices at once replied—

"Yes, he is a doctor, all right, and he isn't Ray Hall. But he is going to allow Ray Hall to manifest himself to you for one instant, through his body. Turn now and look at him, and see what happens."

I turned and looked straight into the doctor's face, wondering what would happen.

As I did so, his eyes changed suddenly in the most extraordinary manner. They were large and dark in reality, but as I looked at them they became quite twice the size of any human eyes. They seemed two deep wells of light. From these depths gazed out at me no human being, but Christ Himself, with a look of the most ineffable and divine love. I felt myself being drawn, body and soul, towards those eyes as if I were a needle being drawn by a magnet.

I half-raised myself on one elbow and stared

in speechless fascination at this extraordinary spectacle.

My whole soul went out in answering love to that look of divine love bent upon me. But I thought to myself, "I am a living, human woman—I do not want to be the Bride of Christ—I need the living, human man I love, who will be with me here, on earth, where I am so lonely."

As I gazed, the vision vanished as suddenly as it had appeared, and I found myself staring into the doctor's own eyes.

Instantly I put my head down under the bed-clothes, and said to the voice that had told me to look for the manifestation of Ray Hall through the doctor's body—

"That was not Ray Hall—those eyes looking at me were no human eyes. They were the eyes of Christ."

"No," replied the voice, "those were the eyes of Ray Hall. They appeared divine because he was looking at you with a love made perfect. Human love, when perfect, *is* divine."

"Well," I said, "I hope those are Ray Hall's eyes, as you say. If not, I have gone and married the wrong man. Whenever I meet the real owner of those eyes, that is the man I shall love; I shan't be able to help it, no matter to whom I may be married. If it isn't Ray Hall, it will be a nice business!"

I didn't take any further notice of the doctor. I had replied to all his questions and remarks quite lucidly, and had revealed to him nothing of all the things that I have recounted, and which I

fully believed I had actually experienced and was still experiencing; and the doctor went away, giving it as his opinion (so Mrs. W. has since informed me) that I appeared to be perfectly rational.

Again, after the doctor had left, I completely lost consciousness, and was entirely oblivious of everything that was happening and of what I myself was doing. When I returned to consciousness, I found myself in bed, alone, with a tray of dinner before me. I began eating, but was much distracted by a wailing, woman's voice.

I inquired of the voices, "Who is that woman, wailing?"

A voice (I didn't know whose) answered at once, "Don't you recognise the voice? Why, it is your cousin Edith's!"

I said, "So it is! What is the matter with her?"

"She is being punished in hell,—she tried to injure you."

I said, "Did she? I didn't know it. Anyway, I forgive her. Let her out of hell."

"We cannot. She cannot get out."

I asked in considerable dread, "Shall I have to go down myself into hell to rescue her?" (I thought I was going to be called upon to go through a repetition of the horrors of the previous terrible night.)

"That would be useless; you couldn't rescue her as you did those others last night."

"Then what must be done? We can't leave her crying in hell!"

"The only thing to be done is to make her save herself. You can do that."

"How?"

"Well, you see, why she is in hell is because she is so utterly selfish. If she could once be induced, of her own free will, to think of somebody else rather than herself, and do one unselfish act for anybody, then she would be saved. Otherwise she is hopelessly lost. What you must do is to try and induce her to perform such an act, and thus save herself."

"Tell me what to do, and I will do it," I said.

"Well, we told you she had tried to injure you. She didn't really succeed in doing so, but she believes she did. Pretend now to be in agonies of pain, and say that if the person who secretly injured you could only be induced to come forward and confess to the injury, your pain would cease; but until that person does confess, nothing can ever alleviate your torments. Begin now!—She is watching you all the time."

I pushed away my dinner tray, saying I was feeling such terrible and unaccountable pain I could not eat. I worked up gradually,—continuing to implore the person who had injured me to come to my assistance and alleviate my intolerable sufferings,—until at last I was throwing myself about on the bed, groaning and writhing in feigned paroxysms of agony.

My cousin's wailing voice had approached nearer and nearer, but still she never spoke to me, nor attempted to confess or come to my assistance.

“Go on!” exclaimed the directing voice. “That is splendid! She can’t withstand that much longer! We had no idea you were such an actress! You should have gone on the stage instead of taking up journalism! Keep it up! That’s splendid! Sarah Bernhardt isn’t in it!”

“Yes,” I said in mental aside to the voices, “this is all very well, but in the meantime my dinner is becoming stone-cold! Can’t I eat my dinner first, and finish this acting afterwards?”

“On no account!” exclaimed the voice in trepidation. “You must not dream of doing that if you really wish to save your cousin. Don’t you understand that she is watching you all the time? If she sees you leave off writhing and quietly recommence eating your dinner, she will know at once that you are merely shamming and are not really in pain, and of course then she will never be brought to confess, and never get saved out of hell. As it is, you have acted so well she is certain you are in agonies of pain. Keep it up! Don’t spoil everything, now, by eating your dinner!”

I said, “Well, my dinner is already so stone-cold that I don’t think it is fit to eat anyway, so I may as well see this thing through.”

And I redoubled my histrionic efforts until I lost consciousness altogether.

Suddenly I came to, and found myself out of bed, standing at the far end of the room by the window, over a basin of clean cold water, which was on the floor (evidently deposited there previously, during unconsciousness, by myself). I

was holding my night-gown up round me with both hands.

I asked mentally, "Whatever am I doing here?"

The directing voice answered at once, "You are still acting, and trying to save your cousin Edith. Cannot you hear her voice continuing to wail for help? She has not yet confessed or come to your assistance. She will never get out of hell unless she does come to your help."

"But what am I supposed to be doing?" I inquired perplexedly.

"You are supposed to be still in agonies. Do keep it up and not spoil everything!"

"But what am I supposed to be acting, standing over this basin like this?"

"You are waiting for a huge piece of black hide, like pig's hide, to drop out of your body into that basin. That's what you are there for. Your cousin put that inside you to injure you, and that is what she knows is causing your agonies of pain."

"But," I argued, "you told me she hadn't succeeded in doing anything to me; so how can she have put this black pig's hide inside me?"

"True," admitted the voice, "she hasn't. But that is what she tried to do, and that is what you must pretend she has succeeded in doing, and you must let her believe that is the reason why you are standing there. Do go on properly with the acting!"

I recommenced imploring for aid and groan-

ing, when I was stopped by the door opening and Mrs. W. appearing.

I said "Hush!" to her, and remained standing where I was.

She said, "What on earth are you doing there, over that basin? Get back into bed at once!"

She bundled me back into bed, and returned the basin to the washstand.

Immediately she had gone, I got out of bed and put the basin under the bed, down at the foot. I do not in the least know why I did this.

In a few minutes' time she was back again, and I said to her, "On no account look under the bed—something dreadful is there." (The voices had told me that the piece of pig's hide was in the basin, and had warned me not to look at it, it was so horrible.)

I saw her glance surreptitiously at the basin as she went out of the room, but she did not attempt to remove it or make any remark.

Directly she had gone, the voice said to me, "As long as that woman keeps on coming in and interrupting, we shall never get this business finished. Get out of bed and lock the door."

I did so—and after that I completely lost all consciousness.

They had been unable to open the door, and had climbed into the room through the window from the balcony of the adjoining house. But I had been wholly unconscious of all this, also of Mrs. W.'s coming to bed, which she did, in the same bed with me (the double-bed in her own room).

CHAPTER II

WHEN I awoke, everything seemed to be dark. (I believe, in reality, it was quite daylight.) Beside me in the bed was Mrs. W., fast asleep. She is, as a matter of fact, quite a small woman, but she appeared to me, then, to possess the full-sized body and brawny arms of a powerfully built man. Her curly hair, and her nose (a small, retroussé one) were the only features that I recognised as Mrs. W.'s. I felt convinced that this was really Ray Hall, who had at last managed to get to me; that he had arrived while I was still asleep, and that he was playing a practical joke upon me by putting on a false wig and nose to try and pass himself off as Mrs. W.

I began to laugh, and said, "Take off that ridiculous nose and wig, and turn on the light and show me your eyes!" I wanted to make sure that he had those eyes that had looked at me, and the owner of which was the man I loved.

Mrs. W. was sound asleep, and did not stir or speak.

Receiving no answer, I laughingly began, with both my fists, pommelling what I believed to be Ray Hall's back.

This woke Mrs. W. up. She says it was broad

daylight, and that I then "went through a whole book."

What took place in my consciousness was this—

The entire scene of what had occurred in my lodging, when I was praying and crying for help, and was told that a fiend had seduced me, and had (as I believed) been sent raving mad in consequence, was all re-enacted in my hearing as I lay there in bed. Again my own cries of "O God! O God! O God!" as I rocked myself to and fro in abandonment of despair on the arm of that big chair, seemed ringing through the room. A crowd of people in an amphitheatre were looking on at the scene, observing and hearing the whole drama, just as I myself seemed doing.

I said to Ray Hall (whom I still believed was the figure lying beside me in the bed)—

"These people have got that whole thing taken down on a gramophone and a kinetoscope, and they are turning it all on in order that the rest of this company that they have collected may see the show! Do hark at my cries! What do these people think that they are doing? Good gracious! they are holding an Adoration Service! They have at last realised that they were quite wrong about there being any fiend; and now they have come to the conclusion that it must be an Immaculate Conception! Yes! Hark at them, all chorusing together! Now, here come all the Church people to join the chorus!—they are all believers in Immaculate Conception, you know! Oh, I shall die of laughter if this goes on much longer!

Range them all in their proper order—in their serried ranks, like their Angels and Archangels!—and put on all of them the correct *Church Hats!*”

(NOTE.—The day before I went off my head, I had been sent to report on some milliner's invention of a new “Church Hat,” for all church-women to wear in church. The hats resembled in shape widows' bonnets, coloured to represent the correct “church colours” of every church festival throughout the year. The inventor had patented them under the trade-mark of “*Universal*”—and she implored me to report nothing publicly about them just yet, as “the time was not ripe,”—for if the High Church people thought that the Low Church people were taking to the hats, they would have nothing to say to them, and *vice versa*; but if each section believed it was the sole users of them, and once “took them up,” then the hats would, indeed, justify their title, and become “Universal”.)

“Yes! Put all that lot into ‘Church Hats,’” I said to Ray Hall, between my spasms of laughter; “but, for goodness' sake, don't let those Baptists see that the Anabaptists are wearing the same hats, or adoration will cease, and free-fights will commence, and all their hats will be torn to pieces, and that luckless woman's patent will never become ‘Universal’!”

When the Church people had entered the amphitheatre and taken their seats, crowds more followed.

“How many more are trooping in to this show?” I exclaimed. “The procession seems never-ending! If Mrs. — joins this Hallelujah Chorus it will be the last straw!—I shall really expire! Pray Heaven her saving sense of humour will prevent that. Yes, she is not there; but there is Oliver’s voice now! To think of his succumbing also!—and that man really used to have a sense of humour. Do listen to him; he is worse than any of the others! He will burst himself directly if he goes on exclaiming in that wonderment much longer!—For goodness’ sake, Oliver, come out of that throng, and don’t be such an idiot!—He won’t! He is getting worse and worse! Oh, look here, if this kinoscope isn’t turned off soon, I shall really expire! These people will certainly be the death of me. First of all they terrify me into madness by telling me I am going to have a fiend-child; now they kill me with laughter by worshipping it as an Immaculate Conception!”

The Adoration Service continued uninterruptedly.

“Now they are saying that you and I are going to start a ‘New Dispensation’!” I exclaimed, for I could hear everything that the crowd were saying. “Well, for goodness’ sake, let us—but not the sort those blithering idiots think! I am tired of all these religions and philosophies that make the world so doleful; let you and me start a New Dispensation, and save the whole world—*by laughter!* I am sure that is what the world needs! You and I together will write a book

that shall shatter the Universe with laughter! Whenever we talk together we make such cracking jokes that I am certain we could write a side-splitting book!—and we will! We will take every section of society and creed, and hold it up in turn to be a laughing-stock to the rest of the world. Then, whatever section is laughing the loudest, we will pounce upon to hold up as the world's next laughing-stock! It will be killing fun! We will start on this chorusing congregation assembled here—they will kill half the world with laughter! No! We must commence upon ourselves!—we shall enjoy the laugh against ourselves as much as any one will! We must say how utterly these people first fooled us about that fiend. Then when every one has started laughing at us, we will turn upon this lot. How we will ridicule them! Yes, we will shatter the Universe with laughter over them!”

All this time the Adoration Service went on. The people were worshipping me as the Madonna, Ray Hall as the Holy Ghost, and our (as yet unborn) spirit-child as the coming Saviour of the world. They meant to prevent this spirit-child from being born with a human body.

They said on no account were they going to allow Ray Hall and me ever to meet on earth, or to allow our spirit-child to have any human body. To allow that would be to put an end to the New Dispensation.

I began to get into a state of the greatest anxiety about my spirit-child. I was dreadfully afraid that it would be born without any body to

use on the earth, and that these people meant to take it from me as soon as it was born, to be their Saviour, to start their "New Dispensation."

I said to Ray Hall, "You hear what those people say? They mean to try and steal our child, and to prevent its being born with any proper body. They want it to be a spirit-child. Well, I just refuse to have a spirit-child. What is the use of having a spirit-child that no one will be able to see? And why should our child not be allowed its own human body? Do not let us let these people injure our child as they are trying to do."

Ray Hall never spoke a word. All this time that I had believed him to be there beside me, he had never uttered one word. He seemed to be laughing with me when I laughed; and to be agreeing with all that I said, but he himself had said nothing.

He seemed to agree with me on the subject of the spirit-child, as on every other subject; our child must have a perfect human body to use on earth.

Confused recollections of Laurence Oliphant's *Scientific Religion* (a book I had read when a girl of nineteen, and which had exercised an incalculable influence over my mind and life) then began crowding into my thoughts. Laurence Oliphant's ideas were those of this chorusing crowd. He would certainly say that our child ought to be our spirit-child only.

Well, he might think that, and for half a lifetime I had agreed with his theories; but I had

come to believe that he was most utterly mistaken. I intended to pay no more heed to theories which I considered entirely wrong and erroneous.

No sooner had I thought this, than I found myself being wound round and round by what felt exactly like a snake. I knew these people thought it *was* The Snake (of the Garden of Eden) and expected me to be terrified; but I was not in the least terrified (I was not afraid of anything when Ray Hall was with me), and I was sure I should be perfectly safe and unharmed.

But almost simultaneously with this sensation of being wound round by a snake, I passed into blank and utter unconsciousness.

This was the sole time, throughout my attack of madness, that I ever believed Ray Hall to have been bodily present with me. And during this time, as already stated, his "voice" never once spoke to me.

While I was blankly unconscious, the following took place: The maid appeared with some tea, and I started up in bed (so Mrs. W. has since informed me) exclaiming that she was my child, causing the woman to drop the cup and bolt in terror from the room.

Then I refused to allow Mrs. W. to dress, telling her she would be a dead woman if she did.

Not one thing of all this ever penetrated to my consciousness.

About two hours or more, later, I returned quite suddenly and most fully to consciousness, to find myself sitting up in bed, gasping, with a most frightful sensation of suffocation.

At the left side of my bed stood my brother Oliver, and at the right Mrs. W. I recognised both instantly.

I thought, "I am being strangled!"

Immediately a voice said to me, "No, you are not being strangled, but some fiends are strangling Ray Hall in his rooms, and that strangles you—because you are not two, but one. For the same reason, if you can manage, by strength of Will, to keep alive, you will keep him alive and defeat the fiends that are trying to kill him. Exert your Will, and fight for your life and his."

I gasped frantically for breath, combating the overwhelming sensation of suffocation I was experiencing. I beat the air wildly with my arms, and began exclaiming, as loudly as my strangling breath would permit—

"I am alive! I am alive and well! We are alive and well!"

My brother and Mrs. W. seized my arms on either side and tried to hold me, but I beat the air more frantically than ever.

"Say it!—Say it with me!" I cried to them both. "I am alive and well!—We are alive and well! Say it!—Say it!"

"Yes, yes!" they said, and repeated it, endeavouring in vain to hold me still.

"I am alive and well! (Water! water!" I cried in an agonised aside to my brother.) I felt at the last stage of suffocation.

"Yes! yes! my dear girl!" he exclaimed. I can see his face of frightened horror now.

He retained hold of my arm with one hand,

while with the other he stretched out to the washstand near, and dipped the tumbler in the jug and handed me some water.

“I am alive and well!—I can swallow!—I cannot be suffocating!—I am drinking water!” I gasped between my sips, as, with superhuman effort, I drank the water. “I am alive and well!—I can drink!—Hold on, Ray Hall, I am alive! I will keep alive! I will save you! I will save us both, they shall not kill us! Hold on! Hold on till I save you!”

For perhaps a quarter of an hour or so I battled for our two lives thus, in full, agonised consciousness; then, in the same sudden way in which I had come to consciousness, I again quitted it, utterly and completely.

They tell me I continued this shouting and screaming for hours. None of it, except precisely what I have described, ever penetrated to my consciousness.

The doctor arrived, and talked and reasoned with me for a long time.

I talked to him. I said all sorts of things to him (so I have since learned from Mrs. W.), things that were not in my own mind at the time, things that never had been in my own mind, things that were not the *conscious* delusions of my madness.

Mrs. W. says that I informed the doctor the following: That I had been seduced by Mr. Jones, that I had had a child, and had murdered it in the * * * * * Asylum.

Of all this, of the very presence, even, of the doctor, Mrs. W., and my brother (who was pacing

up and down the room, wringing his hands and exclaiming: "O God! What shall I do?"), I remained blankly unconscious. It is not that I do not "remember" this and other things, as the doctor has since suggested—the case is not in the least that, in madness. One remembers everything of which one has ever been conscious. But half the time the actions of one's own body, the whole surroundings of that body, never penetrate to the normal consciousness at all, *and leave no trace whatever on the memory.*

What I myself was conscious of, after that strangling and fight for life, was the following:—

A period of complete unconsciousness supervened. Then a voice said to me, as I lay in a strange state of half-coma, in twilight, and with closed eyes—

"Something evil is approaching, whirl your fire-wheels and blast it!"

I obeyed, and felt I had annihilated some evil entity.

I experienced that same whirling sensation, followed by that same feeling of nervous exhaustion, as on previous occasions.

Presently the voice said, "Another evil entity is approaching, whirl your wheels again and shatter this one."

I did so again, with the same feeling and results.

I did not experience the least fear, as I found I could blast anything. Again and again I accomplished it, to order, in the most successful manner; but the efforts made me more and more exhausted.

I had never opened my eyes, nor stirred, nor woken to proper consciousness.

A period of utmost confusion went on. It seemed as if my brother and my mother had gone to my lodging and had found the fiend still waiting there, and the sight of it had killed my mother with terror. My own body, also, seemed lying dead in that room, but (in some most muddled manner) it was that body that had jumped up on that box, waving its arms, and not *I*. *I* was still alive in this other house, and my mother, terrified at having been suddenly killed like this, was trying, in spirit, to obsess me, in order to be born again on earth as this coming child of mine.

This horrified me, and I implored her to desist, as I said I was sure it was contrary to every law of God and man to become the mother of your own mother.

As she would not desist, I whirled my wheels and pushed her from me carefully, without injuring her, to the outmost bounds of the Universe. But she was so frightened at this that I allowed her to return, and she continued to trouble me much, endeavouring to obsess me, both then and later.

At last all this blasting, whirling, and confusion stopped, and I again relapsed into complete unconsciousness.

CHAPTER III

THEN I remember coming slowly and gradually from blank unconsciousness, little by little, back to consciousness again.

Some voice was talking—some unknown voice that I did not recognise in the least.

At first I was not sufficiently conscious to distinguish what it was saying. I seemed incapable of opening my eyes or stirring—I seemed scarcely to be fully alive; but by degrees I crept and crept far enough towards consciousness to be able actually to distinguish and comprehend what this talking voice was saying.

The things it was saying bereft me of speech altogether. I lay there in dumbfounded horror. I could hear everything, and everything was equally abominable. Imagination gone mad in obscenity is the only accurate description of the talk. Horrible statements were being made about every person of my acquaintance—including my nearest and dearest relations—the most vile acts and behaviour were being imputed to them—accusations of the most fell designs of theirs upon myself were being brought against them.

These statements were, without one single exception, absolutely devoid of the smallest

foundation of truth. I knew that for certain in every instance in which I myself was mentioned, and I was perfectly convinced they were equally foundationless in all instances.

At first, as I have said, I lay there dumbfounded with horror. And the voice talked on, without one instant's pause. Rage at last began to predominate even horror in my mind, and I exclaimed angrily, in thought-voice, to this unknown, invisible speaker—

“Cease this vile talk! These things that you are saying are all utter and abominable lies!”

The voice answered, “They are all true, and they have all happened.”

I began to get very frightened. I thought—

“Suppose this person who is talking so confidently knows better than I know, and that these terrible things are true? How can I be sure that they are not true? The things that are said to have happened to me may perhaps have happened when I have been asleep and unconscious.”

I said in my thought-voice to the talker—

“If these things are true, the world is a very different place from anything I have ever believed it to be. If I am to believe you, there isn't a single decent person in it except Ray Hall and myself. I do not wish to go on living at all in a world like this. It is too horrible a place to live in.”

The voice answered contemptuously, “You are a stupid little ignoramus, you know nothing of the world.”

“Well,” I said, “I am not only a stupid ignoramus, I am an *incurable* ignoramus because I have no desire to learn. I have no intention of learning horrible things like these. Cease your vile talk.”

But the voice did not cease, but went on uninterruptedly, each fresh utterance to which it gave vent horrifying, astounding, and terrifying me more than the last.

I thought, “I am terrified to go on living in a world like this. As long as I am obliged to remain on in the world I will never leave Ray Hall’s side day or night; he shall not go out for a quarter of an hour’s walk without my hanging on to him and insisting on going with him.”

“You stupid little ignoramus!” repeated the voice in the midst of its stream of talk.

I could not open my eyes, or see, or make out in the least to whom this voice belonged; I was conscious of nothing whatever that was occurring in the room or to my own body, I was conscious solely of this talking voice and of my own arguments with it. When the voice again called me an ignoramus I answered—

“Yes, I am, a blatant ignoramus, and I have told you I mean to remain one. I absolutely refuse to have my mind polluted with vile talk like yours. If you won’t cease when I order you to, I shall call Ray Hall and he shall force you to cease.”

But at this point my own consciousness began to ebb and ebb in the same slow manner in which it had previously crept in. I lost all power of

arguing with the talking voice; I gradually lost power of distinguishing what it was saying; I receded inch by inch from the margin of conscious existence, leaving that unknown, unseen, unrecognisable stranger still talking without intermission upon that shore from which I had passed away.

(NOTE.—From cross-examination of the nurse who was first called in to attend to me, and who arrived just about at this time, who admits I was talking aloud without intermission, and who refuses to tell me one word that I was saying, I have come to the conclusion that that voice to which I, completely detached, was listening—which was making statements which were the last thing in the world that I myself was thinking at the time or ever had thought, that were quite contrary to all my own thoughts and beliefs, that astounded me beyond expression—that voice must, without doubt, have been the voice of my own physical body. I have recorded above, with exact accuracy, my own part and lot, words and consciousness in the matter.)

It was late afternoon when I regained consciousness. Whether it was the afternoon of that same day, or of the following day, or of two or three days later, I cannot be sure. To me it seemed late afternoon of that same day.

I felt as if awaking from sleep. I opened my eyes, realised where I was, remembered all that had occurred, and noticed, seated some distance away from me, but in full view and with her eyes fixed upon my face, a hospital nurse.

I understood at once that it was a hospital nurse, and that she was there because I was ill.

I thought, "Evidently I must be very ill, to be having a nurse. Now I hope my uncle, who has been saying that I should work, will be satisfied! However, I am feeling most comfortable at present" (and so I was). "I wonder how much of all these astounding things have been actual and how much illness? I wish I could disentangle all this awful muddle. I think I had better speak to this nurse, she seems to be expecting me to."

As I thought this, a voice (not any one's I knew) answered out loud, "Yes, speak to her Say, 'Good spirit, who are you?' Mind you say '*good.*'"

I recognised the voice as another of these "thought-voices" to which I had to reply by thought, not speech, for my words to reach them. I answered mentally (and it sounded like a clear voice speaking aloud)—

"Why should I say anything so silly? I can see that the woman is a hospital nurse. Why should I call her a 'spirit'?"

"Oh, very well!" answered the voice huffily, "say what you think best! Of course, if you know what has happened to you, and understand what to do to get yourself out of this muddle, no one need help you! By all means say what you like, and we will leave you to yourself!"

"For goodness' sake don't!" I implored. "I haven't a notion what has happened to me, or what I ought to do; and I can't find anybody

to understand or to help me. If you do understand and will help me, I implore you to do so. I will say whatever you advise."

"Very well, then; say what we told you just now. Be sure you say '*good*.'"

It seemed to me a most ridiculous thing to say; however, as they appeared to be so easily offended, and I was so afraid of being deserted by people who evidently understood my extraordinary complications and meant to help me, I did not venture to offer one further word of objection. I looked at the nurse, and said to her aloud—

"Good spirit, who are you?"

Immediately she got up and walked to my bedside and began arranging my pillows for me.

I laughed at having called her a "spirit," and said, "You are a hospital nurse, aren't you? You rather remind me of a cousin of mine" (which was true).

I turned to the voices and said mentally—

"Why did you make me say such an idiotic thing? You have made me make myself perfectly ridiculous! I told you all along the woman was a hospital nurse."

The voices admitted that she was, but still maintained it was the best thing to have said under the circumstances.

I mentally asked Mrs. — (the occultist), "Is it any use attending to these people? They say they are helping me, but they tell me to do perfectly idiotic things."

"Pay no attention to any of them," answered

Mrs. ——'s voice; "I am coming from California as fast as I can, to help you myself."

On hearing this I took no more notice of the other voices, and fell asleep again very soon.

The next thing that is impressed on my memory is waking to find that same nurse and Mrs. W. standing together by the window, in front of the looking-glass, talking. The nurse had on no cap or apron (having just come in from walking, I think).

To me they appeared two gaunt, frightful caricatures of their real selves, and they stood nose to nose, as if pecking at each other's faces, like two birds of prey. The spectacle terrified me.

"On no account scream out, or let those two creatures see that you are afraid of them!" exclaimed a voice to me. "Those are the 'doubles' of those women, which have no business to be outside their bodies, and are endeavouring to frighten you. Sit up and face them, and they will be obliged to go back inside the bodies to which they belong, and allow those two women to resume their natural, outward forms."

I was terrified, but I sat up in bed and faced the two harpies without uttering a sound. I thought, "If they don't change to their proper shapes soon, or if they attempt to attack me, I shan't be able to help screaming."

"Are you afraid?" inquired the voice.

"Afraid?" I echoed—"I am terrified! But I am doing what you told me, and not letting them see it."

In a few seconds' time the spectres ceased talking and moved apart. I endured a moment's agony of suspense, wondering what their next move would be—and then suddenly they resumed their proper shapes.

I lay back again quietly on the pillow, without a word.

"Always face these sort of things in this way," said the voice. "If you show one symptom of fear they will have power over you. You will find, as long as you show no fear, that you will be stronger than any of them."

Having proved the truth of this voice's assertions, and found its directions so helpful and successful, I had no hesitation in obeying its next orders.

These next orders were exceedingly difficult and painful to carry out.

I was lying (I cannot tell how many hours or days later) half-unconscious in bed, when I heard footsteps walking about. The voice said to me—

"Lie perfectly still, and don't open your eyes. The footsteps that you hear are those of fiends, who are prowling round. If you saw these fiends you would be terrified to death at the sight of them. On no account open your eyes."

I lay motionless, my eyes tightly closed, in the greatest fright.

The footsteps continued, and seemed drawing nearer and nearer to the bed.

The voice said, "We hoped the fiends would not have discovered you, but they have. Now the only thing that can save you is for the fiends

to be convinced that you are dead. Otherwise they mean to obsess you, and nothing can prevent it. If they think your body is a dead body, they will leave it alone; they need a living body to be of any use to them; a dead body is useless to them, they will leave it alone. You must pretend to be dead—it is your only chance.”

“How shall I do it?” I asked in an agony of anxiety.

“By ceasing to breathe. Hold your breath until your body appears perfectly dead.”

“But,” I said, “I have never done any of these Hatha Yoga practices; I do not know how to do them.”

“Do as we direct you,” said the voice authoritatively, “and you will be able to accomplish it perfectly well. All that is required is strong resolution and courage. Will you do it?”

“I will do anything,” I said, “to escape having my body obsessed by fiends! I will die rather than that!”

“You will feel as if you were dying,” answered the voice; “you will have to endure all the sensations of actual death. In fact you *will* die. But you will not die permanently. When the fiends have gone we will resuscitate you, so you need have no fear.”

“I will do it,” I said.

“Very well,” said the voice; “we are now going to let the fiends in. We have told them you are quite dead; we are now going to tell them they may come into the room and examine your dead body for themselves, and make certain that you

really are dead. Until they have actually seen and examined your corpse, they will never cease trying to obsess you; when they have done so you will be safe. We have come to the conclusion that to make you go through this ordeal is the only thing to be done. Whatever you do, do not flinch! Now!—Stop breathing!”

I held my breath, and lay absolutely motionless. The footsteps seemed prowling all round my bed, as if people were walking about, examining me from all sides.

At last, when I felt on the point of suffocation, I gave the very tiniest little gasp for breath.

“There!” exclaimed the voice instantly, “you have ruined everything! The fiends had just convinced themselves that you were dead, and were leaving; as they were going away, one of them saw you stir when you drew that breath—now they have all come back to examine you afresh. You must go through it all again. If you have not sufficient resolution to hold your breath till you die, you must submit to being obsessed. Those are the sole alternatives.”

I held my breath. What I endured I cannot describe: agonies of suspense lest the fiends should discover I was a living woman and not a corpse; agonies of fear lest they should obsess me; agonies of physical torment, slowly stifling to death. I deliberately held my breath until, without having betrayed one symptom of life by one tiniest movement of a muscle, I died of suffocation.

At least it appeared to me that I died. I felt suffocated, and I lost all consciousness.

I did not do this once only, but, at intervals, several times, after resuscitation, and on being told that other fiends had come. Each time I endured the same agonies, mental and physical.

One time I was told to feign death, to escape these fiends, by stopping my heart beating.

Again I objected that I could not do it.

Again I was told to follow directions, and ordered to fix my mind steadily upon my heart and *will* it to stop.

I followed the directions (preferring death in any form to the only alternative I had, of being obsessed), and my heart seemed entirely to stop beating, and again I died—this time in that way.

Once, it appeared to me, my helpers forgot to resuscitate me, or the fiends remained an unconscionable period after I had died. I endured horrors of suffocation while coming to in that instance.

I have never mentioned the foregoing to any one. But that I actually succeeded in throwing my own body into all sorts of strange conditions, I know to be a fact, for I have since heard Mrs. W. say that I used to alarm her and the nurses by the "extraordinary states" into which I would fall—"going perfectly limp, or becoming absolutely rigid, and all sorts of queer things."

I never saw her, or the nurses, or the doctor, or my brother, while all this was going on. I never opened my eyes, and have no remembrance of eating or drinking.

The most terrific battlings between my helpers

and fiends used to rage in my room. The noise was deafening. The fiends used to be strangled and flung out of the window by dozens—but always more came.

I never took the least part in these battles. I was told never to open my eyes, and I never did. I cowered in darkness, safe and untouched, whatever struggles raged around. I never seemed to be touched or attended to by any one. The actual people in my room were wholly without the range of my consciousness, physical and mental. But I believe it must have been during this period that my lips held some of my conversations, at intervals, with the doctor, my brother, and Mrs. W.

Also, I am told, I mistook all of them for fiends, and spat in their faces. This was wholly without the range of my consciousness at any time. Never once did I myself fight, face, or *see* any fiends; always I lay with tightly closed eyes, in darkness and in complete safety, listening to Ray Hall and other helpers battling fiercely with the fiends. I was very frightened, but always perfectly certain that Ray Hall and my helpers would conquer, because they were good and the fiends were evil, and good was stronger than evil and must infallibly conquer. I was always told to lie perfectly still under the bedclothes, and on no account to open my eyes,—this latter instruction because of the terrifying aspect of the fiends, which I must not see for fear of being frightened to death.

The cousin whom I had been unable to rescue

out of hell turned into a most appalling harpy. She came one night to my bedroom door, shrieking my name, and banging on the panels of the door with the weighted end of a knobbed stick, wanting to murder me.

I cowered under the bedclothes in terror. Her shrieking voice was frightful.

The door, I believed, was not locked; but it appeared she was unable to enter my room unless I myself said to her "Come in."

The voices told me I must do so, and allow her to enter. I was to keep my eyes shut, so as to escape being terrified to death at her appearance; I was to lie perfectly still, and the instant the harpy touched me she was to be strangled.

I did as ordered, although terrified past all expression. I lay perfectly still whilst she raged round the room, banged deafeningly on the floor with her knobbed stick, prowled round me, raving, thirsting for my blood.

Then she scratched the back of my right hand, that lay outside the coverlet.

Instantly she was seized by my helpers, and strangled where she stood. I could hear her gurgling gasps and groans—her frantic struggles—her gradually weakening resistance.

Then the window was thrown open, and two people dragged her heavy, dead body to it, and flung the corpse out into the garden with a crashing thud.

It had not been completely strangled! It resuscitated—and escaped!

CHAPTER IV

THE doctor, two nurses, Mrs. W., and my eldest brother, all these attended me during those days.

Not one of them did I ever see or become conscious of.

Then one night I opened my eyes. I should say it was only a few nights later.

I was fully conscious, and I believed then, and think the same now—I was sane (for the time being).

I cannot describe how ill I felt. I had a horrible sensation of sinking fast. I remembered all that had happened, and I thought—

“I have been in frenzies of madness. Now I am dying.”

And I was thankful that I was dying.

But the physical sensation was ghastly.

I glanced round the room, and saw only the strange nurse.

“They have all left me alone to die,” I thought. “I suppose they have all been too terrified by my frenzies to have had the courage to remain. Well, I am sure it is no wonder! But what a ghastly way to die! Alone, and raving mad! Thank God I *am* dying at last!”

I did not speak to the nurse, who was paying no attention to me. I concluded she was merely waiting for me to snuff out, and that probably the doctor had expected me to do so without regaining consciousness. I was in great fear of her making any attempt, perhaps, to rally me, if she found I was conscious—an attempt that might succeed in rallying me back into madness. I felt convinced it was only because I was dying that I was sane. I was in no doubt as to which I preferred—death or madness.

I set my teeth to die, without a word.

But the horror of the situation, and the sensation of dying, were such, that I hoped devoutly the business would be over without much delay.

But when it was over it was not finished—as I found to my cost.

I died and passed utterly away. But again I was brought back—to a state of the most inextricable confusion.

What I endured, from then onwards, endeavouring to disentangle this confusion, no words can describe.

The most hopelessly entangled thread of all was the thread of my own identity.

My unavailing mental endeavours to follow and unravel that, frenzied me with despair. The problem of its disentanglement, instead of becoming clearer as I analysed it, grew ever more and more complicated and involved.

The following may give some slight idea of what the muddle presented to my own mind by this confusion of identity was.

First, there was *myself*, that I recognised always as myself—that self who had been living in that lodging [working, and who was now Mrs. Ray Hall.]

This self had become hopelessly entangled with that unknown entity who, when I was in my lodging-room, had seized my body in that forcible and extraordinary way, making it leap up on that box and begin declaiming in that fashion most foreign to my true self.

[All sorts of things happened to that second entity, which was not myself but an impostor, at large in the world, going about passing itself off as myself. It lay dead in the lodging-room, killed by the fiend—it was cremated—it was operated on for deafness and the drum of its ear was destroyed (a sudden, most overpowering sensation in the ear-drum ensued at once on myself)—and so on and so on.]

Every single thing that happened to that impostor who was passing itself off as myself, but who was something entirely separate from my real self, reacted instantly upon my real self—was felt, experienced, and suffered by my real self, so that the two separate identities were entangled in a manner past human power of comprehension and past all possibility of unravelment. It caused inextricable confusion.

But this confusion was nothing compared with the confusion worse confounded caused by a *third* personality, [namely, one of the characters in that book of my own that had been the first subject upon which Ray Hall had commenced talking to me when first I had become mad, that first night.]

The character in question was that of a girl.

This character annoyed Ray Hall on account of its insufferable priggishness.

He therefore determined to take that character, and in a book of his own, a sequel to my book, make that girl, in her own person, work out, to their logical conclusions, the theories of life she inculcated.

The book in which this girl-character was thus being made, by Ray Hall, to work out her theories, was being written, at Ray Hall's command, *by the Medium* whom he had engaged, through me, to be his secretary.

The whole trouble was that I myself, wholly without any volition of my own, had leapt in actuality into the part of this fictitious character in Ray Hall's book.) The fearful trials I was enduring—the persecutions, the constant deaths, the sufferings I will hereafter relate—all were caused simply and solely by this: I was being dragged, in person, through all the vicissitudes Ray Hall was imagining for the heroine in his book.

And Ray Hall would not desist from writing that book.

[That was the terrible part. Again and again, after each fresh torment to which I was subjected, as the character in this book, I implored him to desist, saying I was an actual, living woman, who was being made to endure all that the Medium was writing at his orders.

But he maintained that the character was merely a fictitious character, and existed only in his imagination.

And he ordered the Medium, his secretary, to continue the book.

I entreated him, if he must go on writing the book, at any rate to mitigate my sufferings by employing some other secretary or Medium. I said this woman's ignorance caused me so much wholly unnecessary suffering. In the book she was making the character walk the "Razor-Edged Path" (of the Hindu religion). But it was not necessary for any one to walk more than *one* Path; there were but *three* (Devotion, Wisdom, Action), but this Medium in her ignorance had already made me walk *eight* Paths (I had counted eight separate deaths in one form or another I had endured), and it was no living, but all dying.

But my protestations and prayers were unavailing. I was unable to convince Ray Hall that I was enduring all that he and the Medium were imagining for the character in that book of his to endure, or to make him realise that that character existed anywhere in actuality, and not only in his imagination.

I knew that the sole way in which my sufferings *as* that character could be stopped, would be for Ray Hall and the Medium to be brought, in bodily presence, to my room, and shown that I did exist, that I was a living woman, and that I was enduring all they were imagining.

Then they would stop writing that book, and my sufferings (that is to say one set of my sufferings, namely the set I was enduring as that book-character) would end.

But my entreaties to the people who had

charge of me, to bring Ray Hall to me, were ignored in the same way that my entreaties to Ray Hall to desist were ignored—to my unspeakable despair.

One evening I suddenly awoke to normal consciousness—I mean consciousness of my real, bodily surroundings—and found myself out of bed, with two nurses standing, one on each side of me, supporting me.

I remembered all that had been occurring, and I felt so weak and ill I could scarcely sit up.

I could not comprehend what it was that had happened to me (I had again ceased to understand that I was mad), and it seemed to me that these inexplicable torments were never-ending.

I was so weak and in such utter misery, I leant my cheek against the hand of the kinder-looking of the two strange nurses (whose hand was hanging down close beside my face as she stood by me), and my tears trickled slowly and silently down my cheeks all down the back of the woman's hand, as I thought to myself—

“O God, how much longer am I to be obliged to go on enduring such inexplicable torments, and be killed and made to die again and again without ever being allowed to remain dead and get it finished?”

As I thought this, I rose and attempted to walk back to bed. I was so weak I dropped prone upon the floor, half on the bed, half off.

Instantly a clear voice proclaimed loudly—

“*It is finished!*”

I found I had fallen (it had felt to me more as if I had been struck down rather than had fallen), precisely in the attitude of Christ, in the picture "Christ Fainting under His Cross."

I thought, "This is infamous! Here is this Medium dragging me now, in that book, through an 'Imitation of Christ.' I dropped like that simply because I couldn't stand. I had no notion in what attitude I fell; but if I remain one instant longer in this attitude now, it will be a pose. Well, I will show that Medium pretty effectually that I won't be a party to any more of her blasphemous nonsense. If she is reporting correctly what she clairvoyantly sees going on down here, she shall just report this—"

I clutched at the bedclothes with both hands. In my "thought-voice" I answered the unseen speaker curtly, "It is *not* finished!" Turning my head over my shoulder to the two nurses, I laughed, and said aloud to them—

"Give us a leg up!"

The nurses both joined in my laugh. One seizing me by the shoulders and the other clutching me by one leg, they hoisted me into bed, like some squirming frog, the while we all three laughed.

Directly I had got into bed, I remarked, in "thought-voice" to the Medium—

"There! Write down that as the finale to that scene!"

But no sooner had the remark been (mentally) uttered, than instantly I felt a Crown of Thorns pressed down hard on to my head. My fore-

head was painfully pierced and torn by the sharp spikes.

I lost consciousness almost immediately; but the crown seemed to have been removed before I did.

After this sort of thing had continued some time, I said one day to Ray Hall—

“I am willing to endure as much as is humanly possible, to make that book of yours alive and real. But I tell you truly that if you go on much longer you will actually kill me, and find you have made yourself guilty of the murder of your own wife. I keep on returning again and again from the dead, after being killed off as that book-character, in order to save you from having my blood upon your hands; but I am getting so weak and ill I am sure I shan't be able to hold out much longer, or come back much oftener. I implore you to stop the Medium's writing.”

He said, “The fact is I *can't* stop the woman. For some time past she has been saying you are a living woman, and praying me to let her cease writing; but I wouldn't believe her. She said you must have put so much of your own mind-force into that character I took from your book, that it really *is* alive, with your life, and that is why you are feeling everything that is happening to it: it is your life that is animating it. The Medium at last got so terrified at its being a living woman enduring all this, that she killed the character off—but it refuses to die. It keeps on returning again and again from the dead, each time the Medium kills it off (which is what you

are experiencing), and now the Medium has gone mad with terror. She is a raving maniac, and nothing and no one is able to stop her going on with the book."

So my case seemed to me to get more and more hopeless.

Usually each time I "died" I passed into blank unconsciousness—but not always.

Once I seemed to be sent out of my body into a sort of Limbo, where I wandered about, groping my way in complete darkness. The region seemed peopled with entities that I instinctively felt to be evil. They were not fiends—they were not personalities at all—they seemed strange entities (what, I could not make out, as I could see nothing), creations formed by the *thoughts* of human beings. They never molested me or touched me, but some of them accosted me, wanting to know how I, a living, human woman, came to be there, and asking me if I could help them or show them a way out of this place?

I said I knew *my* way out was to get back into my human body, from which I had been ejected against my own will by people who kept on killing that body, and that I could tell them nothing about this place, where I was sure I was never meant to be, as I could not open my eyes here, or see either the place or the people. I asked them if they could not see any light anywhere? They answered, Yes, but only a great way off, at the far end of a terribly rocky path.

"Well," I said, "make for that light, and you will get out of this place I feel sure."

They said, "You are afraid of us!—and that is why you have said that, and not because it is the truth!"

I said, "I am afraid of you because you all seem to me to be evil entities—but I have said nothing that I do not believe to be the truth. If you can see light and will make for it, I honestly believe you will ultimately get out of this dark place. I am sure no smallest spark of good can ever be lost—you all must have some good in you."

They answered, "The only good in us is what we have taken from human beings."

"Well," I said, "if you are simply obsessing entities, with absolutely no spark of good of your own in you, I don't see how you can ever endure. I am convinced that nothing but good will endure, and all evil will ultimately be shattered."

This made them angry, and they began threatening me, saying that as I was afraid of them they would have power to come and torment me when I was back in my body, and they would come. But I had ceased to feel afraid of them, because I was sure that if they were evil they could have no power over me, as I should be far more powerful than they, and I said to them—

"I have told you what I believe to be the truth. If you have power to torment me, you will be able to do so; but I do not believe you have any power over me at all."

They could not answer a word to this, and afterwards I left the place and returned into my body.

CHAPTER V

A SECOND time, late one evening, I awoke
—*sane*.

Again I was experiencing that horrible sensation of sinking fast—of dying. It was not quite so acute as in the previous instance, but sufficiently so to convince me that I should never last out through the night. Again there was no one in the room except the one nurse—but this time I thought—

“I am sane now—and I really cannot die like this—utterly deserted and alone, without a single person to wish me good-bye.”

I wondered if any of my relations would come, or come in time, if I asked for them to be sent for. I came to the conclusion that it would be impossible now for any one to be able to reach me in time, and that I had better attend personally, as far as possible, and as quickly as possible, to whatever I would have requested the person I sent for to attend to for me.

I was too weak to sit up, but I said to the nurse—

“Nurse! Please bring me my writing-case, and all my letters and papers—I want to burn them.”

She answered, "I can't bring them now."

"Why not?"

"They are all in the room upstairs."

"Then please go upstairs and fetch them."

"I cannot."

"Oh, nurse, please do!"

"I could not get your things if I went; the room is locked up, and Mrs. W. has the key."

"Then please ask Mrs. W. to come here."

"Mrs. W. is out, dining."

"It is late, she may have returned."

"No, she will not be back for a long time."

"Well, will you ask her, directly she does return, to come and see me?"

"Very well."

From the way the woman spoke, I felt sure she had no intention of quitting the room, or of bringing Mrs. W. to me when she returned, or, in fact, of paying any attention to my requests. I understood she could not possibly tell that I was sane, or think that my present remarks or requests merited any more attention than any previous remarks or requests I had made when I was a raving madwoman. The realisation of all this filled me with a feeling of impotent despair.

I was certain I should be dead before the night was over, and before I should ever see Mrs. W., or any other 'living soul, again. Being convinced of this, I said to the nurse—

"Please tell Mrs. W., from me, that I ask her to burn all my letters and papers. Promise me that you will give her this message."

The nurse promised, speaking as one would

speaking when acquiescing in everything a mad patient demanded.

It was so palpably the manner in which she was regarding me, it was so impossible for me ever to be able to prove to her I was anything else, it was so evident that every living soul of my own relations and friends was still shunning me in terror as a maniac, and leaving me, as such, alone to die, that I thought to myself—

“It is useless to say anything; I had better die without making any further, wholly futile, bother.”

I said nothing more. I lay there, that dying sensation becoming more and more acute, and seemed slowly to sink and sink until my life, like a fluttering, farthing-dip flame, flickered lower and lower, and finally went out.

(NOTE.—I may add that the sole effect my “dying” request had was to make my “keepers” rifle and read (in conclave) all my private letters and papers.)

It seemed a long time after that extinguishing before I regained any consciousness. It might, however, have been either the next night or a night or two later that I came to, and found I was still alive. I say *alive*, but, as a matter of fact, I felt so ill I felt far more dead than alive.

Seated in an easy-chair, with her feet on the fender, was a nurse. Only her feet and legs were visible to me, as the chair was hidden behind the counterpane-covered rails of the bed.

I thought to myself, "I am still alive, and it is my belief if these people would only give me any nourishment of any sort I should keep alive, but they seem never to attempt to feed me at all."

During the entire time I had been ill in bed, since I entered that house, I had never *consciously* received any food or drink whatever.

I had never once, consciously, set eyes again on the doctor, on my brother, or on Mrs. W. (except the latter that once when she looked like a terrifying harpy). I had never, consciously, spoken to one of them, or heard one of them speak to me.

The doctor has since remarked to me that when I had insane ideas in my head, and he reasoned with me about them—as he did daily—and told me they were nonsense, I should have accepted his word and reasoning, and been convinced my horrors *were* nonsense and non-existent.

What he seems quite unable to grasp is that neither his words, his presence, nor his reasonings ever penetrated to my consciousness at all! I never argued with him, never divulged any of my sufferings to him, never told him one of my "horrors," never even myself imagined some of the horrors I have since learnt my lips told him, never held any conversation whatever with him except exactly what I will narrate.

Therefore, the actual facts of madness being what I have above stated, any doctor who expects from a lunatic patient what that doctor's remark

shows he expected from me is more unreasonable than any lunatic!

Even were a lunatic conscious of the doctor's arguments on any point, it surely would be *unreasonable* of that lunatic to accept the word of another person *contrary to the evidence of every one of his own senses*—which is the evidence lunatics have as to the reality of all they are experiencing.

I cannot help laughing at the comical resemblance doctors, who assure a mad patient (who is enduring every conceivable kind of agony) that his sufferings are non-existent, bear to Christian Scientists!

It seemed to me, that night I am describing, when I awoke, that the people in charge of me were really purposely leaving me to die of inanition. I thought—

“If this goes on much longer it will actually amount to murder. If I don't ask for food it will amount to suicide.”

The nurse seemed to be sleeping, she sat so quiet.

I said, “Nurse, will you please give me a little milk or soup?”

My voice sounded so weak I could scarcely hear it. I thought the nurse did not hear it either, as she made no answer, did not rise, and gave me nothing.

(She did, however, lean forward and put a little saucepan on the fire, I remember, so probably did feed me when the milk was warmed.)

“I will hang on through this night, food or no food, if determination to do so can accomplish it,”

I thought. "I will live to get to the bottom of all this incomprehensible business."

(I referred to all the things that had been happening to me—not to the present starvation treatment of me—so it is evident I had again forgotten I had gone mad, and was not sane but mad again that time of waking.)

I had completely lost all consciousness before I received that milk or soup that was warming.

I have been told since, by the doctor, that the nurses complained to him that I used to refuse to swallow the food that was put into my mouth, that I would spit it out of my mouth.

It is quite possible I may have done so. I might have done anything during all these days, and I should not have been *irresponsible for my actions*—that is quite the wrong expression to make use of with regard to maniacs. The actual fact is this: Maniacs are, a very great part of the time, *wholly unconscious of their actions*.

But concerning this matter of food, I feel convinced, from the miseries I suffered on that score when I became conscious, that the whole explanation of that lay in the method the nurses had of feeding me.

I am, naturally, a very slow eater and drinker.

The nurses used to ladle liquids (and solids also) down my throat at such a rate that I was positively unable (although I tried my utmost) to swallow them at all at the rate they were poured. I never spat them out—they used literally to *overflow* out of my mouth while I gulped and gulped as fast as ever I could.

I did my utmost to endeavour to restrain the pace, in every way I could—but wholly in vain. My mouth was treated as an open funnel, down which everything I was to eat was poured or shovelled as rapidly as possible!

Judging from my own experience, I should say that every doctor who is told that a mad patient “spits out” food or drink, would be wise to witness the feeding operations once or twice for himself.

He could then form his own conclusions, and might save a most helpless patient much, wholly unnecessary, misery.

One evening I awoke to find one of the nurses smoothing back the hair from my forehead. She did it with both hands, and in a manner that (really) resembled mesmeric passes.

Immediately I thought that the doctor was treating me hypnotically, and employing this nurse to mesmerise me. I felt convinced this was adding another complication to my miseries.

I should say it was quite ten days or so after I had first seen the doctor, that first night at Mrs. W.’s house, before I ever became conscious of his presence again. (He had been coming once, and sometimes twice, a day.)

I woke up, very suddenly, and saw him and the two nurses standing, busily occupied, at a small table at the foot of my bed. It appeared to be late at night.

I felt so strange in my own body—it seemed as if I had suddenly woken up in some alien body and not my own. I thought—

“*Now*, who am I? In whose body have I suddenly woken up like this?”

I recognised the doctor at once, as the doctor, and I thought—

“Ah! I see what it is! That doctor has hypnotised me and forgotten to un-hypnotise me. He has then gone off to perform some operation in a hospital; and now, as I am still under his “suggestion,” and attracted wherever he goes, I have woken up in the body of this other woman whom he has hypnotised, to operate on, in this hospital.”

As I was thinking this, the doctor, who was holding something (probably a medicine bottle) in his hand, made some remark. He spoke in a very low voice, and I could not be quite certain what he said, but it sounded to me exactly like—

“How beautiful!”

As he was looking at the thing in his hand, I believed he was apostrophising it.

Instantly this brought everything back to my mind. I thought excitedly—

“I see what it is! I am myself all right—and this doctor is operating on me! Evidently he also has been deluded into believing that I was going to have a fiend-child, and to prevent it he has gone and cut that child out of me. Now he has found, as I have known all along it was going to be, that it is a most beautiful child. Now, if I don't interfere at once and make him quickly put back the child inside me and let it be properly born, it will die!”

I sat up in bed, exclaiming peremptorily—

“I will not be tampered with! Put it back!”

As I believed the doctor to be holding the child in his hand, admiring it, I did not think it necessary to explain *what* he was to put back.

The doctor turned from the table and stood facing me at the foot of the bed.

A man's voice (whether the doctor's or Ray Hall's I felt most uncertain) answered me aloud—

“Lie down, and you will feel no pain.”

I immediately inquired, in my thought-voice—

“But will that child be all right?”

“Yes, quite all right,” answered one of the invisible people. “You were most rash and foolish to sit up like that in the middle of an operation—you might have disarranged all the bandages.”

(I felt no bandages, and saw I was lying covered up in bed in what I recognised perfectly as Mrs. W.'s room.)

I said, “Well, I couldn't lie there and allow those people to murder that beautiful child! How is it that I feel no pain during this operation? Am I chloroformed?”

“No, you are under ‘suggestion.’ Ray Hall has placed you under ‘suggestion,’ and allowed those people to cut the child out of you to convince themselves that it really is a beautiful child and not a fiend-child, as they believe. Now they will leave you in peace, and the child will be perfectly all right. The doctor will put it back inside you. How are you, yourself, feeling? You do not feel any pain, do you?”

I said, "I have never felt more comfortable in my life." And that was true.

The voices said, "You will never feel any pain in your life again, because whatever Ray Hall 'suggests' to you will always be what you will feel, as long as you believe it; and he will always suggest to you to feel no pain, just as he has done now."

I thought this perfectly delightful, because I had proved, from actual experience, how true this was, and so could have the fullest belief, and therefore felt quite sure I should never suffer anything more as long as I lived.

I lay back on the pillow and sank slowly off into the most delicious sleep.

I never, *consciously*, made any other mention whatever to any one of the people attending me, about this child—except once.

Then, on becoming conscious one day, I thought—

"I wish to goodness I could arrive at the truth concerning this child. I am certain I haven't had any child—I don't believe I was ever operated on at all that other night—it's my belief I am not even going to have a child, but how on earth am I to find out? Myself, I can't tell—I don't know. These nurses must know; but I am certain it is useless asking them, they will never tell me the truth. I think the only thing for me to do is to try and surprise this nurse into admitting the truth. I will pretend I know all about it. I will speak as if I were certain I have a baby, then she will probably say I haven't got one, but admit

that I am going to have one, if I really am going to have one."

I said aloud to the nurse, in a tone of quiet command, "Nurse, give me my baby. I want my baby."

"You have no baby, *Miss* ——," answered the nurse.

(She repeatedly called me "*Miss* ——," with much emphasis. I never contradicted her, or pretended to notice it, although I was certain she was doing it to try and see if I would. But I used to remark, in my thought-voice, to Ray Hall—

("You see the invidious position in which you leave me here amongst these people by your inability to get to this house to claim me as your wife." (His efforts to get there were stupendous, and varied in everything except their unvarying failure.) "It isn't worth while entering into any arguments with these people, and I don't demean myself by doing so; but it is a most unpleasant position for me to be in.")

The nurse not having been "surprised" into admitting anything so far, I thought I must make further efforts to entrap her. I said—

"Surely a child is crying in the dressing-room, nurse?" (I had heard nothing.) "Go and see if there isn't a baby in there."

"No, I can't go in there. Nurse —— is there."

"What is she doing in there?" I asked suspiciously, for I thought—"Perhaps she really has got a baby in there, and that is what she is doing, attending to it."

“She is asleep.”

I believed this, and was quite convinced I had had no baby, but was still as much in the dark as ever as to whether I were or were not going to have a baby.

This nurse said afterwards that I mistook her for a midwife, and was always talking about this baby, and believed it had been born; but not any one of the things I am told I said and believed on the subject, was ever in my real consciousness.

The foregoing was the whole of my real consciousness on the subject; except what I have already stated about being so much bothered by the “spirit” of my mother trying to incarnate in this unborn child of mine—to avoid which, I remember, I endured once (amongst other trials) having my heart emptied of every drop of its blood. It was a most curious sensation, which, as I also vividly remember, I only survived with the utmost difficulty. It had, however, the desired effect of expelling my mother’s spirit from the body of my unborn child; my mother believing I had died, and therefore believing the child would die, quitted its body of her own free will.

I had the most extraordinary heart-sensations altogether.

Sometimes my heart felt exactly as if it were attached in its place by elastic. This elastic would be stretched and stretched, and my heart pulled down lower and lower out of its proper position, until it seemed in a literal, and not metaphorical manner, to be going down into my

boots! It certainly seemed pulled many inches down, out of place.

When I inquired mentally what this strange sensation was, I was informed that it was one of the sensations of pregnancy. (I may add, that I have never heard or been told anything to make me imagine such a thing. The sensation was unimaginably astonishing to myself.)

When I experienced fainting sensations, and asked the reason of them, I was told always that Ray Hall was fainting, and that that was causing my physical distress. On one of these occasions I remember saying testily to Ray Hall—

“For heaven’s sake, man, *be* a man, and don’t keep on fainting away like a woman! It nearly kills me off every time; and I assure you I have quite enough, here, of my own to bear, without having your faintings added to what I have already got to put up with! It is all I can do, as it is, to keep alive. Do, for goodness’ sake, pull yourself together, and stop these faintings.”

CHAPTER VI

AT one time (this was after the time that I believed I was being made to imitate the sufferings of Christ) whenever I sat up, a chorus of voices used to hail me as "the Virgin Enthroned."

I thought, "Oh! those idiots are still keeping up their Hallelujah chorus, are they? It is about time they were disabused of such nonsense."

And I contradicted the voices flatly, saying I was not the Virgin—I was Mrs. Ray Hall.

My contradictions produced no effect whatever. Each time, and time after time, I was hailed in the same way.

At last I got perfectly desperate.

I mentally called up Ray Hall, and said to him—

"You hear these imbeciles, and the way they are going on? I have told them a hundred times that I am not the 'Virgin Enthroned,' that I am your wife—but they still go on until I am perfectly sick of their idiocy. I can't stand it any longer. I mean to cure those people, once and for all. Collect the whole chorusing lot (I don't care who they are—collect them all) and tell them that they are to be vouchsafed actual, physical

vision of their 'Virgin Enthroned.' Bring the whole crew along with you to this house, and when you arrive at the front door, just speak to me and let me know you have come. Then I will sit up. Walk straight up to this room, fling the door open wide, and announce theatrically, as you do so, 'Behold your "Virgin Enthroned"!'

"Then when they see what utter asses they have been making of themselves, perhaps they will be cured! It seems nothing less than this ever *will* cure such hopeless idiots. Afterwards, we will write a description of the whole scene, and put it into our book that is to shatter the Universe with laughter."

But the deputation never arrived, because Ray Hall could never get to the house.

Day and night he was trying to get to that house, but he never could.

He was thrown into asylums, into prisons, into coffins; every conceivable horror overtook him.

With regard to coffins—I endured indescribable horrors of burial alive.

That night when, half-dead, I had in vain (as it seemed to me) asked for a little food, had imbued my mind with the idea that the nurses and people in charge of me did not believe me to be alive, and intended to bury me as a corpse.

Daily and nightly the nurses folded and unfolded the white counterpane from the bed.

I believed it was my grave-clothes.

It seemed to me I was unable to make any one understand that I was still a living woman.

My efforts to make the nurses realise this

merely resulted in the women becoming more and more frightened of such an uncanny corpse that kept on spasmodically resuscitating; and in their terror they were afraid either to measure me themselves for my grave-clothes, or to allow the undertaker to measure me for my coffin. But as they were quite determined to bury my affrighting corpse as soon as they could, grave-clothes and coffin were being made, as quickly as possible, by guess-work.

I came to consciousness one day to find myself actually shut down in my coffin at last.

Having been made without measurements, the coffin was far too small in every way for me. My head was pressed so hard against the end of the too short coffin that my crown was crushed against the wood; my nose was flattened all to one side by the pressure upon my face of the too shallow coffin-lid.

The nurses had been so terrified at my beginning once again to come to life, just as they were placing me in my coffin, that they had bundled me in so hastily that half my body was lying naked in the coffin, and all the grave-clothes were crumpled up round the other half.

I felt all this, and knew that I was awake, and that it was no nightmare but an awful actuality.

I felt half-dead with horror, and I dared not open my eyes to see those coffin-walls.

I drew a cautious breath and found there was still some air to breathe, but I realised there couldn't be much, and that I must shortly suffocate, as the coffin-lid had actually been shut down

upon me, and the coffin would soon be carried to the grave and buried deep in the earth. I didn't attempt to make the smallest cry for help or to be let out. I thought it would only have the effect of terrifying the nurses more, and making them more anxious than ever to put me underground quickly, for fear of being arrested for burying a person before she had really died.

I endured all the agonies of mind that a person who has really been buried alive can endure.

Then a voice said to me—

“You must have the courage to open your eyes and look at your surroundings.”

In terror, I opened my eyes.

The iron bars of my bedstead were pressed hard against the top of my head; they were what I had felt as the coffin end, hurting my head. My nightdress was rolled up in a crumpled bunch, round under my arms, leaving my legs and half my body naked in bed; that was the tumbled shroud. The bedclothes were drawn tightly right across my face; they were the coffin-lid flattening my nose.

On discovering all this, I drew a deep breath, and thought—

“That was a delusion!”

(But my nose still felt so flattened to one side that I put up my hand and pushed it back into place.)

The voice that had before spoken said—

“The other body, in your lodging, is being buried—that is why you felt that. As you had the courage to open your eyes as you were

told, you are all right now. But Ray Hall has not had the courage to open his eyes in his coffin, as he was told, and now he is really being carried out to be buried alive. Jump out of bed quickly and go to the window, and you will see his coffin being carried out of this house now."

I jumped quickly out of bed and ran towards the window.

The nurse intercepted me.

I said, "I only want to look out of the window; please let me look, just for one second." But she would not let me go near.

I stood on tiptoe and looked over her shoulder, as far as I could. The road and the garden gate were plainly visible, and there was no sign of any coffin or of any hearse.

I was frequently in my coffin after this, but never again was I afraid. I always found that I could breathe, and I thought, "If I always do what I am told, I am sure I shall survive all right, as I did that first time when I did what I was told."

Ray Hall, also, was repeatedly in his coffin.

He suffered more calamities than I can recount, in his frantic and futile efforts to get to me in his actual, bodily presence. We could always communicate, uninterruptedly, and we did (having, in the intervals between the various sets of horrors that were always going on, the most cracking jokes over the composition of our joint book that was to "shatter the Universe with laughter," and which was entitled *The Laughing Lunatics*), but until Ray Hall could get to

me in his bodily presence, rescue me from the wandering fiends, take me away from the experimenting of the doctor and nurses, see for himself that I was the woman who was enduring the Medium's fictitious inventions, and stop the writing of that book of his, my torments would never cease.

Therefore our efforts were wholly directed towards getting Ray Hall to the house where I lay. All our troubles would cease if he could arrive; none would ever cease until he did. And never once had he succeeded in getting to this house, or to me, again, since that first night when he was there masquerading in false wig and nose. Never again, throughout the whole of my attack of madness, did I believe he was with me in bodily presence. In the body, we never met. All we did was to keep up continual conversation at a distance.

Just as my identity was so terribly tangled, so was every one else's.

Ray Hall was hopelessly mixed up with a raving madman in the * * * * * Asylum. This madman was obsessed by the obsessing, demoniacal spirit in *Flames*—which demon-spirit was the one who had managed once to obsess Ray Hall, and who was always trying to seize his body again. In that way Ray Hall and that madman (obsessed with the demon) became muddled up in the same bewildering manner that I was muddled up with that strange woman in my lodging and with that book-character woman.

So he was triplicated, just as I was triplicated—himself, the madman in the asylum, and the obsessing demon.

I knew instantly from his voice which was the real man, and could never be deceived. But other people were always being deceived, and mistaking the madman or the obsessing fiend, who were personating Ray Hall, to be the real man. This led to the most frightful consequences, and the continual escape again into the world of the maniac and the fiend to wreak havoc amongst mankind.

My brother Oliver was almost equally muddled.

My effort to eliminate his Worser Self I found had by no means destroyed that Worser Self, as I had hoped and believed; it had merely resulted in dividing Oliver up into two personalities, exactly like *Jekyll and Hyde*. (Except that the two personalities of my brother existed simultaneously and not alternately, like Hyde and Jekyll.)

The Oliver who came to see me, in his physical body (who, by the way, I saw, *consciously*, very little oftener than I saw the doctor), was Oliver's Better Self.

His Worser Self had become one of the "thought-voice" people. It was most fully alive, and it used to come and stand by my bedside and threaten to kill me for having murdered it and driven it out of the body of my brother, so that it could no longer make my brother do anything evil, as it wished.

Oliver's Better Self was also existing in the

"thought-world" as well as in the physical world (completing the triplication of Oliver's identity).

I used to hold much communication, in "thought-voice," with this Better Self in the thought-world, when Oliver was not with me in his physical body. I used to implore it to bury its Worser Self, and never to think of it, as that raised it from the dead. It used always to agree, and try its utmost to accomplish this; but every sort of accident used to frustrate its good intentions.

This Better Self of Oliver's, in the thought-world, used to help Ray Hall and me, in every way, in our efforts to get Ray Hall to Mrs. W.'s house. But over and over again, when Oliver had managed to get what he believed to be Ray Hall to the house, the man would turn out to be the maniac or the fiend; or, the coffin which Oliver had brought, believing it to contain the body of Ray Hall, which would resuscitate when the lid was removed, would prove, on being opened, to contain Oliver's Worser Self, which would instantly escape and seek to obsess Oliver and murder me.

I never, *consciously*, spoke to Oliver (the actual man) when he came, in the flesh, to visit me, about any of these things, nor mentioned Ray Hall's name to him, except once.

I had grown very tired of all my own, Ray Hall's, and Oliver's combined futile efforts in the "thought-world" to get Ray Hall to the house in his physical body. I concluded I had better have recourse to some physical help in the matter, if I could procure it anywhere.

I became conscious one day, and saw Oliver sitting writing by the window in my room. I said to him—

“Please write to Miss E. and explain things to her. Have you ever written to her? You know I was most rude to her that day I came here. Do write to her at once if you have not already done so. Give her my love, and say how sorry I am to have behaved to her as I did.”

My brother answered, “Yes,” and continued his writing.

A voice said to me, “Tell your brother to go to the * * * * * Asylum and fetch Ray Hall.”

I answered in my thought-voice—

“But he isn’t in the * * * * * Asylum, surely?”

“It doesn’t matter *where* he is,” answered the voice; “that is immaterial. The material fact is, that he can’t, unaided, get here. What you need to do is to rouse these people into doing *something* to find him and bring him here. If Oliver goes to the * * * * * Asylum and asks for him, that will cause inquiries to be set on foot about him—it will lead to Oliver’s ultimately tracing and finding him, wherever he is. Say what I tell you.”

I said to my brother—

“Oliver, please go to the * * * * * Asylum and fetch Ray Hall.”

“All right!” he answered, and soon after he went away.

I did not see him again for two or three days. I saw Mrs. W., and I said to her—

“Did Oliver go to the * * * * * Asylum to fetch Ray Hall, as he promised?”

She said, “I don’t know.”

I asked, “Where is Oliver now?”

“On a visit to your uncle, in the country.”

I thought hopelessly, “These people go on visits, they go out to dinner-parties, they rush about everywhere, amusing themselves, while I lie here week after week; enduring the most unutterable torments; and not one of these people will walk one step, or lift one finger, to do the one small thing I asked them to do, and which is the only thing that will ever set me free from these torments.”

CHAPTER VII

I CANNOT be quite sure whether it was after I had had a relapse and again got better, or whether it was when I had first got better (about a week after the doctor began attending me), that I saw my second brother, Neville, sitting by my bedside, and spoke to him about the doctor. I said—

“Who is this doctor who is attending me—is he a brain-doctor? You know, Neville, it is my *brain* that has gone wrong, and I must have a brain specialist. Who is this doctor?”

“He is a nerve-specialist.” (I thought, “How euphemistic! However, that’s near enough; they evidently have called in the right *sort* of doctor.”)

“He was recommended to Oliver by his own doctor, as one of the most up-to-date nerve specialists.”

“Oh! well,” I said wearily, “he only looks in here about once a week, says ‘How do you do?’ and then goes away again. He scarcely ever troubles to come here—I shall never get well at this rate; why doesn’t he come oftener?”

My brother didn’t reply.

Probably he thought I was forgetting the daily interviews and long arguments I had with the

doctor. But I was *forgetting* nothing, and stating the exact fact when I said *I* saw the doctor at rarest intervals, and for a few seconds at a time only. For that was all *I*, the real *I*, ever did. (Every interview of which the real I was conscious, is faithfully recounted in this narrative.)

I remember coming to, most suddenly, for one second during one of his visits, and seeing him and Mrs. W. standing together, facing me, near the bed.

The doctor said, "Good evening! How are you?"

"All right, thank you," I answered mechanically, for my whole attention really was fixed upon a handsome, gold watch-chain the doctor was wearing, which had caught my eye on account of its brightness, and of its being precisely on the line of my sight as I lay in bed. I made no remark aloud about it, for fear of seeming rude in making a personal remark, but I thought—

"What a pretty chain!"

As I was in the act of thinking that, a quite obscene thought seemed suddenly flung into my mind, without any volition of my own, from without. Instantly I pulled myself up, horrified, thinking—

"What *am* I thinking?"

And that same moment I was annihilated. My existence was extinguished as suddenly and utterly and completely as the flame of a candle, when it is blown out, is extinguished. That was the

precise sensation. I suddenly and utterly ceased to be.

Goethe has said, "It is to a thinking being quite impossible to think himself non-existent, ceasing to think and live." Goethe would never have made such an assertion had he experienced what I experienced, and have just narrated.

It is quite possible, in fact most easy, to imagine and comprehend annihilation and non-existence, after receiving actual, practical demonstration of them in one's own person!

Whether the above incident occurred before or after I had had my relapse I cannot be sure. But my belief is that it took place quite early during my attack.

The following was certainly after I had been from two to three weeks under the doctor's treatment:—

I became conscious one evening, to find the doctor just advancing towards me. One nurse (I can remember which one) was standing by the other side of my bed-head, close beside the bed.

I was lying on my back, with my right leg bent at the knee, and twisted, sideways, under the left leg, in such a fashion that the sole of my right foot was upturned outwards, beyond the left leg, near the left edge of the bed.

As the doctor walked towards me, at the left-hand side of the bed, some invisible object struck that upturned sole of my right foot with a most resounding slap. It seemed as if it had been violently flung by some one at me.

It gave me the most fearful start, and I jumped

up in bed, intending to throw off the bedclothes in order to discover what it was that had struck me, and to hurl it out of the bed.

But the doctor was too quick for me.

With lightning rapidity he dropped both hands upon the edge of my sheet, signing to the nurse opposite, who instantly followed suit, on her side of the bed.

This united action of theirs pinned me tightly down in the bed.

I made no effort to struggle against them, but what I was enduring, pinned down in bed with some horror that I was not allowed even to investigate, was terrible.

Then suddenly I saw, *through the bedclothes*, what it was that had struck the sole of my foot, and was still lying there where it had been flung.

A feeling of intense indignation and anger against the doctor took possession of my mind. I thought—

“This is all his doing! Nothing of this sort was happening before he came; now, immediately he enters the room, this happens! I believe this whole occurrence is another of his experiments on me, and is due entirely to his deliberate ‘*suggestion*.’”

As I thought this, the object that I had seen and felt lying against the sole of my foot vanished from my sight and sense of touch.

“This proves it to have been his ‘*suggestion*,’ and not a reality!” I exclaimed mentally; “for now the thing has vanished, without one of us having touched it! It is perfectly clear that this

whole occurrence has been another of the doctor's experiments on me."

I lay down again in bed, thinking wearily—

"I wish to heaven this doctor would leave off trying these horrible and utterly useless experiments, that terrify me and do no good to any one."

I do not in the least know whether the doctor stayed any length of time, or whether I, unconsciously, held any converse with him.

Consciously, I did not speak one single word to him. In the first place, I was feeling too indignant with him to speak to him (I felt unable to speak politely, and had no wish to be rude); in the second place, immediately after I had thought what I have written above, the "voices" began speaking to me and I had no more consciousness of anything actual that was occurring.

The "voices" said—

"The spot where that 'suggestion' struck the sole of your foot, is now branded with a mark that every fiend and evil entity can see. Not only can they *see* the mark, but they have also the power to *touch* it and your foot, where that mark is—and they are about to do so.

"You will be obliged to submit to this new torment (caused by that doctor). As long as that mark remains upon your foot this torment will endure. But the mark will gradually fade away in time, and even while it remains, *if you are an innocent woman*, none of these evil creatures will be able to lay a finger on you anywhere except just on that branded mark, and you need

fear nothing ; nothing can harm you. Lie quite still, and do not be afraid."

I stretched out my leg at full length, so as to get that right foot of mine as far away from me as possible, and I lay perfectly still and waited to see what was going to happen.

I saw nothing (I think I was unable to open my eyes), but at the end of the bed, between the bars of the rails, I *felt* fiends doing every sort of thing to the sole of that branded foot of mine.

They scratched it, they sniffed at it, they touched it with ice-cold fingers, they scorched it by burning (I was informed that time, by the voices, that the dead body of that false identity of mine, in my lodging-room, was being cremated, and that it was that burning that I was feeling, in the only spot in which I was vulnerable—namely, that branded part of the sole of my foot).

The fiends did everything they could to that mark, but they were unable to do anything to me anywhere else. They ramped and raged at the foot of the bed, but I lay safe and unafraid.

Having been told I could not be harmed if I was innocent, I felt perfectly unafraid, because I felt perfectly innocent.

CHAPTER VIII

AFTER having begun to get better, I grew worse again when I had been under the doctor's care about ten days or so.

I found, on becoming sane, that I could prove to myself that for three days, and perhaps more, I completely lost all bodily consciousness whatsoever.

Whether it was after those days, or during one of them, I cannot be certain, but one whole day I was unconscious of everything concerning my body—of it and its surroundings—but I was conscious of continual music.

Music—much resembling that I had heard in my lodging—went on all day. Whenever I was addressed by the invisible people they spoke in song, not in speaking voice. I passed a most delightful day, quit of all bodily cares and troubles.

The only thing of which I could complain, was the extraordinary *sameness* of the music that went on.

It was all in the same time (march time) and in the same key, was of the same character (sacred music), and consisted of the same harmonies (the latter were full and beautiful, but very

short, and leading always to the same "perfect cadence"—and ceaseless repetition of them made me long for some alteration to be made in them).

I said at last, "This music is delightful—but can't it be varied a little? All of it is so monotonously alike that I am beginning to get quite tired of it, although it is so beautiful. Do change the time and harmonies."

But the music then stopped altogether.

With regard to the voices "talking in song," I might add, that although that occurred only during that one day, once before, during one of the days soon after my arrival at Mrs. W.'s house, and when I was in much the same state of bodily unconsciousness as in this present instance, all conversation with the invisible people had been carried on in verse.

I have never written (nor attempted to write) one line of poetry in my life—so the ease with which I found I myself, without any premeditation, could reply, also in verse, astonished as well as delighted me.

It was all rhymed verse—and the voices speaking to me never failed to get their rhyme properly; I remember failing only once myself, and then only with one line—but I felt quite annoyed.

"It can't be helped!" I soliloquised; "that must pass as a blank verse."

Except, however, at those two short periods, at times when I was most ill and unconscious (bodily), the "voices" always spoke in the

ordinary way, and their voices and my own "thought-voice" sounded to my sense of hearing precisely in every respect like ordinary speaking voices.

To return to my relapse—

I was roused to consciousness one day by feeling a hot liquid pouring down my chin.

I opened my eyes and found I was being supported in bed by two nurses, one of whom held a tablespoon in her hand, full of pea-soup, with which she was vainly endeavouring to feed me.

She had got the spoon between my lips and was pouring the soup steadily out, but not one drop of it went inside my mouth; it all trickled down my chin and the front of my nightdress.

My teeth were clenched just as if they were jammed in lock-jaw. They felt like that, to myself.

I had relapsed to feeling almost as ill as I had ever felt, even during those terrible times of sinking. I thought—

"I suppose I *could* unclench my teeth if I chose. I feel as if I could if I tried, but I simply won't try. I am so dead-tired of all this, I won't make one further effort to live. If these nurses can feed me and keep me alive, let them. If they can't, I won't help them. I'll just die."

They couldn't force a drop into my mouth, and gave it up as a bad job—laying me down again in bed.

I lost consciousness again immediately.

I began to gain more consciousness (at in-

tervals, only, most fragmentarily) in the following days; and it seemed to me that each time I began to be regaining consciousness, the nurses immediately killed me by making me drink medicine that instantly stopped my heart (a horrible sensation).

I knew exactly what the sensation of one's heart being stopped was, because I had consciously stopped my heart's action by my own volition, and died that way on one of the occasions I had been obliged to die to escape obsession by fiends, not long after I arrived at Mrs. W.'s house, near the commencement of my illness.

It seemed to me perfectly inhuman that these people should keep on deliberately killing me off like this, without cause or reason, and without my ever having harmed them in any way; and I could not understand how they could be such monsters of cruelty.

I said at last to the voices—

“What am I to do? I really think that these are not nurses—nor women—but fiends in disguise.”

The voices answered—

“Perhaps they are. You must test them to find that out.”

“How am I to do so?”

“Now that they are bringing you the medicine again to kill you, sit up and spit in their faces. If they are fiends, that will exorcise them, and compel them to resume their true forms and cease personating other people's forms. That is

your only way of testing who they are. Now! do it!"

The nurses were trying to make me take and drink a wineglassful of medicine.

I turned away from the glass and from the nurse who was offering it to me, at my right hand, and I spat in the face of the other nurse, who was standing at my left side, and who was quite unprepared for such sudden attack.

She exclaimed angrily—

"Don't be so disgusting!" And she remained a nurse, and was not exorcised into revealing herself as anything else!

Seeing this, I felt most ashamed at what I had done, and I said mentally to the voices—

"They really are nurses and not fiends. I wish I hadn't spat at that woman."

"Yes," answered the voice, "they are, but it was absolutely necessary that it should be proved. It is evident the nurses are not fiends; but, for goodness' sake, look out and don't lie down! There is a real, most terrible fiend just approaching to the foot of your bed! It is going to attack you at this instant! If you don't at once go for it, it will go for you!"

I inquired in terror how I was to "go for" it? (I saw nothing.)

"Lean forward in bed and spit and spit and spit at it until it is routed and we tell you to leave off. It is standing exactly behind the central foot-rail of your bed. Be quick!"

With the courage and fury of intense fear, I sprang towards the end of the bed and spat into

vacancy, without ceasing, for the space of several minutes.

The nurses stood motionless by, waiting for my paroxysm to pass.

Then the voice said, "That will do; you have routed it. It has fled in terror at your furious attack. You can lie down now, in safety."

I sank back in bed, still quivering with the fright I had endured, and feeling as weak as a chicken.

The nurse again proffered the glass—containing, as I firmly believed, my death-draught.

I thought, "This is too ghastly! These women are determined I shall drink this and die once more. What shall I do? I am completely at their mercy—and they have no mercy. I can't possibly escape from them—they are two stalwart, active women, to one half-dead invalid."

I looked at the nurse into whose face I had spat, and as I gazed steadily at her a look of fear came into her eyes.

I detected it instantly, and thought to myself—

"How comical!—that woman is afraid! A great brawny-armed woman like her, afraid of a half-dead invalid like me! Ah! I see what it is—she imagines me to be still mad, and she knows that mad people are supposed to be invested with super-human strength. Yes—how very curious!—that woman is so afraid that it makes me feel that if I chose I should be quite able, with the greatest ease, to strangle her. Yes! I feel that in spite of my apparent weakness and their strength, I can, if I wish, strangle both these women now, this

minute, and kill the two of them. How very curious! Of course I shan't dream, really, of injuring either of them, but I most certainly should easily be able to kill the two."

The non-frightened nurse again tried to induce me to drink the medicine.

Again I refused to take it.

She insisted, saying, "Drink it!—You *must* drink it!"

I thought, "It is evident that either I or these two women have got to die. They are, most undoubtedly, *bonâ fide* nurses, and they are simply doing what they believe to be their duty, in making me take this draught which will certainly kill me. They are obeying the doctor's orders. He has ordered this medicine, and now, as he has gone and never returned to see the effect of it, he has no notion how much too strong it is for me, and that it kills me off again and again. It is his fault I am killed—not these women's; they have to do what he tells them. It would be unjust to kill them—it would be a deliberate murder. As I can't commit murder, it is evident I have got to die myself."

(I felt quite confident, after seeing that nurse's look of fear, of my ability to overcome and strangle the two women, if I wished.)

I said aloud to the nurse—

"I cannot take that medicine—it is far too strong for me."

She said, "Drink it!—You must! Take the glass!"

I thought, "I won't take it and drink of my

own accord. To be compelled, against my will, to commit suicide, is a little too much! If these people insist upon a murder, they shall, at least, commit it themselves, and not force me into committing it for them! And they shall not kill me without their own deliberate intention, and thorough understanding of what they are doing."

I said to the nurse—

"If you insist on my taking this medicine, which kills me, you yourself must give it to me. You must hold the glass to my lips and say, 'If it be God's will!' Otherwise, I refuse to drink it."

The nurse held the glass to my lips, and repeated the formula upon which I had insisted. She tilted the glass until I had drained the very last drop.

I did not attempt to evade doing so; but as I drank I thought—

"Now, if it is God's will that I must die again, I die! But if there *is* a God of Justice anywhere in the Universe, I will go straight to Him and find Him, wherever He may be! I will demand justice!"

Directly I had drunk the medicine I quitted my body. I passed swiftly through that dark region, that sort of Limbo in which on that former occasion I had groped my way; and as I passed through it I thought, "How foolish of me ever to have lingered in such a place when I could so easily have passed straight through it, like this! I will never remain there again." (I never did.)

I arrived almost instantly at a place that felt to me the opposite in every respect of the first region.

I was unable to open my eyes, just as I had been unable in the other region. But instead of feeling myself to be in a dark place, surrounded by evil entities, now I felt myself to be in a region of such dazzling light that the brightness penetrated even my closed eyelids and was visible to me; and surrounding me on all sides I felt there was a countless throng—every one of whom was good, just as every one of those inhabitants of that other region was evil. The whole atmosphere seemed permeated with Light and Good, just as the atmosphere in that Limbo seemed permeated with Darkness and Evil.

In this place I experienced a feeling of the utmost safety and ease. I had a curious “quite-at-home” sort of feeling; no other epithet describes so accurately how I did feel.

I was quite convinced I had come before the Judgment Seat of God, and was in Heaven.

But just as I felt not the smallest fear, neither did I experience the smallest heavenly elation. I simply felt comfortably “quite at home.”

I stood in the midst of that immense throng, in the full light of that blinding brilliancy.

I did not say one word. My entire case—the whole of what was in my mind and what I had wished to say—was instantly, fully, and completely stated to the assembled throng, without my uttering a single syllable.

The method of communication between the

inhabitants of that region was wholly independent of any ordinary sense-organs. *Speech*, there was none. *Thought-transference*, direct from mind to mind, was the method of all conversation.

In this wholly inexplicable, but most unmistakably comprehensible manner, I was informed (in reply to my statement) that, having endured so much, I was permitted, if I myself should so choose, to be finally quit of my vacated physical body, and of the Earth, and to remain where I was, in "Heaven."

In the speechless manner of that strange region, I inquired—

"Where is Ray Hall? Has he also been permitted to escape from the Earth and his physical body, or is he left down there, alone amidst all those fiends and torments?"

I was answered, "He is still alive upon the Earth."

"Then I will go back," I replied without one instant's hesitation.

My decision seemed to occasion the most unmitigated surprise amongst all that throng. Their astonishment was conveyed plainly to my mind from theirs.

I thought to myself, "I really don't know why these people should be so astounded as they are at my decision. This place is nice enough, but it doesn't seem to be anything ecstatically enjoyable, and I can't see, or open my eyes here. For the life of me I can't comprehend why they should think it so astonishing I have chosen to leave."

“If you have chosen to return, you are at perfect liberty to do so,” the speechless Judge decreed, in answer to my decision. “Your way back to the Earth lies through your own physical body.”

Silently I turned to go, and instantly I found myself re-entering my body, which seemed to be a dark doorway, leading into the World. I seemed to push the door, and walk through. Then I found myself back again in earth-life, in my body lying in that London room.

CHAPTER IX

I NEVER (consciously) saw the doctor to be able to tell him how his medicine killed me off. Whether the nurses ever told him what I had said, or he himself reduced the doses, I cannot tell. I only know that after the foregoing experience, I suffered no more of that horrible "stopping of my heart" sensation on taking the doses.

But I still experienced expulsion from my physical body. I went, however, with no preceding suffering, or even discomfort.

I went again, soon (perhaps the next night—but of this I cannot be certain), to the same place I have just described.

Again I stood in that brilliant light, in the midst of that crowd of onlookers.

I had not gone to demand justice, or, indeed, gone there of my own purposed volition at all. I found myself there.

My eyes were, as usual, still closed. I cannot therefore explain how I saw what I did see. I seemed to be able to perceive *through my closed eyelids*.

Beside me was standing Ray Hall.

The speechless Judge who had delivered judg-

ment the previous time I had come to demand it, was proclaiming (in the same speechless manner) throughout that region, amidst the profound silence of that countless throng of witnesses—

“Those whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”

—and I found that I and Ray Hall were the contracting parties in a most extraordinary wedding ceremony.

We were standing side by side, close to, but not touching, each other. Our heads were flung back, and our arms were flung up, in an attitude of ecstasy (although I wasn't experiencing any ecstasy, or indeed any sensation whatever), and wings, formed of rainbow-hued light, were streaming out behind us from our shoulders.

A thick band of white light (about as thick as a ship's hawser, and looking very like a hawser of electric light) ran the whole length of both our bodies—*inside them*. (It was visible through them.) This electric-light cable was shaped like a huge horseshoe: its two extremities were the portions running the length of our two bodies—where the curved portion commenced, it emerged from our bodies *through* our throats (not out at our mouths, but at our gullets, *through the flesh* of our backward-stretched necks), and the arch of the horseshoe was completely outside of both our bodies and formed a sort of narrow, arched bridge of light connecting us together at our throats.

I thought to myself, “This attitude exactly

resembles Watts's 'Love Triumphant.' But in that picture dead bodies are lying on the ground at the feet of the upstanding figure. Now, I wonder if *our* dead bodies are lying on the ground at *our* feet? I really must look and see, and find out whether our bodies are still alive or have at last veritably died."

I looked down (through my closed eyelids) at our feet, and there was nothing lying there. I saw only our upright forms with that electric-light band I have described. The head of the figure standing beside me was thrown so far back that the face was completely hidden from me, and the electric cable, emerging through the throat, was all I saw.

(I remember the flung-back chin was as smooth and white as a woman's.)

I realised we were as devoid of clothes as the figure in Watts's picture, but we were in no wise troubled thereat! We stood in the centre of that immense throng, "naked and unashamed."

I thought, "No, our dead bodies are not lying at our feet—evidently they are still alive upon the earth."

The speechless voice said to us—

"Nothing that can happen to separate you on earth can ever separate you in reality. *You are not two, but one.*"

Ray Hall remarked to me—

"Well! I have never felt anything like this in my life before!"

I answered, "How very curious! I feel nothing whatever. I expect you must be feeling now

what I felt 'in my spirit' in that lodging-room, when *you* could feel nothing. It seems to me as if you could feel nothing in your spirit while you are *in* your physical body, and I can feel nothing in my spirit when I am *out* of my physical body. This is a very curious problem."

Suddenly I remembered that we had never finished writing our book that was to be the means of curing all the maniacs, and that until we did finish it those hapless thousands of human beings were remaining in torments—torments such as we ourselves had experienced, the agonising sufferings of which we knew, and we alone, amongst all the sane world, could understand and explain.

As the thought of this came into my mind, I slipped my hand into Ray Hall's, which was hanging down at his side, close by me, and I said—

"Come! Let us go back to the earth to finish our work."

No sooner had I uttered the words than the form beside me vanished, and I found myself alone, re-entering, in the same manner as before, my physical body.

Once when I was returning like this, some one—a big, powerful man—seized me in his arms.

I recognised perfectly the person who seized me. It was a man with whom I am wholly unacquainted personally, but whom I know by sight from having, many years ago, attended some of his lectures. This man believes himself, and is believed by a large number of people who know

him, to be able to function at will in his "*astral body*," while his physical body lies asleep. The man has not been in England, neither have I set eyes on him, for years. But I could have sworn that that man—not in his physical body, but in a body resembling that in which I myself was—seized hold of me as I walked up to my bedside to slip back into my physical body lying on the bed. It seemed to me he seized me with no intention of harming or insulting me, but merely because he wished to detain me out of my physical body and rouse me to fuller consciousness in the region in which I was wandering in a semi-unconscious state. But directly I felt myself thus seized, I exclaimed—

"No man but Ray Hall shall hold me in his arms!" and I made my escape by instantly *crumbling to ashes* in the man's hands!

It was a most funny experience! The body crumbled through my captor's fingers like fine dust falling to the ground, and in the same second of time it *recomposed*, outside the man's clasped, empty arms, and in that free, reconstructed body, I scrambled, laughing, into bed—into my physical body.

I was convinced that my terrible sufferings were caused by this separation of myself from my physical body—this inexplicable dislocation between my body and me,—and I was sure that this man was making a most fatal mistake if he thought he was helping me by endeavouring to detain me out of my body when he caught me involuntarily out of it.

I felt most elated at the successful manner in which I had eluded him, and greatly amused at his comical discomfiture. I thought—

“Now I know a trick worth any of theirs! I shall always in future understand how to be able to escape from any one!”

But this incident raised grave problems in my mad mind when I was back in my physical body.

Next time I was conscious of being given any food, and the nurse placed before me a substantial meal of minced mutton, I thought—

“Now! Here’s a problem! I can’t, surely, have any real body left, after destroying it as I did; I must be merely a sort of ghost now,—how can I possibly eat solid, physical food?”

I pondered this problem deeply. As I did so, and sat gazing in silent and deep dilemma at the plate of minced mutton, that most ideally fanciful story, *The Gateless Barrier*, occurred suddenly to my mind. In an instant it satisfactorily solved all my difficulties. I thought—

“I am in exactly the same position as that ghost-girl in that story. I have no real body, and neither had she. If she had eaten and drunk the material food and drink her human lover tried to get her to eat and drink, she would have become an actual, living human woman, and would have passed “The Gateless Barrier.” She could not. Well, I will see if I can or can not. If I can I will. I will eat, and form a new body for myself.”

With extreme caution (for I had no notion

what consequences might not ensue on my rash act) I attempted to eat the food set before me, and found I was able most successfully to put my body, whatever it was, real or unreal, outside a very substantial, material meal!

One day my brother Oliver entered the room, letting the door shut to rather loudly behind him.

I thought, "Now, that noise is exactly the noise made whenever any of our coffin-lids are slammed down upon us. I know what it will be—Oliver will be terrified, believing that he is again dead and shut up in his coffin. I really must try and make him thoroughly understand that that was not his coffin-lid being banged down, and that he is quite safely alive.

I said aloud, reprovingly, to Oliver—

"Oliver, please never bang a door like that—shut it quite quietly, always."

Oliver, who evidently thought his inadvertent noise had "got on my nerves," apologised most humbly, and promised never again to bang a door. When he left he shut the door behind him with the most extreme care and quietness.

I thought, "I think that has cured him of ever making that coffin-lid noise again. Now he won't get so many frights, believing himself to be dead. That will remove one cause of some of his scares, at all events."

But those untoward accidents, resulting in the resuscitation and escape from its coffin, of Oliver's Worser Self, still continued for weeks after the above incident.

I was told by the voices at one time, that my

youngest brother (who was abroad) had become a morphia-maniac, and had killed his little girl (my god-child), and that this had sent my sister-in-law raving mad, and that she was in an asylum.

I inquired anxiously of Mrs. W. what was the news of this brother of mine, and of his family.

She replied she had heard nothing whatever of them for months.

I thought, "It is evidently all true, and they dare not tell me."

My second brother, I firmly believed, had cut his own throat in the room adjoining mine. As he was away at work and I seldom saw him, I laboured under the latter delusion for about a week, before he reappeared, and I found him to be still alive.

I never inquired if he *had* cut his throat or not, because after my futile inquiries about my youngest brother (whose fate remained never cleared up, as I never saw him), I was certain I should not be told that he had done it, even if it were true.

For days I believed Ray Hall to be lying dead in his coffin in the dressing-room of my room. I was told he would rise from the dead and walk into my room, in his grave-clothes, half-eaten by worms.

I was horrified, but not afraid. I made up my mind I would speak to him directly he rose from the dead, and ask him to wait a little before coming out of the dressing-room, to give his body time to *recompose*, and not to come to me at once and frighten me by appearing in such a state of decomposition.

Once I was told he was standing outside my door, in the passage, and that he could not get in unless I opened the door for him. I was told to jump out of bed and do so.

I obeyed—or, rather, tried to. But the door was locked and the key taken away, and the nurse was at my side in an instant, ordering me back into bed.

As I stood by the locked door, a voice said—

“That was quite the wrong thing you did, endeavouring to open that door. Your act has admitted all this crowd of spirits who were waiting outside.”

A long procession of spirits of the dead seemed to stream in through the shut door and file past me. They spoke to me as they went past, but I saw nothing.

I got back into bed, and afterwards one of these spirits came and lay at my feet, on the end of my bed, and cried for hours.

It was the spirit of a beggar-girl. This girl was one to whom I had never spoken, but whose face had made a great impression on me when I was young. She always stood at the same street-corner, selling matches, and she had the most marvellously beautiful eyes I have ever seen. They fascinated, they haunted me—not only by their beauty, but by their despair. They looked at no one, they gazed straight out into vacancy over the head of every passer-by. I tried, again and again, as I passed, to catch those eyes, in order to speak to that girl. I longed to speak to her, but always steadily she refused. I was very

young, and painfully shy. There was a despair in those eyes upon which I simply *dared not*, uninvited, obtrude.

It was the spirit of this beggar-girl with the soul-haunting eyes that lay and sobbed on my bed. I could feel the weight of her body on the end of the bed; her tears dripped wet upon my feet, and her long hair fell most tangibly across my bare shins. (The bedclothes seemed wholly pervious to the spirit's body.)

She said that she had died because no one had helped her. She said if I had only overcome my shyness, and spoken to her against her will, I could have saved her.

I replied that I had believed (which was true) that she *had been* helped, by people who had the means of helping her, which I had not, and taken out of the streets and started respectably in life.

She answered that that was quite a delusion; that, knowing how sorry I had been for her, she had been permitted to appear to me once, as she had, alive and happy, but in reality she had died in misery—had killed herself.

And she continued to sob.

This upset me so much that I too started sobbing, burying my face in the pillow, under the bedclothes, to prevent any one from knowing that I was crying.

I sobbed and sobbed, until at last Mrs. W. came and tried forcibly to pull me away from under the bedclothes, and stop my crying.

All this time the dead girl was still lying sobbing on my feet, in every respect as real and

tangible to me as were any of the other people in my room. I knew that she was invisible to these other people, but I was feeling so distraught at her misery that I was quite unable to bear being pulled about and worried by Mrs. W. with the petty little inanities of mundane existence, and I wrenched myself away from her when she tried to pull me out from under the bedclothes, and exclaimed in angry exasperation—

“Oh! Cannot I be allowed even to *cry* in peace?” and I took no further notice of her, but continued my conversation with the dead girl.

I promised the latter that as soon as Ray Hall was able to reach me and take me away with him, that she should come and live with us, and not wander about homeless on the earth any more, and this stopped the girl's sobs; but she still remained, after that, lying for hours at the foot of my bed.

My brother Oliver happened to have been in to see me the morning of that day.

Mrs. W. reported to the doctor that my brother's visits made me cry!

CHAPTER X

MRS. W. herself (most unintentionally) was the cause of one of my very worst "horrors" in that room.

She entered the door, and I saw her come in, and recognised her; but I did not pay any attention to her (I was not too much "all there"!), and put my head under the clothes, and lost all count of her.

Seeing that I took no notice of her, she tried, I suppose, to rouse my attention—anyway, she pulled, or touched, my shoulder.

In one second of time I went through the following ghastly torments.

A voice exclaimed, "One of these obsessing fiends, the Demon of Sloth, has got you at last!"

And it seemed to me as if some entity, hideous beyond possibility of description, had leapt from behind the foot-rail of my bed straight down my throat and obsessed my body. My face felt pulled and drawn out of all semblance of its true, or indeed of any human, shape; it seemed being distorted into the likeness of that most frightful, obsessing demon (whom I could not *see*, but whose hideosity I was thus, palpably, made to *feel*).

I started up in a perfect frenzy of horror,

determined that no power on earth should keep me in a body that was to be shared with me by such an awful fiend, and I exclaimed aloud, frantically—

“I will die! I will swallow my tongue!” (This suggested itself as the only and quickest means of killing myself I had at hand, and I instantly had recourse to it.)

It seemed to me, as I turned back my tongue down my throat, that I accomplished my purpose, killed myself, quitted my body, and was back again in it, all in one second of time.

During that second I had felt my mother touch my arm (the one farthest from Mrs. W.), and over Mrs. W.'s head I had seen the face of a most beautiful girl (of about seventeen or eighteen) look hastily in *through* the wall above the closed door of the room. She had a most surprised expression, and disappeared again immediately when she saw me look at her.

My quitting my body had ousted the fiend—it being obliged to quit it when I did. But I found, on re-entering the body, that the face was still hideously distorted. The muscles round the mouth, especially, were all drawn and dragged down in the most painful manner, as if they had been forcibly stretched so far beyond their utmost normal limits that they could not regain them. Days afterwards those muscles still ached and felt over-stretched.

In an extraordinary way my distorted face seemed to me to resemble my mother's face, but I thought—

“My mother has a very sweet expression, this must be some demon that has obsessed her and grown like her, and not her herself, that obsessed me then. I see what it is—she is attending spiritualistic *séances* to try and find out what is the matter with me, and this is resulting in these awful obsessing demons getting power over me, through her, at these *séances*. Now *she* is going to add another to all the different sets of experiments to which I am being subjected, each of which makes me have to endure a separate set of horrors.”

Mrs. W. was stroking my face—as I believed, endeavouring to get it back into something resembling its normal shape. I asked her if she had not noticed how like that distorted countenance was to my mother’s?

I told the nurse afterwards that Mrs. W.’s touching me had given me an awful start and fit of the horrors. I must have been fairly sane when I told her that; but I could not have remained so for long, for I well remember all that I continued to endure as the after-effects of the incident I have just described.

I believed my face remained transformed into something so appallingly hideous that no one dared look at me.

Mrs. W. being excluded from the room (as I learnt afterwards, on account of the start she had given me), no one came near me, so that confirmed me in this belief.

It was further strengthened by observing that the large looking-glass was carefully covered up—

as I believed, to prevent my accidentally catching sight of my terrifying self.

As a matter of fact the covering had inadvertently been left on from the previous night. The mirror was draped to prevent it reflecting the electric light into my eyes. The electric light, itself, also, was constantly draped by the nurses, to darken my side of the room, while they worked or read.

(NOTE. — With regard to this free use of draperies of all sorts, that daily folding and unfolding of counterpanes, etc., there is one thing that I should like to say—that I long to din into the ears of every Keeper of every Lunatic in the world. It is this—

The more bare of furniture and objects of every description the room can be kept, the better for the unfortunate patient.

To use draperies, for any purpose whatever, to allow drapery of any kind to remain in a Lunatic's room, is, on the part of those in charge of that Lunatic, an egregious, professional blunder.)

As I observed that draped mirror, and felt the aching of the stretched, distorted muscles of my face, voices began speaking to me. They told me that I had become like "*The Woman with the Fan*," so frightful to look upon, that no one, not even the man—or, rather the *men*, for there were many—who loved her, were able to bear such a terrible sight. They said Ray Hall would never be able to bear the sight of me.

I answered the voices—

“One man could bear the sight of ‘*The Woman with the Fan*,’ and never deserted her, when all the others did. If I am ‘*The Woman with the Fan*,’ perhaps Ray Hall is that one man.”

They said—

“He has such an intense love of the beautiful, that it is exceedingly likely that the mere *trying* to see if he is able to bear the frightful sight may send him mad. You know the hideousness of that distortion terrified you to death, and if your face is still looking like it felt to you then (and still feels, only more slightly), it will certainly have the same disastrous effect on him. You must discover for yourself, before asking him to come and see you, whether your countenance is, really, so demonical as to be likely to send him mad. You must have the courage to look at it, yourself, first. If the sight does not send you mad, it probably may not send him mad either; and then you can ask him to come and try if he can stand the sight of you or not. Be brave, and look in the glass and see your own terrifying face.”

Against the side wall, opposite the bottom of the bed, stood the wardrobe, in which was a large cheval-glass. If I was out of bed, I could, by scrambling back into bed at the foot of the bed, get a sight of myself in this glass, without the nurses interfering to prevent it.

Throughout the day I endeavoured vainly to screw up my courage to do this, and to face the terrifyingly hideous spectacle which I was con-

vinced would confront me if I caught sight of myself in a glass.

At last I decided to face the horror gradually. The looking-glass would present point-blank, and directly, the gruesome sight. To see it thus would probably send me mad.

To look at myself, first, in the polished tiles of the back of the wash-hand stand would break the shock of the sight I had to face. The tiles would give only a very imperfect, blurred image of me; I would accustom myself to that indistinct, modified version of the horror before attempting the other.

So next time I got out of bed I summoned up all my courage and went and faced my reflection in the tiles.

It was an exceedingly blurred and distorted reflection; but there seemed no trace, in the distortion, of any resemblance to that hideous, obsessing fiend, and so I turned straight from it to the foot of my bed and confronted my own image, full and clear, in the cheval-glass.

I saw myself *as* myself, and ejaculated mentally—

“ Good heavens! All these horrors that I have endured have left me perfectly unchanged! My hair has not even turned white!”

And I got back into bed—but only to endure fresh horrors day after day.

One day I recollect waking to consciousness, from a period of unconsciousness, to find myself rigidly stiffened into a very peculiar position.

The stiffening and the position alike were equally peculiar.

With regard to the first, the sensation was exactly as if my body had been some time dead, and the death-stiffening had set in.

(I feel convinced that whatever *does* happen at death, *had* happened to me previous to that return to consciousness—that *I* had been completely severed from connection with my body, just as one is severed at death, and that when I returned into my body, I found it stiffened precisely as a corpse would be stiffened after the vital principle had departed. I awoke in, and revitalised, a rigid corpse.)

Directly I became conscious, I “unstiffened” my body; but I left it in the attitude in which I had found it, in order to discover what that attitude was.

I quickly discovered, without any mental effort at remembrance, that the pose was the exact replica of that of the cross-legged, seated images of the *Buddha*.

Immediately I had mentally solved the problem as to what pose it was into which I had found my body stiffened during my absence, I instantly changed my limbs into an ordinary, natural position.

Once again, later on, I re-awoke in the same, unnatural, corpse-stiffened manner.

Again I was certain I was put in exact imitation of *some* original, but I could not remember what that original was. I racked my brain, but I could not remember; I could not think of any original of which this could be a copy.

I unstiffened myself (one arm and hand espe-

cially were rigid as stone) and remained exactly as I had been posed, for it was quite an ordinary-seeming sort of position in which to be lying in bed, and I was still endeavouring to discover what the pose imitated—what the original was.

But no sooner had I “unstiffened” than a voice said to me—

“You are lying in a perfectly obscene attitude.”

As I was then (and still am now) unable to see anything objectionable in the attitude, I remained quietly exactly as I was, and answered—

“I am lying in a perfectly natural attitude, and I do not intend to budge.”

The voice went on—

“You are continually putting yourself into obscene attitudes, and bringing down upon yourself all sorts of trouble in consequence. It was entirely your own fault that you were seduced by that fiend in your lodging. You were in another obscene attitude.”

I said—

“I was in an attitude of prayer, and I was thinking no evil.”

The voice answered—

“So you believe, but you are so crassly ignorant that you are continually saying and doing the most appalling things without knowing that they *are* appalling. Now, for instance, when R. B. asked you if you were afraid of him, and you answered—‘Not in the least, I rather like you,’ that had a perfectly dreadful double meaning.”

I got furious.

“Had it!” I said. “Well, I meant exactly

what I said, in plain English, and nothing else ; and R. B. took it exactly as I meant it. All my life I have said to every one exactly what I mean, in plain English, and no one—man or woman—has ever mistaken my meaning, or believed me to be saying anything abominable. I have no intention whatever of attending to anything you say, or of altering the way I have been used, all my life, to speaking. Any one who misconstrues plain English into horrible double-meanings is not fit to be spoken to, and I shall not speak to them."

Upon this the voice left off talking.

Since becoming sane, and endeavouring to analyse the whole of my madness, I have been able, after much thought, to solve the problem of that unrecognisable attitude, which I was unable, in spite of all my brain-racking, to solve at the time.

The position into which I was stiffened, was the exact replica of the attitude of Titian's celebrated *Venus* in the Tribuna of the Uffizzi Gallery, in Florence.

Any one who has read Mark Twain's *Tramp Abroad*, will remember his rabid tirade against this picture—which he denounces as something too objectionable for exhibition.

It is ten years ago since I saw that picture. The only impression it made upon my mind when I did see it, was, that it was not in the least beautiful. Personally, except for its ugliness, I see nothing whatever objectionable in that picture.

(I wonder if Titian did either!)

CHAPTER XI

JUST as vicissitudes overtook us in everything else Ray Hall and I attempted, so they overtook us in the writing of the book we were compiling to enable the doctors to understand madness and cure all the maniacs.

Ray Hall was writing the book, and had put down all our joint experiences, and had arrived at almost the successful completion of the entire work, when a terrible calamity overtook him.

He again became obsessed by the demon in *Flames*, who was now the obsessing demon of a lunatic in the * * * * * Asylum.

Ray Hall had been flung into that asylum while trying to reach me; and his being put there had enabled that lunatic's obsessing demon to pass into and obsess Ray Hall's body.

The voices told me all this, and added that this obsessing demon had utilised Ray Hall's brain and hand, and had written an immense amount of "copy" in our joint book upon which Ray Hall had been engaged when taken possession of.

The voices said that the demon, being the obsessing spirit of a lunatic, was itself a lunatic; that its obsession of Ray Hall's body turned that

body into a maniac; and that Ray Hall being in love with me, his going mad caused him to become an *eroto*-maniac.

The voices further added that the things this *eroto*-maniac had written in our book were absolutely unprintable; that they were things like those I had heard that voice stating some weeks ago (that time I had ordered it to desist talking such abominations).

I said to the voice that was telling me all this—

“Well, when Ray Hall gets back again into his own body, and ousts that fiend and recovers possession of our book, he shall cut out the whole of what this *eroto*-maniac has added to our book, and we will go on with it from the point at which we left off when Ray Hall became obsessed.”

“If you do that,” said the voice, “you will make your book useless. One kind of madness will still remain uncomprehended by the doctors; and the whole of that class of maniacs will remain for ever uncomprehended and uncured. What that maniac has written is just what was needed to enable the doctors to understand that madness; and Ray Hall was obliged to go through this last terrible obsession in order that this class of maniacs *should* be understood. To cut out what has been written by the maniac, while in Ray Hall’s body, will be to throw away the whole of the knowledge, to gain which Ray Hall has been subjected to this last and most terrible ordeal.”

“Then,” I said, “the things the *eroto*-maniac has written in our book shall remain; we will

not leave any class of maniacs unsaved. The book is only for the doctors, it isn't for the public; however terrible the things that are in it, they shall remain if they are necessary to enable the doctors to understand that madness."

"But," said the voice, "are you aware that there are the most terrible things there about yourself?"

I said, "What things?"

"The things you heard that voice saying, weeks ago."

I said, "Those things were, every one of them, foundationless lies; it cannot be necessary for any lies to be left. All the lies shall be cut out."

The voice answered, "But to cut out anything that is not a lie, will make the book useless to help any one. It will not be the whole Truth. There are other things also there about you. Some of these things are true. If the book is to be of any use, they must stand."

"Then," I said, "they shall stand."

"Well, in that case," said the voice, "you must read the book to find out which of the things are true and which are lies."

"No!" I replied. "I refuse to read the book. If it is the sort of things that that voice was talking, I simply refuse to pollute my mind with them. I will not read the book."

"But you must," argued the voice; "otherwise, how will you ever be able to know which are the true and which are the false, so as to be able to cut out the lies?"

I said, "Ray Hall shall read the book."

“But of what use will that be,” objected the voice, “for the parts that concern you? He will not know what is true and what is not true of the things written. No one can tell that but you, and you must read the book.”

I said, “Ray Hall knows everything concerning me. He knows my entire life and all my acts and thoughts. My whole mind is laid absolutely bare to him, just as if it were his own mind. He shall read the book and he will know what is true; and whatever is written there about me that he decides is necessary to stand, shall stand—no matter what it is.”

So it was settled thus; and I never read the book, and neither saw nor heard anything of the horrible things the maniac had written.

But the voice said to me—

“Are you aware that that book now—when the things necessary for the comprehension of this last kind of madness are added to it—is such, that the publication of it will shatter the reputations of both Ray Hall and yourself? All your friends will cut you both for publishing such a book.”

I said, “We do not care. We are determined that no other human being shall endure such torments as we have experienced, if we can prevent it—and we can prevent it by the publication of that book; and we will prevent it, no matter what it costs ourselves. The book is to be given only to the doctors, and any friends we have who are worth keeping will understand our reason for writing it, and remain our friends. For the rest—let them cut us! We care nothing for

Society—we will quit it for good and all. We will correct the proofs of our book, and then we shall have finished our work—we will leave it in the hands of our friends to be brought out and given to the doctors, and we will go away for the rest of our lives into the Desert. Yes! we will go away and live alone, together, in the ‘*Garden of Allah*’!”

This mention of the “Garden of Allah,” put it into my head that I would go there one night when the medicine killed my body and forced me to quit that body.

This was after my spitting at the nurse, and after I had gone twice to “Heaven,” when expelled from my body.

I think it was almost immediately after those two nights of going to “Heaven”—and I should very much like to know whether the doctor gave me any different medicine (morphia, for instance) to cause me to experience what I did experience.

Anyway, after taking the medicine I thought to myself—

“I don’t think much of the Christian ‘*Heaven*’—to-night I will go to the ‘*Garden of Allah*.’”

I have never in my whole life experienced such bliss.

Why, or in what way, I was so blissful, I cannot state. I saw nothing, I heard nothing, I neither met nor spoke to any one, nor did I even seem to have been “sent out of my body.” At least I could bring back no recollection of any of the foregoing.

What I did bring back was recollection of

perfectly indescribable Bliss. I did not seem merely to have *experienced* bliss—it was something infinitely more than that. I seemed to have been *merged in* bliss—to have myself *become* Bliss Incarnate.

I was roused by the nurse shaking me by the shoulder.

It was morning, and I was lying on my face, with both arms flung out at full length above my head across the pillow.

I think the nurse rather believed I was dead, for never had I been roused by either of the two nurses in that fashion.

No words can describe my vexation of spirit at being recalled from such unutterable bliss to mundane misery.

Again the next night the very same thing happened. Again I determined to go to the "*Garden of Allah*"—again I experienced nothing but Bliss—Bliss—Bliss—again I was awoken by the rough pulling at my shoulders by the nurse (the nurse who had been afraid of me)—and again I found myself in that attitude, face downwards, with my arms flung out above my head.

Again my misery at being made to awake once more in my physical body was beyond expression in words.

I thought to myself, "*At last* this doctor has discovered the right thing to give me. If he will give me the same thing every night, I do not mind being ill for the rest of my life. I have never known such bliss!"

But never again, throughout my illness, were

the experiences of those two nights repeated. Whether any different medicine was really given me, those two nights only, I cannot tell. (I may state I have been given morphia once, when sane, but I experienced nothing in the least resembling what I experienced those two nights of bliss.)

I passed directly from those blissful experiences to about the most terrifying of all the experiences of my madness.

(NOTE.—I have been told since that I raved a very great deal, throughout my illness, about the "Garden of Allah," but the foregoing is the whole and entire thought I ever had of it, in my real consciousness. It never was in my thoughts before or after.)

CHAPTER XII

THE night following those two blissful nights in the "Garden of Allah," visual terrors commenced.

The nurses, the objects in the room,—and especially the draperies put over the electric light by the nurse,—were the originals of nearly all my optical delusions.

I understood that, and I believed that the nurses were dressing up bogies on purpose to try me and see if I were afraid of them. I believed it to be a lunacy test; if I showed any fear of these bogies it would prove, to my keepers' satisfaction, that I was mad, and I should then be sent by them to an asylum.

But what I also believed was this, "That every time a fresh bogie was arranged by the nurse, the spirit of the spectre imitated came and took possession of that dressed-up image of itself; and it was the real, living spectre, in every case, that I found myself forced to face—and face without letting the nurses know that I believed it to be real, or they (who thought it only their own dressed-up bogie, and did not understand about the real spectre having taken possession of it) would at once report to the doctor that I had

failed to pass the lunacy test, and must be shut up as a lunatic.

The thought of being put into an asylum was terrifying to me on account of the remembrance I had of that agonising shattering of my brain by those shrieking, mad voices at the commencement of my illness. I felt sure, if I were put in an asylum, I should always be hearing those shriekings, and always be experiencing that indescribable brain-torture.

The first spectre that confronted me was the *Glamis Ghost*. (I had read an account of some festivities at Glamis Castle, a day or so before I went mad, and in that account reference had been made to the Glamis Family Mystery).

It appeared as a grey woman, with a battered face of shapeless grey stone.

It confronted me, threateningly, and made a sign with its arm.

I felt certain if I didn't give the correct countersign that spectre would attack me. As I did not know what countersign to give, I reflected that if I made, or attempted to make, any, it would certainly be the wrong one, and probably do more harm than making none; so I simply lay perfectly motionless and faced the ghost in the way I had been told, weeks before, to face the spectres of Mrs. W. and the nurse.

Seeing I made neither sign nor sound, the stone-faced woman bowed down, raised herself again and stretched out her arm in another sign.

Again I understood I ought to give the countersign; and again, not knowing it, I lay as

before, motionless, facing the thing, absolutely silent, absolutely terrified—but determined that no symptom of that fear should be apparent to the spectre.

The thing vanished. It re-became the nurse.

Instantly, in another part of the room, another terror appeared.

A monk was sitting on a wooden chair, in a cell, at a bare wooden table. He was dressed in the brown cloak and hood of the Franciscan Friars.

Before him, on the table, was spread out a huge, open Bible, which he was pretending to read,—but in reality he was so tipsy that he could scarcely sit up,—and at short intervals he would turn a purple, drink-sodden countenance in my direction, and leer horribly, from under his cowl; at me.

It was “Friar Lubin,” of poetic fame.

If there is anything of which I have a horror, it is a tipsy person, and there was that tipsy Friar, in every way as alive and real (so my senses assured me) as the nurse, seated opposite me, in that cell inside my room, leering at me.

I faced him as I had faced the Glamis Spectre, fixedly, in absolute silence, until he vanished.

Several other apparitions followed—heads only, and none objectionable or terrifying (one was the life-size head of old Madame Blavatsky, which remained some time, regarding me with a most knowing wink!)—and then came the grand climax for that night.

A huge stone platform appeared, extending the whole length of the large bay-windows. This platform reminded me of the platforms on which Egyptian kings and gods are represented.

Seated on this platform was the most terrifying object it is possible to imagine.

Its body and legs resembled the Egyptian figures of men—in colossal size—its head also was the head of a man, but its eye was the eye of an angry bull, bloodshot and fiery, which rolled round and round in its socket, glowering at me. It was seated profile to me, and its one, visible arm, instead of being human, was the hairy, black fore-arm of a bear—at the extremity of which, instead of a human hand, or even the paw of a bear, hung a shapeless sort of *flap*, like the flipper of a seal.

I understood that this figure was the *Personification of Eastern Magic*.

The arm and flipper of the monster hung down at its side, and between that flipper and the knees of the figure, on the intervening space of tessellated stone-paving, prone and motionless, face-downwards on the platform,—looking as if it had been struck down and killed by the monster, who was now mounting guard over its dead body, preparatory to devouring it,—lay a second figure.

This figure was that of a girl.

She was dressed in a flowing robe of a whiteness that resembled exactly the dazzling whiteness of snow upon which a brilliant sun is shining. It was an absolutely glistening whiteness.

Her hair streamed out all round her, over the

pavement, and she lay there to all appearance stone-dead, in the clutches of the monster.

This figure was myself—myself in the character of that book-heroine whom the Medium and Ray Hall had been forcing to enact all those torments and deaths which I, *in its character*, had endured.

Now it (and therefore I—as our identities were inextricably intertwined) lay there, dead on that platform.

I thought, “Well, if I am dead and exposed up there to the gaze of the whole world, at any rate my innocence will be vindicated to the whole world. My garment is spotless and whiter than snow.”

A voice said, “You must face this monster also.”

I obeyed, and faced that angry, rolling, bull’s eye without flinching, although it, and the whole frightful aspect of the apparition, filled me with terror.

I knew I was awake and not dreaming—I knew that menacing monster was an actual, living reality. All my senses assured me of this fact.

As I faced it, a voice said to me—

“You need have no fear of that monster, it is in reality R. B. who has come to help you. He has assumed that terrifying aspect in order to scare away all these spectres that are tormenting you; he makes you lie there, dead on that platform in that book-character, to make these spectres believe he has killed you and is going to demolish you. He has made himself so terrifying in appearance in order that they shall all be

scared away. But you must have courage to remain and face him in that guise, otherwise he will not help you, but attack you."

So I remained with eyes fixed on the monster, until, suddenly, a *third eye* opened in its forehead. The eye was so bright it threw a beam of light shooting right across the room.

Immediately I felt completely reassured as to the character and intentions of the seeming monster. It must be a White Magician—and a highly evolved one—otherwise it could not have developed the mysterious, all-seeing *Third Eye*.

I thought, "I have nothing to fear now from that spectre, I had better leave that one and face some of these other evil spectres."

So I turned away and glanced round the room.

Instantly the monster exclaimed in an angry, threatening voice—

"You are afraid! You cannot face the '*Third Eye*'!"

I immediately turned back and faced it, replying in "thought-voice"—

"On the contrary, the appearance of that Third Eye made me cease to have the least fear of you. That is why I looked away—to face other spectres."

While I spoke, the Third Eye disappeared, and only the red, bull's eye remained, rolling angrily round in its socket at me.

The monster did not believe what I said, and suddenly turned on the Third Eye again, to try if I should be frightened. He turned it on in the wrong place—namely, over the right eyebrow

instead of in the forehead between the two eyes.

I stared and stared at this, and puzzled and puzzled over the incorrectness of the position, thinking that perhaps, after all, the monster was a Black Magician and had not really evolved the Third Eye, but was only shamming to have done so, and was ignorant even of the position in which it should be.

“Well! What is the matter now?” growled the monster. “I am certain you are afraid of the Third Eye.”

I said, “I am not. But you have got it in the wrong position—that is what is the matter.”

He said, “I opened it there because, as I am in profile to you, you couldn’t possibly have seen it if I had opened it in the right place. That is why I did that.”

I said, “I wish you would stick to the exact truth, R. B.—it never helps me when you don’t, but always leads to disasters. I could see perfectly the Eye in its proper position, as its beams shot out right across the room. When you opened it in the wrong position then I made sure you were a Black Magician, trying to deceive me.”

This apparition remained a long time. It said that Ray Hall was lying dead in the next room, and was intending to rise from the dead and walk into this room in which we were, but that if he did so, it (the monster) meant instantly to kill him, as it was forbidden for Ray Hall to rise yet from the dead.

So I spoke to Ray Hall, lying dead in the

next room, and told him he must on no account rise from his death-bed or come to me yet, or he would be murdered.

That finished the apparitions for that night, and I saw none during the following day; but the next evening, directly the nurse draped the electric-light, all the terrors recommenced.

CHAPTER XIII

THE Three Witches, from *Macbeth*, were gathered under the swinging lamp, and they, in co-operation with hundreds of other witches, were wanting me to join the Witches' *Saturnalia*.

I didn't even answer them, and said to myself that I wouldn't trouble to face such spectres as these—who imagined it possible I could be tempted to join the Witches' *Saturnalia*.

They stood there, mixing their Witches' Cauldron—and the Medium having joined them, I could distinctly smell the strong, aromatic smell of that burning Paper of Arabia, sold by the strip in the London streets.

The Medium had told me at the Office that if I wanted to get an "Eastern atmosphere" for writing Eastern stories, I should burn this Paper of Arabia in my room while working.

I had never taken the least notice of her advice—but repeatedly throughout my illness, whenever the Medium spoke to me direct in her own voice (which was not very often), I smelt that strong, aromatic smell under my nostrils.

After the Witches had vanished, there followed strange apparitions of heads and objects, of which

I could not understand the meaning, but was dimly aware that they *had* deep, allegorical meanings, which it was highly important that I should understand.

I gathered that they were sent to warn me against marrying Ray Hall, who, as far as I could make out, was not whom we ourselves believed him to be, but was, in some way, closely related to me. Therefore for us to marry would be an offence against Law.

I remember saying that if it was only one of the arbitrary laws of man, we didn't intend to pay any attention to it; but that if it was some Law of God, then we would attend to it; but that even if we could not marry on earth, we were twin-souls and could never be parted in reality—our souls were One, for Eternity.

The only apparition, of all these allegorical figures, of which I retain any distinct remembrance, was the woolly, monster head of a white ram—in the forehead of which was embedded the miniature head and face of an old, grey-bearded man (no face I recognised).

After these, a dead man's hand and arm were flung across the floor, through the open door of the dressing-room (where Ray Hall's corpse lay)—the hand holding a piece of paper clasped in its stiffened fingers.

The nurse got up and took the paper out of the dead hand and read it, then crumpled it up and threw it aside.

I longed to find out what was written in it, as I was sure it was a message to me from the dead

man; but it was not until about a week or ten days later that I was told, by Ray Hall's voice, that that had been a message from him to say that I was not to try to keep alive any longer, but just to allow myself to die finally next time I was killed, as he had given up the fight and meant to remain dead this time, as he could not hold out through any more of these sufferings.

As I had not received the message, I had not died, but struggled on; and so he had been obliged, after all, to return again and continue our joint battle for life.

As the dead hand and arm were flung from the doorway, a bright streak of light flashed from the side of my bed farthest from the door, towards the hand.

At first I thought it was a spirit-child, running across the room like a flash, but when I looked steadily at it I saw it was the electric-light cable that I had before seen joining Ray Hall and me together in "Heaven," and when the hand vanished the cable was still visible, stretching from the right side of my bed-head, round the bottom of the bed and up the left side, encircling, in the form of a horseshoe, the bed and me.

That finished that night's apparitions—but the whole of the following day two apparitions remained visible to me in my room.

One was a figure of *Death*—Death, dressed in white, carrying a long scythe, and glowering at me from empty, eyeless eye-sockets, set in a grinning death's-head.

(It was the draped mirror and dressing-table.)

This apparition was very angry with me for having cheated it so often of its lawful prey (my dead body, that I was continually resuscitating), and it was there waiting for me once more.

Its aspect gave me the horrors; but I knew it would be fatal if I allowed it to see how it terrified me, so I stared at it with as supercilious an expression as I could assume, and remarked sarcastically, in thought-voice, that it could hardly suppose I wasn't perfectly aware that it had no power over me, as I had died again and again, and had always slipped through its hands every time.

This made it gnash its teeth impotently, frightening me more than ever; but I argued with myself that what I had said was true, and that it was therefore foolish of me to fear Death.

Nevertheless I did fear it—for dying was such an awful bodily sensation to endure, and I had to endure that every time, no matter whether I escaped from Death's clutches afterwards or not; also, the apparition was terrifying to behold.

But I allowed no trace of the fear I was feeling to appear.

The other optical delusion stared at me all day from the lace curtain.

It was the head (only) of a man.

When he first appeared he began nodding and smiling at me.

As I didn't know him from Adam, I stared stonily at him, as I had stared at all the other apparitions.

This non-recognition of him by me seemed to

surprise him very much. After looking blankly astonished, he recommenced nodding and smiling, as if to say, "Surely you recognise me?"

But as I didn't recognise him at all, and didn't like the beady glint of his dark eyes, I never moved a muscle, but continued my fixed, stony stare.

While doing this, I racked my brain to try and think who this man could be.

I knew nobody in the least resembling him. What he looked most like was some courtier of the time of Queen Elizabeth—Sir Walter Raleigh, or some such person—but I did not see what business an Elizabethan courtier had to be in my room, and I intended to show him so.

When the man saw that I not only failed to recognise him, but also did not intend to have anything to say to him, he got angry.

For the rest of the day, whenever I looked at him, his dark eyes were gleaming most menacingly at me.

I spent the day facing him and the Death-Spectre alternately.

Although the utmost racking of my brain, at the time, failed to enable me to solve the mystery of that Vandyke-bearded man's identity, sane analysis of the matter has very easily enabled me to solve that problem since.

The Medium, just at the time of my breakdown, told me more than once that she could "see" beside me a man whose appearance she described. Her description tallied with the appearance of no one I could remember, but the

face of that apparition, that haunted me for a whole day, tallied with that description.

Personally, I am convinced that I saw a visualisation of the image conjured up by my own subconscious mind on that description given by the Medium.

But although now I am quite convinced that that was the origin and cause of that apparition, at the time I had no thought in my conscious mind of that statement of the Medium's, neither did I remember it even when fixedly endeavouring all day to solve the baffling problem concerning the appearance to me of this unknown, dark-eyed, dark-bearded stranger.

After that day I saw no more spectres of any sort.

Those who have not themselves experienced such things, will no doubt laugh at the foregoing, and say it is simply like having a "nightmare."

But would those persons feel inclined to laugh if, in the midst of some most frightful and terrifying "nightmare," they woke up, and, *when awake*, found it to be no "nightmare" but a Reality?—a reality, the truth and actuality of which every one of their waking senses, after most critical observation, confirmed? Would they laugh then?

I think not.

Many a one of those who are laughing now would, in all probability, *then*, go mad or die of terror.

(NOTE.—The psychology of SLEEP bears, in

so many respects, such a close resemblance to that of MADNESS, that if Science could solve the problem of the one, it would not be far off the solution of that of the other.

But to say that one resembles the other, solves the problem of neither.

Western Science frankly confesses, that in spite of all researches, the phenomenon of SLEEP still remains an UNSOLVED PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM.)

From first to last the nurses knew nothing of my having seen things, for I had faced all apparitions in absolute silence, and had made no mention of them for fear I should be judged to have failed in the "lunacy test" and be sent to an asylum, to endure worse horrors.

The doctor also believed I had *seen* nothing throughout the attack. He told me so, afterwards—and I told him he was mistaken.

CHAPTER XIV

THE Medium continuing mad with terror all this time (so I believed), and that keeping Ray Hall and myself enduring all sorts of torments, I was perpetually endeavouring to restore her to sanity.

Part of her terror was at having killed me so often as that book-character, and part of it was at R. B.'s anger—which she still believed remained unappeased against her, because my MS. of the story she had told me about him remained unburnt.

I kept on assuring her (in thought-voice) that I forgave her for what she had done to me, so she need have no further fear on that score, and that R. B. was no longer angry with her and had said I need not burn the story.

However, as nothing cured her, and she refused to believe what I said about R. B., I determined to burn my story, solely to pacify her and see if *that* would cure her.

Accordingly I asked Mrs. W. to let me have the MS. of that story, as I wanted to burn it.

She made every sort of excuse, and refused to bring it.

I was in impotent despair, because it seemed to me that every effort I made to cure us three

(the Medium, Ray Hall, and myself) and finish our torments, was always deliberately frustrated by the people in charge of me.

They could not cure me themselves, and they refused to do, or allow me to do, any of the things that I knew were the only ones that could cure me. Until I escaped from their hands I should never have an opportunity of doing the necessary things to cure the Medium—as long as the Medium was mad, Ray Hall and I were also kept in a state of torment—until I was cured, the people who had charge of me would never allow me to escape. The whole affair was a perfectly hopeless *impasse*.

However, my entreaties had been so importunate that Mrs. W. had really found the MS., and next time the doctor came she gave it to him to bring to me.

By that time my mind was fully occupied with other, further problems, but when I saw the MS. I said it was to be burnt.

The MS. had been deposited on the bed.

The doctor asked, "Am I to read it first, before destroying it?"

I said wearily, "Oh! if you like!" for I was enduring so many other sufferings besides those connected with the Medium, that I had almost ceased my endeavours to get her sane—of which the burning of that manuscript was one of the necessary items.

The nurse (the one who I believed mesmerised me) picked up the MS., and fidgeted it between her fingers.

I thought, "That woman is mesmerising that MS., and when the doctor reads it, he will read just what she is 'suggesting' he shall see in it, and not in the least what I have written. If he is going to read the thing at all, he shall read what I have written, and not what that woman 'suggests'—of which I know nothing, and for which I won't be held answerable."

I turned to the doctor, and said—

"Why don't you take the book yourself?" and I glanced significantly and suspiciously at the nurse, toying the manuscript.

The doctor took the MS. from her and put it in his pocket.

Another night he and Mrs. W. together brought me a letter which I read and understood perfectly rationally, and to which I told them to return answer exactly as I should have ordered if I had been quite sane.

But I was still completely mad.

Once more, only (besides the times I have fully narrated), was I conscious of the doctor, during the whole period of my stay in that room (some three weeks or so).

This time I allude to at present was very shortly before I was moved from this room to another room.

When I saw him, I decided I would try if *he* would help Ray Hall to get to me to end our joint torments, which would never cease until he did get to me, and take me away.

I had very little hope from the doctor, but still I thought I would try him as a last, desperate

resource, as Ray Hall's own efforts had been so entirely fruitless for so many weeks, and seemed likely to remain so—he being beset by such insurmountable difficulties—and other of my attendants having been applied to already by me in vain.

Accordingly, directly I became conscious of the doctor's presence one evening, I said to him—

“Will you please go to Ray Hall, and ask him to come here?”

The doctor answered, “I can't do a thing like that.”

“Why not?” I asked. “You very well can, if you will. You are a man, you can go and call on him.”

The doctor shook his head.

“You can tell him I want nothing of him,” I urged imploringly; “I only want him to come here—just for five minutes. I am sure he won't refuse to come.”

The doctor seemed to me to be hesitating.

“Tell him you have a very troublesome ‘*case*,’” I suggested.

But the doctor only shook his head, and said decisively—

“No, I can't do that.”

I gave up in despair. I thought—

“You so easily *could*, but you *won't*. Not one of you will ever lift a finger to do the only thing that will cure me. But at any rate you are better than the others—you haven't lied to me. You have refused point-blank to do what I ask. You are perfectly useless to me—in fact increase all my sufferings with your own ignorant experiments—but

I really believe you ‘*mean well.*’ However, ‘*People who “mean well” always do ill,*’ and I am sure there couldn’t be a better example anywhere than you always afford as to the truth of that witty remark !”

(NOTE.—As a matter of fact, the doctor actually did go and call at the man’s club and endeavour to find “Ray Hall.” My delusion about him was so fixed that the doctor went intending to try and find out if this artist really had any knowledge of me, and if not, to ask him to write a letter stating so, which the doctor would then show to me in the hopes of thus curing me of my “fixed delusion” about this man. But the doctor was told at the club that “Ray Hall” was away.)

Throughout all these weeks, in the intervals between our various vicissitudes and torments, Ray Hall and I used to hold conversation and have the most cracking jokes.

I wish I could remember these jokes, but not a single one of them has remained in my memory. They consisted for the most part of conversational repartee ; but sometimes, I remember, we would compose parodies on other people’s writings, competing against each other as to which could compose the most lightning-quick and funniest skit on any given subject.

Whenever we were engaged on these competitions or conversations (which were so killingly witty that they nearly finished me off) I used simply to shake with laughter.

I always endeavoured to hide this laughter from the nurses and people with me, making sure they would only attribute my (as it would appear to them) causeless hilarity to madness; but sometimes the conversations went on at such inconvenient times, and my convulsions of laughter were so wholly unconcealable, that I remember quite well, more than once, Mrs. W. rushing at me and demanding—

“What are you laughing at? Tell me!”

But I never did.

I used to implore Ray Hall to desist from talking to me until a more convenient time, when I could successfully hide my laughter under the bedclothes, and not afford these people further cause for confirming their belief that I was mad.

But he seldom paid the least attention to my supplications, looking upon it as a joke to his score in our competition whenever he successfully managed to upset my gravity at any specially inconvenient time.

I well remember one night, when, in the very midst of my bathing operations, he, with malice aforethought, commenced a mental assault of wit that reduced me to the last stage of incapacity to do anything except helplessly laugh!

By the time the nurse wanted to dry me, I had reached the state of being scarcely able to stand; and when she got me up, and swathed me round in an enormous bath towel, and I instantly endeavoured to hide my merriment under its Roman toga-like folds, I stood there, in the middle of that bath, like Cæsar “at the base of Pompey’s

statua," "in my mantle muffling up my face," and simply shaking with laughter.

I did have an amusing evening!

But these cheerful periods (which included the times of the composition of Ray Hall's and my joint book, *The Laughing Lunatics*) were few and far between, and the horrors were almost unintermittent and of every sort and description.

One morning, I remember, the nurse asked me if I would have my head washed that night.

I was feeling so weak and ill, I said—

"Oh! nurse, I don't feel well enough to have my head washed."

"Very well," she said, and turned away.

Instantly one of the voices said to me—

"You were very foolish to have refused. Your head is alive with vermin."

Horrified, I called after the nurse—

"Nurse, I have changed my mind! I will have my head washed. Please wash it now, at once!"

"I can't do it now;" said the nurse, "you must wait till this evening."

I lay back in an agonised state of mind, wondering how I should manage to exist through a whole day with my head alive with vermin.

The voice said—

"Oh! you needn't worry so much about that! —that is nothing! Every one of those spots upon you" (I was a mass of acne, brought out by bromide medicine) "is a fat, white maggot, eating you alive."

Words cannot describe the state of mind into which this statement threw me.

I said (in my thought-voice, of course) to the speaker—

“What am I to do?—Tell me!”

The voice answered—

“Well, you can, if you have the courage, squeeze out each separate maggot from every spot in turn until you have got them all out, alive.”

I said, “I shall die of horror before I have squeezed out half a dozen.”

“Then,” said the voice, “you had better just leave them. Each maggot will eat its way to the surface and then die, just beneath the skin, when it can be squeezed out as pus and not as a living grub. It really is better for you that these grubs are eating their way out through your flesh like this; because, you know, your inside is simply filled with them, from the doctor’s medicine, and unless they had eaten their way out like this, you would never have got rid of them, but would have remained, permanently, with your inside filled with living maggots. Now, after you have once borne this horror of their eating their way out through your flesh, you will be quit of them. But as the doctor’s treatment has filled your inside with them, you will have to bear this.”

My doctor laughed when I told him (long afterwards) of this delusion. But if he himself had experienced such horror as I experienced, throughout that day, I think he would, as the

saying is, have “laughed on the wrong side of his mouth”!¹

Owing to domestic affairs in Mrs. W.’s household, it became necessary, when I had been about three weeks ill, that I should change rooms.

All that I have so far narrated occurred before I changed rooms.

I have given fully and in detail each and every interview with the doctor *of which I was conscious*.

As any reader will see, they amount to about half a dozen—and very fragmentary at that.

I have given these in such full detail, because, if my doctor ever reads this account (which, by the bye, he evinced considerable eagerness to possess) it will prove to him conclusively how extremely mistaken he is with regard to the *location* and *extent* of a lunatic’s consciousness—at least of this particular lunatic’s; and also how wholly unreasonable he was in some of the demands he made upon this lunatic, and some of the complaints he made to her, afterwards, when she became sane.

To give what I mean—

This doctor came daily—twice daily during the first part of my illness—and (I have since been told) would reason and argue with me for an hour at a time, endeavouring to convince me that my delusions were false.

¹ The whole time that my head was being washed, that night, I was in a state of blank unconsciousness. I returned to a very dim and confused consciousness, to find myself seated before the fire, with my wet hair hanging loose over my shoulders to dry.

After I became sane, he said to me that I should have accepted his reasoning and relinquished my delusions, when he pointed out to me how false they were. He also added that there was always a part of my brain that remained sane and capable of reasoning.

Well, the above is the case from *his* point of view—the point of view of the looker-on.

These are the facts from the Maniac's point of view:—

I neither saw the doctor nor heard his reasonings. The delusions (at least, many of them — such, for instance, as the birth and murder of a child) my lips were stating to him, were never *delusions in my own consciousness at all*. I knew nothing of them, until informed of them afterwards by the nurses or Mrs. W.

The doctor, his reasonings, the whole of our conversations, were to me non-existent.

Throughout the latter *I was as unconscious as the dead*.

My mind may have retained (as the doctor says it steadily did retain) a portion of its reason throughout all those conversations—but that did not assist *me* in becoming conscious of those conversations, and for this cogent cause—

I was not there. I was, in actual, literal reality, *out of my mind*.

PART III

IN ROOM No. 2.

“Then of the **THEE IN ME** who works behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
A Lamp amid the Darkness; and I heard,
As from Without . . .”

OMAR KHAYYÁM.

CHAPTER I

THE change of rooms upset me considerably. I thought I had been moved because those in charge of me found I was getting used to the first room and was ceasing to be sufficiently mesmerised in it, and they had put me into a freshly and strongly mesmerised room in order to get me more thoroughly "under suggestion" for their experiments.

Again my brother's murdered "Worser Self" stood at my bedside threatening to kill me.

Again my mother's spirit began trying to obsess me to be born as the spirit of my child.

Again Ray Hall was daily being shut up, alive, in a coffin, and whenever the coffin was opened to release him (which was done by my brother's Better Self—the Spirit-World Better Self, which was always assisting Ray Hall and me in the Spirit-World, and used to open these coffins in the room beneath mine, amidst the most deafening din and conflicts) Ray Hall's body was found to be obsessed either by the obsessing demon from *Flames* or by the spirit of the maniac from the * * * * * Asylum, each intent on escaping into the world to wreak havoc amongst mankind.

Besides all this, my own various "*doubles*" bewildered me to a state of frenzy.

One, I believed, really belonged to me, and ought to be inside me, but it had been forcibly severed from me in all this unaccountable disaster which had overtaken me—and now all sorts of other, false "*doubles*" kept on trying to get inside me, under pretence of being my true "*double*."

The loss of my true "*double*" reduced my body almost to death's door from the loss of an integral part of myself—but the intrusion of these false "*doubles*" jumbled my identity to such an extent that I was beside myself in my vain endeavours to unravel the hopelessly tangled knot of that identity.

These false "*doubles*" would be shattered by my invisible friends, in the manner in which I had shattered my brother's *Worser Self*, and separated from me like that—or I would be instructed by the voices how to rout them myself.

One "*double*," I remember, lay on the bed, beside me, talking in a little squeaky voice into my ear.

I was told to get out of bed by rolling straight over on the top of this "*double*," which continued squeakingly imploring me to desist, and asking if I didn't see and hear it?

The voices told me I was on no account to allow it to believe I could either see or hear it, and that that would terrify it, as it would think it had ceased properly to exist.

I did exactly as I was told, and after several

repetitions of the operation, succeeded in routing that would-be obsessor—but my feelings at having to roll over on top of the squeaking and remonstrating entity lying beside me were anything but enviable!

Another time, I had to submit to a huge python, that had been sent by my helpers to frighten away one of these false “doubles,” coiling round and round me in bed.

I did not see this python—but I felt its folds pressing down the bed and coiling round and round my body.

In addition to all my other bewilderments, I had relapsed into an agony of uncertainty as to what really had happened to me in my lodging-room, and as to whether I had been seduced by a fiend and should have a fiend-child—or what it was that had happened that day, and what was the meaning and solution of this whole, maddening muddle.

This vain and agonizing endeavour to *understand*, obsessed me throughout my attack.

It formed one of the worst torments of all the hideous torments of madness.

I kept on declaring (in thought-voice) that I *would not* die; I would live and come back again and again from the dead, until I *had* solved this whole business and found out the meaning of it, and obtained Justice.

Again and again, in the midst of all these torments, and when (as I believed) I was called upon to endure death—and did endure it repeatedly — I continually asseverated that my

conscience acquitted me of having done anything to deserve these incomprehensible sufferings, and I appealed to God—if there was such a thing as a God of Justice in the Universe—to mete out Justice to me.

At last, when I was doing this, on one occasion (about the time of which I am now writing), a stern Voice exclaimed—

“ You keep on clamouring for Justice, and to understand all these things. Well! the first step towards justice is, that you yourself are called upon to give account for every idle deed that you have done, and every idle word that you have spoken, and every idle word that you have written.”

This announcement dumbfounded me with astonishment. It seemed to me a wholly incomprehensible preliminary to my obtaining justice for what I considered most cruel and causeless injustice done to myself, that I should be called to Judgment.

However, I would have gladly welcomed the Last Day, or anything else that would clear up this whole matter to my understanding, so I answered nothing, but hurriedly began reviewing my conscience, saying to myself that I was only human and had doubtless done many things that I should not have done, but that I had no crime upon my conscience, had intentionally injured no one, and had tried hard to do my best, even if I had often failed. I could not think of anything lying on my conscience.

But my searchings of conscience were altogether beside the mark. Not one of the things which

I was reviewing in my mind, nor anything of which I was thinking at all, was what I was summoned to account for. Nevertheless, out of my own mouth was I judged, and with unerring justice.

The whole thing was one of the most extraordinary imaginable.

While I was busy thinking of every sort of other matters, my own voice began, quite without my own volition or thought, to declaim aloud, in my own hearing, those things for which I was summoned to account. I recognised it as my own voice speaking, but I had not the least control over it, neither had I the least idea what it was going to say next. I listened to it exactly as I would have listened to a gramophone. My body, separated from me, seemed turned into a living gramophone—my brain constituted the “record”—my voice faithfully transmitted the record, through the mouth of the machine, which machine, apparently, the Maker had wound up and set to run.

What it stated gave me a shock.

I thought, “Good heavens! what next? That is all true, I cannot deny a word of it; but now, if any of those appalling lies that were stated the other day are going to be added—I don’t care if it is the Day of Judgment, or what it is—I intend to challenge every word that is not the exact truth.”

But not one word was spoken that was not the exact truth.

From that first statement, the voice — my

gramophone-voice—passed on without intermission to a statement of the next misdeed I was called upon to answer for.

It was something that had completely and utterly passed from my (conscious) memory. I could not have been more than five or six years old at the time it had occurred.

But when the gramophone voice declaimed it, I remembered it distinctly; and again I could not say a word, for it was the exact truth.

From that the Accuser passed straight on, without a single intervening indictment, to another record.

That also was no more “on my conscience,” nor in my mind at the time, than the previous one. I should say I was about twelve or thirteen years old at the period *that* record was engraved on my gramophone-scroll.

Then the voice ceased.

That was the whole indictment.

I thought, “Well! This is the most extraordinary indictment that I have ever heard of! It seems so utterly trivial! I am ashamed of all those things, but not one of them has injured any one, and they weigh so little on my conscience, that two, out of the three, I had completely forgotten! I must surely be guilty of a hundred worse things than these!”

But while I was thinking this, I was interrupted by new voices.

In the indictment of me at the age of six, other names, besides my own, had been mentioned.

It was the voices of these people who had been named that spoke to me. They seemed in great terror. They said—

“We have been dragged here, against our wills, from the other side of the world, to answer for these childish misdeeds of more than twenty years ago.—Why have you summoned us?”

I said, “I have summoned no one. I myself am being judged.”

They said, “What does it mean? Our spirits have been dragged here and been forced to stand here, before the whole Universe, while these things against us have been publicly declaimed.”

I asked, “Can you deny the truth of them?”

“My God!—No!” answered one of the voices. “But if I had realised that everything that one has ever done was to be proclaimed before the whole world like this, while one is forced to stand by and listen to it, I would never have done half the things I have done in my life!”

“No, I expect not,” I agreed; “I don’t believe any one would. But it is too late to think of any of that now. My Day of Judgment has come. And I am thankful that it *has* come, if it clears up this perfectly unbearable state of torment and muddle into which I have been plunged and out of which I cannot extricate myself. It is truly appalling having one’s misdeeds proclaimed publicly, by one’s self, before the whole world, like this; but at any rate there is this consolation:—Every one of the people listening to my indictment knows

that their own turn must infallibly come! And I wonder how many of the records of these people will be any better, or even half as good, as mine! It is my belief not any one will dare to remain to listen to any one else's record—every one will be too terrified at the thought of their own turn!”

My conversation with them concluded, the people who had been summoned at my indictment, left, and spoke no more to me.

But I continued to endure as bad horrors as ever.

This horror of Ray Hall shut up in his coffin was a standing one.

I believed that a whole army of doctors had banded themselves together to help us, and my mind was intently fixed upon their operations (going on at a distance, in all parts of the world).

I and the leader of this company of doctors kept up unceasing “thought-talk” together, and I learnt how he and his colleagues were opening coffins and resuscitating corpses, and mummies in museums, in earnest endeavour to discover and resuscitate the body of Ray Hall amongst them.

As I said before, the awful part was, that whenever they did discover and resuscitate Ray Hall's body, it was immediately obsessed by the eroto-maniac or the fiend—and I used to yell to them in agony (all in “thought-voice” only) telling them to batten down the coffin-lid upon the resuscitated corpse, which was rising from

the coffin and from the dead, and force it back to death again inside its coffin.

None of these doctors could tell which was the *true* Ray Hall; and I could only tell by his voice.

Unless I kept my whole mind and attention fixed upon listening to this voice, the appalling catastrophe of the escape of the maniac or the fiend occurred—as they imitated Ray Hall's voice so exactly that only the closest attention on my part enabled my ear to detect the fraud.

To the people in charge of me, I seemed, when in this intense concentration of mind on these efforts of the doctors and this listening to the voice I had to test, to be sunk in a complete abstraction and apathy.

Evidently my doctor had given orders that whenever this occurred I was to be "roused"; for this is what invariably happened whenever the "doctors" were opening a coffin during the day-time when I was under observation and not lying down in bed.

Then, when Ray Hall's salvation hung upon the most delicate sound-test—when a raging maniac or a fiend would be let loose upon me and the world in general if I made any mistake on the one hand; when Ray Hall would be shut up alive in a coffin if I made a mistake on the other hand, and concentration and attention of the most absolute and utter description, and complete silence for my ear to detect the smallest variation of tone were essentially requisite—then one or other of the nurses or Mrs. W. would begin her "*rousing*."

In the midst of my agony of suspense and listening attention I would find myself pulled by the shoulders: *The Sketch, Madame, Punch*, would be thrust into my face: people would talk, laugh, speak to me—shout to me—insist upon my answering.

I cannot describe my despair, or the terrors that ensued on these “rousings”—which invariably resulted in the “doctors” letting loose, by mistake, the maniac or the fiend, and all our labours having to begin over again.

Once my real doctor, himself, arrived during one of these crises.

I saw him come in and recognised him perfectly, but Ray Hall’s affairs were at a crisis and I couldn’t relax my intense attention for a second.

The doctor sat down beside the bed and began talking. I answered nothing.

He spoke again. I took no notice.

He shouted—saying—

“Don’t you hear me?”

I said, “Yes,” in an interval of talking to the “doctors” and Ray Hall, and could give him no further attention.

He got up to go.

I realised how abominably rude I must have appeared to him, who knew nothing of what was going on with regard to such infinitely important affairs.

As he walked away I called after him—

“I beg your pardon, Doctor; I did not mean to be rude to you.”

The doctor stopped and turned round and looked at me.

“ Oh! that doesn't matter!” he said genially, “ that's what I come for.”

This made me laugh.

He still waited—looking at me as if inquiring the cause of my laughter.

I said, “ You say you come here for me to be rude to you?” and I laughed again.

The doctor then began to laugh himself, and was still laughing as he went out of the door.

And I returned to the testing of that voice emerging from the coffin.

I think I was fully conscious of the doctor, every visit after my change to the second room. I think he no longer came daily, but only several times a week.

One time he brought back my manuscript, that he had taken away with him previously, and asked me what he was to do with it?

“ Burn it!” I said.

I thought, at last I would cure that Medium, and take one step towards Ray Hall's and my recovery.

The doctor walked over to the fireplace and held the manuscript, divided into two parts, between his fingers, over the flames, but did not drop it in.

He said, “ It is not one story, but two.—Am I to burn both?”

“ It is all one—burn it all!” I exclaimed impatiently.

He tore out the pages by handful and dropped them slowly into the fire before my eyes, until the whole manuscript was burnt to ashes.

"It is not for myself—it is for somebody else I want it burnt," I explained aloud.

I was determined I would not allow anybody—the people in the room, R. B., or any of the "spirit people"—to labour under the delusion that I was burning that manuscript from any fear myself of R. B.

As the pages blazed away, I thought—

"If there really *are* two stories there, I know nothing of the second one! I myself have written nothing in that manuscript except that one story about R. B. If there is another story as well, some one else must have written it, unknown to me, in my book. How very funny! I wonder what that second story can be?"

I did not ask the doctor, then, what that story was; neither have I ever remembered to do so since—although I have more than once intended to.

To this day I do not know what that second composition, in that manuscript the doctor burnt, was.

I have come to the conclusion it must have been something I had written after I had gone mad, and while in a state of blank unconsciousness, some day before quitting my lodging-room.

Consciously I had written nothing whatever in that manuscript, except the one story the Medium had told me about R. B.—and careful investigation since has proved to me that apparently not one other of my manuscript compositions is missing.

The burning of the manuscript had no effect, I found, in curing the Medium of her madness. She remained a raving lunatic.

CHAPTER II

ONE evening the doctor came, and said—
“Look here! I want you to promise me you will give up listening to these ‘voices.’ You won’t get well until you do.”

This remark of his interested me greatly.

I thought, “*At last* this doctor has arrived at understanding that invisible people *are* talking to me. Perhaps, after all his experiments, he really is beginning to understand my ‘case,’ and will be able to help me. I shall try if he can. Unless *somebody* can help Ray Hall and me our case seems hopeless, because we cannot extricate ourselves.”

I said aloud to the doctor—

“I will promise to give up all the ‘voices’ except one. I cannot give up listening to that one.”

I knew if I gave up listening to Ray Hall’s voice that the “doctors” would either be letting loose the Maniac or the Fiend—or else shutting down the coffin-lid upon Ray Hall alive.

My doctor said—

“If you don’t give up listening to *all*, you will never get well.”

This ultimatum filled me with despair.

I said, "But if I do not think it right to promise?"

"Then you will never get well," reiterated the doctor firmly.

"Then I never shall get well," I said wearily—and I turned away and buried my face in the pillows, thinking how cruelly hopeless the case was. I couldn't get well by deserting Ray Hall, and leaving him to be buried alive.

After the doctor had gone, I thought at any rate I would endeavour to comply with his instructions as far as possible, and dismiss all the invisible people that I could.

I said in my thought-voice—

"Who are all you invisible people, whom I don't know, who keep on talking to me?"

A voice answered—

"We have always told you we are 'The Invisible Helpers'" (they had never told me anything of the kind!) "but as a matter of fact we are 'The Invisible Liars.'"

I thought of all the times I had been deluded by these people—of my being told to hail a hospital-nurse as a "Good Spirit"—to get out of bed to open doors for Ray Hall when he was not there—to look out of window at coffins that were non-existent—and so on and so on; and I said to these people who informed me that they were invisible liars—

"Do you know, that is just the conclusion that I have arrived at myself about the lot of you—and as I am certain that lying will never help any one, you needn't trouble to endeavour to help me

any more, because I intend in future not to pay the least attention to any of you. As you have had sufficient truthfulness to acknowledge yourselves liars, perhaps you aren't such arrant liars after all, and there is some hope for you; but I have done with the lot of you—so you can go!”

And they went.

But this did not by any means rid me of the “voices”—on the contrary, they grew worse and worse.

Instead of talking to me singly, they now came in battalions.

That evening or the next, a vast army of them marched down upon me with thundering tread, and all shouting at the top pitch of their voices.

When they reached me (I was again wandering in some unknown region, “out of my body”) they challenged me and demanded who I was?

I said I was a living, human woman.

Then they said, “If you are a living, human woman, how do you come to be here, in these regions, and able to listen to us?”

I said I did not know—that I was continually being sent out of my human body, into these regions, against my own will.

“Well, as you are here, you must march with us and show us the way,” said they.

“How can I possibly show any one the way when I haven't a notion of it myself?” I objected. “I cannot find my own way, much less direct any one else. I cannot see at all in this place.”

“Oh! well, if you cannot take the lead and

show us the way, at any rate you can fall-in behind and march with us," said the voices.

I inquired, "Who are you?"

"We are '*The Legion of the Lost and the Cohort of the Damned*,'" they yelled, all together.

"But," I remonstrated, "I am not a '*Gentleman Ranker*'—why should I be called upon to march with you?"

They said, "No—but you see we saw you shed a secret tear for us, years ago, when you read that poem about us. That has forged a link of sympathy between you and us that cannot be broken. You *must* march with us."

"Well, if I must, I must!" I said resignedly. (I had no fear whatever of them, as they were perfectly friendly.) "And I can tell you this much, even if I am unable to tell you your way:—If you go on shouting in this deafening manner, and march with that thundering tread, you will shatter not only the drums of my ears, but every bridge across which we have to pass on our march. Do cease shouting, and break step."

They said, "We will break step, but we cannot cease shouting," and they continued to make a more and more brain-shattering noise.

I fell into the ranks behind and marched with them. But I held no further converse with them, and at the first opportunity I slipped out of the ranks and back into my body—whence I passed to oblivion in sleep, after the administration of a sleeping-draught.

Always of an evening, before the time of my sleeping-draught, I suffered my worst, in the way

of "horrors" and in the loudness of the shoutings of the "voices."

From this time onwards I experienced the greatest relief from the sleeping-draughts given me nightly at the doctor's orders. (He has since told me it was "*veronal*" he gave me.)

Each evening that sleeping-draught put an end (without any discomfort to me of "heart-stopping" or "sending of me out of my body") to the noises and the voices and the torments that always culminated towards night-time.

This "*veronal*" was an inestimable boon to me for weeks after I became sane, as well as during the attack.

The next time the doctor came to me, he asked—

"Well, have you kept the promise you made to me the other night, to give up all the 'voices'?"

I said, "I never promised to give up *all*—I told you I could not give up one; and I have gone and forgotten my promise, and have been listening to other voices as well as that one. You should not make me make promises I cannot keep."

"If you do not give up listening to all the voices," said the doctor, "you cannot get well—I tell you that."

Again this sank deeply into my mind.

I thought to myself, "If this doctor *can* help me, I ought to tell him what is the matter with me. What is the use of having a doctor, if you don't tell him what is the matter with you?"

Yes—I must certainly tell him. The question is, though, what *is* the matter with me? That is what I can't find out, myself—so how can I tell him, and what can I tell him?"

I puzzled over this for some minutes, and then came to the conclusion that, as I didn't know what had happened to me, I had better tell him what I had been told had happened to me, and then he would be able to tell me whether it was correct or not. I thought, surely a doctor and nurses would know if anything really had happened to me, and if I really were going to have a child?

The doctor was standing rather behind me, at the bed-head—one of the nurses was standing directly facing me, at the foot-rail of the bed.

Without looking at the doctor, but gazing straight in front of me (which happened to be directly at the nurse) I said aloud to him—

"I have been seduced by a fiend."

The nurse instantly glanced up at the doctor with a quick grin.

Her face told me plainly, and at once, that she had heard this before.

Consciously, I had never mentioned the matter to any one of them until that moment—I knew that. I wondered if I had told them in unconscious ravings—and if so, what I had told them, and whether I had correctly told them what had occurred that day in my lodgings.

The doctor paid no attention whatever to the nurse—I don't think he had even seen her

look and grin. He said to me quietly and firmly—

“That is all nonsense.”

“Now!” I thought, “he means that! He isn’t angry or impatient—he has listened to what I have told him, and he honestly believes it *is* nonsense. Well! he would not think it nonsense if I really had been seduced—he would consider it something very serious—and he and these nurses *must* know. I have been in their charge for weeks now; they could not have failed to discover, in all this time, if such a thing had ever actually happened to me. I do believe that what I felt in my lodging was no more anything real and physical than any of these other extraordinary physical sensations I have felt since, during these last few weeks. I have felt burnings and scratchings, and touches from ice-cold fingers, and drippings of tears on my feet—and none of these, although perfectly physical *apparently*, has been anything physical. That violent jumping-up-and-down sensation inside me, that day in my lodging, must have been just such another. I really believe it is an entire delusion that I ever have been seduced, or that I am going to have a child at all—fiend, or spirit, or any sort.”

Never again, from that day forward, did I suffer from either of those two delusions—which had constituted two of the chief delusions of my madness.

(It will be seen that I accepted the doctor’s word on the subject the first time his words reached me!)

When the doctor left, I pondered his ultimatum about the "voices," and came to a determination.

I mentally called up Ray Hall.

I said to him—

"You have heard what this doctor has said to me about my never getting well unless I cease listening to *all* the voices—yours included? Well, as matters stand, our case seems absolutely hopeless. Unless one of us three can get cured and well, none of us can. That Medium remaining mad is keeping us all three enduring never-ceasing torments. If one of us could pull round, that would cure all three of us. Well, you have been trying for weeks to get here and you never can. I can't get to you because these people are detaining me here as a madwoman. But if I could once get cured, then I should be set at liberty, and could go to you, and then we should all three be cured. You and I have been shut up alive in coffins, and endured death so often; will you agree to this—to be shut up alive once more in a coffin and endure one more death? It seems to me the only way. We cannot let loose the maniac or the obsessing demon into the world, which would happen if we allowed the doctors to leave open all the coffins, because then they would live as much as you would; and I must not listen to your voice to tell the doctors which to allow to live and which to kill off again. But if I order the doctors to nail down *all* the coffins, then the maniac and the obsessing demon would be finally killed, no matter into which coffin they move. All of you would be killed.

“It is a terrible thing to ask you to go through with again, but it seems to me the only thing left for us to do. And of this I feel certain: you will rise again from the dead when I am cured, and come and open your coffin. Even if your corpse has decomposed before I can come, I am certain it will recompose immediately your spirit returns to it. Will you agree to endure this one, last torment?”

Ray Hall did agree—and together we decided I was to order the “doctors” to shut down all the coffin-lids, and nail and seal them down for the space of a month. By that time no one inside them could possibly have survived—the maniac and the demon would have been killed—and by that time I must certainly have been cured (having listened to no “voices”) and would be at liberty and able to save the three of us—Ray Hall, the Medium, and myself.

So that was arranged.

And the “doctors,” at my orders, nailed down all the coffins, and I ceased to hold any communication with Ray Hall, who was left to die by inches in his coffin.

I found if I ever allowed a *thought* of him to enter my mind, that his voice immediately began to speak to me from his coffin; so I had most resolutely to prevent one single thought of him from ever entering my mind.

It was a difficult process, but I accomplished it; and after the second day (up till which, inadvertent thoughts had more than once summoned the forbidden voice) I put all thought of Ray Hall from my mind.

Doing this had the effect of making me completely forget him.

But it had no effect in curing me.

My bewilderment of mind—the “voices” and the noises—all remained as bad as ever.

CHAPTER III

THESE many weeks I had remained in bed, without getting up—except, latterly, for a bath.

But now I began to be allowed to get up daily for a short space of time, and sit or walk about my room, in a dressing-gown.

One day (soon after I had begun this getting up) I was taking a little turn up and down my room.

It was late afternoon.

I was feeling fairly all right, except for the most extreme depression of spirits.

Ever since Ray Hall had been shut away in his coffin and not permitted to speak to me any more, I had suffered from this dreadful depression. The stopping of his conversations had stopped all my amusement and remaining pleasure in life. The only "good times" I had throughout my madness were when Ray Hall and I had our conversations. *Then*, I thoroughly enjoyed life—to an extent that I have never enjoyed it when sane!

I have never felt so full of life—so *exultantly* alive—as I used to feel whenever these conversations went on. As I used to say to him, I had

never before known what it meant to *be* alive—that without him, and all the previous portion of my lifetime, I had been only *half*-alive—half-dead, in fact—compared with the *exultant* vitality I experienced now, with him.

Throughout my attack of madness, I was conscious of three distinct sets of “pulse.”

The first was when I was alone and no “voices” were speaking to me.

That pulse was so slow that I felt almost dead. It was a terrible pulse. While that lasted I was bereft of every spark of vitality.

Then there was the second pulse.

This began when the voices began speaking to me. I very much preferred it to the first pulse, as, when it commenced, my vitality began to revive. But it was not a *comfortable* pulse. When in full swing it resembled exactly a quick, cavalry trot. My sensation, throughout its duration, was very like the extremely uncomfortable one of trotting when one has not learnt to “rise”!

Always, at this pulse, my brother Oliver’s “voice” led the “trot.”

Then there was the third pulse.

This commenced whenever Ray Hall’s “voice” spoke with me.

No sooner did he join in, than the trot would begin to quicken. Faster and faster would it become, until always Oliver’s “voice” alone (besides Ray Hall’s) remained able to keep up with the pace.

Then I would say to Ray Hall—

“Come! Let us put on the pace until nobody can keep up with us!”

Then it felt to me as if the trot quickened and quickened into a canter (delightfully smooth and comfortable), and attained to a gallop (the while my exhilaration increased and increased in intensity, keeping pace with the increase and increase in our speed), and passed on into such a racing-pace that every one, one after another, and Oliver last of all, dropped breathless behind, and I and Ray Hall sped onwards in an ever wilder and wilder rush—panting at our own speed and yet at the same time utterly at ease, just as a tobogganer or motorist might sit utterly at ease and yet breathless from the rapidity of his rush through the air; on and on we sped, laughing, talking, experiencing a perfect ecstasy of vitality utterly unreachable and unimaginable by any normal, living human being.

Words cannot convey to the sane mind one smallest notion of the mad ecstasy of those wild rides!

If madness consisted wholly of such experiences as I have described I experienced whenever Ray Hall and I talked together when none of our “torments” were going on, then I would say:—Give me madness, for choice, for the rest of my life, and shut my body up in a lunatic asylum, or a dungeon, or wherever you please! Wherever that body lay would be immaterial to me, *I* should be clean quit of it, transported in ecstasy—not to the calm Nirvana of the Buddhist, nor to the Crystal-sea’d, Angel-

harping Heaven of the Christian, but to the pulsing Heart of Life—to Creation's Central Maelstrom of Vitality and Bliss.

Unfortunately, these experiences were few and far between, and the reduction of them altogether was evidently the aim and object of the doctor—who seemed always to wish to reduce me to the "dead" pulse (probably the only "pulse" during which I was not in a brain fever!). I do not think I had more than two of these rushing rides after I changed rooms; and after I had had Ray Hall shut up in his coffin and had left him alone to die, I naturally had no further experience of them—for I never experienced them except when conversing with Ray Hall.

Without these, and without Ray Hall to talk to me at all—either to make me laugh by his brilliant witticisms or to continue our work on our joint books, serious and comic—I found life shorn of all joy and amusement, and aim and object, and full of nothing but misery and suffering—most incomprehensible misery and suffering.

I felt terribly depressed, as I said.

Well, I was walking slowly up and down my bedroom that afternoon (from which I have strayed far, in my narrative!) and the nurse was busy making my bed.

I was occupied, as ever, in vain endeavours to disentangle my mental, inextricable muddle.

Suddenly, without the least warning, I felt dying.

I gasped for breath and sank down into the nearest chair, with a deathly sensation.

I didn't utter a sound, and the nurse noticed nothing and continued making the bed.

I sat there, grasping the arms of the chair, battling this overpowering sensation, for, I should think, about five minutes, when suddenly Mrs. W. ran into the room, exclaiming—

“Are you ready for the doctor, nurse? He has been here about five minutes downstairs, and is now coming up.”

The nurse said she was quite ready.

I sat there, still feeling half-dead, and I thought to myself—

“Now, this seems *most* suspicious! Five minutes ago I was perfectly well and walking about with ease. Five minutes ago that doctor entered this house, and immediately I am seized with an attack like this and nearly killed! It is my belief he is trying some more of his experiments, and ‘willed’ me to be taken ill directly he entered the house, and now he is waiting downstairs to give his ‘suggestion’ time to work, before coming up to witness its effect.

“Well, he has certainly got me completely ‘under suggestion’—but he shan't have the satisfaction of knowing it, if I can help it! It is my belief he would never have succeeded in getting me ‘under suggestion’ at all, if I had only had an inkling of what he was up to; but I had no idea, even, that he was coming, and so, of course, he has managed to take me completely unawares, when my Will was entirely quiescent. Well! we will just see, now that I have found out what he is up to, and have my Will on the alert, which of

our two Wills is the stronger. I simply *will not* allow this man to have me 'under suggestion' for his experiments, any longer."

As I was thinking these things, the doctor entered the room.

"Good evening!" he said. "How are you?"

"Pretty well, thanks," I answered, with an air of studied, careless indifference, although I was still feeling so frightfully faint and ill I had scarcely enough breath to utter the words.

He looked keenly and searchingly at me, and then said authoritatively—

"Get up and walk towards me."

"Now!" I exclaimed mentally, "this conclusively proves it! He has hypnotised me and has mentally 'suggested' to me to be unable to rise from this chair. Now he pretends to order me to walk, thinking that I myself shall be obliged to confess that his experiment has been completely successful, and that I am *unable* to get up. Well! he shall just see! His 'suggestion' has been successful, beyond his wildest thoughts, and he has very nearly killed me—but he shan't have the satisfaction of knowing it, or of hearing me confess it. *If I drop dead on the floor* in the effort, I will get up and walk to him."

With the most frightful effort to raise myself from the chair and to appear perfectly at ease, while in reality gasping for breath, I surreptitiously pushed myself up by the help of both my hands on the arms of the chair, and without saying a word I walked towards that doctor.

He evidently was expecting me every second to fall.

He kept close in front of me, taking a step backwards for every step I took forwards, and looking fully prepared to catch me in his arms at any moment.

But I never once faltered. I would have died first!

After I had gone about six paces towards him, he said quietly—

“Thank you, that will do. You can sit down again.”

I did so, taking care not to drop into my chair, as I was longing to do, but to sit down with an air of complete ease and unconcern.

Then, as he began talking to the nurse, I sat gazing into the fire and thinking—

“Now, I wonder what on earth this doctor thinks he has gained by *that* experiment? I hope devoutly I have managed to hide from him how ill I feel, and how completely he had really succeeded in getting me ‘under suggestion.’ If he thinks the experiment has failed, he may give up trying any more of them on me. They never lead anywhere, and make me suffer the most needless torments. I wish to goodness this man would take me into his confidence, and tell me straight out what it is he is aiming at; then I could co-operate with him and help him. I am sure I would be willing to do or suffer anything that he required—if only it were going to lead to any use in the end. I have faced every sort of terror, I have endured every form of torment,

I have died every sort of death; I do not think there is any mortal thing I would not be willing to face or to suffer, if he considered it necessary if he would only explain to me what it is I want, and what he is driving at, and if it were anything that was likely to be of the least use in curing me. But what is the use of such experiments as these?"

The doctor paid no further attention to me and so, being left to my own devices, I studied and ignored him and did not speak a single word while he remained in the room.

I felt unutterably disgusted with him, and hoped he would see it, and refrain from trying any more of his experiments on me, to add to all that was already suffering.

CHAPTER IV

WHenever I thought of any person, that person's voice immediately entered into conversation with me. All day these conversations went on.

Each speaker always spoke of the matters on which we were mutually interested—spoke in his own well-recognisable voice, and retained his proper character and identity throughout.

There never was one of these conversations that was in any way objectionable. But to be obliged to carry on unceasing conversation wearied me, and I often would gladly have stopped, but was quite unable to prevent the talkers from continuing.

I came to the conclusion that I had been turned into a medium, and having had no training, and not knowing how to close my super-physical senses at will, I was obliged to listen to all this talking going on in the world, at every distance, whether I would or not.

There was one thing that I thought most noticeable and strange, on the subject of all these conversationalists who talked with me willy-nilly, and that was the following—they were all, with scarcely a single exception, men.

As I have far more women-friends and acquaintance than men, and as many of these mer talkers were people I hadn't met or given a stray thought to for years (in fact hadn't given a stray thought to even when I had met them!), this circumstance struck me as most peculiar.

I wondered why it was that none of my women-friends and acquaintance ever spoke to me; and while I was wondering that one afternoon a woman-journalist immediately entered into conversation with me.

She asked me if I was wanting any help; But as at that time I fully believed that one of my invisible friends had made all arrangements to smuggle me out of the house in the dead of night, that night, and convey me (as a corpse shut in a coffin) safely out of the hands of my tormentors, I thanked her, and said I required no help now, as at last I had found it.

So she left off talking to me, and never again returned.

This inability to close my ears to this talking going on from all quarters of the globe wearied me dreadfully. To find myself unable to do so however much I stopped up my physical ears filled me with a feeling of impotent bewilderment.

I implored and prayed all the invisible people to teach me how to regulate rationally these most bewildering super-physical senses of mine, that had been opened quite without my own volition and of the working of which I was so completely ignorant.

These people said the only cure was for these

senses to be closed again, and the sole method for accomplishing this was for me to marry—celibacy being the *sine quâ non* for all super-physical gifts and experiences whatever. To marry would be to put an end to all super-physical phenomena; until I did marry they would continue.

This headed me back into the hopeless and never-ending circle of Ray Hall and myself being unable to be cured until we were united, and of being unable to be united until we were cured.

I grew utterly desperate.

Then the invisible people said that the sole other method was to put a stop to all mediumship in the world, and this could only be done by putting a stop to every spiritualistic séance in the world.

So they went about “controlling” and “materialising” at every séance and peremptorily ordering all these spiritualistic experiments to be stopped.

They created such terror throughout all spiritualistic “circles,” that every one of the mediums went mad—and all “circles” united in one common effort to catch this hostile, denunciatory “spirit” who was wrecking Spiritualism and driving all the mediums raving mad.

A few days after the last visit of the doctor, which I have just described, I was again taking a little stroll up and down my room. This time it was later in the evening—just before I was to have my bath, which the nurse was preparing in the adjoining bath-room.

As I walked up and down the room, the talking of the invisible people began.

I found I was listening at a large "séance"—gathered together with the purpose of endeavouring to discover and catch the disturbing "spirit-control."

The medium was "entranced," and various entities were "controlling" him.

When I first became aware (aurally) of the proceedings, my brother Oliver (who was banded, in the spirit-world, with those endeavouring to help me) had just obtained "control" of the medium, and I heard the medium announcing loudly and authoritatively, in my brother's well-recognised voice—

"These proceedings must be stopped!"

"Quite right; Oliver!" I exclaimed in my thought-voice—which sounded loud and clear in the séance-room, "they must and shall be stopped!"

Instantly the whole "circle" was in commotion.

A chorus of voices shouted—

"Seize it! That is the 'spirit' that has sent all our mediums mad!" and a dozen of the "sitters" flung themselves upon the "materialised spirit."

Their action brought me to death's door.

I being the one who had spoken, *I* (or, rather my "double") was the "spirit" materialised there, and the one seized, and this seizure disrupted my being.

My heart stopped completely and refused to go on.

I cannot describe the agony I endured.

I clutched desperately at the mantelpiece and propped myself up against it. I gasped and gasped for breath but could get none. I felt simply dying.

While I was in this state, the nurse returned from the bath-room. She caught up the towels, and, without having looked at me, said cheerfully—

“Come along!—The bath is quite ready.”

I thought to myself that to be put into a hot bath now would be the last finishing stroke.

“I can't have a bath, nurse!” I gasped. “I am feeling too ill.”

The nurse turned round at my words and looked at me for the first time.

In a second she was across that room and had me in her arms.

She half-lifted, half-dragged me to the bed and laid me flat upon it. She summoned the other nurse instantly, and together they put hot bottles at my heart and at my feet without a moment's delay. Then they poured what tasted to me like perfectly neat brandy down my throat until I felt as sick as a dog.

Then they left my bedside and sat down by the fire and talked together in whispers.

While they chatted, I endured what I pray Heaven I may never be called upon to endure again.

All my bodily functions seemed entirely suspended. My heart remained completely stopped—the blood stood still in my veins and I was unable to breathe.

It seemed as if my body had fainted and passed into a state of suspended animation; but, instead of my having lost consciousness (as I should have done under the circumstances, if in a normal state of mind), I remained imprisoned in that body in a state of full consciousness, experiencing and suffering the whole thing.

Not only was I fully conscious of my bodily sufferings and the nurses whispering by the fire, but I also was conscious of the "thought-world" happenings as well.

It seemed to me that the company of "doctors" who had been trying to help me and Ray Hall, had become aware of my present plight and had quickly come to the rescue.

Having one of my "doubles" on which to experiment, they decided to inject blood into that, in order to restore animation to my own heart and make it resume work.

I heard them ask for a volunteer who would allow the blood to be taken from his veins to be poured into mine.

Some one offered, and the doctors commenced the operation (all this at an unseen distance, upon my "double"—every experiment upon which reacted at once upon me).

In a few seconds I began to feel the blood trickling slowly along all my veins. Down my legs I felt it tingling, along my arms—in every direction—the flow growing faster and faster.

At last it reached my head.

More and more blood surged up there until

my face felt purple and the veins in my brain about to burst.

I thought, "If these doctors don't stop injecting any more of that man's blood into my veins, he will die from loss of blood and I shall die of apoplexy."

"Oh no!" remarked a voice (not any of the doctors'—but some unknown person's). "You will die—but not like that! Your body has died and been resuscitated so often that now, as it is merely a galvanised corpse, it hasn't the resisting power to stand such an infusion of fresh blood as these doctors have just injected into your veins—the consequence is that the same thing will happen to your body that happened to Mr. Valdemar's, when he was experimented on by the doctors—you will die as he did."

Such horror as I cannot describe took possession of my soul.

The whole of that most awful description by Edgar Allan Poe, in *The Case of Mr. Valdemar*, of the dissolution into liquid putrescence of the body of Mr. Valdemar while he himself remained in full consciousness in that body—the bursting tongue of the corpse (vivified by the agonized frenzies of the living man within endeavouring to escape from the imprisoning, decomposing mass of putrescence) articulating: "Quick! Quick!" to the terror-stricken doctors, urging them to finish their gruesome experiment, destroy the decayed corpse and release quickly its occupant from such unutterable horror—all this

flashed into my mind with lightning-like rapidity and distinctness.

So I was doomed to die thus? To remain fully conscious while my body turned into a liquid mass of decomposed putrescence around me?

I did not answer the voice. I shut my eyes and prayed silently—

“O God! I implore You to spare me such an awful death as that! Let me die in any other way, but spare me that!”

The voice that had previously spoken said—

“You should not pray contrary to God’s Will. You must submit to God’s Will.”

I said—

“If it is God’s Will, then I know I must submit to it. But I do not believe that it can be God’s Will, after all that I have already suffered, and when my Conscience acquits me of having committed any crime whatever to merit all these sufferings, that I should now be called upon to endure such a death as that. I am quite ready to die; all I pray is, to be spared that awful kind of death—to be allowed to live long enough for my sleeping-draught to take effect, so that I may die to-night in my sleep. That is what I mean to pray for.”

“No,” said the voice, “you must not pray for *anything*. You must submit yourself entirely to the Will of God, and pray for nothing else. If you do pray for anything, it proves that you are not really ready to submit to God’s Will. All you may pray is—‘If it be God’s Will.’”

"Then I will pray that," I said.

I lay there, repeating over and over again the only prayer permitted to me.

My limbs and my lips twitched, wholly beyond my control—those were the preliminary symptoms in the case of Mr. Valdemar—every instant I expected the gruesome sequence—the almost instantaneous melting of the flesh from off the rotting bones—the rolling of the yellow, rheum-dripping eyeball backwards and upwards in its socket into the skull—the shrivelling-up of the lips, leaving bare the grinning jaws and displaying the cracked and bursting tongue: any one who has read Poe's terrible tale can tell, without description of mine, what I lay facing and expecting.

As I waited in this agony of suspense, the most grotesque and deafening "death-dog" barkings and howlings commenced. It seemed as if the entire house were surrounded by these harbingers of death, each endeavouring to outvie the other in the loudness of its summons to me, the death-doomed.

I glanced at the two nurses, who continued talking in whispers by the fireside, and I saw that they heard nothing of all this howling going on around us. This convinced me more than ever that the summons was intended for me, as I alone heard it; but I thought to myself—

"I will pretend to ignore these death-summons. If I die, I die—but at any rate I won't allow myself to be terrorised by this sort of thing—and whoever is setting these dogs on shall see that.

There are thousands of people all around me here in London to-night, I shall pretend I haven't a notion that the summons is for me more than for any one of these thousands."

While I was thinking this, and the howls and barks were continuing incessantly in the most gruesome manner, suddenly another sound began.

It was a very curious one, resembling more than anything else the most loud and grotesquely exaggerated chirping of a bird. It sounded at intervals of about five seconds, with such abrupt, shrill distinctness, it seemed to me to cleave the air like a sharp, shooting tongue of flame.

This inexplicable sound puzzled me greatly.

I felt certain it was another form of death-summons to me; but although I racked and racked my brain, I couldn't for the life of me recollect any superstition of any sort, of any country or people, attributing any sound in the least resembling this chirping, as a death-omen to the one who heard it.

It worried me intensely to be unable to place this phenomenon or to understand it; although I was all this time in agonies of terror, expecting the most horrible of dissolutions momentarily, I still exercised my utmost mental efforts in determined endeavour to discover, by memory or reason, the meaning of this mysterious, strange sound.

Throughout my whole attack of madness, and in the midst of even my utmost terrors, I never relaxed for one instant my unceasing endeavour to discover the meaning and reason of each and every item of the whole inexplicable affair.

That sharp, shooting tongue of sound, and the deafening, lugubrious, and weird death-dog howlings went on ceaselessly, until—after what seemed to me an eternity of mental agony—at last I lost consciousness.

CHAPTER V

THE following morning, when I awoke from sleep, I thought—

“I believe I have misjudged that doctor. He had nothing whatever to do with that seizure of mine last night, which was much the same thing (only far worse) as I experienced the day he came, and which I felt sure he had deliberately caused. It seems certain that all these sufferings are due to my being turned into a medium—and all these spiritualists and mediums getting hold of my wandering “doubles.” Well now, as the doctor is perfectly innocent of having caused that other attack of mine, and as I am sure he is *trying* to cure me, I intend to tell him all about this last seizure, and then I have great hopes that he may be able to help me. Yes, I will tell him to-day when he comes.”

But he never came that day.

In the evening the death-dogs recommenced their awful howlings, and my lips began twitching, as a preliminary, I was certain, of their curling away from my gums, and the whole awful sequel of my demise in agonies resembling “Mr. Valdemar’s,” following.

But invisible friends hailed me and asked me if they should silence those dogs?

I said, "Yes—at any price."

They said the price probably would mean the shattering of my ear-drums—*possibly* the disintegration of my entire physical body—as the only way to silence the howlings was to drown them by superior volume of sound; and probably the sound would have to be carried to such a pitch that I should be shattered by its vibrations, as any vessel is shattered when subjected to sound-vibrations beyond its resisting powers of cohesion.

I said, No matter—I would rather die that way than the other, if it had to be a choice.

So these invisible people began, and started a "*Mantram*."

The Name of God was repeated a million, million times by countless hosts of voices, with a gathering volume of sound, increasing until it seemed to me really impossible for my body to remain in cohesion any longer, or escape being shivered into fragments like a shattered bowl of glass.

It amounted to an excruciating torment.

However, my body held out through the ordeal, and the dog-howlings were effectually drowned; and again I escaped death, in oblivion.

The next afternoon the doctor called.

I was up, in my dressing-gown.

He sat down in a chair and asked me how I was.

Immediately I commenced telling him, as I had decided to do, exactly what had happened to me two evenings before. I meant to tell him everything and ask him to try and help me.

No sooner, however, had I commenced—and got as far as saying that while I had been walking about the room, quite well, I had been seized at a “séance” and nearly killed—than the doctor flung himself back in his chair and fell into a perfect guffaw of laughter.

With a vivid remembrance of the ghastly agonies, physical and mental, that I had endured that night (and the following) still fresh in my mind, the doctor’s laughter seemed to me singularly out of place.

I stopped immediately from confiding anything further to him. I got up and began walking agitatedly up and down the room—realising that my last hope of finding any help was gone. I said, in a nettled tone, to the guffawing doctor—

“Well! this may be hysteria, or it may be anything—but I am enduring all these things in my actual consciousness—and it is no laughing matter to *me*! Something *must* be done!”

The doctor, upon this, immediately stopped laughing, and asked me what I wanted done?

“Send for the Medium!” I ordered.

As they had never sent for her nor for Ray Hall, although I had implored them to do so from the first, I didn’t think any more notice would be taken of my request now than heretofore. So I was considerably surprised when the doctor said at once—

“What is her name and address? Give them to me,”—and took out a pocket-book with the evident intention of really writing them down, and attending to my request.

I gave him the correct name and address of the Medium at the Office—but no sooner had I done so than I began to repent of having asked him to fetch her.

Suppose her coming to my room would merely make matters worse? Until she had been to my lodging-room, no single “horror” or misfortune had overtaken me—after that day she had been, misfortune had never left me. No! I would not have her brought here.

I turned to the doctor and said—

“No!—Don’t bring her here! Write to her!—do anything, but don’t bring her here!”

The doctor, having carefully written down the woman’s name and address, went away.

A day or two later, he returned, and he brought in his hand an opened letter from the Medium (it had been addressed direct to me).

The nurse and Mrs. W. were both present also.

Since I had been mad, I had, at different times, read, and given correct instructions for the answering of four letters addressed to me by four different people.

Not one of these letters had bothered me in the reading or the answering.

But now—when I was rapidly progressing towards recovery—when this Medium’s letter was put into my hands, what was the effect?

I took the missive and glanced it over—the nurse, the doctor, and Mrs. W. grouped round me as I sat in the arm-chair.

It seemed to me the most extraordinary composition.

It began in one handwriting (I was so bewildered I can't be certain of this—but I believe it was *my own*)—half-way down it suddenly changed to a second, most totally different handwriting (unmistakably a man's—but no one's I recognised)—and then it ended up in a *third*, utterly dissimilar hand (which I recognised immediately as the Medium's, very illiterate, own).

I turned, with an air of complete bewilderment, to the doctor, and said to him—

“This seems to me an utterly mad letter—it is all in different handwritings.”

“Oh no!” he said encouragingly, “it is all right. Read it aloud to us.”

Still feeling very bewildered at what I saw of the handwriting, I obeyed and began to read.

My voice sounded most strange to me—as if it wasn't my own—but I mastered my growing nervousness and read on until I arrived at the first change of writing.

Directly I began reading that part, terror seized me.

Without any volition of my own, my voice changed to the deep, baritone tones of a man. Every word I uttered sounded to me in a man's voice, not my own.

Too frightened to go on, I stopped short and said to the listeners—

“That is not I speaking at all—it is some man!”

“Oh no!” they all said—“go on reading—it is all right!”

Directly I attempted to do so, this same, alien voice issued from my mouth, making me more and more terrified. I felt certain I was again mediumised and being "controlled" as mediums are, and made to talk in all sorts of voices (totally unlike their own, normal voices) according to the "spirit" "controlling" them.

Silently, I turned over the letter and glanced at the last page.

On it, in the Medium's own writing, I saw—

"—*forgive me—I am hopeless!*"

(I found afterwards she was referring to the badness of her handwriting.)

I thought to myself—

"My good woman, you can't be more hopeless than *I* am!—and all owing to you! I have forgiven you, and told you so a hundred times— I have burnt my manuscript to remove every cause of your cowardly fear of R. B., that kept sending you mad—I have done every possible, conceivable thing to pull you round and cure you—but certainly you *are* hopeless! You are keeping the lot of us from ever being cured!"

While I sat silently thinking these things, my lips suddenly—wholly without any thought or volition on my part—exclaimed aloud, "Oh! I'm in Hell!" in a fretful, tearful sort of voice, totally unlike any I have ever heard myself use—but so exactly like a tone I had once heard my mother use (but not those words) when she was crying about something, that I instantly turned to the doctor and said hastily—

“I never said that! That was my mother speaking!”

And I grew more frightened than ever, for I was convinced I was now being “controlled” by the “spirit” of my mother.

It was certain that I had never been thinking, nor meaning to say, that I was in Hell—I was thinking about the Medium. The voice was unmistakably (to my ears and senses) my mother’s. Evidently she had found out what terrible things were happening to me owing to her having gone to these séances in her misguided efforts to help me—which had merely resulted in worse things happening to me from my “double” being dragged to the séances which she attended—and now, when she saw what mischief she had done, and found she couldn’t undo it, she felt herself in a perfect hell, from remorse. Yes, that was the explanation—and now she also was “controlling” me, besides all these other, terrifying “controls.”

I gave the letter back to the doctor, and said—
“It seems to me a perfectly mad letter.”

I added that I was being made to talk in all sorts of voices that didn’t belong to me.

The doctor, Mrs. W., and the nurse all endeavoured to reassure me. They declared everything was all right.

I thought—

“Now, what *am* I to believe—these people’s assurances or my own senses? They say that letter is not written in three different hand-writings, and that I am not talking in all sorts of different voices—one, a man’s voice. Well, I can

see for myself those different writings, and hear myself unmistakably talking in those other people's voices. If it were only these women telling me it was all right, I should know at once what to think; they always say everything is 'all right' however wrong it may be. I cannot believe a word they say.

"But now this doctor—he has never lied to me. I can always believe what he says. He, also, declares it is 'all right.' Now, what can it mean? Am I to believe what he says, contrary to the evidence of all my own senses? That would be simply irrational."

I puzzled and puzzled over this, until at last I thought suddenly—

"I have it! He isn't lying, and yet I can believe my own senses. He hears perfectly well that I am talking in these strange voices, and that I am being used as a medium. He declares it is 'all right' because he considers it *is* 'all right' that I *should be* turned into a medium—probably it is part of his 'experiments' that he is trying and finding very interesting as a 'case.' Well, he may think it all right, but *I* don't; I am terrified at being obsessed like this by any one who chooses to make use of my body as a medium."

And I believed this to be the solution of the matter—a solution that left me, as ever, without hope of finding human help anywhere.

CHAPTER VI

THE noises and "voices" seemed to grow worse and worse instead of better, as the time of my recovery approached.

They caused me torments of suffering.

Of an evening, especially, they came on in such force that I wondered continually how it was the drums of my ears held out and did not split.

I remember one evening, a day or two after the incident of the Medium's letter, I lay in bed enduring these torments, while the nurse was occupied writing letters.

I tried and tried to turn a deaf ear to these shouting "voices," to take no notice of them, to put them away out of my consciousness.

But my efforts were wholly in vain.

At last I could bear it no longer in silence, and I said to the nurse—

"Nurse! The doctor has told me I mustn't listen to these 'voices.' Well, they are all shouting in my ears so that I cannot help listening to them. Please come and talk to me, and see if that will drive them away."

"How can you be so inconsiderate!" exclaimed the nurse crossly, "as to ask me to come and waste my time talking to you? Don't you see

that I am writing letters? If I don't write them now, what time shall I have to write them, do you think? Don't be so selfishly inconsiderate!"

I took up a magazine and tried to read.

It made matters infinitely worse.

The voices joined in chorus and yelled, in deafening shouts into both my ears, every word I was reading.

I dropped the magazine in despair.

I stopped my ears with my fingers. I buried my head in the pillows. I pulled the bedclothes over me.

All was equally futile. There was no way of escape for me from the torture of those screaming voices.

When the nurse had finished her letters, and could be addressed without quite too much inconsideration on the part of the person to attend to whom she was receiving three guineas a week, besides board and keep, I said to her—

"Is either of my brothers here to-night?"

I had made up my mind to speak to them and tell them I could bear no more of these torments.

"No," answered the nurse, "neither of your brothers has been to-day."

"Is either coming to-morrow?"

"Yes, Mr. Neville has sent word he will call to-morrow, if you are well enough to see him. He is leaving London the day after for a short time."

"Very well; be sure and bring him to see me. I particularly wish to see him before he leaves."

When my second brother turned up the following evening, and the nurse had left the room for a few minutes, I said to him—

“Look here! Neville, I can’t stand any more of this. I implore you to call in some second opinion upon my case.”

My brother (who had evidently been told he must on no account allow me to speak of my illness at all) hurriedly seized up *The Graphic* lying near, and pushing it before me, said—

“Have you seen this week’s *Graphic* yet?”

I pushed it away.

“For God’s sake,” I said, “don’t try to turn the conversation! You must hear me! I am sure I have never, so far, bothered any one of you with any of my ‘symptoms’; you cannot say I have! But now you must and shall hear me this once. I cannot bear this any longer—it is like *delirium tremens* and everything else rolled into one. You have none of you had the very least notion of what I have been suffering all these weeks. I have said nothing, and never complained; but now I *must* speak. If this doctor thinks I have been unconscious all this time, he is very much mistaken. He tells me I shall never be cured until I give up listening to these ‘voices’; well, they are shouting and yelling at me now—they never cease, day or night, shouting and yelling in my ears. I *cannot* stop listening to them, however much I try. If *he cannot make me able to stop*, I shall never be cured. I cannot cure myself, and it is evident he cannot cure me either; for he has had me in his

sole charge now for five or six weeks, and I am still as ill as ever, and suffering torments. Do call in further advice; he cannot object to our asking for a second opinion; no decent doctor ever does object to any one asking for that—especially after having been given a free hand for all these weeks, with no more result than this to show for it!”

My brother said quietly—

“Listen to me. This man is the very best man we could get. We cannot get any better man in London for your case. He was recommended to Oliver, by a Harley Street doctor, as the most up-to-date of Specialists, a man we cannot better if we were to call in any one of all the other tiptop Specialists in London. He understands your ‘case’ thoroughly—and has, all through. He told us exactly and accurately when you would get worse—as you did” (“Much use to *me*, telling them when I should get worse, instead of making me better!” I thought bitterly), “and he has told us that you are now on the mend and will soon get better. He says he expects in about four or five days that you will take a decided turn, and recover. Wait for those few days and see if what he has said is not right. Will you do that?”

I groaned inwardly, thinking how glibly he spoke of my “waiting a few days,” when each single hour of each one of those days would be packed for me with such terrors and sufferings as he could not conceive. However, I thought as I had borne things for so long, if it really did

mean an end was in sight *anywhere*, I could hold out till that end. Perhaps the doctor was right, and I must wait those few days before expecting any turn for the better.

My brother watched my silent cogitation and said—

“Look here! I promise you this. If, when I return at the end of five days, you have not taken that turn for the better which the doctor predicts, I will call in for you any other doctor in London you want. Will you wait the few days?”

I said I would. And I made no more mention to any one of my symptoms, my sufferings, or of calling in a second opinion.

The next time the doctor came to see me, after shaking hands, he sat down in a chair by the fire and seemed to be pondering something deeply.

As he took no notice of me, I took none of him, and was engaged on thoughts of my own, when presently he remarked aloud to me, in a tentative sort of way—

“You are not believing yourself to be the wife of Ray Hall, are you?”

The question struck me as being so ludicrous (I not even knowing that artist by sight, and never having spoken to him in my life) that I burst out laughing, and without an instant's thought I answered—

“Good gracious! No! Why, I shouldn't know the man if I met him in the street!”

As I spoke, the nurse cast a quick, significant glance at the doctor, which I caught.

Immediately I thought to myself—

“What I have just said is perfectly true—but that nurse’s look reminds me that for weeks past I *have* been believing myself to be the wife of Ray Hall. Now, how long is it since I ceased to believe that, and saw the matter in the ludicrous light in which it appeared to me when the doctor asked me that question?”

I analysed the subject carefully, and found that a few days after I had allowed the “doctors” to shut Ray Hall up in his coffin to be left to die, I had relinquished the delusion of believing myself to be his wife.

That was many days before the doctor asked me this question of his on the point—before my terrors and sufferings at being turned into a medium, and being seized at séances, commenced.

I cannot be quite certain what date the doctor put that question to me, but this I know—it was less than the four or five days predicted by my brother, that evening he spoke to me, as being the time I should have to wait for my recovery, before I did recover.

On Monday afternoon, November 6th, when I had just finished tea (with my favourite nurse, who, I believe, had come on day-duty that very day only, for she was not the one on duty when the doctor asked me about my being Mrs. Ray Hall), quite suddenly I felt a change take place in my head.

The noise going on ceaselessly in my head—voices and sounds—had, until that moment, re-

seemed exactly the rushing, roaring sound one hears in one's head when seated in an express train speeding through a tunnel.

The sensation I experienced at the moment of which I write, resembled exactly the emerging, in the express train, from the tunnel.

Sounds still went on in my head, just as sounds still go on in one's head all the time one is travelling by express train; but the difference and relief of emerging into the open after the roaring sounds of a tunnel, every one has experienced and understands; and that, with quite curious exactness of simile, was precisely the difference and relief that I suddenly experienced.

I said to the nurse—

“Oh! Nurse, my head does feel so much better!”

She said, “Does it? I am so glad!” But I believe she did not think my remark of sufficient importance to note or report to the doctor.

From that date I was sane.

CHAPTER VII

FROM beginning to end my madness had lasted from Friday night, September 29th, until Monday afternoon, November 6th.

My doctor (who is Mental Specialist at several London hospitals) has told me that the above period is just about half only of the usual shortest period for the duration of an attack of that form of acute mania. He told me he considered it a *phenomenally* quick recovery.

Directly I became sane, he asked me to what I attributed my recovery?

It seemed to me rather a funny question for a doctor to ask his patient, and I wondered if he regarded me as one of "The Peculiar People," who attribute all recovery from illness to prayer!

I replied, "Why, to your medicines, I suppose!"

He said—

"I attribute it to your logical mind, and your good habits of life."

With regard to a logical mind assisting one, it seemed to me that, on the contrary, it merely caused one to stray further and further along the path of madness; for, each of one's senses systematically deceiving one, all logic was built up on utterly false premises.

Hearing, sight, touch, smell, every one of those senses furnished me with false data for my reasonings, and made all logic futile.

If the doctor considered me a "*peculiar*" person, I considered him another!

Bewildered as I was throughout my madness, I really was almost equally bewildered on becoming sane!

One of the first things the doctor remarked to me, on my recovery, was—

"Well! Now you have experienced Madness!" and he laughed, as if it were the greatest joke that I *should* have experienced such an awful calamity.

I did not answer a word.

I could not understand this man, try as I would.

His way of speaking to me, and of treating me altogether, were to me, *at the time*, quite past comprehension.

(With regard to his considering it such a laughable matter that I should have experienced Madness, I have since come to the conclusion that probably I had, wholly unconsciously, when mad, expressed aloud, and in the doctor's hearing, the sentiments I consciously expressed to "Ray Hall," namely, that I *wished* to obtain thorough experience of all forms of Madness. I wished this quite honestly, and in spite of the terrible sufferings it entailed upon myself and Ray Hall, because I believed it would give us an understanding of Madness that would enable us to help all other maniacs, by our ability to explain to the doctors *Madness from the Inside*.

(I failed to see my doctor's joke at the time; but I see now that of course there was quite enough joke about the whole business to make a cat laugh!—is not a cat, of all created animals, proverbially the most cruel?)

The thankfulness I had felt, on regaining sanity, at finding that there really *was* human help at hand, cannot be realised by any one who has not, as I had, experienced weeks and weeks of agony, and in the full belief that there was no help, human or Divine, to be found anywhere.

This unspeakable thankfulness was what I felt the moment I returned to sanity, and found that a competent human helper really *had* “disentangled that snarl” of my bewilderingly tangled “Fate” for me, and restored me to sanity and freed me from torments.

But this human helper, for whose presence I had felt so devoutly thankful, quickly showed me that he was taking it quite as a matter of course that I was regarding him as my natural enemy. He also, as quickly, showed me that he was heartily reciprocating my (supposed) sentiments!

(To be absolutely just, I would add that I am blessed—or cursed!—to perhaps a somewhat uncommon degree with the quite common intuitive faculty of “sensing” the feelings and thoughts of others.)

I asked Mrs. W. privately one day (a little later on) if she could explain this, to me quite inexplicable, attitude of this doctor towards me?

She answered that when mad I had been abominably rude to him, had continually ordered

him about in the most insolent manner, and had spat in his face.

I was horrified to learn all this (I never should have learnt it to this day, had not the doctor's own manner towards me driven me to institute inquiries), and it was the most complete news to me.

Whenever conscious at all I had always treated the doctor with studied politeness—and this in spite of the fact that while mad I was fully convinced he was greatly augmenting all my sufferings by his ignorant experiments!

The day I was permitted to leave my sick-room and come downstairs for the first time, the doctor called.

Without any preliminary, or explanation of any sort or kind, he came into the room and said to me peremptorily—

“Give up Mr. ‘Jones’!”

The reader has already been put into possession of the facts (at least some of them, and shall be given the others) of the position from the doctor's point of view—but I ask him now to review, in imagination, the facts of the position *from the Maniac's point of view*.

I was utterly and blankly unaware of what my lips had told the doctor, the first day he came, about Mr. “Jones” having seduced me. I never had that delusion in my mind when mad, so could not dream of ever having stated it to this doctor. There is nothing whatever, of any sort or kind, in word or deed, wrong in the relations between Mr. “Jones” and myself—there never has been at

any time. Mr. "Jones" is the most punctiliously honourable of gentlemen, and has ever, both in act and speech, behaved as such. I myself am absolutely innocent of any single wrong *thought*, even, concerning Mr. "Jones."

Therefore, when addressed in this most insulting manner by the doctor, I was utterly taken aback—and I answered with a brusqueness resembling the doctor's own—

"There is nothing to give up!"

But it was evident that the doctor did not in the least believe me.

In the presence of the nurse my doctor subjected me to a cross-examination on the subject of Mr. "Jones," and our mutual relationship, precisely resembling the cross-examination by a hostile, prosecuting Counsel of a Criminal in the Dock.

I was so terribly upset physically, mentally, and nervously, by all this, I spoke to my second brother about it. I said I was still really too ill to be able to stand this seemingly studiedly hostile sort of treatment—and I implored my brother to protect me from this doctor's insults.

But my brother said the doctor was "a very good fellow, who had no intention whatever of insulting me, but was only determined to try and do his utmost to prevent my ever going mad again."

It seemed to me that my "Keepers" were combining, in this case and in much else also, to do their utmost, not to try and ensure my remaining sane, but to bait and goad me as soon as possible back into madness!

It was not until very many weeks afterwards (when the doctor had long ago left me as cured) that Mrs. W. informed me what I had told the doctor, in her presence and my brother's, about Mr. "Jones."

In the meantime I had also learnt that Mr. "Jones," having heard nothing from me, and having been told by the landlady that I had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared from my lodgings "very ill," and gone she did not know where, had spent two days endeavouring to trace me, and had finally discovered my doctor and applied to him to find out what had happened to me. This most kind solicitude of his on my behalf confirmed the doctor more than ever in his foundationless suspicions against the innocent Mr. "Jones."

But of all this, at the time the doctor subjected me to his cross-examination, I knew nothing whatever. His conduct seemed to me simply wanton brutality towards a sick woman confided, helpless, to his care.

However, I am now able to see the matter from *his* point of view—and to understand.

Perhaps some day he may be able to see not only *this* matter, but many other matters too, from *my* point of view—and also to understand.

When one becomes sane ; when one learns what one's body has been saying and doing while one has been out of that body ; when one finds one's self, to all intents and purposes, held answerable for words and actions of which one has never known anything ; when one finds one's self believed and

judged guilty, without trial, or even explanation, of things of which one is totally ignorant, and of which one is innocent even in thought, when mad or sane—when all this is brought home to one, and daily enforced upon one's consciousness by every word and act of those in charge of one; when one's doctor—when one is feeling so stricken in body, mind, and spirit that one is needing every help, human and divine, to enable one to have the Will or courage to take up one's life again at all and go on with it—when one's doctor gives one, with impatient intolerance, the stern ultimatum that one must either renounce one's Religion or relapse into Madness, and that there is no other possible course open to one, and that one can choose whichever of the alternatives one likes, as it is perfectly immaterial to him, as *he* doesn't care in the least whether one is mad or sane (his actual words),—when all this is added to what one has already gone through, then, indeed, the unhappy sufferer from Madness finds held to his trembling lips the last and bitterest draught of all his bitter Cup of Agony.

Madness, in all conscience, is surely suffering enough for any human being to endure. No one who has not experienced it can imagine its torments.

But when one becomes sane, is it necessary then, for the preservation of one's sanity, that, as a supplement to all the other, unavoidable, sufferings of Madness, one's heart should be broken?

I do not ask the question in any spirit of bitterness or cynicism, but in all earnestness. I do not

ask it because I consider my "Keepers" to be callous, careless, or cruel people—but for the very reverse reason, because I know them to be the most well-intentioned, kindest-hearted of mortals.

"For if they do these things in the green tree . . . ?"

(NOTE.—To prevent the smallest shadow of suspicion from resting in the mind of any one upon the highly honourable character of Mr. "Jones," I would wish expressly to state that the doctor himself, a little later, explicitly told me that he was entirely convinced of the complete innocence, in every respect, of Mr. "Jones."

I have recounted the incident concerning Mr. "Jones," because it seems to me one of the most vitally important of my narrative. It teaches so trenchantly the extreme danger that exists in accepting any statements made by lunatics when they are in an "unconscious" condition (and doctors evidently cannot tell at all when lunatics are really "conscious" or really "unconscious"), and of regarding as "lucid intervals" periods during which, in reality, the patient may be absolutely "unconscious" — showing what great caution is necessary in the estimation of "consciousness" and in the acceptance of statements. Otherwise, cruel injustice is done to perfectly guiltless persons.—AUTHOR.)

CHAPTER VII

IN summing up the salient features, judged from Within, of an attack of Madness, I would state them to be these:—

First—and foremost and chief—*bewilderment*.—Bewilderment as to *what has happened*; bewilderment as to how or why one's own identity (which, *whenever conscious*, one retains) keeps finding itself in some utterly unaccountable, inexplicable way thrust in and out of bodies which do not belong to that identity; bewilderment impossible for a sane person to comprehend or even remotely conceive, such as no pen can ever in the faintest manner portray; bewilderment amounting to perfect hell-torment of suffering.

That is the most salient of all the features of Madness.

Secondly.—The grotesque *exaggeration* of everything—especially of one's own personality and importance—strikes (when once more sane) the "Observer from Within."

One seems to become the Cynosure of every eye in Heaven and on earth. The attention of the whole of Creation seems centred upon one's self and one's actions. One's fortune is "millions"

(which one generously throws away!); one's writings are to be Revelations for the Salvation of Suffering Humanity; one's wit is to "shatter the Universe with laughter"—and so on.

Thirdly.—The automatic, instantaneous, and violent action of the Mind upon the Body is a very noticeable fact to any one who has experienced Madness.

For instance, that time I felt nearly killed, when I believed myself seized "in my Double" at a Spiritualistic Séance (and must, in reality, have been much in the same physical extremities I felt, for the nurse to have acted as she did, summoning the second nurse and resorting to hot bottles and brandy, etc.). I quite understand now what caused my sudden seizure and bodily sufferings.

I have read of several carefully-authenticated cases in which "materialised forms" at a Séance have been seized by the "Sitters," with the result of causing nearly the death of the "Medium."

The logical sequence of my thought that I had been seized would be that that disastrous result would follow.

Automatically, and quite involuntarily and unconsciously to myself, that thought evidently *did* follow in my mind, with the instantaneous effect of very nearly killing my own body in actuality.

Exactly the same thing was noticeable in that earlier incident, when my mental inquiry as to whether my sufferings would never be "finished" induced the (unconscious and involuntary) sequence of thought of Christ's words, "It is

finished" — with its instant effect upon my body.

This powerful, automatic action of the Mind upon the Body, combined with the extreme susceptibility of the brain, while in this abnormal state, to every slightest impression and suggestion from Within and from Without, make evident to any one who has experienced Madness that very much might be done to relieve suffering and restore a lunatic to a normal mental and physical condition, by deliberate and systematic *suggestion* by doctors of whatever mental or physical condition they are endeavouring to bring about in the patient.

I should say it would be infinitely more efficacious to suggest right conditions rather than to attempt to argue lunatics out of wrong ones. Suggestions reaching the brain will take effect quite irrespective of the lunatic's *consciousness*; whereas, attempts to "reason" a patient out of his delusions can produce no effect whatever until that "reasoning" penetrates to a lunatic's *real consciousness*—which, as will be seen from the foregoing actual experiences of a lunatic, often does not occur (even with regard to daily reasonings concerning "fixed delusions") until *after many weeks of madness*.

To laugh at a patient's "delusions" (which are causing him inconceivable agonies of *body* as well as of mind) is a fatal thing to do. It produces the result of making the patient lose every vestige of faith in the doctor. The unfortunate sufferer argues, most logically, that either the doctor is

entirely ignorant of the "case," or else he is a man of a cruelty more resembling a fiend's than a human being's; otherwise, how could he possibly, under the circumstances, be feeling even the most remote *inclination* to laugh? That hilarity over his sufferings fills the unhappy lunatic with despair—it makes him feel bereft of all hope of human help.

Fourthly.—What strikes the Observer from Within, very forcibly, is the extreme error Outsiders make in believing that in madness lunatics "lose their reason."

Nothing could be further from fact.

Speaking from personal experience, I assert that a lunatic's reason remains with him intact, whenever he is conscious at all. What a lunatic does lose is not his *reason*, but his *consciousness*.

My reason remained with me throughout (whenever I was conscious), and I never exercised it more unceasingly than I did during those five and a half weeks of madness. No reasoning could have been sounder or more logical than mine throughout that time; *but*, as all my senses were deceiving me, the whole reasoning in every case was built up entirely on false premises. Hence, to the Onlookers, the seeming lack of reason.

Lunatics do not "lose their reason," they merely reason from false premises.

Fifthly.—Just as the Observer from Within can refute the popular error that people when mad "lose their reason," so can he testify to the exact accuracy of the equally common statement that they "go out of their mind."

That is precisely what they do do!

Throughout an attack of acute madness the patient is "out of his mind," and out of his whole physical body, continually, in varying degrees of completeness.

That the "consciousness" and the "Madness" vary with the varying degrees of the completeness of the severance of the Ego from his physical brain-apparatus, I believe to be the case.

That such severance—partial, complete, and varying to every intermediate degree—does take place, in Madness, between the Ego and the physical body, appears to me, from actual, personal experience, to be a fact.

The possibility of such thing will probably be pooh-poohed by the majority of Western Scientists, even the least materialistic. But what I firmly believe is this—

If any perfectly unprejudiced Scientist would, to the European Medical Knowledge of the West, add a Knowledge of the Hindu Psychology of the East, and *thus equipped*, study the Problem of Madness, that man would solve the Problem.

Lastly.—The Observer from Within would remark that the most accurate and profound Psychological Comprehension of Madness, on the part of any one endeavouring to cure a Lunatic, would be quite useless without corresponding *Medical Knowledge*.

For that some frightful dislocation of the physical brain-apparatus takes place in "acute mania," and that no mad person can "recover their sanity" until that dislocation has become

re-set, is very apparent to any one who has experienced an attack of "acute mania."

Not only is one severed from one's brain (which is one half of the mischief), but the brain itself has suffered some injury that prevents it, even at the times when one is "in one's mind," from working properly (which is the other half of the mischief, and caused, I believe, by the first—namely, the abnormal¹ dragging-out of the Ego from the brain).

Anyway, however caused, that injury is something entirely physical, and must be dealt with as such.

And in this connection, might I, without presumption, as a Looker-on at the Game from an exceptional point of vantage, be permitted to say "a word to the Wise"?

In cases of acute mania, in the treatment of the patient take into account this dual nature of the malady with which you are dealing. Do not centre your attention on an *effect*, to the entire exclusion from your view of the more important *cause* of that effect.

To be explicit:—Avoid as far as possible (consistent with keeping the Patient's body alive) the

¹ *Abnormal*, because a severance between non-separable "sheaths" has taken place. The Ego can safely withdraw from the physical body, but the physical body and the "Etheric Body" must be shuffled off as one "sheath," and left together, united. Then the physical body suffers no harm. The trouble in "madness" is that a separation has taken place between two "sheaths" (the Physical and the Etheric) which should never be separated during the lifetime of the physical body; and which cannot be separated, *partially*, without causing serious physical injury, or *completely*, without causing the *death* of the physical body.—AUTHOR.

use of any and all medicines which produce the result of accentuating the severance of the Ego from the physical body. Various anæsthetics have been proved, by unprejudiced, scientific investigation, to be one way of bringing about such severance.

That sedatives to quiet the brain-frenzies in madness are indispensable, is self-evident. But this, to any one who has seen Madness from Within, is equally self-evident:—

Any medicines that induce or accentuate a severance between the Ego and the physical body, prevent, instead of bringing about, the “consummation devoutly to be wish’d” that the Patient should “regain control over his mind.” It stands to reason that as long as he is being *pushed out of his mind*, he cannot, in the very nature of things, obtain control over that mind!

But the problem of keeping the body alive, for the Patient to have any physical brain into which to get back, must be one of extreme difficulty, requiring the highest medical skill to solve. Whatever medicines are necessary for effecting that, must, of course, be employed, even should they delay the patient’s restoration to sanity. Obviously, the imperative need is, that he should be kept alive!

I am sure I cannot have been very far from death’s door when I was put into my doctor’s hands—and I consider him over-modest in attributing, as he does, my recovery to “my logical mind and my good habits of life.” If I had been left with no other help than that

of my logical mind and my good habits of life—or had been put into the hands of any but a first-class nerve-specialist—I think I should not have survived many days, and should not be here now to tell the tale!

I make full and public acknowledgment of my doctor's medical skill, and of his unremitting care and attention throughout the whole of my "case."

But, his share in the recovery being fully and frankly acknowledged, I would, with all due deference to his expressed opinion on the matter, state that in my opinion my phenomenally quick recovery—in fact my recovery at all instead of dying—was due more than anything else to this:—

A clear Conscience. This was, I am sure, again and again, the sole (and effectual) preventive of my *dying of terror*. I felt I had done nothing to deserve these terrors—and that, as a perfectly innocent woman, I should prove more powerful than any of these fiends, spectres, demons, murderers, and evil entities besetting me. I should say that if the actual cause of death could be traced, more than half the deaths in cases of "acute mania" would be found to be deaths from terror.

For the terrors of one's situation no sane person can conceive.

Next to my clear Conscience, I believe the other chief reason of my surviving was my determination to return to my physical body those times when I was "out" of that body.

I returned thus, of purposed volition, at first, to prevent "Ray Hall" from having my death on his hands when I was being repeatedly "killed" as his book-character—later (when the choice was offered me to remain in "Heaven") to go to Ray Hall's help and not leave him deserted amongst all those torments from which I alone had escaped—and lastly, towards the conclusion of my illness, to endeavour to solve the inexplicable mystery of the Fate that had overtaken me; I swore to myself repeatedly that I *would not* die, I would return again and again into my murdered physical body, until I *had* solved the meaning of this whole (as I believed) monstrous Injustice of God.

I feel firmly convinced that if I had *not* returned, as I did—but had remained away, "out of my body"—that body would have "died."

(Unless, by the way, it were able to continue, indefinitely, to remain alive *without* ME—a physical, animal body, bereft permanently of its Human Ego.

(This seems, to any one who has had personal experience of Madness, a quite conceivable possibility—a possibility also that would afford a complete and satisfactory explanation of cases such as Nebuchadnezzar's, the Mad King of Bavaria's, and hundreds of others—in which all Human characteristics disappear, and a human body lives on as an Animal solely.)

But to quit Speculation and return to Facts!

One laughable fact is, that I having informed Mrs W. that my lodging-room was "haunted by a Fiend," and she having charged my landlady

with having put me into a haunted room and thereby brought on me a dangerous illness—I found myself threatened by the indignant woman with a Summons for having “taken away the character of her house”!

Needless to remark, the character of the good lady’s house is as unimpeachable as the character of the innocent “Mr. Jones”!

I continued to hear “Voices” for months after regaining sanity. But these “Voices” did not resemble the “Voices” of Insanity, for two reasons.

Firstly, they all sounded as being *inside my head*; not, as those other “Voices” did, as proceeding entirely *from without*—often at long distances without.

Secondly, the things spoken were always *my own thought that I was thinking*.

The Mad Voices never said what *I* was thinking—they said quite other things. They said things often quite contrary to my own thoughts or opinions—they said things that utterly astonished me—they said things that I never had, and never should have, thought; and all this while I myself was thinking my own, quite independent thoughts.

When I first became sane the Voices inside my head spoke *very loudly* every thought I was thinking.

Not only did they speak it very loudly, but they spoke it with the most bewildering *quickness*.

They seemed to seize the thought out of my

mind before I had had time to finish thinking it, and to shout the whole completed thought aloud, with a rapidity of action that resembled nothing so much as the sudden collapse of a card-house falling down.

Every slightest, passing thought was shouted instantly and loudly in my head in this manner.

As time went on the Voices grew less loud.

This decrease in loudness took place, at intervals of a few weeks, in a marked manner. The manner rather resembled the quick shutting of a shutter in my brain, or—I think this describes the sensation more exactly—the sudden *shifting tighter together* of wide-apart, oscillating brain-molecules.

I haven't a notion if this is scientifically accurate—or even possible—but it describes the sensation precisely of the cause of the noise-decrease.

It was (in ever lessening degree) the self-same phenomenon that had occurred that Monday afternoon I regained my sanity, and the rushing and roaring in my head suddenly abated as it did.

Concurrently with their decrease in volume of sound, the Voices decreased in rapidity.

They no longer seized the thought out of my mind before I had finished thinking it, and spoke it quicker than thought—they said it at the exact speed of thought.

Then, as they more and more died away, they seemed unable to keep up with the speed of thought. The statement by the Voice lagged behind my thought.

This I found tedious.

A Voice would be still halting over one thought, saying it slowly aloud, while I myself had moved on to a second thought. The Voice would follow on to the second thought while I was on at a third or fourth thought.

I usually had to end by suspending further thought of anything except: "Oh! hurry up!"—until the Voice, like some lagging child, had caught me up!

At last all "Voices" died completely away.

An attack of Acute Mania has left me unscathed.

"After so many deaths, I live and write."

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