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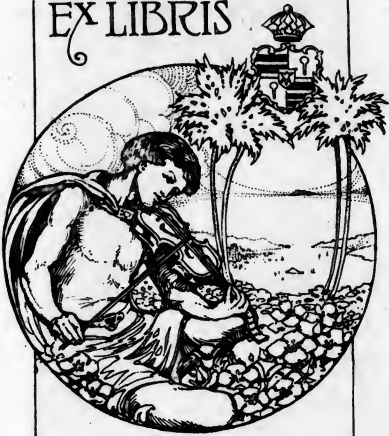
THE SOUL OF AN ORGAN

BY

LOUISE VESCELIUS SHELDON



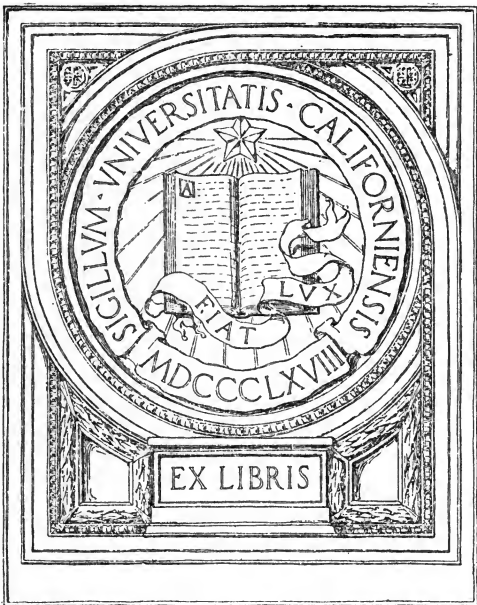
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THE SOUL OF AN ORGAN



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LOUISE VESCELIUS-SHELDON



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Boston, Massachusetts

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INTRODUCTION

The following pages, which, in my humble judgment, are of intense interest and value to all seekers for first-hand information regarding the nature of a larger life than that which meets our external senses, contain an accurate account of experiences in real life, veiled in the guise of seeming fiction. We have almost ceased to be astonished at any new revelation in the domain of applied science which may come into general vogue. Only a comparatively few years ago Wireless Telegraphy was unknown, and the great discoveries of William Marconi and a few other extremely advanced electricians were looked upon by many professedly "practical, level-headed" persons as merely figments of the scientific imagination.

As long ago as during the 80's of the 19th century Sir Oliver Lodge and a few other singularly intrepid and adventurous men of scientific renown had plunged into the vortex of *Psychical Research*, but though the famous Professor Alfred Russel Wallace had avowed himself a Spiritualist and Sir William Crookes had come out boldly in favor of a scientific theory of telepathy, the average man of science looked askance

at anything presumably calculated to cross the mysterious border-line between the physical and the spiritual.

The position of the scientific world is now so greatly changed that we are not astonished to learn on good authority that Sir Oliver Lodge is positively convinced that he is in possession of satisfactory evidence confirming the fact of actual communion between those still functioning through physical bodies and the so-called, but mis-called, dead.

A gifted writer has recently expressed herself in the following impressive words, called forth by recent demonstrations in the field of actual scientific exploration: "But a very few years ago wireless telegraphy as a medium for transmitting intelligence through the air was unheard of; yesterday the human voice was heard distinctly half way round the planet; to-morrow we may hear a voice from one of the distant stars."

Important though these new discoveries and revelations unquestionably are, when viewed solely from the standpoint of commercial advantage and freedom of intercourse between physically separated friends, the ethical implications of this rapidly growing proof of the immeasurable greatness of human capacity are far more stupendously important, for the larger view we take of our possibilities, and the greater our knowledge of the law governing psychical as well as physical activity, the stronger must become our hold on assurances of immortality and

the certainty that we are even now and here living in a spiritual realm immeasurably vaster than our physical senses can determine.

The more sensitive we are constitutionally or temperamentally the more readily do we respond to vibrations in higher octaves than those which appeal to our less sensitive, or less highly sensitized, fellow beings.

Musical therapeutics is a branch of scientific healing which has been as yet hardly hinted at save by a few unusually progressive musical enthusiasts, among whom Eva Augusta Vescelius, sister of the author of "The Soul of an Organ," has been a genuine pioneer. But with the increase of attention now being bestowed upon the psychical aspects of therapeutics, we may confidently expect that in the very near future music will take its rightful place among accepted health-giving and health-restoring agencies, and literally from the very "soul" of an organ will proceed healing effluence appreciable by sufferers for whose necessities other modes of treatment may have long been tried in vain. The widespread interest in music, which is growing daily, is certainly an avenue through which the higher forces can work directly for the alleviation of human suffering and the increase of knowledge concerning celestial realms. Adelaide Proctor's exquisite poem, "The Message Sent to Heaven," is receiving more and more justification as science grasps the hand of poetry and pays its tribute to the

fundamental verities which underlie the poets' rhapsodies.

The coming age will unquestionably be one in which there will be no antagonism between intellect and emotion, but the two will so dwell together, as in connubial felicity that, to use popular rather than scientific phraseology, head and heart will run in double harness.

Transcending all else of interest and vital moment to humanity is the clear, bright light which modern revelations are showering upon the hitherto dark problem of our Hereafter. We may well admit the reasonableness of the new widely accepted proposition that there is the same intimate connection between ourselves on earth and our so-called "departed" loved ones that there is between devoted friends whose physical bodies are held apart by what the world calls material space. The chasm of space is practically bridged on earth by wireless telegraphy, but there must be stations and operators or the truth of "wireless" cannot be demonstrated. So is it with our conscious communion with the usually unknown realm of spirit. Glibly we speak of invisible, inaudible and much else that we arbitrarily designate negatively, while all about us are highly attuned human instruments responding to finer vibrations than the general average of humanity in its present limited development can be aware of.

As a definite contribution to the literature of the new period I heartily commend the following entrancing story to all who are on

the alert for confirmation of the mighty truth of the beautiful inspiring words of Harriet Beecher Stowe:

“It lies around us like a cloud, a world we
do not see;
But the soft closing of an eye, may bring
us there to be.”

—W. J. COLVILLE.



“SEATED, one day, at the organ
I was weary and ill at ease,
And my fingers wandered idly
Over the noisy keys;
I know not what I was playing,
Or what I was dreaming then,
But I struck one chord of music,
Like the sound of a great Amen.

It flooded the crimson twilight,
Like the close of an Angel's Psalm,
And it lay on my fever'd spirit,
With a touch of infinite calm,
It quieted pain and sorrow,
Like love overcoming strife,
It seem'd the harmonious echo
From our discordant life.

It linked all perplexed meanings,
Into one perfect peace,
And trembled away into silence,
As if it were loth to cease;
I have sought, but I seek it vainly,
That one lost chord divine,
Which came from the soul of the organ,
And enter'd into mine.

It may be that Death's bright Angel,
Will speak in that chord again,
It may be that only in Heav'n
I shall hear that grand Amen.”

—ADELAIDE A. PROCTOR.

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The Soul of an Organ

CHAPTER I.

IN the province of Wurtemberg on the banks of the Danube lies the ancient and fortified town of Ulm, whose streets at one time resounded with the strains of martial music and the tread of the armies of Napoleon I.

It was in this quaint old town that Napoleon's forces were encamped on their way to Russia, and thirty thousand souls gathered in the Cathedral to greet the Emperor.

The inhabitants of Ulm look with awe and admiration upon their Cathedral, whose single lofty spire points like a finger to the skies, while from its smaller pinnacles the Swabian Alps are to be seen in the near distance.

The great Munster, four hundred feet in length, is a worthy temple of worship. Erected more than three centuries before Columbus set sail to try the fortunes of a western course, serene and calm it stands welcoming the hurrying throng with scarcely a mark from the hand of time to show the passing of the years.

It was a lovely day in May when the sound of a great organ pealed from the open door of the Cathedral, while shimmering streams of light were falling on worshiper and priest, pillar and pulpit, from windows high in the vaulted dome.

On the incense laden air, which floated from the altar, rose the thundering tones of the great instrument, uttering as it were, its warlike commands to bitter foes in combat, then again changing to pleading strains as from some distant angel choir until the worshiper was barely conscious of the passing scene and the angel chant grew fainter and still fainter, the eyes closed in rapt adoration of things sublime, the blood flowed

through the veins with an added swiftness, the heart pulsed with a conscious throb, and the breath came slower through the lips, for the soul of the man at the keyboard was speaking through the instrument, telling the story of life, while the answering echo in every heart gave testimony that all men were brothers.

Who was this man that could breathe into the organ and make it a living entity to which the thoughts and heart-throbs of the kneeling multitude responded? His shapely head covered with softly waving brown hair, was poised on high, broad shoulders; the pointed beard had been carefully trimmed; the face in outline was a blending of the feminine and the masculine, and yet there was a certain strength about the muscles of the throat. But it was in the dark blue eyes veiled by black lashes that the singular fascination of the man was to be found. Under deep emotion an intensity of expression illuminated the face,

reminding one of Hoffman's painting of the man, Jesus.

As the music died away in the gathering twilight and was lost in the dark recesses of the Cathedral, the organist rose and lifting his head, gazed through and beyond the arches above him. Presently a sigh escaped his lips and he regretfully turned from the instrument, his face lost that rapt look of the artist, as slowly descending the winding stairway, he passed out through a side door into a garden and strolled up a narrow path leading to the dwelling at the end. The strains of music still lingered in his ear and he stood a few moments looking at the great stone pile, as he had done many times before.

It is in the presence of strength outlined in noble structures, hallowed by the devotion of centuries that the best inspirations are often born. Who knows what new motif comes to the soul of the musician who, through solitary hours, lives alone in the vaulted dome of these

architectural wonders — “frozen music.”

As the organist awoke from his reverie and neared the porch, a sweet but intense face appeared in the doorway.

He smiled as he saw his sister, the gentle Amina. The green-sward was covered with cherry blossoms and the evening air was laden with the delicious odor which arises from the earth in the early spring, while one of those rare, restful twilights fell over the land.

As Amina came and stood at Joseph's side, the nightingale in the bushes sang its ode to the night in a burst of joy. When it ceased singing Amina softly crooned a lullaby. All nature was wrapping itself in repose, and she was assisting it. Amina's brownish-lidded eyes asked so many questions, not of you, but of the stars, that it would have taken an eternity to have answered them, and her low feminine voice was but an echo from the gentle spirit within. To live in her brother's world of music made her life complete. He was

the beloved "Joseph" of the community; the capable leader of an orchestra.

"Helena is coming home," said Amina, as she handed him a letter stamped with a foreign postmark, "and she may be with us at any moment, for the letter has been delayed."

A look of surprise swept over the organist's face.

"Helena coming home!" he said. "After all these years! I can scarcely believe it."

He paced up and down the walk with Amina, as he looked over at the great Munster and continued:

"When Helena left us to go to America as the wife of Carl Bauer, I was the poor student, struggling hesitatingly, but slowly to the goal. She returns to us alone; a widow, to find you, Amina lovelier than ever."

"And to find that you are the Kapellmeister of Ulm," said Amina, with a bright smile. "I have often dreamed of her return and wondered if we would know her."

“She cannot have changed very much,” said Joseph, thoughtfully, “for she was so temperamental; so full of nervous energy, and restless to the point of caprice, but never tyrannical. She says,” reading from Helena’s letter, “‘I have been overwhelmed with the care of Mr. Bauer’s affairs since his death, and have finally decided to close my house for the season and return to the old home in Ulm.’ “The simple life here, sister, attracts her after all. We would not wish to leave it for all that she could lavish upon us.”

CHAPTER II.

As the evening chimes pealed from the tower, Amina's voice roused Joseph from the reverie into which he had fallen.

"Come, brother," she said, "we have the proben tonight. It is time to go." And they passed through the gate in the wall that surrounded the garden and walked down the quiet old street to the hall not far away, where the sound of sweet discord, dear to every music lover greeted the ear.

The violins were being tuned to pitch; the softly melodious tones of the horns were heard; while the sweet-voiced oboe, the flute and the clarionet were merrily caroling cadences and arpeggio preparatory to the evening's rehearsal.

Joseph took his seat as leader with more than his usual show of interest, for 'Tristan and Isolde' was being interpreted by his beloved band. Joseph lifted his

baton and the passionate undertone of the great love poem began to slowly vibrate through the room. When the tender strains of "Isolde's" music were heard, Joseph's heart swelled within his breast and the notes of the score were blurred through a river of unshed tears. A vision of his own lost Ailsa, whose life had been his inspiration, rose up before him. From early childhood the love between Joseph and Ailsa had blossomed like a flower, but a day came when, with scarcely a moment's warning, Ailsa sighed her soul away into the limitless ethers, and left Joseph bereft.

It was Amina's tender sympathy that gave Joseph renewed hope, and gradually brought him back to an interest in life. This was accomplished in a measure, through their mutual love for music.

The program played this evening exerted a peculiar influence over Joseph. When the final beat was given, he dismissed the men with a nod, and placing his hands

over his heart, walked home in silence by Amina's side. The whispered name "Ailsa" was sufficient explanation for his noticeable pallor.

On reaching the gate in the garden wall, a carriage drove up whose lighted lamp flared full in their faces.

"Joseph, Amina!" cried a voice from the darkness.

"Helena!" they both gasped and in another moment were locked in their sister's fond embrace.

As Helena entered the guest room and seated herself in a wooden high-backed chair, under the swinging lamp, her eyes roamed over the familiar apartment, but always returned to Joseph and Amina, who were quietly observing her, while the strains of "Tristan and Isolde" still rang in their ears.

Amina found her old familiar place on a footstool, at Helena's side, and sat regarding her in open admiration—for she was her ideal of womanhood. The oval face, sparkling blue eyes, and fun-lov-

ing mouth (perhaps a little too wide), with its dimpled smile, were irresistibly fascinating. Her head, crowned with a wealth of burnished brown hair, which fell in ripples about neck and ear, together with the pink and white complexion, gave her quite a youthful appearance. In fact, nature had been very prodigal with her gifts to Helena Bauer.

The dress, the bright boxes and trunks belonging to her, the things she threw down here and there, all made an instantaneous change in the home.

“I suppose that you would like to know what brought me home to Ulm? The fact is, that after Mr. Bauer’s death, I found the adjustment of his business interests required my undivided attention. Those months of anxiety seemed fearfully long. You can imagine how tired I grew of the confusion, when I decided to throw care to the winds and return to you in the serenity of the old home, and rest awhile.”

Amina caressed her sister’s hand

and said: "We intend keeping you with us for many days."

"You are living happily as usual, Joseph, under the shadow of the Cathedral, with its gloomy niches and whispering corners?"

"We love the old Cathedral; it casts its benediction over us. We would be lost if we left its shadow," Joseph said, rising and leading the way to the dining room.

The room with its low ceiling and small square windows draped in white dimity; the steaming tea kettle hanging over the fire and humming a tune to which the lid was merrily dancing; the table spread with its simple fare, together with the general air of comfort and repose, presented a quaint picture to the tired traveler. It was as Joseph said: "We need so little to make us content."

CHAPTER III.

Helena nestled in this restful home with ever-increasing interest, for the qualities of both mind and heart of her brother and sister appealed to her affectional nature.

She realized that it was Amina's brooding spirit hovering over every detail of Joseph's career that gave him time for labor and composition. It was Amina who arranged the orchestral scores for rehearsals; kept the house scrupulously clean; prepared the meals to suit his tastes, and still found time to devote to her piano and accompany him in his violin studies.

The music, so impersonal, carried healing on its wings. It was like heavenly manna to Helena's soul; and she knew that it was Joseph's and Amina's daily food.

This visit to the old home proved to be one of genuine pleasure to Helena, especially in the meeting

of girlhood friends who assisted in making the summer pass quickly by. When the days began to shorten, Helena took long solitary drives, during which she turned over many things in her mind. Her restless spirit craved excitement, while her commercial interests called to her from New York, but a feeling of fear gripped her; the fear of loneliness which is the twin sister to monotony. As the time fixed for her departure drew near, the restlessness increased until she had a sudden inspiration. Joseph and Amina should return with her to America! The decision was quickly made, and that same evening on her return from the drive, she broached the subject.

“Why cannot you and Amina go to America with me?” she said to Joseph, as they sat talking of her departure. “You should see something of the world beyond Ulm. Everything that you have here is included in the life in America, but there, commerce overshadows art.”

There was a long pause. Joseph

sat motionless, while a flood of tender memories swept over him. The inspiration of the home, of the Cathedral, of a thousand and one things that were life itself.

“Nothing can overshadow art,” he finally said, “for art includes philosophy. The professional man and the philosopher should grow in wisdom, and their judgment and spiritual intuition increase with years. The treadmill of competition in the business world is the soul crusher; the genius escapes the treadmill, but it takes what the American calls ‘nerve’ to do it and play the game to a finish. Nothing was ever gained through slaying your brother.”

The restless movement of Helena’s rocking chair was the only sound that broke the stillness. There was a sad note in Joseph’s voice as he continued:

“Our wants are few, sister; we have enough for our every need, and I think that Amina is happy. Why should we leave the old home with its hallowed associations and break the rythm of our lives?”

"Ah, brother," cried Helena, shrugging her shoulders, "you are not weighing your words. The fact is, you have too many ideals."

Joseph sat thinking over those words "too many ideals," until Amina came into the room and lit the lamp, then turning to her he said in a low voice, full of emotion:

"Our sister says that we have too many ideals. She is wrong! We cannot have too many ideals, for we have time to live up to them here. Live your own life in your own way," he said to Helena, "but leave us, with God's blessing, to listen to the voice of the soul, and do what little we can to interpret the music of the great masters. Here, life's song lingers on the gentle breeze, and we are content with our lot just as it is."

"I have no patience with either of you. Why should your music constitute the entire world to both of you? Now brother," continued Helena coaxingly, "you can both labor in your world of music, and at the same time be of assistance to me."

Joseph rose from his chair and moved restlessly about the room as he said:

“The whirr of your great wheels of commerce would drown aught else! I must hear the nightingale that sings in these bushes. I would pine for the Cathedral—for the Danube flowing by our side.”

“So you think now,” persisted Helena. “But you will find other things in the New World which will take their place. We have the woods, the birds, the rivers; in fact, all that Ulm possesses we have—with the exception of the Cathedral. Joseph, I have no one near me upon whom I can rely, and you would be of great assistance to me.”

Joseph stood facing her, and at once grasped the situation. She was asking him to be her servant; to place secondary the results of his years of study; to throw aside his art and take an interest in her world of finance? The artist soul in him shrank from the very thought of it. Lifting his head he looked steadily at her. Helena

had never seen him so stirred, and the intensity of his varied emotions surprised her.

“Should I accede to your wishes and go with you,” he said slowly and distinctly as if weighing his words, “we would all pay too dearly for it. If I gave up my hopes and ambitions as a musician even for a time, the ear would close to the harmonies that are born of inspiration. I would become disintegrated. Do not ask it.”

Helena sat dumb. What could it all mean, she asked herself. Could not Joseph hear the great orchestras of the New World; greater than any he could ever hope to hear in Ulm? Was there no other song so sweet as the one the single nightingale sang in the garden? She looked at Joseph and thought what a pity it was that he was not more practical; what was he really accomplishing anyway. Composing a few fugitive songs: an orchestral theme now and then. A leader of an orchestra! What did that count for in her world of things? What a pity

it was that he was not like other men who loved money?

CHAPTER IV.

Helena yielded gracefully however, to the seemingly inevitable, and following the line of least resistance, sped away to Paris to renew her wardrobe, and live a few weeks in the French capital which she had frequently visited with Mr. Bauer. She was fond of gay colors with daring artistic touches, and only in that feminine city could she find the right combination. Her gowns were selected to suit her moods, so she adorned her clothes.

A month elapsed before, pendulum-like, she swung back to Ulm. A few days after her arrival, Amina sat looking at her sister's purchases. She had never seen such beautiful things, for, in their quiet life, nobody wore expensive gowns or jewels, except on gala days, and the desire for personal adornment had never before presented itself so forcibly.

Picking up a string of pearls which Helena had brought her from Paris, she counted them. There was a pearl for each year of her life, and as she clasped the necklace around her throat, a spark of the feminine within her was touched; the necklace possessed an indefinable charm, and she did not take it off. They were her first jewels. As Helena continued opening other boxes containing marvels of things in lace and silk, so beautiful in texture and design that one could but wonder at the hands that made them, the artistic side of Amina's nature awoke to the meaning of such clothes to the wearer.

She saw in a flash why Helena loved that New World where such things were created and from which she and Joseph had shrunk. Perhaps she had been a trifle selfish in not urging Joseph to return with Helena, for the change from Ulm to America, even for a season, would certainly give him a larger view of life, of men, and of things in general.

It was all very well to love God, and be a musician like Joseph, but she realized also, that in her sister's busy world, ideals were either moulded into concrete form, or cast aside.

As Amina thought over these things, she dressed for the street, and went for a long walk. Her step was slow and hesitating as she left the house, and when she returned an hour later, she stood looking at the Cathedral, wishing that it could speak and give her some of the wisdom it held within its walls, so that she might know which way her duty lay. When she entered the house, she had decided upon laying the whole matter before Joseph.

That very night she told him frankly that she thought the change would benefit him, and concluded:

“We need not leave Ulm where the spirit of content dwells, to plunge into Helena's world of excitement; we can live our own individual lives, leaving others to chase after butterflies.”

She paused, for a grim look of resolve swept swiftly over Joseph's face; as if in fact, he had had a glimpse into futurity. Breathing deeply he rose to his full height and slowly said:

"This sacrifice is unnecessary. But we will go, for a season and see if it 'pays' as Helena says."

CHAPTER V.

When Joseph told his devoted band that he would soon be leaving them, their protestations of devotion made it difficult to break the last tie that bound him to the old home. The night at last arrived when they gave their final program. Never had they played so well. Joseph heard the cheer of approval from his friends who crowded the hall, and heard them crying lustily: "Auf Wiedersehen Kapellmeister." His eyes filled with tears; he bowed and lifted the baton for one more number. It was the "Lorelei," and the echo of the song was heard on the midnight air long after Joseph had retired to rest.

A few days later they went aboard the great ship and steamed away with Helena to the New World. Days passed and they sat unnoticed in a corner of the spacious salon, but it was the violin

lying in Joseph's stateroom, that revealed his secret to his fellow-passengers, and he was asked to assist on the usual concert program. When Joseph arose to play they received him coldly, expecting doubtless, to be bored by some mediocre fiddler. But at the first inspiring touch of his bow the attention of everybody was rivetted upon him. His face was transfigured, and he was soon oblivious to his surroundings. When his bow swept to its last beat, a great wave of applause greeted him. Hastily resuming his instrument, Joseph played a Grieg melody, filled with the magnetism of the north, and the feeling of isolation which had hitherto enveloped him, fell away. He immediately became the center of attraction and made many friends.

They landed in New York the following day with a feeling of un-mixed pleasure, but listened in a confusion of mind to the din of gong and cable car, and the roaring rushing trains overhead. They were particularly interested in the

whirl of action everywhere in evidence, and were soon convinced that this was indeed a new land and a new race keyed to a new momentum of speed.

As they entered Helena's door, a world of splendor was revealed. On the walls of the drawing room hung paintings from the brush of modern masters. The fjords of Norway, with their stupendous waterfalls and beautifully tinted snow-capped heights; Venetian scenes and woodland paths soothed the eye; while the summer breeze played with the delicate lace curtains. The grand piano was lost in an alcove, which served as a background to gold and tapestried furniture; shaded and draped in softest tones of silken hangings, the interior of this abode seemed an Aladdin-like palace to the two wanderers: especially to Amina, for she had never even in imagination, pictured such a home.

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Bauer had been considered a singularly astute man in the business world but he had made no secret of the fact that he owed his success to his wife's good judgment and keen insight into his moneyed interests.

The entire management of the business had now fallen into her hands. It was the detail connected with it that irked her, and it was here that Joseph's well known characteristics, developed through years of concentration that had taught him the value of time, served him in good stead. He called for assistants from Mr. Bauer's former employees, and the early morning hours of the day found him hard at work in the office looking into Helena's accounts, where she left him to conduct the business in his own way.

From the moment that Amina stepped into Helena's home, a

round of gaiety with all its accompanying frivolity, kept her in a continual whirl of excitement from morning until night.

While dressing, in an abandon of delight, for her first night at the opera, she glanced in the mirror and saw a stranger reflected there.

The low-cut evening gown of pearl-trimmed cream-colored satin revealed the exquisitely moulded form of a beautiful woman.

The brown hair parted in the middle of the low, broad forehead and falling over the tips of the small ears, was softly twisted into a psyche knot at the back of the shapely head.

For a moment Amina stood gazing at the mirror before it dawned on her that she was looking at her own reflection in the glass. Then she awoke to a new sense of power, which beauty alone gives, and turning, descended the winding stairway in a bewildered state of mind. The Amina of Ulm had re-incarnated.

Joseph stood faultlessly attired in evening dress, and watched her

as she came, then bowing low, said in a tone of mock humility:

“May I have the honor of escorting Lady Amina to the opera to-night?”

Amina courtesied and replied:

“I have been looking forward to this night and hoped that it might be possible for us to go together. Just think, Joseph, of the changes that have taken place since you last led your orchestra.”

Amina was evidently stirred, for she added: “We must take up our music studies and be serious once more.”

His sensitive lips twitched as she said it, but he bit them into firmness, and a sterner look, that was almost austere, stamped itself upon his face. The life in New York had wrought a greater change in Joseph than in Amina. A dignity of bearing had always been a distinguishing feature of his make up, for it seemed to separate him indefinitely from other men less introspective. He was conscious, however, of a lack of physical strength, for in trying to

keep pace with the standard American business man, the end of the day found him too tired for study.

"Helena's investments need my undivided attention," he said to Amina, when she questioned and expostulated with him for becoming submerged in the world of finance.

Helena appeared superbly gowned in a riot of color, and wearing her famous rubies. She gave her brother and sister a glance of approval as she wrapped her sable cloak about her, and filled with the joy of life, descended the steps to her waiting car. Her opera box was the cynosure of all eyes that evening, for its occupants were distinctively charming in every particular. From that night the Metropolitan Opera House became a veritable shrine to Amina, and she revelled in the appearance of each new attraction, until the opening of the early Spring morning musicales which enchanted her, because they were possibly, more intimate affairs: the artists seemed more human.

The end of the season's introduction to New York's social life found Amina eager for the change offered by Helena to the quiet of the country. Not until she heard Helena directing the preparation of the summer home, did she know how tired she was. A lassitude stole over her which she was unable to shake off, and when the day came for the closing of the town house her lagging feet would scarcely take her to the train which bore her rapidly away to green fields and pastures new.

CHAPTER VII.

During the hot and sultry summer months, Helena lavishly entertained her numerous friends in her country house on the Hudson. It stood on a bold promontory commanding an inspiring view of that noble river, and it was there, amid the poetry in nature which awakened to the whispering of the muses dwelling along the banks, that Joseph and Amina drank in their first breath of freedom from care in the New World.

One day as Joseph stood idly watching the early morning train as it crawled into the station on its way to the city, it seemed to take on the form of a great ogre swallowing its meal of suburbanites, and crawling out again with an exultant shriek of delight. Joseph turned away and lost himself in the cool shade of a neighboring grove, where all thought of the business world fell away and melted into the hazy atmosphere hanging over

the river. The spirit of content breathed through the trees.

While humming a half-forgotten melody, his attention was arrested by the tolling of the bell in the ivy-covered belfry of the village church. There was a peculiar tenderness in the sound, for it was keyed to the same pitch as the great old bell in Ulm, and it fell on Joseph's sensitive ear like a distant echo of the Cathedral bell. He stood for a moment entranced, listening to its sweet message, then with but one thought, that of getting nearer to the tolling bell, he turned towards the church and on entering the door found himself, alone. The rapt stillness quelled the rapid beating of his heart, and he dropped into the first seat he came to and bowed his head to receive the benediction he felt was there. The birds sang in the trees, while the perfume-laden air floated in through the open window. An organ stood in the chancel; the gift of a wealthy communicant who spent his summers in that vicinity.

As Joseph raised his head, his eyes fell upon the organ. The ends of his fingers began to tingle and reach out to touch it; the urge grew stronger by the moment, until finally he rose and falteringly made his way to the instrument. As he took his seat in the organ loft, his critical eye ran over it and he gauged its possibilities with momentarily increasing interest; but the instant his fingers lightly touched the keys, and his feet found the pedals, he knew it to be an instrument worthy of the interpretation of the masters. The moments slipped by, until he lost all mental cognition of time. The great orchestra concealed in the organ awoke and crashed out into symphonic waves of sound, such as had never been heard in that edifice. During the pauses in the music, the silence in the church was eloquent, there was such hope, such comfort in it.

Amina had missed her brother, and on going in search of him heard the thundering tones of the church organ in the distance. She

quickly followed it, knowing that only Joseph's fingers could be manipulating the keys.

On entering the church she sank to her knees, listening spellbound to the wonderful music. Joseph had found the path to the organ and she knew what that meant to him. She had not been blind to his apathy for his art, but now he was playing with a fervor that reminded her of the days when she heard him in the Cathedral.

Amina regained her courage and through it was able to meet the coming, but unseen blow, with fortitude.

As Joseph closed the morning's musicale with an improvisation which pictured, with crescendo effects the storm through which he was passing, he closed the organ and stood facing, but not seeing Amina. Startled at the sight of his wan visage, she covered her eyes with her hands. She was not weeping, but a sense of an impending sorrow swept over her. Joseph descended the steps of the chancel and walking slowly down

the aisle, came upon Amina standing in the shadow. Taking her hands in his, he spoke to her in a voice just above a whisper, while a wave of melancholy swept over him.

“There is a cry way down in my heart that will not be silenced. We are not the same in spirit as when living by the Cathedral’s side! There, we lived in harmony with our surroundings. Here, I feel like a tired child who has no home. I thought that Helena’s affairs needed all my time, but I have ‘paid the price.’ My health is shattered!”

His voice rose to a cry of anguish as he said:

“I am at war with everything around me. I am out of my orbit!”

Amina’s eyes were like two smoldering coals of fire as she patted his hand and said:

“Hush, brother, this is a passing phase of our life. It is our first summer in the country, and you know that the weather is very trying. Let us confer with Doctor

Bell and then consider the next best thing to do."

"Doctor Bell can do nothing for me, for I am soul sick." As Joseph said this, he glanced up at Amina who stood very still by his side, while the lines of her face deepened. "However," he quickly added, "you are worrying over me, so I will reconsider the matter, for Doctor Bell might suggest something that would lift this mental depression."

"This spirit that is hovering over you, brother, is but a cloud that will soon fade away. Let us go home now, for you are tired."

When Doctor Bell arrived in response to Amina's urgent call, the influence of his cheery voice and magnetic presence pervaded the house. After conversing on matters quite foreign to the sick room, he turned and questioned Joseph closely, and then sat absorbed in thought. The ticking of the clock was audible.

As Doctor Bell's voice broke the intense stillness, it was evident that he had diagnosed the case to his

own satisfaction, for he said, in a tone of authority:

“You have used up your surplus energy and are now living on your nerve. No vital organ, as yet, attacked; heart action perhaps a little weak, therefore liable to give way under severe strain. The truth is that you are only half alive to this work-a-day world. You are living more on the psychic plane of life than on the physical. The specific thing you are suffering from is called ‘Nostalgia,’ but the old-fashioned name for it is ‘Homesickness.’”

The doctor rose and, buttoning his coat, gripped Joseph’s hand as he concluded:

“Medicine cannot reach your case. However, there is no need, in these days of science, in being half-alive. Work over yourself; diet, and you will pull through all right,” and, bidding him cheer up and look on the bright side of life, left Joseph facing his problem, perhaps, more philosophically.

CHAPTER VIII.

A week later, on entering the breakfast room earlier than usual, Amina found Joseph seated in his armchair, but unconscious. An hour elapsed before a pressure on her hand enclosing his rewarded her efforts to arouse him. As he slowly opened his eyes, there was a look in them which she had never seen before.

“Sister,” he said, “my days on earth are numbered.”

“Joseph!”

“Listen to me,” he whispered, as he soothingly stroked her hand. “I know—I know. I shall follow the doctor’s advice, but I am fully prepared for any event in nature that may take place; perhaps ‘Heimweh’ has stolen into my veins. ‘Homesickness,’ however, is not always fatal.” He said this with a forced smile that ended in a slight sob. It was full of unutterable dreariness. “Ailsa came to

me last night, as she has done on several previous occasions. What the law is whereby she reaches me I do not know. As Ailsa can come to me, so there is a way whereby I can return to you."

"Brother, you must live. The doctor has ordered you home, and says that there must be no delay in your departure. This voyage will bring you around all right."

She talked fast and with unusual determination, as if afraid of being swerved from her purpose.

"Perhaps it will be the best thing for me to do, Amina," he replied. "I will pull myself together and leave on the first steamer for home."

Helena was greatly concerned over Joseph's illness.

"It does seem strange," she said, with an unusual frown on her face, "that he cannot be contented here in America. However, if he must go, let it be as soon as possible."

"Let me return with him?" pleaded Amina.

"No, no," said Helena quickly.

“Why should you wish to leave me here alone? He may return almost immediately, for the voyage will restore him to health.” Helena prevailed, and Amina reluctantly consented to remain.

Two weeks later found Joseph in Ulm under the shadow of the Cathedral and in the midst of his former associates. The change in the Kapellmeister was apparent to all, but the calm dignity of his demeanor forbade any one from alluding to it. They were satisfied to see him once more sitting in the Cathedral and listening to the bell as it tolled the hour.

“It is the same dear old spot,” he wrote Amina, “but I have changed. When we left Ulm, we snapped the magic tie of music, more subtle than the wind that blows in summer days. I sought an unequal match; I tried to live the way of the world, and retain the life of the spirit. However, I am going tomorrow to my old seat in the organ loft of the Cathedral, where I hope to regain my lost ambition.”

It was evening when Amina sat holding the letter in her hand, while she looked at a portrait of Joseph, done in pastel, hanging on the wall. His very presence seemed to breathe through it. Was it her fancy that the face had undergone a change? The eyes looking into hers were suddenly alive. The portrait was obscured by a blue light which gathered slowly in form, until Joseph's face, etherealized, floated from the frame, while a voice from the ceiling said:

“Amina, I am free!”

CHAPTER IX.

The following day a cablegram dated from Ulm was received. It read:

“Joseph died yesterday afternoon in the Cathedral.” The following week the news was confirmed by letter. Joseph’s death had occurred during the service, The music had suddenly ceased, and, on searching for the cause, the form of Joseph lying on the organ manual solved the mystery. Tenderly they bore him to his old home, but life was extinct. He was buried in the shadow of the Cathedral, and was at rest at last.

The lives of the two sisters now ran in parallel lines. Helena once more took the reins of business into her own hands, but with a more subdued manner. The lonely hours spent by Amina in the dimly-lit music room became more frequent as the weeks went by.

One evening, as she sat playing

Handel's "Largo," there seemed to be a movement in the frame enclosing Joseph's portrait. Scarcely daring to believe her senses, she waited. His eyes moved, and in a few seconds his form floated out into the room and stood by the piano.

"Amina," he said, "I can only remain a few moments. I have but little strength—" the voice was just audible, and then ceased altogether.

Amina sat motionless, for it was evident that Joseph was making an effort to proceed. She sensed that through her own passive strength he gained his momentarily, and was soon rewarded by hearing him say distinctly:

"You wish to know how I left earth life? When I went to the Cathedral in Ulm my heart was cold. The old organ loft did not seem the same to me. But I continued playing, until finally the soul of the organ awoke, and I realized that I was truly playing the anthem of my life. One theme followed another in quick succes-

sion, until the joy of perfect melody overpowered me. Then there came a crash, and I fell forward on the keyboard. After one moment of oblivion, a great peace stole over me, when I became conscious of moving away from my body. Hovering in space, I looked down upon it through a bluish light. I had no desire to return, and was filled with a great calm. Then someone whose voice was familiar said:

“ ‘You must return to earth life, they want you over there.’ ”

“Reluctantly and painfully, I attempted to squeeze myself into my body. It seemed an eternity, and I knew that I had outgrown my frame. I could endure it no longer, and cried out: ‘I will not go back.’ ”

“Then came oblivion. I do not know how long I lay there, but I realized that I was being suspended above that body by an invisible hand, and heard a voice like a zephyr uttering words of encouragement, as if to someone just awakening from sleep.

“ ‘The butterfly is coming out of the chrysalis. He will soon be with us,’ it said in tones so rythmical that they seemed like music to my soul, and, fearing nothing, I awakened to find myself slipping away on a raft which was being carried down a swiftly running stream. I soon came into a beautiful valley of peace, where the air was balmy and exquisitely perfumed.”

Joseph’s voice ceased, while his form began to fade.

“Watch for me; I will return,” he added, and with a sigh passed to the open window, and dissolved in the moonlight. Amina stood dazed before the canvas portrait hanging intact in its old place on the wall. She had seen and talked with Joseph. Wonderful night!

CHAPTER X.

Amina lived through the days for the nights to come; for the hour when she might retire to her room and in the dim light play soft strains of music, Joseph's favorite themes, hoping that the desire of her heart would be granted, when she would be reassured that his visit was not all a dream. She must believe her senses, else they could no longer guide her? He could return, for he had spoken to her. His desire to visit this world had not ceased with his death! She was playing an old melody in the twilight, when she became conscious of the same subtle influence pervading the room which had thrilled her on the occasion of his previous visit.

A great peace filled her heart. She heard a sigh, just a breath, and Joseph stood by her side.

"When you touch those chords, Amina," he said, pointing to the

piano, "there is an answering thrill in my heart which draws me to you, like a silvery thread which forms a bridge between our two worlds of existence. Certain strains of music kindle new fires beyond the veil, which light the torches carried by angel messengers to earth-bound souls, and illumine the way. Ethers of light of exquisite color envelop human beings through whom music finds expression. The music is then carried through the wireless as a healing force; like a sweet perfume, and is wafted on the breeze, stirring old memories so soothing, so dear. Your touch on this instrument, full of soul essence, vibrates through the densest ethers and produces overtones, with their sympathetic octaves, until a world of sound swoons its way to realms of life far beyond this plane of existence; and so, on that wave of sound, I feel my way to you."

"Brother, I am so glad to know that you wish to come to me."

"Unselfish devotion can bridge chasms. I have also visited the old home in Ulm. If it had been a

mountain hut, I would still wish to return. Memories are doubly dear where music has dwelt. I tried to find solace in music while earth-bound, but I can never tell you, in words, of the beauty of the music I now hear. Like a thousand stringed instruments, and at first so faint that my ear strained to catch the harmonies. The wind blows through the trees, mingling with the murmur of the waters in making music indescribable. As it grows in intensity of sound, the vibrations of the atmospheric ethers take form in changing colors and so give outward expression to the music, until one is in a state of ecstasy listening to it and seeing it interpreted in symphonies of color never seen on sea or land."

As Amina listened to these revelations she wished that she, too, might hear this ravishing music.

"You are about to ask me to take you to the celestial realms," he said. "Hold no such thoughts, for Helena needs you. My thoughts will impress you, if you act on that inner urge which ac-

companies those impressions. Be faithful to them, for then you strengthen the connecting cord between us; and, above all, be patient. There is a home building for you on the other side which, through your loving thoughts, grows into perfection for your occupation."

"Oh, how long it is in building! Why must I wait?" Amina's face was a picture of despair.

"Hush!" said Joseph tenderly; "while in the flesh I breathed myself into an atmosphere filled with sighs of self-pity, thereby losing my birthright of healthy manifestation through the flesh which stood for the personal I."

Joseph hesitated for a few seconds, then in a voice which grew stronger and more commanding in tone, continued:

"No soul can progress that questions the way. For every step is a precious link in an endless chain of events. From life to life. We were rythmically connected through the subtle, sympathetic family tie. But we must free our-

selves from all ties that bind us, and become lost in the one great love. It is found in service for others. Activity in passivity is invulnerable. Let go of the things which bind you, and press on. It is the letting go that counts and makes the good soldier. Helena is a good soldier!"

"Joseph!" gasped Amina.

"Helena, I repeat, is a good soldier. Every moment counts for something with her. She can do no more until she sees a higher light and lives through and out of her limitations. She now lives in the rythm of her life on the material plane, so she attracts to her material things. Through assuming responsibilities, she is solving her problems. But she is on the wheels of the gods. They grind slowly, you know, and finally leave but a handful of dust which a puff of wind blows away."

CHAPTER XI.

Joseph's breath came spasmodically, yet it was evident that he wished to say something more. After a few moments of silence, during which time his body seemed to grow more tangible, he resumed:

“It is so difficult to breathe this dense atmosphere—so dense—to reach you. Every time I return here to you my progress in gaining the inner worlds is retarded. However, while I have strength I must tell you more of the life of the Spirit. That life which adjusts itself to, and includes, the life physical.”

“How can the mortal, while living in the sense body of flesh, live the life of the Spirit?”

“There is an impulse of the centered breath, sister, which, if once controlled by man under all circumstances, becomes the umbilical cord of connection with the breath

of worlds within worlds: with universal life itself. It is the cord which connects Mother Nature with her children. Limitations are broken through and planes of consciousness, undreamed of, are contacted. It is only through getting into the rythm of life, through breath control, that we breathe around ourselves, consciously or unconsciously, a protective atmosphere; sleeping or waking, and so gain health and happiness. The physical energy is transmuted: keyed to a higher vibration, as it were. When the thrill accompanying this transmutation is recognized by the mortal, discord ceases. The body pulsates with health, is rejuvenated, in fact, and refuses to return to its former psychic environment. Where it existed a prisoner in the meshes of flesh inheritance, or even obsession, and is free."

"You claim, then, that we grow in higher understanding of self; find larger expression, as it were, through gaining control of the centered breath impulse?"

“The recognition, alone, of this breath impulse which throbs and thrills, quickens the energies of the mortal. He finds himself in the attitude of expectancy—of listening. Because the life of the Spirit has made its connection, and pulls that cord, while the voice of the Spirit calls to the forces of the body to transmute energy to the planes of inspiration and knowledge which, when reached, are ever normal planes where every activity of mind and body serve in rhythmic conscious unison and the mortal is free: has attained his birthright. Those hours of expectancy, when falling asleep at night and awakening in the morning, are two great hours of the day when one should seek protection from their source of life. At night, the centered impulse of the breath creates an atmosphere of protection around one, like the shell around the egg. In the morning, the impulse quickens the pulse, and the mortal slowly awakens to a profound stillness within. The mortal awakens to—energy!”

“When mortals, who are not interested in these laws of life, drop their mantle of flesh while still retaining their desire to live on this earth plane, what is their portion in the realms celestial?”

A look of tenderest pity swept over Joseph's face, while he breathed deeply and shivered.

“I did not intend to touch upon that subject, but since you wish to know I will tell you. One evening as I stood on the brink of a chasm a strange moaning sound fell on my ear. Looking across the chasm in the direction from which it came, I saw a desolate tract of land, where many people were moving about in a grey misty light. Questioning a companion standing by my side in regard to them, he said: ‘They are earth-bound souls who squandered their lease of life in pandering to their own selfish desires, and, upon passing out, came here before they had made ready a mansion or even a garment to live in. They shun their neighbors, and their groanings and whisperings, created by their discordant

thoughts, produce a cold wind which blows through the trees and over the waters, and fills their hearts with misery as they creep away to hide themselves and think over their lost opportunities. 'That woman,' pointing through the gloom to a female figure that was trying to hold together a few brown rags over her shivering form, 'had untold wealth at her command while in earth-life, but lived for herself alone, so that hardly one sympathetic thought followed her here. Her garments are what her thoughts wove. Poverty and rags, and you see that even they do not completely cover her. Beings like herself are there, on their incompleted mission, still blind to the possibilities of a continued existence, and, instead of going in search of the sunshine, they remain to talk over the malarial regions of the past: always an unprofitable subject. They passed through earth-life with all senses dulled to the sufferings of others; not trying to make their brother happier, or even more

hopeful. They were not interested in the problems of humanity, so, in their greed, deprived other mortals of their share in the things which go to make up a successful life. Therefore, through lack of harmonious vibrations in their surrounding atmosphere, they became disintegrated, losing thereby their body of flesh, and now, clothed in rusty, ragged garments, remain isolated and alone, until restitution in earth-life has been fully made through those they left behind them."

Joseph's voice sank to a sigh, and then all was still. A cloud of mist veiled Amina's eyes, and when she looked again at the portrait on the wall, only a few seconds had elapsed, but she was alone.

CHAPTER XII.

Amina now devoted her evenings to music, while the gift of improvisation became hers. Joseph had listened and reproduced the chorales of the skies, so she, too, listened and heard. It helped her to maintain her faith in the Supreme Power. Supreme, for nothing that man could conceive of would approach the wondrous creations described by her brother. Her life here, in comparison, seemed pent up in narrow confines. So she waited night after night, hoping to hear more of that New World to which he had gone. Weeks elapsed, but Joseph did not come. Months passed by, while she sat, hungry hearted, and with waning courage, waiting for a sign, a word, until finally her heart grew cold.

Helena had grown very tender in her affection for her sister, who seemed to be drifting into a sea of

lethargy from which she was powerless to rescue her. Amina recognized Helena's efforts in her behalf, and struggled against the obsession which was paralyzing her energies. But it was useless, for she had allowed herself to drift. Continued thoughts of the life beyond, combined with her intense desire to know more of it, had led her to silent hours of meditation and solitude, without any centering thought beyond that of wishing to talk with Joseph. Therefore, she had become negative, had relinquished her birthright, her individuality.

It lacked six days of being the anniversary of Joseph's death, when Amina sat playing a Chopin Nocturne in the dim light; a sigh breathed itself through the air, and Joseph stood looking into her eyes.

"I have come," he said, smiling radiantly upon her.

"Did my desire to see you once more reach you, brother?"

"It was the compelling power which brought me to you. I came through the law of desire."

He took her hand with a firm but gentle touch, which Amina returned with a hand clasp. Questioningly, she looked at him.

“What form is this you wear, brother? It is the same, and yet it is not. Tell me.”

“This form was my inheritance on entering the celestial sphere in which I now live. It is infinitely stronger in every way than the old earth form.”

As Joseph continued speaking, Amina’s emotions were so intense that her heart almost ceased to beat.

“And now, sister, I have found a still greater world than I knew of when I was here. A Being (of whom I will tell you later) led me to the border of that land, and taught me how to control my breath so as to glide over the surface of the country, which hitherto I had only trod upon. The light was more roseate-tinted, with no speck, no dust, while the grass was greener than I had ever seen it—like a great carpet spread under our feet. Lilies stood taller than

I, with their stalks and leaves transparent, while foliage of the trees took on the form of feathers waving in the perfumed breeze. Many of the homes resembled alabaster, and as I came to one, an impulse seized me to descend and enter. I had only to point my foot towards the house and touch the steps and glide through the open door, when members of our household greeted me with a smile of welcome, for I was expected. We all proceeded to an inner court, where fountains were playing and tall trees stood."

Joseph's eyes flamed with an intense look of joy.

"I have seen Ailsa. She lives in a great white mansion with lovely children whose parents are still earth-bound. Ailsa, in her trailing white robes and golden hair, which ripples in massive waves over her shoulders, is more beautiful than anything you can imagine. The little babes nestle to her throat like doves under the mother's wing. There are no homes over there more beautiful than those in which

the babies laugh, and sleep, and grow in stature. The gardens are filled with butterflies and tinted orchids; while sweetest lullabies are heard. Unutterable chords are struck when that word 'Love' is spoken. It is the one word which expresses all things."

A few moments of expectant silence followed, then Joseph's voice throbbed with an exultant tone:

"I wish to tell you one thing more before I go, sister. As I was walking by the river's side listening to the waters, the music they made suddenly ceased, and there stood before me a Being whom I could not look upon. He spoke to me in a voice so perfectly modulated that all other sounds seemed harsh in comparison. The influence of it pervaded all space. It had in it the essence of what Spirit Itself is; and yet you, and I, were component parts of It. I had been in search of one Perfect Being. One long since made perfect and when we met, I felt that I saw before me the adorable ex-

pression of what I would some day become, simply through its indwelling power, its central force. I could not stand another moment, and was slowly sinking to my knees when the Being spoke, but in such dulcet tones that the great old organ at Ulm, which had no mate on earth, seemed harsh in comparison.

“‘Not there,’ said the Voice, ‘but to the height of your stature, with your heart beating against mine, for I am your elder brother. Shall we lift the veil and view the city celestial, where we will meet again some day?’

“An instant later, a scene of entrancing vistas lay before me. Rolling from beneath our feet lay a valley which stretched away to grassy slopes on whose sides, hanging like white roses, were temples overshadowed by camelia trees in full bloom, unlike any others that I have ever seen, so wide-spreading and yet so perfectly proportioned. Over these grassy slopes were scattered mansions of every size and description.

Each one, however, had its vines and trees, and the guardians of them knew the souls who dwelt therein by the flowers which bloomed near the entrance. The slopes of the valley rose to a high mountain on the horizon, and there, through that wonderful light, could be seen the fairy-like city, more symmetrical and beautiful than any dream of fancy—for it was—the home of the Perfect Being, who continued saying:

“‘We will go there later. You shall see from the jewelled tower, that is lost in the stars, how you have journeyed from your home on that dark earth planet, and how, every time that you were disappointed and stumbled along the way, it was a step upward, to join us here.’

“‘What rapture it was, Amina, to listen to his voice, for every word he uttered struck a responsive chord in my heart.

“‘Shall we go on?’ I asked.

“‘Be patient; for you must return to earth once more, for the longing desires of that soul will

call you back from the inner celestial spheres.'

" 'Must I return to earth? Cannot a messenger be sent to bring Amina to me, for I cannot leave this place that I have longed to see, and yet never realized one jot of its glorious beauty. No words can paint it for those who have not seen it, and if I return to and cross that awful abyss to earth, and lose you, brother, how can I hope to ever regain those heights?'

" 'Then you would go on alone and partake of all the delights prepared for you. Shall we go on?'

"I heard a distant cry, and a chord from your instrument reached me. Its tenderness was heard where we stood. I looked up at the Being who called himself my Elder Brother. His eyes were closed, but he could see through the lids, and could have read my thoughts had he chosen to do so. But there is no desire in those realms to possess anything that does not belong to one. As I hesitated, I heard you cry:

“‘Joseph, have you forgotten me?’

“My heart was riven, and I said, ‘I will go back.’

“Then came one glorious moment when I heard a rhythmic chant. I had stood there so intent in gazing on the scene at our feet that I had not noticed that our Brother was surrounded by a legion of the most adorable beings eye had ever seen. They were swaying back and forth above the green sward, and their garments of azure-like quality created a vibration, until each one of them had a special tone which blended with those nearest, and so on through the band, until I awakened to the fact that they were each one in tune with the Infinite Mind and the glorious anthem which gradually stole upon my ear was an ‘Alleluia,’ snatches of which I had often heard in the organ loft, but never clearly enough to fasten in my memory. It could not have been understood only in the company of such celestial creatures. It was a song of

triumph over my decision to come to you; for it seemed that my giving up their world to descend into the depths to reach you sent them into a song of rapture.

“‘Another soul redeemed!’ they sang. But I had first made the decision before I heard the song.”

CHAPTER XIII.

“Joseph, I understand—I understand—how utterly selfish I am,” whispered Amina. “To think that I gave a sigh to bring you back from those realms of light! For did you not earn the right to be released from your form of clay?”

There was such an expression of deep self-pity on his sister's face that Joseph tenderly laid his hand on her suffering head.

“The greatest thing in the world, Amina, is to learn to forgive yourself. If I had not made the decision to return to you because you desired it, I probably would not have heard the ‘Alleluia.’ I can hear it now, but I could not give you any idea of its beauty through the agency of any earthly instrument, and I have been wondering ever since how I could have turned from it to come to you. I only know that on those entrancing strains came the voice:

“ ‘Brother,’ it said, ‘as our hearts beat once in unison, so the tie that binds us can never be severed. You are a part of me. But that other heart down there cries for the celestial life. It is attuned to the songs we sing here. Her desire is for the larger life which speaks to her in the stillness of the night: in the watches of the morning when the swinging orb of day throws its taper against the eastern sky, and nature cries aloud for joy. There is a body terrestrial and a life as well, which is as a shadow to the body celestial and its life. But shadows are such real things to children. Your sister will soon belong to our celestial household.

“I turned from him to descend to you by the path which lay between us, and I found myself in a dense, black fog, so dense that I hesitated to take another step. As I stood there, a great fear stole over me, which increased to terror. Then that voice spoke again from the darkness: ‘Fear nothing; I will light the way,’ it said. With that, there came a light which shone

through and around me, as if my body reflected light from a great sun. It was the flame of the Spirit within me. It lit the path ahead of me, and as I passed down, now filled with confidence, and came near to the place where the cold winds blew in a minor key, shapes of strange, unknown creatures slunk past me in the darkness. At a point where the wind shrieked and howled, I met the rich woman in her brown rags. She was leaning on her cane and regarding me fearlessly through those hard, steely blue eyes which, as she continued looking at me, began to soften.

“‘Where did you come from—Angel of Light?’ she asked with an imperious air.

“‘I came from above, where all is Light. I was a mortal until I climbed up those steeps, and in a twinkling of an eye was changed into what you see me.

“‘I have come from below, where the cold winds blow, by slow, arduous steps, hoping to meet with some one who could tell

me how to reach those summits which I glimpse when the wind lulls and the leaden veil lifts,' she said with a deep sigh. 'I am willing to climb higher if you can assure me that I will not lose my way, and may hope for a ray of sunshine such as you reflect to fall across my weary life. I am so weary,' and she leaned on her staff in an attitude of hopelessness.

"As I stood waiting for her to cease speaking so that I might tell her of the Great Heart awaiting her up there, the 'Alleluia' was wafted through the air. She looked up, startled, and listened intently, then slowly sank to the ground, her old cane dropping from her hand and rolling down the hill, as she fell into a deep sleep, with a glorified smile on her face. I knew that she had found peace, and would go higher up and join the throng, so I passed on and came to you."

As Joseph concluded, his countenance seemed to reflect, in a measure, the light from the Being whom he had attempted to de-

scribe. A few moments of expectant silence followed, then Joseph's voice throbbed with an exultant tone as he said:

"I have a message for you. Ailsa will be here in a few days to bear you hence. She will be with you, so you will have nothing to fear."

With a gesture full of compassion at Amina's breathless emotion, he placed his hand on her head and continued:

"On the anniversary hour of my release from earth form we will be here to take you away with us."

"In six days?"

Joseph bowed his head. Giving him one long look, Amina felt her blood chill and then turn to molten fire. Her body thrilled to this new emotion; her head fell back against the chair on which she was sitting, and when she awoke a new day had dawned.

CHAPTER XIV.

The following morning, as Helena entered Amina's room with her usual cheery greeting, she hesitated, for a visible change had taken place in Amina. The dark shadows in her face had deepened and an ethereal expression had stamped itself plainly upon her face. She gave Helena a smile of recognition and, crossing her hands over her heart, as if to quell its tumultuous beatings, raised her eyes confidingly and said:

"I am going."

"Going where?"

"To Brother—to Joseph."

"Amina!" sobbed Helena.

"It is true," Amina said gently. "Joseph came last night and said that he would return for me on the anniversary hour of his passing from earth life. That will be in six days. He loved you, Helena, and we know that you did your best to keep Joseph here; but he

was so tired—so tired of his earthly garment! He is now free to live his life, having first earned the right through living a life of service here. I am going home to see them all.” She turned wearily on her pillow as she continued: “I could not tune myself to my surroundings here, and become interested in your life, dear Sister; my heart was not in it.”

“Amina,” said Helena, breathlessly. “Try and be a good girl and use your will to arouse yourself out of this senseless condition into which you have drifted. You must, in the first place, leave this house. You need an entire change of scene. Besides, you must, you must think of me. I have concealed from you my anxiety of mind.”

“Dear Helena,” interrupted Amina. “Do not grieve. If you but knew—I choke—oh, I cannot find words to make you understand what is awaiting me. Listen—don’t you hear the echo of a great anthem? How they chant! The roll of an organ, like the beating of

a heart, throbs through it all. Hush!"

Helena stood in silence by her side. In that moment she realized that here was a force defying her to avert the coming dissolution. Every method that she could think of had been carefully pondered and acted upon, even to the turning of the hands of the clock forward one hour. The love of home and family was deeply entrenched in Helena's nature, and she mourned for Joseph, that great soul, whose death had shocked her awake to life's mysteries. But she quailed as she caught a glimpse of the future, and saw herself standing alone, while her sister was slipping from her side.

After a moment of profound stillness, Amina turned with a look of unutterable tenderness which thrilled Helena's inmost being, and said between pauses, as if repeating a message dictated by another:

"Joseph called you a good soldier. Therefore, my dear Helena, promise me that you will not grieve when I am gone? That you will

be brave where I was weak; courageous in helping others through life, where I was faint-hearted?"

"I promise you that I will be a good soldier. I will take up my life anew and consecrate it to the work that you and Joseph have left unfinished," Helena whispered.

Such a look of exaltation shone in Amina's eyes that Helena dried her tears and, leaning down, tenderly kissed her sister.

CHAPTER XV.

The sixth day, the anniversary of Joseph's passing out, arrived. That afternoon as the clock struck, the doctor entered the room. Amina was crying:

"He has left me. They have taken him away: oh what shall I do?" Despair was depicted on her countenance. "Doctor, Joseph promised to be here when the clock struck the hour. He has forgotten me."

As she said this, a long sigh escaped her lips and she dropped into a deep sleep. The watchers felt relieved, and at the same time confident that the turning point had been reached and she would now be cured of her vagaries. It was nearing the anniversary hour of Joseph's death (with the hands of the clock turned forward) when Amina awoke. The look of despair had changed to one of rapture which illumined her face, and she

seemed to be gazing at some object through and beyond them both. An influence, almost palpable filled the room. Doctor Bell realized that with all his scientific knowledge he knew little of the spiritual laws that govern the body.

As the clock struck seven, Amina rose to a sitting posture, and raising her hands as if to some invisible presence, murmured:

“Here I am, Joseph, “then added in a whisper, “Oh hear it ‘Alleluia Alle—” and with one long breath of ecstasy, her heart fluttered and stopped beating.

No one but Amina had heard the “Alleluia.” The stillness was profound. Her ear alone was attuned to those chorales of the skies.







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