

Letters from
a Spirit 



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LETTERS
" "
FROM A SPIRIT



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PREFACE.

These extracts, from the account given by a Spirit as of actual experience, cover more than a year of the new, or spiritual life.

They were written during 1886-87, and are now offered by the desire of the Spirit, in the hope of correcting the crude theories, and misconceptions, prevalent concerning the state beyond.

The process was that of Automatic writing, in which the mind of the Scribe has no influence over the matter communicated, and the hand is a truly mechanical instrument, as the pen it holds.

As an instance of this, it may be stated, that, on several occasions when there was a pause in the writing, the Scribe, noting what had been written, supplied a word. It was invariably crossed out, and a different one substituted.

It has been suggested that the Author was a receiver of Swedenborg's doctrines, but during mortal life her only knowledge of them were derived from casual mention in conversation.

It may be considered as internal evidence of the truth of these communications, that they were not in the least influenced by the religious belief of either Spirit, or Scribe.

They are as originally given in the familiar epistol-

ary usual with the Author in earthly life. No attempt has been made at revision.

Beyond the omission of family names and circumstances, and the dropping of adjectives, which were the natural result of the effort to "describe the indescribable," not a word has been changed.

The narrative professes to concern itself only with the state immediately succeeding the mortal life, and in which the newly freed are prepared for their ultimate destiny.

In the hope that these revelations may be a means of help, and comfort, as well as an incentive to more orderly living, they are submitted by—

THE SCRIBE.

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LETTERS FROM A SPIRIT.

CHAPTER I.

THE AWAKENING.

As you desire to know my experience from the first moment of my spiritual life, it is necessary to begin at the close of my earthly being. As it had never occurred to me that the end was at hand, I have nothing to relate beyond the fact that my last recollection was of persons about me, ministering to my comfort.

I was but partially conscious of these efforts, feeling only an overcoming drowsiness which speedily sank into a profound slumber. When I awoke it was with the impression of having slept for a long time; and gradually there was a feeling of pleased surprise that there was no pain, which merged into the most delicious feeling of *rest*, and peace, as if I was enfolded in an atmosphere of perfect quietude. No words can describe it, but as I lay with half-closed eyes, the sweet old memory came,—“As one whom his Mother comforteth.”

At length I noticed that I was lying in a position which had been impossible during my illness, owing

to pain excited by that posture, and opening my eyes, discovered that I was not on the same earth with which I was familiar.

Above me was a blue dome-like canopy and with very delicate curtains, falling all about the bed, only when I extended my hand, I would feel nothing.

In a dreamy way, so delightful was the sense of rest, I had half closed my eyes, when I saw thro' the drapery at the foot of the couch, a form, then a face, smiling, tender, and oh! so full of love. He came quickly to my side, and as I sprang up in an instant wild with joy, I fell into—how can I tell it—my blessed Father's embrace. I threw my arms about his neck, as he leaned over me, and clung to him and cried, "Oh Father, oh Father" over and over again in an ecstasy. He held me for a long time, till I grew quieter and then laid me back among the pillows, and sat down with one arm about me, and my head resting on his shoulder, until I was as still as one could be, beside oneself with joy.

I could think of nothing but living with him, for a long time, but at length it occurred to me, "He is dead, how can I be with him?" and I began to tremble. Father who till then had only said a few words like,—"my dear child," "my darling," "my precious daughter," spoke gently.

"Do not be afraid, my child, all fear and pain are past for you. You are at home again, in my home."

I said still trembling, "Father, am I dead?" He replied, "You have passed from earthly life, but there is no death. It is but the change to life under new

circumstances. You are still living, and can never cease to live."

But I was afraid, and quivered all through me, and he held me in his dear arms, and hushed and petted me till I began to be used to the idea, and more quiet.

Then I thought of those who had cared for me, and I cried out,—“Where are Muriel and Marion? Oh! what will they do?”

Father said softly,—“They are in the shadow now, but the Lord will take care of them, His love and care are especially with those that mourn.”

And then I remembered like a great shock of agony, and I cried out, “Oh! my boys, my boys, what will they do? oh, I cannot leave them.” In a moment I was frantic with pain: Father lifted me as if I was really a child again, and hushed and soothed me, till the paroxysm had exhausted itself, and I lay weak and panting but more composed. Oh, the loving words, so full of pity and compassion.

He told me over and over again, “that this must have been the *right* thing to come to me, or the Lord would not have taken me away; that He would comfort them, and by and bye I could try to comfort them.”

But it was very hard to bear, and as soon as I could speak I said that I wanted to go to them at once. He told me tenderly that I was not strong enough; I had been sick and suffering for many years, and it would be some time before I should have strength tho' the *pain* was gone.

I soon found I was glad to be back among the pillows. Father sat beside me holding my hands, talking just a little, and always saying the best thing possible.

I remained so for a long time, and then Father raised me a little and held a cup to my lips, full of what looked like milk, only that it sparkled. I took a long draught, and it went all over me, and I felt as if I could fly, it gave me such energy.

He said smiling, that I "had tasted the new wine of the Kingdom, and it seemed to agree with me." I answered that it did not look like wine, and he replied that "all things into which the divine truth flowed were the wine of the Kingdom."

I asked him why all the draperies were blue, as I was not particularly attached to that color, and he answered, "It is because you have always loved Truth, and have been sincere in all your living."

We talked a little. At last Father said with a smile that would have made Heaven of a desert, "There are some very impatient young people, who want to come in" and when I raised up and looked, there stood two young men, and one said in the pleasantest voice, "Mother, I am your baby Gerald" and "This," the other said, "is the little nameless one who breathed but once on earth. I have a name now. I am David because I belong to one of the societies of the House of David."

They are very noble and beautiful, my heavenly boys. They sat beside me, and told me all I asked,

so many wonderful things, but I cannot tell them now.

And then little baby Florence came in, only she is the loveliest of maidens. She is beautiful exceedingly. Her hair is spun gold, all ripples and curly locks, and her eyes blue wells of love. Her marvellous baby beauty is glorified. She is simply a perfect creation. She may be more glorious, as the ages go by, but more beautiful she can never grow.

And then Grandma came in, and petted and kissed me, and called me "her dear, dear child." I was overcome with their love and tenderness, and had to cry again, for very joy, because there was no other way to express myself.

And so thro' that long bright day they never left me, or ceased to tend me. They brought delicious food, like the finest white bread, only it was cool and sweet, and more of the drink, and so I fell asleep at last, with my hands held in their loving embrace, and so ended my first conscious day in Spirit life.

CHAPTER II.

THE SECOND DAY.

Another day awaked me from repose so absolute, that it can only be expressed by the word, renewal. We are renewed in every sense, by our seasons of withdrawal, partly because we are so passive, that the influx of our surroundings takes full possession of us.

Perhaps it is well to say that what is called day and night is but the nearest expression to the reality. In the morning there is a brighter place in the East. It is like a rosy dawning, very clear, and grows brighter for a time, until it is like sunlight, but brighter and yet softer.

This brilliant spot rises about one-third of the way to the zenith, and remains there till the day declines, and then slowly descends to the horizon, and fades away.

Does not disappear as the sun does, but becomes more and more delicate, till it merges into a lovely dusky gray, very nice to rest in. Like a beautiful twilight.

Sometimes there are such waves of color breaking over the sky, that it is a perfect wonder to see. Like

ten thousand rainbows, following each other, but broken into masses of glory. They tell me that some of the Archangelic spirits are near then, and Their sphere is one of color. They are "passing by," and "we see their glory," as of those who "dwell in the innermost courts of the Almighty."

But I must give you the history of my second conscious day, for I had lain three days and nights before my awakening.

Again the Father's greeting and blessing, the two nobly beautiful boys, and the home faces of yesterday so full of love. The gentle ministering, the bread and "wine of the kingdom."

I was too weak to sit up much, but reclined among the cushions, in peace that no language can describe. After a while I asked Father "where my body was." He said "that it was of no consequence, it was a cast off garment, which I was done with forever, with all its aches and pains." I couldn't help wishing to know, and at length he told me that it was on its homeward journey.

The sweet face of Mother's sister, which we only knew from its pictured loveliness, came to me that day, and her children so early gathered to her, that had been but names to me. I was half afraid of them tho' they were tenderness itself, but it seemed as if their very bodies were shining, and as if they might flash out at any moment like blinding glory. I do not know as "fear" expresses the emotion, perhaps it was awe, as if they were very superior beings. I

know Father must be so, but his loving heart makes him adapt himself to the needs of so whimsical a creature as myself.

Grandma and Florence took care of me all that day, only Father gave me the drink from the same cup, and little by little told me what my surroundings meant, and I really began to understand a great many things.

I happened to ask him if these meanings were the "correspondence" that Eliza was always talking about on earth. He replied that he supposed so.

Suddenly she stood beside me, saying that my thought of her had drawn her to me. She was so glad to know that I had passed out of my pain-racked body, and it did seem good to see here—one who so lately left the earth. As if she had not had time to forget things, and would sympathize with me better than those so long gone. I do not mean that she is in any respect equal to them, but as if we were more "on the same plane" to quote one of her frequent sayings. She is not half so gentle as my own family, but seems more on an equality with me. We had many topics of discussion, of matters of the life we had so lately left, and those we had left behind.

For she told me again, what on earth she so often said, that the "veil is for both sides of death, and that as natural eyes cannot discern the spiritual, so the natural is also hidden from the spiritual vision." I was so disheartened to be told that I would never again perceive things on earth, that she explained how little it mattered, since by coming in close con-

nection with a mortal, we can use their mental perceptions, and be kept advised of the course of material events.

She gave me the truth, but I did not receive it, as it was as yet impossible for me to understand of how little account anything but the eternal and permanent is. It is difficult to appreciate the fact that the mortal is naught, and the spiritual all. And in such discourse and such gentle greetings and teachings, passed away my second day of spirit life.

CHAPTER III.

THE BURIAL DAY.

Again light came, a rosy flush, and stirrings of music thro' the air, as if its vibrations were audible and fragrant breaths of blossoms and the singing of birds, if the gorgeous shapes are birds, and the loving faces and ministrations to my need.

I was still weak, but could walk a little about the room, where everything was so beautiful and yet so reminded me of my home, as if the imperfect shapes were *glorified*, and made lovely.

And yet there was a strange feeling possessed me, and the doubt came at last.

"Was it possible that one could be homesick, or rather earthsick in the midst of such blessedness?"

When Father came, he said very tenderly, "My darling, you are troubled and grieved. I hoped that you would not be, but there seems no help for it."

I asked him "Why?" but he only smiled a little and said, "Cannot my daughter trust a little, to the love that has cared so long for her?"

He laid me down among my pillows, and sat beside me, and tried in every way to direct my attention and soothe me into quiet. I tried to follow him, and to engage myself in his teachings, but for all that I

could do my heart grew heavier, and heavier, and at last I said, sobbing like a child, "I must cry, and I don't know what is the matter."

Father told me that we never can get beyond love, so long as there are those who remember and mourn for us on earth. Love is not anything that can be left behind, but holds and clings, a part of our very lives. Love is immortal, the one human emotion, over which death has no power.

"Just now," he said, "this mortal love and longing, is very concentrated and intense, and appeals strongly to you." All at once it came to me like a shock, that my friends were together somewhere, sorrowing for me, and I said trembling, "Oh Father, is it my funeral service?"

He leaned over, and gathered me into his embrace, and said with his cheek resting on mine.

"My child, my child," so tenderly, that I could not feel afraid any longer.

After a while he added, "We hoped that you would get thro' this day without trouble, but there is so much love to flow to you, and cling to you, that I could not absorb your attention, and prevent you feeling it."

I asked him what my friends were doing then? He said "I cannot tell you my child, and it is no matter. Try not to think of anything, but to be grateful that so much love has been given you."

But I could not get it out of my mind that I should feel "smothered" when the lid went down for the last time, and said so. He went away for a moment, and

after a while, perhaps an hour, Edward and Eliza came smiling in. Father said, "How is it?" and Edward said "It is all over now, and the poor worn-out body is laid in its earthly bed" and I could not help feeling surprised that I had not known anything about it.

I was relieved, and yet could not help feeling low-spirited or rather sorrowful. It is a sad thing that one phase of life is passed away, never to be changed or helped, all its mistakes and weaknesses unhealed, and so the shadow fell over me very sadly.

They sat about me, and exhausted every device to soothe and brighten me, the tenderest words, the sweetest caresses.

Then I heard a soft, sweet strain of music, coming nearer, and all the faces grew brighter. Listening with all my might, I heard thro' the exquisite tones, the words "Death where is thy sting? oh where is thy victory, grave?"

Ending in a louder chant, ringing in a superb chorus, "Glory and honor and power and might unto our God forever" and so they went away, and the chanting passed until the last note was lost.

We sat in a trance of joy and Father said while his face glowed with an inward light, "There is always joy and thanksgiving when one is born into the Life Eternal. Angelic spirits come down into this spirit world and give thanks, that the newly born may feel the gladness of the angels. It is your welcome Home, my child."

It must be so, for all my doubts and fears, seemed

to leave me, and I began to feel as if I really was at Home, in my own Father's house.

So that day was done, and that night as I must call it for lack of a better word—I had a drink of clear golden wine, which seemed to strengthen me all over.

There were more days of nursing and care with the dear faces coming and going, and flowers of exquisite beauty to cover my bed, and make my room a dream of loveliness. My blue, light draperies began to grow more delicate and finally faded away, and I grew stronger and felt that at length my days of weakness had departed and I was healed forever. I have tried to tell everything connected with my passing away, and early experience in this world of spirits, that is neither Heaven nor earth, but between the two, where we, who come with stains upon us, or erroneous and false ideas, are taught and helped and purified, till we are fitted for our "Own place" in the heavenly societies.

CHAPTER IV.

THE JUDGMENT.

I see that having given you an account of my transition the question now occurs to you, "With what body do they come?" and will proceed to give you my experience.

After my blue draperies had quite faded, my blue clothing still remained, but with additions of silver.

Father taught me that, as "Blue is the color that corresponds to Truth, so Silver is its representation among metals."

Everything signifies Truth or Love, Wisdom or Good.

I will describe the house sometime. It is very beautiful and noble, as Father's dwelling ought to be. I asked him "If he made it?"

He replied that he "supposed so, as it had always been his dwelling since he came here."

I do not ask him many personal questions. There is the same dignity in his manner as on earth, and I cannot inquire of anything that he does not think best to tell me.

But he did say, that he has always had the same feeling of care, and responsibility for his family as he had in the form, and has kept a Home for all of us.

There were but few of his own, for a long time, but after a while our little children, his grand-children, began to brighten his house, as they left ours desolate. The dwelling was full of them, and he had ample employment, when he could attend to them.

Grandma found her most congenial work in taking care of them, and it was not needful that he should be with them all the time. He has long ago passed into the Heavenly Society to which he belongs, but his intense desire and tenderness for his own, keeps him in this Home too. I feel all the time as if he makes a great sacrifice to come back for my comfort, but he says that he cannot "go on till all his flock is gathered in." I feel as if he veils his glory, when he comes here, and is not as he is among the angelic spirits to whom he belongs.

It is so with all of our family. They come constantly. There are always more or less of them here, but they do not live their real life in this home. More as if they come for my sake, tho' they all love it, because it was their first spiritual home. This is not Heaven, but the Spirit world above the earth and below the Heavens.

But I was to tell you about my body. It was some time after I came here. I had no pain, no feeling of heaviness, but was only not quite strong.

When I could move about, I did not think about myself specially. One day I went into another room that I had not noticed in going through the house. It was a smaller one than the others, and the light came from one window, opening to the East.

It was a grave, subdued looking place, and the walls and furnishings were an intense but quiet shade of blue. One side was covered from floor to ceiling with a crystal mirror. As I looked into it, there was a person that I did not know, but I was alone. As I looked more closely at the figure, the knowledge came to me that it was myself. I can't describe the vision to you. It was my earthly self, as I was at eighteen, but with a difference, as if the once familiar features were spiritualized and purified, not glorified, though that will come when it is possible.

But there I was, slender, round, light and easy of motion, such a contrast to the load of adipose I carried so many years. My face was young and fair. In every way, much nicer looking than ever before.

My hair was in a wavy mass, bound by a band of silver filagree, as beautiful as it can be, and my clothing a robe of the loveliest blue, soft, clinging and falling in loose folds, only confined at the waist by a girdle, of the same design of leaves and tendrils. A clasp of brilliant blue stones holds my robe together at the throat.

While I stood gazing, other figures, or rather shapes, for they were very delicate, began to form in the mirror, and I saw all the principal events of my life, pass in succession across the glass. My face of form did not alter or move, but as each scene died away, I would see what—for want of a better name—I must call a change, very slight and subtle in myself. Perhaps it will be nearer the fact if I state that there

was no change of age, but of state. For instance, when there was a temptation to which I yielded, there was a shadow about me, which was darker or lighter, according to my abiding in it, or overcoming it. So when I overcame at once, the light was more brilliant.

Also I seemed to grow stronger, or weaker as I was overcome, or victorious. Though I could always see that the increase of strength came through—or as I should have said—from, a most lovely creature, always near me.

In every scene she removed, or added something, I can't tell you what, or how. Gradually it came to me, that this was the showing to me of the change, and discipline of my whole life. It was awful, but it was beautiful too, to see how a thoughtless, careless child, was changed and fitted for a higher sphere of being.

Sometimes there were two bright forms about me, and sometimes more, but they were always busy, cheering, sustaining, disciplining my earthly self.

While I stood, spell-bound, Father came in. He always knows when I need him, and he stood beside me, and held me in his arm. If there was need he explained a change or a scene, and what effect that experience had upon me. There were often dark, ugly forms, too.

Father said these were "evil spirits, for we are in the midst" and are subject to both good and evil influences. In this series of visions, they were not

real existences, but representations. The hereditary evils, more difficult of removal than all others, presented in form so that I understand more fully.

I told him that as yet I could remember enough of my evil thoughts, and bad tempers, not to need to see them personified. He answered "that this is the way that such lessons are taught." I cannot go through all my life, and tell all that was shown me, but I must say that if I had known how literally true it is that "He giveth his angels charge concerning" me I should have gone on my way with less misgiving. My mistakes were not mistakes at all, but the working out of my nature, the manifesting of evils which had to be known to be overcome. All the discipline was needful, every bit, and as Father said, "We can always be sure, that the way one is led, is the very most merciful way, to overcome the evil, and produce the best results."

I asked why "my life story did not commence with my childhood."

The reason he gave was "that it is only the spiritual experience that was presented, and as there is no real spiritual experience till one is adult, all till then is merely preparation," so I was an adult in the minor. It was over at last, and I stood alone in the depths of the mirror. It was a strange and solemn experience. Fighting the battle of life over again, and seeing both sides of the veil at once. But when it was done, my darling drew me nearer to his great loving heart, and with his hand in blessing on my head said:

“It was worth all the pain and trial, my child, to have you here, so purified at last.”

And so I came away from that judgment place, all strengthened and enfolded in the purest love that ever is known to mortals, the parent love, which is an emblem and symbol of the Divine.

CHAPTER V.

THE INFANT SOCIETY.

There has been so much to tell of my personal experience which is after all, the same practically of every human being, that there has been no opportunity to give any idea of my immediate surroundings.

It is impossible to give the details of every day, and I will try to render such accounts as will convey the best idea of the general state of affairs, as far as they come under my observation. And as one of my strongest traits was the love and care of children, one of my earliest excursions, was to the spirit home, of those early gathered into the Kingdom.

I happened to say to my boys, that one of my sorrows after they were taken from me, was that they would miss their mother. Not all the angels in Heaven could supply that want, or so, it seemed to me.

Gerald said, "We will go to the place where baby spirits are taken, and let you see."

How we went I cannot tell, only we were there in an instant, and I stood looking down on the Infants' Heaven.

It was encircled with hills, that seemed as if they

touched the bluest and most cloudless of skies. Far-off and shining, like snow upon their summits, only it was clear light. All down the sides of these came streams of pure water, leaping from point to point in misty cascades, or flowing in sparkling ripples like brooks on earth.

Everywhere flowing water, and the light which was indescribably soft, yet brilliant, striking on it, made the air full of rainbows.

They were in fragments, everywhere, the lovely sevenfold chords of light. Looking down into the valley was like a sea of lovely hues like moonlight for tenderness, and radiant with colors too lovely for description. Through the midst of the place ran a broad stream of water, silver bright, over a bed of precious stones, that flashed like living things.

Everywhere noble clumps of trees, some covered with tiny white bells, that swaying lightly, rung in the softest tones, some with glittering leaves, and pendant branches like tents of green light.

Flowers beside the streams—among the green grass—climbing, nesting in wreaths—in garlands—in sheets and beds of bloom, of such colors and fragrance as no earthly blossoms ever possessed.

Finest fruits growing close to the ground, sweet and cool for the baby lips.

Birds in flocks, of gorgeous plumage, shooting in graceful curves, like a flash of scarlet or blue, white or rose, nestling in the cool places by the streams, or darting and singing, a very ecstasy of life.

Dotted about the valley were small white houses, exquisite in the delicacy of form and material, lace-like verandahs carved of pure translucent stone, and overrun with vines, loaded with flowers, and shaded by trees and shrubbery.

Fountains threw their diamond spray over beds of blossoms, the birds darting thro' the falling drops. And children! such hosts, and multitudes of them.

The precious little ones were all clad in the purest white, for that is the dress of innocence. Floating on the water, springing in frolic in and out, knee deep in flowers, covered with wreaths, hands full and heads crowned, chasing the birds who cuddled in their arms one moment, and were flying and singing the next,—the most indescribably lovely sight that one can ever see.

I stood and gazed till heart and eyes were full. So holy, so happy, so pure, so blessed. I could not bear it. I was so full of joy, that I cried like a child, and Gerald said smiling, "Dearest Mother, yours are the first tears ever shed here."

But I have to express myself somehow, and must shed tears, till I am able to bear such bliss. Why do I try to describe it? Only that I would give some faintest idea of the truth, and beauty, of this life of ours. A year of earth, would not suffice to tell the tithes of the beauty and blessedness of these tiny immortals.

Yet as we lingered there came through all the music of baby voices, and bird songs, and sweet sighing of the winds, and the chiming of waters, a strain

so soft, so sweet, so thrilling with tenderness, a voice from the very inmost of heaven, it seemed to me.

The rainbows flashed, and deepened, and the children stopped in their playing, and began to sing like the little angels that they are, and all turned their faces one way, lifting up their snow-white hands, with oh, such joy and gladness.

And over the hills, the eastern hills, floating thro' the air, came a train of angelic spirits, with love lit eyes, and every one had a darling baby asleep in her arms. There were a hundred or more, I think. They floated down to the ground, and the eager little ones gathered around them, and each Spirit knelt down among the flowers, and showed them the sleeping child. Some of them woke up in the midst of the smiling children, and put up their hands and laughed at the happy faces; but the most of them, looking pale and weak, nestled closer to the angels bosoms, and slept on.

They carried them to the cosy white dwellings scattered thro' the valley, and as they disappeared the old doubt came back again,—“These are angels, but they will miss their Mothers,” and as the thought passed thro' my mind, I was in a room in one of the houses.

There was a tiny bed, like earthly ones to look at, with the curtains like mine falling about it, only they were of rosy light. The couch looked like wool, but it was of flowers, tiny, soft and rose color.

The little one was just laid down, and the angel stooping over and arranging it, began to croon a soft lullaby, and I could but look at her.

If I should say she was a perfect dream of beauty, so ethereal that no language could describe her, would anyone have an idea of her?

The child began to stir, as if to waken, and still gazing at her, I saw her changing. In a moment there stood by the bed, a sweet, sorrowful, middle aged woman, with a colored dress, linen collar and white apron. Just such as one can see in any house.

The baby awoke, opened his eyes and held up his arms, and cooed at her, and all at once, it came to me that the angel had changed, into the very likeness of the child's mother, that he might not be distressed at a stranger.

And the next I knew, I was singing at the top of my voice, "Oh the depth, of the riches of the goodness of God. How unsearchable are His mercies, and His love past finding out. Of Him and thro' Him, and to Him, are all things to whom be glory forever," and the tears were simply streaming.

Afterward when we were at home, and oh how blessed, it is to be in one's own home, I had to enquire about the babies who had friends here, before they came. In case there are those of the same blood, or spirit, which is the same thing, they are cared for by those friends, or relatives.

For instance Aunty took care of her own, and afterward of my two boys, till Grandma arrived. Then she went to the angelic society to which she belonged, and which is the same as that to which I belong, only I have not got there yet, and she has.

But until this use was fulfilled, she only went at

times, and then returned to those who needed her in this Spirit world. The children are often taken to one of the places such as I went to—there are many of them—so that they enjoy the other little ones, and are taught by association with them.

Where all is so full of love, it does not seem as if “one’s own” could love any more than angels do. I don’t know as they do, but there is a sympathy that comes of having the same nature, that draws one nearer than to strangers.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCHOOLS.

It was a few days—to employ earthly speech—after my visit to the little babies' home, that my boys took me to the place where they were taught, during their stay in this spirit world.

Imagine if possible, the most beautiful park, rolling away in what seemed an endless sea of verdure, full of coolest and shadiest nooks, with magnificent trees, a bright rippling river, fountains, flowers, the assembling of all that was elevating and instructive.

Up an avenue of noblest trees, other avenues stretching in every direction to a building,—a Palace, I am sure there is nothing “made with hands,” in any world to compare with it. There were immense halls, crowned with domes of richest colors, and crowded with instruments for all sorts of teaching.

Crystal, precious stones, silver—all the metallic parts of the articles there, were of burnished silver, and studded with most brilliant blue stones, and tracings of lovely designs. There was not one of the innumerable instruments, however small and trivial that was not wrought with exquisite beauty.

Here my “heavenly boys” were taught, according to their desire, for each one has an aptitude of some

sort, and no one tries to understand the whole universe.

There are some truths that all must learn, elementary or basic facts, and then they are in freedom, to choose that which they prefer.

We went into a Hall where a class was studying Electricity, from the slender and most evanescent spark through all its marvellous changes, increasing in power till the pure white flame seemed to enwrap and enfold the world, so intense and blinding was the sheet of light.

Then as a means of communicating life. The dead, inert thought beautiful matter, useless and helpless, with organs fitted for reception and vitality. Then the subtle delicate thread of electric force, creeping and pervading the marvellous organism, till the result was reached, and life, thrilling full of use and joy was made manifest.

It was a magnificent exhibition. The teacher was most noble looking, wise as wisdom can be—finite I mean—and answering so patiently the thousand questions of those eager, bright boys and after taught them how this knowledge must be made useful, or it will be as nothing.

Into hall after hall, all full of students, learning in every department of wisdom, the great lesson of understanding thro' His works, the Infinite Wisdom of all.

Into a garden, where a teacher was showing his class, of vegetation, not alone the materials of plants and trees, but the subtle secrets of life and growth,

how the processes of which on earth we see but the external results, are carried forward, till from the lowest form of being, wrapped in the tiny seeds, there rose the noble tree, or the exquisite blossom.

To a stream where beautiful shapes flashed thro' the crystal water, and another one, a very sage in appearance, was showing his class the combination of organs, necessary for these to secure their share of the Infinite Life. Up in a high tower, a man—or an angel—was showing his class, nearly men they were, how the worlds were made; how the Infinite Creator, moving thro' space collected and united the crude materials. Change after change, motion, fire, electricity, the moulding of a seething molten mass into symmetry and poise, and as he taught, the processes proceeded before our eyes, till a world full of verdure, streams, land, and water in due proportion, mountains, and valleys, a perfect creation, fitted for the receiving of living forms, floated into being, and had its place among the wonders of this wonderful world.

It was but a miniature representation of course, but a perfect "showing forth" of Divine creative power.

Have I given any idea of the spiritual mode of teaching? If so, any more of these scenes would be but repetition, though it seems as if the subject is inexhaustible.

When my powers, feeble earth-bound ones yet, were exhausted and we floated homeward, I inquired of my boys who had shown me, from time to time

where their places had been in these various classes, if they had "graduated." They were very merry at the idea, and told me that "No one ever graduated, if that meant finished, as there can never be an end of learning. The Infinite is inexhaustible, and the Immortal always receptive."

This teaching has a great fascination for me, and I go often since then, but what I do really enjoy most of all is the singing.

Oh how these children—fitting for angelhood—do sing. Some of their songs are simple little things apparently, till you consider them, and perceive how full they are of the deepest truth and love,—always the dual—Truth and Love—Wisdom and Good.

Thro' grade after grade of singing and themes, rising in expression though always the same in reality, till the last volume of sound, like the "voices of many waters." Such a rapture of melody, that the heart is fairly borne upward! To this musical Institute, if that is a good name, I go almost daily. There are galleries of instruments, for I am told that there is nothing on earth that is not first in spirit life. Such music as no bands of earth ever made; martial music; such triumphant bursts and floods of sound, that I cannot endure it. It seems as if I am torn asunder, I feel lifted from my body—aerial as it is—and thrill through and through, till I sway and quiver like a leaf in the wind.

Time and space pass away, and there is only the sense of infinite expression, as if all life is swallowed up in one sensation. But always at the ending, no

matter how various the themes, all join together, instruments, voices, babies almost as they are, in such an ecstasy and triumph, such a glorious strain,—“Hallelujah, Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth,” and overhead appears the glory of the angelic spirits passing, taking up the ascription in such waves and billows of sound, that the very arch above us seems to tremble, and vibrate, to the voice of thanksgiving.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHILDREN OF SIN.

Do you marvel that I wrote, that there is nothing on earth, that is not here also.

Shadows and sorrow—need and want. How can it be otherwise, when a “great cloud” comes hither, not from peaceful and happy homes alone, but from haunts of evil, and places dark with sin. This rests heavily on my heart.

Always going through these places where all is beautiful, the doubt would come, “How with the undeveloped, the untaught but in evil.” And it came to pass, that one day my boys took me to the places of the maimed, and sick, where those born, and reared in vicious surroundings, are led, when they are delivered from the flesh.

There are many of these homes, but in this one they were from 5 to 18 years old, in earthly life.

There were no infants. They cannot be other than pure, however vile their environment. But these were children, old enough to learn to steal and deceive, little wretched gamins of the street, whose only word from father or mother was an oath, their only caress, a blow.

The place at which we entered was like a great

green lawn, only grass and trees, and afar off the glint of water. About it was a high stone wall, so very high that one could never get over it, and need never think of such a thing.

They are brought to so pleasant a place, because no one is said to choose evil, till their earthly years number three times seven.

It is strange to me, though growing less so constantly, how matters that on earth seem accidental, or arbitrary, are founded in Eternal Law. For seven means, "all of a series," and three, "the whole of a truth," and three times seven, therefore signifies the whole series of truths, which make "the measure of a man; that is of an angel."

So these children of less than 21 earthly years, are mercifully held to be not "deliberately evil."

Oh such a pitiful sight, or series of sights, for as we commenced at the younger ones, we found as we proceeded, the evils, and sinful inclinations of the additional years of experience increased.

Some of them were so fully grown, that on earth they must have seemed like men, but their spirits were, oh, so dwarfed and maimed, for each presents his real and spiritual state.

For instance, they are blind if they look upward. Their eyes perfectly blank and sightless, because in all their earthly lives, they had only looked down in evil, and sensuous things.

Some of them could not unclench their hands, unless they desired what belonged to another, and some

deaf and dumb because they are not suffered to say or hear, profane and vile words, and knew no other—poor children.

The wretched and diseased are a shocking sight on earth, and one can perhaps imagine how much more sickening, the spirit really maimed must be.

Some were not even light colored, and many were perfectly black. But each kind or age were by themselves, for the horror of it was, that all seemed to be alike; the only difference was in age, as there had been more or less time to practice evil in.

The younger ones were the least repulsive. The smallest were like unfortunate little beggars, dirty looking, though they were as clean as the care of others can make them, but their real inward selves was manifested by dirt, and filth. Oh, it was horrible!

I wanted to be satisfied about many questions before I would settle down to my new life, and after I had seen the babies' home, I could not help thinking about the poor children "born in sin and conceived in iniquity" and what had become of them. For as the "kingdom of Heaven" is within, there must be purity and holiness before there can be peace.

Well, the grass and trees and flowing water were everywhere, and to begin at the beginning, we went to the younger first. There were huts or hovels, poor looking dwellings, but whole and comfortable. And everywhere, Teachers.

They were pure, bright angels, for only the purest

can minister to the highest, and lowest of uses, if there is any difference, for "use is the end and aim of all life," and perhaps the leading up of these poor creatures, is as precious before the Lord as when, like burning flames of glory, these angels worship before Him in the "beauty of Holiness."

But for the space in which they stay among these children, they wear the semblance of powerful but gentle men, and plain pleasant-faced women.

Shall I give you an object lesson, that shall serve to show how these wretched ones are taught?

There was a boy who attracted my attention. He seemed about twelve years old, and from his earliest days, had been taught to steal. He literally did not know anything else. Of course, after the first perplexity of his change of worlds, the old nature asserted itself, and he went about trying to steal.

In certain places he would find articles like money, food or clothes. He would look all about, and seeing no one watching, would snatch up the thing, hide it under his poor rags, and fly to secrete it in his hiding place. He had quite a store of odds, and bits, and at last went to his poor home, to enjoy himself with his gains.

He put the food into his mouth, but it was bitter and offensive, and of all he had gathered, he could eat nothing, and finally he threw it away.

Oh, how angry he was, and some of the companions of his earthly life, who were there too, laughed at his trouble till he was furious. Afterward he tried to put on the clothes, but it tore all to bits, tho' it looked

strong and suitable for him. Then he threw that away, and tried to comfort himself counting his money, but that was the worst of all, for it burned his hands, turning to coals of fire, so that he danced and shrieked with pain.

Poor boy, he was full of trouble, and went away by himself, so forlorn and disappointed, that I could not help going after him to see what would come to him next, for it is a part of the blessedness of this "outer court of the Temple," that we know that things cannot stay wrong.

He went till he came to the waterside, and sat down there, brooding and sullen.

At length, he saw a bit of board like a shingle, floating along, and then a child appeared by him, a poor looking little one, such as he had been used to on earth.

The child pointed to the board, and seemed to ask him to get it, but he refused, and when the little one begged him to do so, made as if he would strike him.

After a while he yielded to persuasion, and getting up, lumbered along to the water, and picked up a long stick and tried to reach the board, but could not, though he tried for a long time.

He grew so interested that he did not notice that the child was gone, tho' I saw him disappear. But after many efforts, the poor boy went into the edge of the water, and then farther in till it was up to his waist. Finally the stick caught on the board, and he slowly drew it in, and came on shore.

In the process his anger had abated, and he seemed

interested and pleased. He looked about, and said as if he was ashamed, "Well, I've got myself wet for that young one, and now he's gone."

Still he held the board, and on it was a loaf of bread. It seemed to come there, and though he thought that he was alone, he had already learned not to touch it. All at once the child came back, and the boy went to him and said, "Here's your raft, little fellow," and handed it to him. The child thanked him and they sat down together. The child broke the loaf in two pieces, and gave him one. He ate as if he was hungry, and began to tell how good it tasted, and finally confided to the little one, who talked to him in a childish way, as one of his earth companions might have done, how he had taken food, and it was all bitter, and that he was so hungry because he could not eat it.

The child, in a homely familiar way, told him how everything that was not earned by some good deed, or honest labor, would grow unfit for use, and be a torture, and not a help.

I am yet so bound by the sight of my eyes, that I did not for some time understand, that the helpless coarsely clad child was one of the very purest angelic spirits, clothed for the moment in such fashion, as to reach by the shortest way, to the sense and reason of the outcast.

And then I recalled, how the Blessed Lord had said that even the Highest must serve, even as He had striven to win the lost ones, or the strayed ones,

rather, for such love as I see here, will never cease its efforts till all are safe.

It was not a place for raptures, there was too much suggestion of suffering, but I knelt down in earnest thanksgiving, for this sight of the love that seeks and saves.

I have made a long story of this experience, but it is a good showing of the patience, and tenderness, with which the wandering are sought.

We went into the next place, the next higher class in this great school. There the dwellings were more sightly, and the boys were taught to work, for they must learn to be of use by exercising their faculties, or rather the faculties that have been perverted to evil, must be trained to proper uses.

There were various employments, but I watched those who worked in the ground, which looked like a vegetable garden. The reason for this was, that as yet they could only understand the good of such labor as ministered to their needs, the most pressing of which was something good to eat. And this again had its foundation in Law, for as eating signifies "appropriation," so the first and only nourishment of the spirit, is by the reception and appropriation of truth and good.

They seemed to take great pains at their work, and pride in the nice vegetables they produced.

The next class up was more like a school, only instead of books, were the things themselves. They were shown not only how to make things grow, but

the processes of growth like the heavenly boys I told of, only all these things were such as ministered to their wants and needs.

For instance, when a seed was given them, the processes of growth were shown them, and they saw it grow and swell until the plant appeared. And then the influence of rain and sunshine, that matures it, till it was grown, and the fruit came forth and was fit for their use.

Thence to the next grade up where they had books, or what was more like them than anything else, and they began to sing, and be merry in a rude way, comparatively, but oh, so different from what they had been.

It was a long road for them, poor boys and girls, but they had begun to climb, and I knew that they would never be "let go of."

At last after many changes, we reached the last of this series of homes, where the inmates were fit for another society, and that was like a beautiful earthly home, such as a lovely and beloved child might go from, to spirit life.

So long it had taken the poor souls to reach a state such as a well taught child reaches on earth. They were outwardly changed, gradually as they progressed, both bodies and garments, and in this class their faces were white and clean, and their clothing whole and neat.

I was glad for them, but it is a fearful waste of time, that made this teaching necessary, but so is all unholy or selfish living. I should say that they are

taught by seeing it acted in scenes, in their daily experience, how the Lord was on earth, and all His life there.

The angels who came to teach them, show in their own persons, how he lived and taught and healed, and so little by little as they can receive it, they have shown to them, all about the life of "the Christ" on earth.

We were going away, for the marvel and excitement of it were too much for me, when far overhead, I saw a bright cloud, only it seemed like a burning glory within. As it came nearer, it grew darker, and heavier, and finally it was a company of men and women coming to this place.

I was as usual wondering, when Gerald pointed to another assembly who were rising slowly in the air, from all parts of the great place we had just left. As they rose they drew nearer together, and grew brighter and brighter, till they too were lost in glory, passing higher and higher, till we could see them no more.

As they went, there was such a joyful triumphant song of thanksgiving. These were the home going angels, and the others had come in their places, and the words that they sang were these: "Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain to redeem all the nations and kindreds of the earth. Halleluiah to our Lord forever."

Of all the marvellous experiences that came to me here so far, to me the most moving is the singing of these angelic spirits. They appear usually like a

bright cloud, away up in the air, and we hear their voices like distant music, according to the state of our hearts, and worship as they approach or recede. On this day they came so near us, just above the tree-tops, that I could see their lovely faces, and how their garments of many colors blended into a beautiful misty surrounding, till like a cloud shot thro' with glory, there was but a blinding blaze of light.

There are some of them, so fond of singing that they are full of it, like musicians on earth.

They express in this way, their holy thoughts and aspirations, because this is their inmost love, in other words, their "life."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRE-EXISTENT STATE.

Having visited the pure little ones, in their spiritual home, and the poor sick and maimed ones, in their "hospital," or place of healing, my thoughts turned towards the creation of these spirits. I longed to know if the *pre-existent state* was a reality, or only existed in the imaginations of sundry good people.

My boys told me that surely spirits were made, and are of the All Father, who is literally the Father of us all. They sought permission, for which we had to wait, but finally we went to see the "baby souls," as I cannot help calling them, before they are earth-born.

I cannot express how strange, and awful it is to me, to think of my being a literal "child of the Highest," created and living, in a spirit state, then embodied in flesh for awhile, and then returning to a spiritual state again. And again, the mystery of one being in this pre-existent condition of different *societies*, from which we are born. Is this the reason of the attraction that we feel for some persons whom we meet on earth? An attraction so strong and persistent, that all other ties seem weak beside it. Are we spiritual brethren *from* the same home, tho' in

the flesh aliens and strangers? It is simply awful to think of, what mysteries we are. Wrapt in the unknown, from the beginning of our existence to the end, only there is no end. How could we endure it, only that we know that "underneath are the everlasting arms."

I do not know *where* is this pre-existent place of spirits. No more do I know how I got there, or to any place. Only we are there, and there is none of the "swishing" through the air, that I thought there must be in a spirit's progress.

As we came to the place, I saw first of all a filmy, rosy mist, like the loveliest of sunset clouds, delicate, elusive, wreaths of floating color—but *radiant*, all through, as if the brightness was all inside, instead of being *reflected*.

It grew brighter as we advanced, until it was like a sea of rosy brightness. Billow upon billow, of softest down would not express the delicacy of these lovely folds of misty light. There were shapes of flowers all through these cloud folds, and exquisite fragrance, and colors we know nothing of on earth, of which none have ever dreamed, so pure and faint and spirit-like.

There were forms of lovely women, so rarefied that they looked like shapes of air.

My boys said they were of the "angels of the inmost heaven," who alone are pure enough, to be given charge of these "God-souls."

They were ethereal, like a vision of pure light. If

we could imagine light *in a form*, wrapt and swathed and floating in rosy ether. They—like all the rest whom we see here,—suit their glory to their uses, or at work, to use plain terms; but they are beyond all conception of loveliness then.

Gerald told me that he had been given a vision of that heaven, and it was a glory of burning light, too intense for his endurance even to look upon; but when these holy ones came to care for the little souls, they leave behind the “burning glory,” and show ineffable tenderness.

It was like nothing that I had ever seen, or imagined.

There were no solid looking habitations, trees or even flowers. But if one could imagine a sea of loveliest rose mist, waves and billows perfectly alive with the exquisite baby forms and faces. No not a mass; that sounds too heavy, but they were everywhere, floated and enwrapped and upborne, by the cloudy rose light, till, whether baby was cloud, or cloud was baby, one could scarcely tell.

I had to see all that was possible, for I could not be sure of ever coming again, so I looked very anxiously to perceive if the wee souls had any *real* difference, or were simply forms of purest life; and as the thought crossed my mind, a soft billow of mist came close to me,—for we were obliged to stop a little way off—and as the folds parted, “in the midst” was such a marvellous angel of a woman. Clinging to her were a dozen tiny forms, of every shade of complexion,

eyes, and hair, that belong to *one* race. Clear blue eyes, roguish black ones, gray, and brown—any shade and tint, and hair like sunshine, brown, and black.

I said, "It seems that complexion is not an accident."

"No," Gerald answered, "Everyone is to eternity in this respect as the Father creates them, and the clothing of flesh receives from the spirit, its hue and color."

And I asked, "Are any more refined than others?"

"No dear Mother," Gerald answered, "They are all God's children, and of His spirit. As he is Love itself, and Wisdom itself, these little ones are forms of love and wisdom, only He is Infinite and Uncreate, and they are finite, the creations of His hand."

How triumphantly the thought shot thro' me, "If this is our origin, there *can be but one end.*" And the boys looking at me cried, "Why Mother your face shines like the sun—a thought of the dear Lord's must have come to you," and I could not help it, but broke out "Halleluiah to the Father of all spirits. Blessed be His Holy name."

The air had been full of the faintest murmurings of music, unearthly sweet, but as I spoke a peal of sound soft and thrilling, but so powerful and full that it was like a strong wind, came sweeping thro' the misty, rosy clouds, and I heard—I do really believe, the voices of the very angels about the inmost glory.

I was faint with ecstasy, and realized that my body was as much too gross for that sphere, as my earthly one would have been for my present home.

The light grew brilliant, painfully so to me, though it was soft too, a very rapture of rose and gold, and every tiny soul chanted like a little silver flute, to the praise of the Highest. Then something covered us in, like thick, snowy clouds, and we were borne swiftly away.

I cannot bear such happiness without a reaction, yet, and was thrilling through with a rapture, so intense that it was a pain, and so we went floating away.

It was my first experience in this mode of progressing, and if my heavenly boys had not been one on each side, with their strong arms about me, I think that I should have been a little afraid.

Suddenly I saw close before me, a noble face, with deep tender eyes, and such a loving smile. A little sorrowful too, I fancied.

I looked at the boys, and their faces were fairly radiant. A feeling of unspeakable peace and awe came over me, as I thought "It is the Christ!" A voice of perfect modulations answered, "No my sister, only one of His lowliest ministers. You have unsettled questions in your mind, and I am come to answer you."

So I said, "I cannot help thinking, how pitiful it is, that those pure child souls must pass through the martyrdom of an earthly existence."

He answered, "There is no other road than that which He took, who is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." These little souls are but thoughts of God, and un-embodied even in spiritual forms. They

exist in the Divine, or Creative Sphere, but they are only recipients of life and joy. They have no ability to perform uses, or to do good to any one. They are *forms* of innocence, but not innocence itself, because they are not capable of exercising choice. They are *held* in purity, but do not choose it, and hence are not in the exercise of freedom. They receive their freedom, with the nature derived from human parents. I do not mean the *body*—that is but a garment—but a plane of natural life, which is capable of experience, capable of acting, and of choice, and hence freedom, and thus each acquires a separate and individual existence.

I enquired, “And the little ones who but breathe earthly air, and are gone?”

“They have the human nature for a plane of reception, and can be tempted, resist, and conquer,” he replied, “as in those who pass thro’ an earthly experience. None are wanting in the germs of all possible spiritual gifts, but those who develop one special gift on earth, are stronger, or more powerful in that direction, than those who have received simply enough human embodiment, to open the planes of life to them. For this reason the physical death of children is a disorderly thing, and is only permitted, not ordained. The instinct—as it is called—of parental love will fight for a child’s life, when it is all in vain; but it is really the perception of an implanted truth, which desires the *perfection* of life for its own child. The children are holy—as you have witness in those beside you—but they will not to eternity, be

as *strong* in some respects, as if their earthly lives had been lived out to maturity. There is always a difference, not in purity, but in intellectual development. Nor is there among this class any special gift, which has been strengthened by earthly exercise and development. For instance, the *genius*, as it is called, of a musician exists, as do all germs of perfection in all created souls, but it has had no plane of human life to develop upon, and hence remains a gift, or germ, and not a specialty."

I said, "Perfect thro' suffering—that is the rule"—and he answered with a heavenly smile, "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

But then I began to feel pitiful for the dear ones who died early, and he said so gently—

"There is no injustice done, my sister. The children who pass away, are not punished for the lack of strength, which makes human life impossible. If they are not notably and exceptionally strong in any direction, they are pure forms of life, and blessedness thrills through them, with no remembrance of pain. If they are not Kings and Priests in the Kingdom, they are those whose Angels do always behold the face of the "Father in Heaven." They have the innocence of ignorance, and the adult the innocence of wisdom, but all are alike in one respect. The life of the Lord fills them, and pulses through and through them, and they are alike holy and happy. But as one star differs from another star in glory, so must it be in the celestial Kingdom, in which the Lord dwells—the "inmost of all."

He was gone, and we floated on in such perfect peace and serenity as belongs to this life of ours. Through exquisite vibrations of music, and clouds of fragrance until Gerald said softly,

“Mother, that was one of the angels of the house of David.”

“And that is your society?” I enquired.

“Yes,” they answered together, “and he gave us leave to take you there, because he told us that you never would be satisfied till you knew all about children, and all have to be satisfied, or the promise is broken.”

Oh, how poor and fragmentary this *showing* of mine is. How little it expresses of the flood of illumination which surged and enfolded me. But how can I express what no human language can convey, how describe the indescribable, or give, what cannot be communicated but in bits and fragments.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TEMPLE ON THE MOUNTAIN—JUNE 29, 1886.

It has not so occurred since I have been writing these letters, that it has been possible for me to relate at any given time, the occurrences of that especial day. Now, however, I am able to give the occupations, and experiences of the day just passed. In order to present a perfect account, I must commence with yesterday.

Father and my two boys had been away, "to their own place," and had not appeared after the early morning greeting. Florence had come, my beautiful darling. It does not seem at times, as if she could be the lovely tiny baby, whom I saw pass away in the first year of our "civil war,"—yet so it is.

"A fair maiden in her Father's mansion, clothed with celestial grace," surely describes her perfect loveliness, and with her, the three precious boys, whose "going away" darkened so many lives. They do not come as often as the other. They are not so much attracted to me as my own boys, but that day they were here all day. And at night, Father, and my boys, and Grandma all came.

The young people—as I call them to distinguish them from us who lived so many, many years in the

flesh, were singing in very gladness of heart, sweet, merry songs, and by and bye we heard voices and saw people coming from all directions, and we had a musicale, and kind of reception.

It is one of the lovely things of this life, that when one rejoices, all others rejoice with him, and are attracted by what is like themselves, to come and make a part of it.

We sang and talked, and my many questions were answered so patiently, with such loving sympathy, that I could but feel a pleasure in being taught.

As we were again singing, overhead came the singing spirits, in their glory-shot clouds, and radiant faces, repeating our strains till the heavens did literally "rejoice with the earth." They floated away at last, the sweet voices coming back to us fainter and fainter, till lost in the sky, and then Father stood in the midst, and made a little address, and afterwards *such* a prayer.

He has "walked with God" so long, that it appears as if he could "see Him when he talks to Him, as friend with friend," "and his face is like the face of Moses when he came down from the Mount," so glorious that I could not look at him.

Then the kindly friends went away with many gentle words, and sweet welcomes to me so lately come, and we went to our rest with lingering last good nights, and embraces.

Such peace and quiet as we have here, no weary hours—no pain, and yet it is so good to rest, to lie down, and "take the comfort of it."

Often when I lie so quietly, there are doves, and sweet faces hovering about me, and a soft murmuring sound, so gentle that I can but be soothed.

It was a night of blessed calm, but I found to my surprise in the morning that my blue robe had disappeared, and in its place was one of purest white with silver embroidery all about the hem. When I inquired, Florence said laughingly, that she "was the rogue, but we were going to the upper mountain that day, and only white garments were admissible."

We met in the circular Hall where Father blessed us, and we kissed each other, just as we used to do when we were earthly children, in his earthly home. It is so good to know oftentimes, that *love* is the same in all worlds, and that we never grow beyond the household joys in any life, however elevated it may be. Then Grandmother took the *home* part in which she always delighted, and divided the finest white bread.

We had each a cup of the clear, golden "wine of the Kingdom," and clusters of grapes, and that was our breakfast. Every bit gave strength, and made us feel as if our very hearts were refreshed.

The hour came and we went forth. Each of us had a long white outer garment, with a kind of hood, and wide sleeves.

I did not care to have my hood over my head and so I turned it back as some of the others did.

I could not look at any one for some time for watching Florence. She is as much lovelier than anyone else here, as she was on earth. Father says

“she is a perfect strain of music, not a discord in her whole nature.” I am so thankful that she was taken in her infancy, before one string was out of tune. She has never known anything but love. From the home on earth where she was idolized, she passed to the perfect love of this life, before she knew what transition meant.

I walked beside Father, the rest in couples, or in groups, as others joined our little company, and so along the flowery road that leads up into the Hills, which lie to the east of our home.

Since coming here, I have been every first day of the week to a place of assembling, where we worship, and are taught. But today, I could scarcely realise, when all is so lovely all the time, that it could be lovelier, and yet as we went up, the air seemed full of music, and the flowers were marvellous in their beauty, and such clouds of fragrance swept over us and the very light was more peaceful and holy.

As we walked we were talking, but after awhile a kind of awe came over me, and I think the others also, for we drew closer together and went very quietly.

We saw such throngs of people coming from every direction.

As we passed under a tree, beside our path, Gerald came up saying, “Grandpa, here are grapes that will do.” The vine they grew on, twined over the tree in great loops and curves. The leaves like softest green velvet, and the clusters of deep golden grapes, were

covered as if with a delicate network of ruby. They were "beautiful exceedingly."

We stopped, and Gerald with a silver knife, cut as many clusters as there were persons in our household, and placed them in a basket of silver that represented a vine, leaves and tendrils. And then I noticed every group of persons had baskets of fruit.

Some were like grapes, and olives, and others with strange sorts to me. I had never seen any like them even here, but all were perfect of their kind.

Then we began to hear singing. As we climbed upward it was louder and clearer, and we saw clouds of singing spirits coming from the East. Up and still up we went, far beyond where my feet had ever trodden, and alway the light grew brilliant, yet softer, and the very air was changed into a Sunday blessedness.

At last I saw the spires of a magnificent Temple, like a bank of snow, pure and glittering in the floods of light. All began to chant, "Beautiful art thou for situation, O Thou City of our God," until we passed in a flood of melody up the last slope, and stood before the Sanctuary.

It was one solid mass of whiteness. No doors, no windows, to be seen; and still the people came till it seemed as if no building could contain them.

The faces grew radiant and joyful tho', with a touch of awe, and so we waited, till a great multitude that man could not number, were gathered about that central whiteness.

At length the throngs parted and one came thro' the midst. Oh what majesty of bearing, and face of love, and what a sphere of blessing diffused itself about him. He went to the front of the building, and turning raised his hands, and as we sank to our knees, he pronounced in a voice whose rich melody exceeded all that ever fell on my ears, a benediction.

As he rose I saw that an archway in the building had opened, and he led us in through the rows and rows of columns, to the interior of the Temple.

It was supported by many snow white pillars—that seemed like trees, they were so interlaced above in tiny lines like delicate boughs, and over all a Dome so lofty, that it appeared almost like a sky, and lined to the very top with the loveliest spirit faces.

The teacher went up to an elevated place by a winding stairway, and everyone sat quietly down as if we were in an earthly church.

I happened to look down on the floor and saw it was one mass of lilies. They were so beautiful that I was about to stoop to gather some, when Father motioned to my other hand, and I saw that I already held a stem of silver white lilies, and then noted for the first time, that all had them.

The teacher stood before us, and unclosed a great book lying on an altar wrought like lilies, of snowy stone. If all was white before, it was so no longer. As he opened the great volume a perfect blaze of color rushed up from within, till we saw the form of the angel standing in a flood of rainbow light, and he appeared to become more stately and glorious.

His face *shone* as he began to read. It was the same dear, old Bible, but every word was a gem of purest light, and the glory of it was beyond human thought.

He read about the purifying of the old Hebrew Tabernacle, and now as then, the glory came down and filled the house, till we seemed to be in a sea of light. And then the singing began, such an indescribably triumphant psalm, and that was one of David's, that I had read a hundred times in the flesh, only now I understood it, or as much of its majesty as I am able to receive. A prayer that uplifted us to the highest heavens—so sublime and wonderful, and yet so tender in supplication, while full of thanksgiving. Then the chanting again. "Glory to thee oh God in the Highest. Thou hast redeemed us out of all nations, kindreds and peoples." One chorus answered another, sweet solo strains between such strains and billows of harmony, that whether I had any conscious being, or was borne up and away on a sea of glory, I could not have told.

Afterward the angel spoke to us, but what am I to repeat what he said; or to give the faintest shadow of that sublime teaching. Only from the beginning to the end it was *love* LOVE LOVE. The love of the Infinite in every world and condition, in every sphere of existence, creating, sustaining, searching and seeking, for the erring and straying, and reclaiming them by his tireless, patient long suffering tenderness. We were thrilled and moved, and swayed beneath his voice; and oh, how glowing all the faces became, and

from the walls and pillars radiance began to stream from within, till the vast solid structure was a temple of living light. And when our cups of rejoicing fairly overflowed, his voice changed and became even more moving, melting our very hearts, as he spoke of the most perfect Love, that even the Infinite could manifest, and there above his head, thro' the blinding glory, there grew a face so tender, so compassionate, so pitying, so loving, and so glorious too, and on the forehead "a crown of thorns."

It was *too* much. I dared not think it was "the Christ" and yet, what other face in all the universe *could* it be, and as I gazed a *pierced* hand was extended, with rays of glory darting from every wound, and a voice whose music might have "melted the spheres," blessed us as we sunk to our knees.

When I could look up again, the angel who had spoken to us was in his place, but the vision was gone. We knelt entranced, unable to move for a long time, and then a low strain came like a whisper overhead, and slowly the voices grew clearer, and louder, until we rose as if by one impulse, and the old blessed words, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive glory and honor and dominion and power. Halleluiah. The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth," repeated again and again, wave upon wave, like the sound of "mighty waters."

Afterward we were seated again, and all among the congregation the boys passed with their baskets of fruit, till all were provided, and we ate of what we

had taken, but it was not food—it was heavenly manna—it was incarnate Love.

And so we stood again, the sweet old solemn benediction was given us, and we went forth to the Home, already so dear and peaceful a refuge.

When I had rested for a long time, and felt as if I *could speak*, I went to Father and asked him to explain some things that were not quite clear to me.

It seemed a singular Scripture lesson to read on such an occasion. He told me that when the letter of the Word is read, we receive the internal and spiritual meaning. Understand for the “fat from the inwards, and the blood,” the archetype. The Good which is signified by the blood, and the fat, has the same meaning, and they again have another significance, the very Life, as no animal existence could be sustained but by those organisms, and the blood. I could see then that the lesson meant to take of our very inmost life, all of our very selves, heart, soul and mind, and dedicate them to the service of the Highest.

And there is a reflex as in all truth. While we take of our best, and inmost, to serve the Lord with, the Divine Good flows into us, the living Tabernacles, and makes them fitter for the indwelling of the Most High, for he said “I dwell in the humble and contrite heart,” and again, “I will abide in you.”

It is a great part of my learning here, to trace the meanings of the Hebrew Scriptures, and see how in all types, it foreshadows and prophesies the Lord—

“the Divine Humanity.” “Immanuel,” “God with us.”

In a lesser sense, our purification also, for we all walk in the same path in which He trod, and are purified, as He purified human nature. Only He made His humanity Divine, while we can never be more than Celestial, if we are ever able to attain to that.

So I saw that the Bible lesson was after all a fit prelude to a teaching of Love. The same love that guided and helped those stiff-necked old abominations of Jews in their wilderness passage, is the very same which leads us, as stiff and obstinate and hard to guide thro’ our ten thousand mistakes, and our wildernesses.

I asked, how such an experience came to us. The temple is opened every *first day*, the Resurrection day, but no one community goes to it every week. Father and some of the others, have been there since I came hither, but it was too much of an undertaking for my weak spiritual frame.

Physical disease has its spiritual cause, and as mine was life-long it requires longer space for healing. No one class, even of a community, go to this place of revealing every first day, and very few oftener than four times a year, and then they partake of the fruit, *provided* by the way, and which symbolizes the parting supper, as nearly as it is possible in this sphere.

I was silent for a long time, longing yet fearful to think that to me, so earthly and stained the “Christ”

had been shown, in that supreme moment of His anguish.

At last Father drew me closely to him and said, "What is it, my child?" Oh what a world of tenderness he puts into "my child."

I whispered to him, "Father, what was that which appeared to us?"

He replied, "On occasion, angels were so filled with the influx of the Holy Spirit, as to be able for the time, to represent anything that is needful for *illustration* of the truth. There is no other form so representative of love as that of Him who died for us, and no act of His human life that so perfectly expressed the idea, as its latest hours. So for that time, or service, the face and form of an angel had been used for such a representation as we could bear."

"But we *couldn't* bear it," I sobbed. Father only gathered me up in his dear arms, and kissed me over and over again.

CHAPTER X.

THE BAPTISM.

Since my visit to the Temple, I am forced to remain in "my own place," for a little. The vessel is not strong enough to endure the "stress of the glory poured into it." But I have loving tendance, and my companion for the time is, that same precious Florence.

She speaks in such an unassuming way, as if she is half afraid of seeming to teach me, as if one year of spirit life was not worth an earthly lifetime.

She told me of her Baptism. She said that there were attendants who carried many children, but Grandpa carried her in his arms, to a place very like the Temple we had just visited, only in the midst there was a pool of blue sparkling water.

It was blue because that signifies "Truth from celestial sources," and water means the same among elementary forces, as blue among colors.

There were a great number of children, and all about the same spiritual age, about three years in spirit life.

She could never forget that pool. The bottom of it was one great sapphire, and made the water sparkle all thro' like a mass of liquid gems.

There were so many of the little ones, and so many of the attending people, that all thro' the rows of columns was a vast multitude, and so many lovely floating faces—for all angels love to be where children are—that the whole place seemed alive.

There was no roof to the building, but the cloudless sky—and there were such sweet voices of singing birds, such waves of melody vibrant in the air, such loads and masses of flowers, all snow white and pure.

There was a band of noble looking men, and one of them so shining that she would have been afraid when her turn came, if his face had not been so loving.

He took her in his arms and laid her under the sparkling water, and said gently the words of blessing, the "name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." The water drops clung to her dress like diamonds, and all the time the music in the air grew sweeter, and the blossoms brighter, and more fragrant.

And after a while they were all baptized, and stood by themselves, a sweet, shining band of pure angel babies. Then the glorious being who had done this service, was uplifted above their heads, not floating away, but rose standing as he was, till he was away above the heads of the multitude. "He simply blazed," she said, and "all the people bowed down, and covered their faces."

"Only I did not, nor the rest of the children," she

said, "we all looked up." The pure innocent creatures, why should they fear anything.

"I watched till he seemed to stop in the air, and such a voice of power and sweetness, that we could not tell which prevailed, pronounced a blessing. Then he spread his hands over us, and a multitude of snow white doves, only they glittered like light, came fluttering down from the blaze of glory, and one nestled in each child's bosom. Oh how glad I was, when my hand closed on my darling, tiny dove, and I heard it coo and murmur in my bosom; and then there was such a burst of singing, "Blessed be the Lord God Almighty," and as I looked up again, from settling my precious dove, I saw the form, all light and glory go slowly up, till I could see it no longer.

Grandpa came to me, and took me into his arms, and carried me all the way home." "Did the other children receive this baptism?" I enquired.

"Yes," she replied, "Hally went too that time, and we all went again with Elmer and Bertie and Little Flora, and every time it was just the same. I thought it was the Lord," she said in her reverent tone, "but it was like what we saw at the Temple, an angel filled with the Holy Spirit, to represent Him. No, I never saw the Christ, no one does, unless much more elevated than any of us. I do not believe that any created existence can, for He is the only form of God we know anything about. He is Divine, Man, and God together.

"The indwelling Divine Good is his soul, and the

Divine Humanity or Truth, is His external or body, and the sphere which proceeds from Him is the Holy Spirit, because of course there is a sphere which encompasses Him. We all have a sphere of influence, or being, and it is just as we are ourselves."

"His sphere is Divine, and Divine love is like a fire, for it warms and vivifies, and gives life to all the universe. I do *not* believe," she said very slowly and decidedly, "that any one, even the highest and purest angel, for that is the same thing, could approach the Lord and live. I mean near enough to see Him."

"You see the light and feel the warmth of the day. Well that is the sphere about the Lord. He shines like a Sun, a blaze of light, in the heavens, but not so brilliantly here, because His light is tempered to our use and faculties. No, I do not expect to ever *see* Him, any more than we saw Him at the Temple. And yet in another way we do see Him all the time," and her perfect face beamed with inward shining, "because He is everything we have and see, and enjoy. We do see and partake of His love and wisdom, and that is the seeing we need; that creates within us such overflowing love and worship, and makes us long to do as He would have us do, to make His heavenly Will our will, and do it in our little place, as He does, among all the grand spaces of the universe."

To my question, "If the adults were ever baptized," she replied, "No, the grown-up people who come here mature, are not baptized as we were, but when they

are ready, each to go to his own place, there is a ceremony of reception into the society, and a baptism is part of it. It is then, because all the time spent in this spirit world is a time of preparation, and one only begins his real angelhood, when it is over."

"We have each to live our lives in our own place, and come here when we have a joy to fulfil, or a use to perform. Just now my very arduous task is to talk to my dear Auntie, and it is not at all wearisome."

She put her arms about me, and kissed me a dozen times. The Darling!

"We had a grand time over that mite of a Flora," she began presently, laughing. "It is a good thing that she was a spirit baby and not a mortal one, or she would have been worn out, such kissing and caressing, and loving as she went through. We had had no baby for a long time. Berty was so big, and strong, that we could not make him seem like an infant any more. When we saw a crown of pink rosebuds forming in the alcove of the nursery, we were just wild. Grandma came quickly I can assure you, and when Grandpa saw the crown, he just shone, and said, "Another of my little flock," and looked so glad that we sang together for very joy. We did watch that bud grow so. It was so soft and rosy, all tiny flowers. I asked Grandma if the little green knobs at the base of the buds would be hard for the baby, but she only told me to feel of them. They were softness itself. At last the crown was done, every lovely, perfect rosebud in its place, and it hung

suspended over the couch, such a wee one, and the rosy mist began to stream downward from the wreath, and fall about the bed like curtains.

“I can’t tell you how it was, for all my watching, but we saw a faint brightness come over the flowers. It was the softest little light you can imagine, and by and by we saw it gather, and form oh, so slowly into a baby. We were so engaged seeing her come, that we scarcely breathed, till she opened her eyes and put up her tiny mites of hands, and then we just *rushed*. We hugged her and kissed her, and she laughed softly. She always was such a quiet creature as you see her now, but a happy little one. Finally Grandma turned us all out of the nursery, for that time, for though she had not been sick, she was not strong. We had famous times with her, and though she has often been taken to the Babies’ house it is not for want of playmates or nursing. She never cared to stay there, though there are so many lovely children, as small as she is, and so many sweet angelic spirits.”

“Grandpa takes her up in his bosom, and says she belongs to his family, and they always did like their own home best. No wonder is it, when such as he is the centre and life of it. Now tell me Aunty, of his earthly life.”

And so we sit, and I repeat to her the dear story of a lifelong benevolence and tenderness, which has its fitting end here, in love and devotion and blessedness unspeakable.

CHAPTER XI.

THE COMING OF A FRIEND.

I am just arrived at the telling of a great happiness, that came to us some time ago, but I have had so much of purely personal history to relate, that I have had no opportunity to sooner mention it.

One day Father came in looking so perfectly radiant with joy, that I went directly to him, with the question, "What is it that you have to tell me. Is mother coming?"

"No," he said, gently, "but somebody else is. Do you wish to go with me and see him?"

"Yes, yes, I do indeed," I cried, and in an instant we were there, wherever it was, and such a mass of people, all full of happiness, and yet somehow, all of the same kind of manner and aspect. Quiet and restrained, but literally full of joy and thanksgiving.

There must have been over a hundred, I think. There were some lovely women there, too, but I was so absorbed with the multitude that I did not notice any as of my friends. I stood partly behind Father, too, but began to feel as if I had gotten into society too lofty for one scarcely entered into this new life. I think we were all too busy watching to spend any attention on ourselves.

The place was like a room, but very large, and the roof was a dome, only the top of it was open and a soft rosy cloud covered the place.

Directly under this was a low couch, and a soft mist kept falling around it. It was covered with crimson and over the drapery a perfect mass of pure white flowers, more like lilies than any other blossom, but far lovelier than any earthly bloom.

We knew that this was the center of attraction, and watched. After quite long waiting, from the opening above came a low strain of music, one voice of great power and sweetness. It sang words that were strange to me, but the faces grew radiant, and when the voice ceased, the people responded in a sweet subdued chant, which seemed a response. Then the voice, and against the response.

While this was going forward the assembly moved into a circle, and drew near the couch. At the head of this stood four women, very fair and sweet, and one of them seemed familiar, though of perfectly dazzling beauty.

I was greatly drawn to her and at last she turned, and holding out both hands, said smiling, "I am Sabra B." I knew her as she turned but I could not help saying, "Oh, you are *too* lovely." She smiled a little and took me by one hand, and extended her other one to Father, and saying to him, "He loved you best," drew us both beside her to the head of the settle.

That gave me a key to the occasion, and as I looked about I recognized many of our old ministers,

the saintly and noble servants of the truth, whose lives had been devoted to the holiest ends.

During this change the voice had re-commenced singing, and Mrs. B. whispered to me, her face alight with joy, "He is worthy of an angel's welcome," by which I understand that the voice was of one of much higher sphere than ours.

At last, something as Florence had described, a light began to gather over the couch, dim and misty at first, and Mrs. B. leaning forward, heaped the lilies at the head, as one would lighten a pillow and through the light which became clearer though very soft, we began to see the outline of a human form. If I could but give an idea of the pure gladness possible in a tone—of the triumph that ran thro' that sweet low singing. It never swelled or grew louder, but was pure and perfect joy.

Slowly, very slowly, the form grew more distinct, until the dear old friend, truly a minister of God, Mr. B., lay before us on the pure white lilies. The rosy mist fell in softest light, around him, and from above, the snowy blossoms kept falling till his form was completely covered with them.

If the perfect joy of the singing could have taken form, it would have been his wife then. She stood fairly palpitating with emotion, her lovely face, as it was on earth in form but glorified, and her great wonderful eyes, one flood of rapture. He lay with his eyes closed, as if sleeping, but the smile about his lips showed that he too was tasting the freedom from pain, that was my first experience of spirit life.

And so we stood waiting and the voice sang on, and the sweetness and brightness were almost intolerable.

It was a long time before he opened his eyes languidly, weakly but with a smile of perfect peace, and then right before him was the sweet face whose loss had darkened his life. He looked into her eyes for a moment, then extended his arms. She sank forward, and took his head upon her breast and showered caresses and blessings upon him. He seemed entranced, in an ecstasy he was too weak to endure, and after a time she laid him back among the life giving flowers, and holding still his hands in hers, said gently, "Come, welcome this precious one." So they came, those dear old faces, friends and associates through his long earthly life, bent over him said each their word of heartfull greeting, and he lay looking at them, with that heavenly smile on his face, too intent to utter one word.

And when they had all spoken his wife drew me forward. He looked at me an instant, "My dear child," was all he said.

"Yes," I answered, "Your last earthly service was given to me, and here I am, so little while before you."

"My dear child," he again repeated.

Then she drew Father before his eyes, and he rose up with hands extended, "My brother, my precious brother," he repeated again and again, and then sinking back into the arms held to receive him, he looked about upon us all, and said, "Oh, my brothers,

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, to conceive such joy and gladness as this. Praise and honor and glory and power to the Holy Name forever."

He lay looking upon us, listening, and the faces grew radiant and other voices came into the singing and we heard—"The Lamb in the midst of the throne, hath fed them and led them unto the fountains of living waters, and God hath wiped all tears from their eyes. Halleluiah, Halleluiah."

The singing passed like a dream, the friends sent softly away, and at last, though he clung to Father with utter delight, we said our good-bye and left him with his own. He *was so happy*. It seemed enough for him to lie and gaze at them. We left him at last with his wife, and mother, and those of his family who had gathered to welcome him.

Father was glorious. He smiled to himself, and at last began to sing softly.

After a while I asked, "What building is that to which Mr. B. came?"

He answered, "It is called the place of the house of Gabriel. It is a kind of vestibule, or outer court to the society of that name, and so called because it meant *Sent*. Those who are truly called to minister in holy things are from that society in the pre-existent state, and return to it again."

"But we shall never see him again then," I cried.

"Oh, yes, we shall have him always," Father said. "His home will be his own in this spirit world, the

same as all of us, but eventually, when he is prepared, he will go to his own place in that society."

"But I hoped that all our friends would belong to one society," I explained.

Father looked at me so tenderly, and said, "Have you forgotten my child, how He said, in my Father's house are many mansions. We can go to our friends, and they can come to us, whenever we need each other."

It was a few days after this that we went again to our friends, and found them in their new home. It is not very far away. A little higher on the same hillside as ours, and very much the same in general appearance.

Mr. B. is perfectly healed, and is so happy, that as he says he cannot express himself, and is always breaking out in some of the Scriptural phrases, which long study of the Word has made a second nature.

He said one day, "I suppose that if I had listened to information offered to me, I might have been a little prepared for my present life. But it seemed like belittling eternal verities to put them into words, and I always preferred to think of the future state, as of something vast, and glorious, and rather immaterial. I was content, or thought I was, to know that it must be worthy of our Lord's Providence, but I wish now that I had had a more tangible idea of it, for my dear child's sake. Oh, if I had prepared her, so that I could let her know where I am, and how it is with her mother, and myself."

There is an element of sadness in his peace, on her account, but it will pass away, as he realizes the perfect will of infinite love.

Such talks as he and Father have, and such happiness as they enjoy. Two noble earnest souls, bound by memories of many years of earthly toils and sorrows, shared and made lighter by each other's sympathy. He is troubled, and Father says that it will take him a long time to unlearn much of his theology.

"My dear brother" he says in his earnest way, "I cannot get it into my mind, how it is that Christ Jesus, who called himself the Son of God and even in his last earthly hour prayed to God, can be the veritable Lord God to whom he prayed."

Father gives him over and over again, with the Word open before them, the same internal meaning, and they sit and talk by the day together.

"Ah," he says often, "If the churches could but give to the satisfaction of the world, an answer to that question, 'Who is the Christ?' there would be no staying the course of the Gospel, and it would go on, conquering and to conquer."

And Father replies, "The churches of the day are the voice in the wilderness, to make ready a pathway for our God. The church of the future already in the world, will combine the truths partially possessed by those now declining, and illustrated by the hidden internal meanings of the Word, now in process of revealing. It will build the habitation of God with men, and unveil the face of the Lord God, in the Divine Humanity."

Sometimes our dear friend will apprehend the truth, and be wrapt in a perfect ecstasy for a time, and then he will fall back into the old doctrines, he preached for so many years. I told him one day of what Frances used to say, that she wished he would not say so much about our "elder brother," till he could tell her who He was.

He sat for a few moments and then said a little sorrowfully, "She was one of the lambs of my flock, poor child, and did not know what I thought I taught. How was it a possible thing for me to teach her what I had not learned myself? I used to take refuge in that phrase. It sounded very comfortable, and I liked to think of my elder brother, when I might have been trying to find out who He was."

I told him, how she said that she could have some idea of the uncreated, and the created, but had no comprehension of any existence, that was neither the one or the other.

He only said again, "Poor child she looked to me for bread, and I gave to her, hungering and thirsting for truth, only a stone."

Father came to his relief, saying "If you could not give her a truth that you had not received yourself, you did give her the example of a life so filled with good, that it will always be a help and incentive to her, and in due season, the Lord will provide the truth for which she yearns."

Mr. B.'s eyes were full of tears as he looked into Father's face and said tenderly, "My brother, and always my comforter."

Father says that "the uncertainty of that truth, coming to be a part of him, is all that keeps him from his own society. Many of those whom he associated with in his own profession on earth have already received it, and some are striving to unlearn their old teachings."

I never realized before how indispensable the truth is, but when I see such intellects as these, so conformed to the old familiar ways of thought, my very heart goes out in pity for them, and for the multitudes led astray every hour, by those who strive so earnestly to make easy the truth of the Kingdom.

Meanwhile our dear old friend is as blest and happy as any one can be, and goes continually with father to all sorts of places of learning, and art, and "takes in blessedness at every pore," he says.

Whatever may be the difficulty of reconstructing his beliefs, he is certain of the blessing, that the "pure in heart shall see God."

CHAPTER XII.

THE INDIAN SOCIETY.

Our friend's advent, is such a blessing to us all, in that, while Father is with us in this home, it adds such suggestions and illustrations of lovely things, in their constant conversations. Each stimulates the thought of the other, and they pour out "sweet waters of wisdom," and we slake our thirst thereat. One of these occasions and its consequences, will be of interest I am sure.

They were speaking of God's Infinity, as not only manifest in His being the "I am, Who was and Is and is to come," but in the variety, in unity of all His works. As for instance in the leaves of a tree, which fulfilling one type, are nevertheless each one different, so that no two are ever precisely alike.

They discussed the matter for a long time, each suggesting some new manifestation of the same truth, but at last Mr. B. remarked, "Of course we see infinite variety in inanimate nature, but to me there is much clearer evidence of this variety, in Mankind, of which we can truly say, that of all the millions who are, and have been, not two are absolutely the same."

Father said, "We can see that in the nations of our own earth, no one people resembles another abso-

lutely, excepting in the rationality common to all the Lord's creation. A nation is but a collection of individuals, so that this, is but the same principle carried out."

Mr. B. asked, if Father "considered this difference to be a radical one, or only a part of the human nature, which we leave behind us at death."

Father considered, "the difference must be a radical one to be an expression of the Lord's infinity, as it must possess its imperishableness." So out of this discussion, grew an excursion into other provinces of the Spirit World, or rather into the natural Spiritual Heavens. There are three divisions of each of the three Heavens.

The lower Heavens, or Heavenly societies, are not open to those in the Spirit World, who belong there, until they are fitted to enter, but by permission, one can go into the lower, or ultimate heaven, for a short space if with intent to learn, for curiosity is not regarded as impertinent, if of the rational kind, seeking for knowledge.

As we concluded to commerce, with the lowest, or most external of the races, we went first into the Indian Heaven. I do not mean by the lowest, the least developed, but merely, the most natural, or least spiritual.

There were Father, Mr. and Mrs. B. my two boys, Hally, Bertie and myself. We went floating, because we had but a short distance to go, and we wanted to enjoy the going. It is lovely, when once you learn

not to be fearful, to rise in the pure, clear ether, and go among the soft cloud shadows, and be borne along, one scarcely knows how.

As we went, I had to tell them of Frances' queer objection to being an Angel, on account of the "skinny webby part, which she always said must hold the feathery portions, fast to the shoulders."

We laughed at the quaint conceit, till we could laugh no more and Mr. B. said, "How delightful it is to recall such bits from our old home. It makes one feel as if that too, was one of the "many mansions of the Father's house," instead of a place utterly given over to sin and misery."

In our progress we were up above this spirit world, even above the mountain tops, going still upward till we lost sight of the place beneath. We floated on, and at length, saw through the clear sunny spaces, a lovely light, clear, green, like an emerald. As we approached, it became more brilliant till we came to rest on the mountain top, which was one of the chain surrounding this province of the Heavenly Kingdom.

Gerald and Hally went down into the space beneath, while we waited, for these people are as particular about etiquette, as when on earth, and would not feel comfortable if an unannounced party visited them.

We did not lose our time in our waiting, for down the mountain slope, we saw the deep green forest shades, so cool and inviting, the clear rushing streams, and the most beautiful forms of animal life.

Soft eyed deer, tiny, and curious and great horned animals and horses like glorified steeds.

We actually saw a beaver colony, as perfect as any beaver hut on earth could be. Eagles, great glorious birds, had their nests in the craigs of the mountains, and there was no end of singing birds, and flowers of every hue, and shade, but not at all like those of our world. They were all wild flowers, and only those, whose roots, or leaves are used for healing.

This is the expression of what may be called genius of this people. They lived near to nature and learned her secrets, and their speciality as spiritual beings, is to heal.

It seems impossible to have two places of the same elements, so utterly different as our world, and this one. The trees here are a continuous forest, with open glades it is true, but nothing that even suggested cultivation,—all was as wild as an earthly wilderness but perfect in beauty. Clear lakes and springs bubbled from among mossy clumps, and slept among deep shadows. The tinted fish, living flashes of color, and the wild fowl swimming through liquid emerald as it seemed. Fruits in abundance, such as suggested our wild fruits, and Oh so exquisitely flavored, with, as Mrs. B. remarked, "A suggestion of wildness in them all."

We had plenty of occupation, as we waited, for every sense was satisfied. We lay on the green, springy moss, and ate of the crimson berries that grew under our hand, the birds hopped close to us, and chirped and twittered, as if we could understand

them, and the bright eyed animals gathered about us, and suffered us to stroke their soft, furry heads.

At last we heard a pleasant, though rather monotonous chanting approaching, and saw the boys coming at the head of a train, and rose to receive them in due state.

Such noble forms, such perfect faces, no sign of race deterioration among them, and clad in garments corresponding to their natures, all of natural products.

Their leggins were like soft white chamois skin, beautifully adorned with embroidery of colored barks and vegetable fibers, feathers and shells. These were not manufactured articles such as our clothing resembled, nor gems.

Some of them had golden bracelets and necklaces beaten and wrought, but not many of them were so distinguished. The men wore garlands of oak leaves on their heads and some of them carried evergreen branches in their hands.

As they came near, three of them advanced while the rest paused. The three bent gravely before us, each saying a few words of welcome. Then we were each given a branch of evergreen, and directed to walk in couples. As we did so, they separated into two columns, and those who had the large boughs of evergreen, walked on each side, the branches meeting over our heads, so that we were in a kind of natural arbor.

We went in this order down the mountain side, with the low chanting as our accompaniment.

After a long walk among the loveliest glades, and shades, we reached a large open space with a building,—if so it can be called,—in the midst.

It was of branches woven together and all in bloom, so that within there was a sheet of flowers over head, a most beautiful ceiling, as well as fragrant. Here we were met by lovely women all crowned with blossoms, with girdles and necklaces, of buds, and blooms. Their dresses were short, and of some vegetable material soft and glossy, and embroidered like the men's clothing. Their slender shapely limbs were bare, but for bands of flowers. They showed us seats on the soft green moss, and brought us food in baskets woven of blossoming rods. Fruits, and berries, and a kind of bread very nice and clean, which tasted, Mrs. B. said as if it was "celestial corn-pone."

After we had eaten, we had clear water to drink, but surely it was living water.

After some time here, while we "sat attentive" the young girls began to sing, and to dance very gracefully, some springing lightly half floating in the air, while others moved very slowly in figures, but all singing.

After a long time of these pretty sports, a company of men appeared from among the woods, and led us away as before. Such a glade of beauty as we were taken to, surely never was before. Such trees, one oak would cover an acre. Mighty trunks and such heaps of leaves all glittering like emeralds, or sheets of them rather, and all through their masses, a con-

stant flutter and breeze of softest music. The ground was covered with moss, like exquisite feathers, and mingled with it, loveliest wild flowers, frail and delicate.

Under a magnificent tree, a giant even here, there was a space elevated a foot or more, and upon it, were as many little mounds of mingled moss and blossom, as there were persons in our party.

There were two higher than the rest,—Father and Mr. B. were escorted with great ceremony by the noblest and most profusely decorated of our hosts to these seats. The rest of us were disposed of, on the lower ones, and then the multitude gathered, and made a circle of which we were “in the midst,” and sat down. We remained for a time in silence, and then a magnificent man, perfect in every limb, and feature, and noble in every movement arose, and came into the circle, and nearer us. He said in a voice of perfect music.

“Our brothers from another place in the heavens have come to us by command of the Great Spirit. They are most welcome, and we trust have a message for our ears.”

Father arose, and thanked them for their welcome, saying that “Some of us had newly come to the home of the Great Spirit, and had known of the Red Men on earth, as gifted with healing powers, and had received the permission to visit them. He had no especial message but that of gratitude for benefits conferred, and the love and kindness, due from one people to another.”

They seemed a little surprised at this, and presently still sitting began a low chant to which we sang in reply. Then one of the chiefs arose, and said there was with us a medicine man to whom the great Spirit talked. He had the sign given to him. We did not know what this meant, until Mrs. B. motioned to Mr. B.'s mossy throne, and we saw it had become a mass of crimson blossoms. "My brother," he said, coming to Mr. B., and extending both hands, "the Great Spirit has spoken to you, the message that we wait to hear."

Verily one might have believed that the Lord did speak through Mr. B. for the next hour, He fairly glowed and burned. The words came in a full flood. We were as those carried away on the tide of eloquence that poured from him, like one whose "lips were touched" with a "coal from the altar."

He talked to them of their Father and ours, of His love and tenderness, His wisdom and infinity. He told them how we desired to learn of the nature of the Highest. How we tried to comprehend if possible, how He created from His own spirit so many different peoples, and by It expressed His Infinity. He was so full at last that he could speak to them no longer, but raised his hand and poured out his overflowing heart to God.

Such prayer, and such praise, surely never came from human lips before. We heard voices in the air, the very leaves on the trees seemed to listen, and the lovely emerald light deepened, and brightened, till we seemed in a sea of liquid gems.

When he ceased and stood like one, to whom the Heavens had been opened, and his face, like the face of an angel for glory, we were so wrapt, as like Paul of old, "we knew not if we were in the body, or out of the body," and from over our heads there came a burst of singing.

It is so marvellous here, that all nature responds in perfect sympathy. His intense adoration had drawn to us some singing spirits, and oh, how they sang. Like a bright cloud they hovered high in the air, while their voices floated down, so sweetly yet with such power and triumph in every note.

"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," they chanted, one voice singing clear, and sweet, and the rest in the billow of sound repeating again, and yet again, the perfect harmony. While we scarcely breathed for very rapture, they floated away, singing as they went, till but the faintest sound came from the distance.

When we could move once more, we found all the Indians with their faces veiled, sitting perfectly upright, like an assembly of statues. It was a long time before they moved and then the same man who had spoken before came slowly to Mr. B., and bowed down, nearly to the ground before him. With a singular mingling of stateliness and humility he spoke.

"The great Spirit has sent us a message by your lips, Oh Medicine Man, which we will bear in our ears forever. He has lifted up the cloud, and let us see His face. Our eyes have seen, and our ears have

heard of His Will. We are but of His outer courts, but we do his pleasure as we are able. We look at the leaves upon the trees, and the flowers at our feet,—we see that they are not alike and we know that He made them all. We hear His voice in the winds, and the waters, and bow down before Him. We hear His word and go forth to serve, and to heal among those not yet come to the inner place, and come back to our own place, when we have done His bidding. He gives us all our food, and our garments are the gift of His hand, but He gives us only such wisdom as we are able to hear, and has sent us only our own medicine men to teach us.

“Now He sends another, whose words are like singing in our ears. We give thanks to the Great Spirit, We bless His Holy Name.”

He sat down amid a low acquiescent murmur, which passed around the circle, and the low chanting recommenced, and continued for a long time.

When the circle broke up many of the Indians came and spoke to us. They were delighted to recognize in Hally the “little Chief,” who had remained with them for a time, needing their peculiar healing powers.

They brought us garlands of flowers, and covered us with them. They were very noble, and beautiful, and perfectly fitted to their sphere, not white in color; darker than we are, though not dark red. Some of them seemed translucent, like tinted flesh lighted from within, scarcely red, but reddish.

It gives the impression of intense vitality. I was

particularly pleased with the gentle affectionate manner of some of the maidens. I gave one of them my silver girdle, and to others the bracelets, in fact all the ornaments I had on, and Mrs. B. did the same. They were as pleased as children, in fact, they seemed as simple and innocent as children, but they are very powerful as healers, and strong in the control of natural powers. One of them seemed to desire, that we should know that they had special gifts. He took a rod, and struck on a place on the ground, and a clear fountain sprang sparkling into the air. It was lovely, like a shaft of diamonds shot thro' with emeralds.

They ran and let the drops fall on them like rain.

They often bring in the very sick, and weak ones, who need strengthening after the many ills of human life, and bathe them in such fountains, which restores strength and health to them wonderfully.

After more "powows," as Hally called their speeches, they made litters of branches covered with flowers, and seated us each in one and carried us up into the mountains to our starting place. Here after a most stately and beautiful ceremony of leave taking, we floated away again to our place, seeing the beautiful world we were leaving growing fainter and fainter, till its wonderful luminous living green was lost in the spaces thro' whose depths we were passing.

And so home again, with a new knowledge and blessing, added to the overflowing bounty of Infinite Love.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NURTURE OF CHILDREN.

It occurs to me, that in my account of the children who are brought here in infancy, there is a want of continuity. I have tried to give some idea of the Heavenly Home to which they are taken, and have spoken of them as adults after their long residence. But the "Between" has been left untold.

As already related, those who came here babies, were cared for by "our own," as there were enough previously taken, to do that use. After their infancy was so advanced, as to make it possible for them to be taught away from home, they were taken for a portion of each day to what corresponds to a school on earth; tho' the buildings are so magnificent, and the surroundings are so lovely, that no human language can express them.

Every sense is ministered to, and forms an avenue for education. That their teachers are love, and wisdom themselves, in a "finite" form, will be manifest from the accounts already given of the dealings with the little ones. To the Angel guarded, and angel taught, there can be but one result, in the dear old familiar speech, "They grow in grace, and in favor with God," hourly. They are bright, happy, beauti-

ful creatures, full of energy and love, and longing to do good. They are under control as children are on earth in good homes, and are not allowed to absent themselves from usual places, but by permission. They are specially guarded from intercourse with anyone, who would interfere with their development.

The object of creation is the formation of a Heaven of pure and holy beings, and each one must follow the law of nature and grow, somehow.

For children to be taken to a home, and parents saddened by loss and death of their dear ones, to be in a sphere of mourning, or even of earthly affection, would subject them to a class of influences which would retard, and perhaps prevent their perfect development.

Here they are provided with a lovely home, the most tender and joyous influences, everything to make them symmetrical in growth, and are taken from stage to stage of their education, by the wisest and gentlest means.

They are carried at times to their parents, and other relatives, as the sphere of their family love is always preserved if possible. Much oftener, when the influence is peaceful and happy, because their exquisitely sensitive natures are so easily affected by the contrary, and they shrink in pain, from gloom and sadness. As they mature, and can understand the trials and temptations of human life, they can go oftener, but to those bred in Heavenly places, there is little to attract in an atmosphere of earthly trial and suffering, and unless these visits are productive of good, they are

not anxious to repeat them. If they are of use, the desire to fulfil their duty, leads them to go oftener, and so continue, as their own growth in knowledge permits.

Each has a sphere of duty and use, for which they are preparing, and are obliged to devote the greater portion of their efforts to that. To express it all shortly, each child, whether reared on earth, or in Spirit Life, is passing through an experience and discipline, to fit them for angel-hood, and here all other calls and pursuits are side issues, and yield to the pursuit of Spiritual Development.

It must be so to insure any kind of orderly growth.

I have had a great desire, to know of the continued processes in the heavenly societies. They must be in the same direction, but whether there are any other agencies possible to the more developed, I do not learn. They tell me very little of the life there. I think that it is not permitted, though once, when I asked Florence a question in that direction, she only smiled and told me: "It is like this life, only a little higher grade, or next class, and we grow wiser and more loving through our duties, and experience, just as you are doing."

It does not matter in what world we live, the process is the same. It is all to subdue evil, and grow in goodness. For, as there is a sadness in all lives that touch the human, these tender innocent ones have the seeds or germs of evils hereditary, and therefore, inborn, and these are to be removed and guarded against. Even they have to know what evil is, and

guard themselves against its development. We poor creatures who are warped and maimed by our human life, are obliged to be healed, and strengthened, before we can even join that upward progress. Tho' in many respects we join in an advanced state, we have so many earthly and evil incumbrances, that we mingle the two, much to the detriment often of our upward progress.

Though it may be, that the exercise of our powers, in comforting and ministering to those whom we leave behind, by its unselfishness and loving tendency may make that even.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE AFRICAN SOCIETY.

After our enjoyable, as well as profitable visit to the Indian society, we were only too anxious to receive permission for another excursion to a Heavenly Province.

We could not go at once, as we needed some instruction before we could derive all possible good from our visit. At last permission was given us to visit the African's Heaven,—natural Heavenly Society I mean—after they pass through a Spirit World similar to ours. We were the same number, as before, excepting Elize who desired to join in our journeyings.

Poor Woman, she had so “many meditations on human life,” only to find that truths without a soul, or inner life of good, are dead indeed, and now she has to verify her dead truths, with the love that is their inmost life.

This is an episode true to rule, though it may not seem as true to the subject, as it is short. Our experience in the going—was the same as before, only as we approached the place to which we were bound, we perceived a reddish glow of light. As we came nearer it was more brilliant until it was red, not coarse

or violent in hue, but a soft pervading color, tho' quite different from our rosy tints at home. We came through the soft red light to the mountain top, and if it was true that we could scarcely conceive of two worlds, both so lovely and so different, as our home and the Indian Heavens, it was doubly true here. This was another Province of the Heavenly Kingdom, as different from both, as they were from each other.

There were streams and trees, and houses, but the rivers were broad and deep, and their beds were lined with gems, and the trees were the loftiest palms, and the lower shrubs, with broad velvety foliage like banana leaves, and the dwellings were light Bamboo structures, open on all sides, and the flowers ran out everywhere. Up to the top of the tallest tree swinging from branch to branch, like cordage, and simply masses of the most vivid, and gorgeous blooms. Large flowers like great scarlet and purple Cactus blossoms abounded, and the earth glittered like gems. The very sand was colored, and sparkling. The birds were as gorgeous as the flowers, exquisite in form and dazzling in color. I can give no description, that will give any idea of its splendor.

It was so unlike anything that I have ever seen before, unless it were pictures of tropical scenery—and those would need to be purified and intensified, every detail made perfect, and that wonderful light over all.

There was nothing that suggested the slimy depths of swamps, low creeping vines, or venomous reptiles. All was unspeakably beautiful, clear, and pure, and beyond all description dazzling in color.

We saw nobody for a long time, and went down the mountain, lost in wonder at the wealth of bloom on every side. Great snowy bells swung from vines over our heads, the ground was scarlet, purple and golden, but not one blue flower did I see. To describe the effect of this intense and vivid coloring, against the deep rich green of the long feathery foliage, is simply impossible. We saw animals, too, beautiful, but strange to us, some bounding lightly among the trees, some stood gazing at us with deep soft eyes, but all wonderful, all perfect of their kind.

At length we reached a town, or a cluster of the open bamboo houses, all trimmed with vines and ablaze with flowers. There were arches woven over the path, and though we could see no one we were sensible of life near us, a kind of thrill of excitement, in the atmosphere, so to speak.

As we passed under the first of the arches, a burst of music greeted us, and we saw coming from among the houses a long procession; it appeared as if live flowers had come to meet us, for each person was armed, and girdled and adorned, from head to knees with one kind of blossom. The effect was entrancing. Among the first were young girls who fairly danced along, they moved so lightly, all clad in white short garments, but so literally covered with flowers that the white only showed in glimpses through the colors. They wore broad bands of gold around their limbs, with pendant ornaments that chimed together as they moved, with a pleasant tinkling sound, and

they kept the most perfect time in every motion to this music.

Their singing was unlike any that we had heard. Rich, sonorous, and solemn, it seemed like a triumphant swell, with minor chords running through it, if you can imagine such a possibility. It did not impress me as being as clear, or as spiritual as our music. More sensuous, if I may so express it, as if there was more human life in it, and less intelligence, perhaps to express it in one word, more passionate.

After those girls came women, very stately, having crowns of gold and gems on their heads, as sparkling and brilliant as their great black eyes.

After these men, very tall, erect and noble with fine faces, though always with that impression of subdued or reserved passion, in every movement. They were all enwreathed like the women, but each carried in the right hand a long palm leaf. They moved forward in perfect time.

We stood still in the archway, and so they approached until within a few feet of us, then arranged themselves on both sides of the way, and a few of the men came thro' the avenue thus formed.

The foremost had a crown of gems on his head, and a sceptre in his hand, and appeared to be the chief. He came close to Father, who was the tallest of us, and without saying a word took off his crown and laid it at Father's feet, placing the sceptre beside it, and then prostrated himself, while all of his train followed his example. It was so unexpected, and we were so utterly amazed, that a moment passed

L. of G.

before we could speak. Then Father extended both hands to receive the chief, saying as he leaned forward:

“I beg of you not to render such homage to us. We are but finite creatures like yourselves. Arise, I do beseech you.”

The chief arose as gravely as he had prostrated himself, but left his crown and sceptre on the ground, until Father took them up, and replaced them on his head, and in his hand.

It seems fantastic to tell it, but it was solemn and full of feeling. The chief took Father by the hand and led him forward, and each of us were taken by others, who conducted us through the long archways, the girls hovering about like butterflies, now near and now further away, still singing and chiming their ornaments.

So we reached at last the end of our walk. There was a lake, of clearest water, with its basin so lined with gems of every hue, that it was a literal sea of rainbows, the color struck up so vividly. The great plumey trees made a thick grove, draped with vines and the ground was covered thickly with most gorgeous blooms, and there were flocks of restless darting birds, who sang with wonderful sweetness.

There was a large low building—if anything so open, light and frail could be given so substantial a name—entwined and overhung with the rarest blooms. Within were mats of flowers, each mat of one kind, and a raised dais where we were seated as guests of honor.

Only the chief and a few of his train sat, the rest came and went continually. Here the chief made us a little speech of welcome, and in his reply Father enquired "why he had anticipated our coming, to meet us with such honor?"

He smiled, and put up his hand, and there came from overhead a bird like a living ruby, only his beak was golden. He spoke to it in a low voice, and the bird began to sing in a rippling rapid note. Sound so liquid and ravishing, that it appeared as if the voice must be human or rather angelic. As it ceased the chief said: "This is the messenger, when the Lord sends us a blessing, and we prepare accordingly."

The bird left his hand, flew up overhead among the flowers, and we sat wondering. They brought us fruit, delicious, but unlike any we had in our world, all vivid in color and semi-liquid in texture.

Wine in cups of a flower bell so very fragrant, that the wine was flavored with it. So we ate and drank, the chief and his nearer friends partaking with us. Then a number of young men came to us with crowns and bands of gold, and afterwards the maidens came with wreaths and bands of flowers, and bound about us in every direction. They removed our shoes and hose, and bound the garlands about our ankles. I did not like that at first, but shortly a most delightful sensation pervaded my whole body of repose, and quietude, and it seemed to proceed or be absorbed from those flowers.

After a time these were removed, and our hose and shoes replaced.

It may have been a preparation for what followed, for we were in a most passive and receptive condition. The principal men then arose, each in his turn, and made a little speech, according to their respective dignity, or station, without waiting for any replies.

Father answered in an address, acknowledging their kind reception, and expressing our admiration at their surroundings, and then asked Mr. B. to unfold to them the reason of our coming. In doing this, he expressed our desire to learn of their life, and spoke of the "different earthly conditions of the race. Some in Africa in savage tribes, some in civilized communities, I asked if these differing developments, made any inequality in their state here."

The chief replied simply that their nature is one and the same, and upon reaching the Home where they can live out their natures they are alike in their unquestioning obedience. "I perceive," he said, "that you are of a race whose desire is to observe, and understand and study into the natures of all things.

"We are not so.

"We love to be directed to render obedience to Him who brought us to our Home, by His boundless power and love.

"We could not understand His operations, or His nature. He gives, and we receive what it is His will to bestow upon us, and we live, children in our Father's house, and find our delight in obedience to His commands.

"We are the little ones of His family, but we live our lives, and would not exchange it for any other."

Indeed it is impossible to imagine anything more pure, simple and joyous than these people. They are truly the children of the Great Family. Could only represent such particulars as they could attain by natural means or without influx of spiritual powers.

Mr. B. then inquired of their form of government. The Chief replied that each town, or settlement, had its chief and principal men. These again were under the direction of another set of officials, each of whom had seven villages under their charge. These again were responsible to a chief of great power and authority, who was sent, and changed from time to time. Once in a certain season all the chiefs met in council, and after certain solemn ceremonies an angel appeared to them with instruction for their guidance until he should next appear to them. The chiefs were then directed to whom to render their authority, and these were inducted into office with great ceremony.

Mr. B. said, "Do you have no schools of learning, no teachers to open to you the wonders of the Lord's providence?"

The chief looked at him with utter amazement. "What are we," he said, "to search into the secrets of the great One?" Father asked by what means the knowledge of the Lord was communicated to them, meaning the events of His mortal, or rather, His earthly life. The chief made a sign and some of the people came together in a tableau, and we had the manger, the beasts, and the child in the Mother's arms, light streaming from all parts of His body.

Again a sign, and the sky darkened, the winds

howled and on the lake a boat heavily driven by the winds and nearly swallowed by the waves. A noble majestic presence came over the surging billows, the commotion ceased, and He entered into the boat. So we found all the events of the Lord's earthly life were represented to them.

Mr. B. inquired if these representatives were appointed, or if the heavenly influx entered into them at such times.

Their chief replied, that there always were those who delighted to represent these scenes, They were always able to do so, by influx, when they desire to teach.

They are not white, or so gloriously bright, as some of the angelic spirits, but there is a soft, subdued color, like nothing that I ever saw before, and their flesh looks pure, and fresh like babies' flesh, and the hair is loose, wavy or curly, and forms a veil about the form.

They are gentle, lovable, and affectionate, and were delighted with our coming. After the speaking we were taken to see some games among the youths, running, swimming, and floating. The animals and birds played with and about them, and seemed to be companions always, as if the sport was nothing new to them.

So the day passed, and when we set out on our return, we were escorted in the same manner, as we had come to the very mountain top. And as we floated on our homeward way, we concluded that the Africans represented, or were forms of perfect un-

questioning obedience. To them as such belongs the gold which symbolizes good, and the ruby red of perfect, and child-like love. Blessed is their sphere in this life, as becomes a race whose earthly lot is a martyrdom. We showed our crowns and bracelets, to the great surprise of the home-staying members of the household, and hung them up, as trophies of our visit to the natural or lowest of the African Heavens.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SPIRITUAL CONGRESS.

In one of the many discussions, which are the natural result of the meeting of two such minds as Father's and Mr. B. one eager for knowledge, and the other eager to lead upward the friend of his earthly life, the question arose of governments, and whether they were administered by spiritual influence.

Not that there could be any question of the spiritual influence either, but of the mode of its administration. The outcome of this, was a permission to visit the Spiritual Republic, of which America is the natural outcome.

We had greatly desired this privilege, and had discussed the possibility of obtaining it for a long time, but the permission was delayed by reason of the position of this Spiritual America.

It is in the lowest, or ultimate, or natural Heaven, and we spirit world people are not supposed to enter there. There was no difficulty with the others. We late comers were the "occasion of offense" here, as lacking preparation for such a visit to be of use to us.

However, we had so intense a desire that we were permitted, and have been. I must state, however, that one of my limitations is the inability to receive,

and transmit as clearly what I hear, as what I see, and as a great part of this is hearsay only, it will lack the intensity of a more personal experience.

As the place is situated but a little above this spirit world, we reached it in the pleasant progress which I have already described, rising above all obstacles and floating thro' the air.

We found ourselves at the entrance of a great and park-like expanse, in which noble clumps of trees, clear streams, and velvet lawns, made a fit setting for the stately building, which was its center.

There were no growing flowers, no lovely shrubs. It was great, noble, massive, as becomes the spiritual center of a great nation.

We were received at the entrance by an imposing looking man, an angel, who was clad in a splendid garment of blue, which fell from the neck, nearly to the ground, and was heavily inwrought with silver.

On his head he wore a kind of cap, also of this rich material, and he carried a silver rod, tipped with sapphire.

We made no lengthy stay in the park, lovely as it was, but followed our guide up the steps of the magnificent building, in which the spiritual congress assembles. It was like going up a marble hill, so lofty are the steps and so easy of access.

The Capitol is of pure white stone, and we were told that the Washington building will in time reproduce it. Though this is a vast pile, of which that, is at present the miniature of a portion only.

As there is nothing on earth or of the natural,

which is not first in the spiritual world, we had been instructed that division of Congress is the same on earth, as here.

The two houses, one of which we call the Representative, is here the lower house, and the higher house, to which the American Senate answers. The lower is composed of those more newly arrived, who pass thro' a long training, before they attain to the higher branch, and not all of them ever reach it.

The principal qualification is an intense patriotism, or in other words, those in whom the love of country is the ruling love, or above all other earthly ties, and desires. They must be purified, and well developed before they are able to enter into this sphere, and that is one reason why so many are obliged to spend so long time in preparation, before they pass from the educating spirit-sphere to the use they desire so strongly.

There are at present so many hindrances in public life to a pure manliness, that much effort is needful to rid themselves of these incidental evils, for these are not politicians, but patriots.

Perhaps this will be easier to understand if I take a particular instance, one of the few presidents who have attained to this responsibility and honor.

He was a noble man, pure and patriotic, but he meddled with pitch, and was defiled. He traded, and bargained for the position, which should have sought him freely, as such offices will in time, when the purification is accomplished, and America is a people whose "God is the Lord," instead of Mammon.

He had his heart's desire, though it led him thro' the "valley of the shadow of death." He had greatly coveted this place, but it was largely because he hoped to accomplish great good, which he believed that he could better advance than any one else.

It would seem to earthly eyes that the motive would have absolved this irregularity in obtaining his object, but there is no compromise in a perfect development, and hence this was an evil to be removed before he could "enter in."

The long agony of his death was a great purifying furnace. He knew for months that the end had come, and in the silence, and suffering of his mortal passing away, he put off the "garments of heaviness," and made ready for the wedding robes.

But his physical powers were exhausted before the process was complete, and he tarried in the spirit world for a season, to "finish the work."

His powerful intellect and intense energy, made him one of the principal agents in his upward progress. He is one of those, to whom as soon as the reason is shown for any discipline, no farther loss of time is possible, no strength is wasted in useless regrets.

When he knew where his weakness lay, he concentrated his energies in the strengthening of that point, and in so doing he acquired power rapidly, and his intellect ripened in a marvellous manner.

Even then, it was quite a space before he was ready for his place, and then as here, a place was ready for him.

In the lower house a station prepared itself for him, by his spiritual off-throwing.

Our leader had partially explained this to us, on our way, and by the time this point was reached, we were at the Hall where the lower assembly meets.

It is of vast proportions, square and covered by a dome, through which the light proceeds. It was a magnificent place, furnished throughout with blue and silver representing truth, which is always subservient to good.

In this great hall, the members are seated in regular order, the seats being elevated each by itself, and approached by steps.

The central seat, higher than the rest, is the place of the leader who is appointed to preside. These seats are covered with tapestry of rich blue, of finest workmanship, and shot with silver. The frames of the seat, and all the solid portions are of silver, and at times when a great degree of illumination is given, the intensity of color is like a blaze of sapphire, and diamond light.

When this new comer was ready for his place, there formed in this hall a new dais, and chair, and no little interest was felt as to its occupant, by those assembled. Often the coming one is not at all known in public earthly life as a prominent person, while those who have filled a large place on earth, are often wanting in the spiritual Congress.

When all the preliminaries were completed and the candidate was to be received, it was an occasion of

great ceremony, as befits the reception of the Guardian of a nation.

We regard our own dear land as the crown and height of all governments. The nearest approach to perfection. To freedom, the best and most essential of gifts. Not yet, but as it is to be. It is truly the hope of the world.

The reception we did not see, of course, but it was described by the attendant, by whom we were led and who explained with a truly wonderful patience. The whole body of representatives, as I will call them for need of a better name, assembled in their hall, clad in richest costumes, much more elaborate than their ordinary robes, and with certain insignia of rank, usually dispensed with.

They proceeded with imposing ceremonies, of which choral and martial music formed a part, to the entrance of the grounds.

Arriving there and forming in order, the sound of grand orchestral music announced his coming.

He was escorted to the entrance by those of his recent associates in the spirit world, who are allowed to come thus far. Here he was rendered by one party, to be received by the other, each body being accompanied by music, and great display of flowers, and greenery and banners.

Prominent among them the dear old flag, by virtue of its significance as the correspondence of the "Celestial Man." The speaker appointed for the occasion took the new comer by the hand, and the way

was retraced to the hall, while the music was marvelous for triumph and exaltation.

Showers of blossoms fell on this occasion. When the martyr President was received, they were in such profusion that the way was literally heaped with them. On that occasion they were white. On this, they were blue.

So up to the hall where the address was given, explaining his new position and its duties, and of welcome as well. Then he was escorted to his seat, which was a mass of brilliant blossoms, all of blue, radiant with inner light, and placed therein with great ceremony.

His associates came forward, and were presented to him each with a heart-warm welcome.

The grand crash of all assembled instruments, and voices followed, in chorals of magnificent harmony. A prayer was followed by a perfect flood of glory, which filled all the building.

While our guide had related this event, we had proceeded to a kind of gallery with an arched opening, both inwards and outwards, towards the East, where we were seated, and could look down on the assembly below. They were just coming together, and the business of the day had not commenced. On the central dais, directly under the center of the dome, there sat one—not known on earth as a leader—but he was here in “his own place” and filled it.

He raised his hands, as he rose to his feet, and the whole body of noble men arose, as he uttered one of the most wonderful prayers, or adorations, with such

a beseeching for light and wisdom as must have an answer, and from the dome and the archway in which we sat, a flood of light surged in, till his form was scarcely visible in the intense radiance.

The unendurable glory made us more than willing to follow our guide, who withdrew us. We should probably not have been allowed to remain, but were more anxious to see what we were allowed to witness, than to tarry the course of the legislation.

Father enquired if their method was that of debate, to which our guide replied that we would be shown an example. He led us up a higher ascent to another portion of the building. Here we looked as below, thro' an archway over a second assembly. The Hall was much the same as the lower one, but adorned with crimson and gold, corresponding to love or good, and oh, such majestic beings as we saw. They were as much beyond any conception that I had of angels, as any language can express.

Those in the lower hall were clear, pure, wise, calm, but these were glorious forms of good, and so perfectly quiet, that the very atmosphere of the place was of that "peace which passeth understanding."

It was a fitting place for the moulding of the destinies of a people, with no discordant element to hinder. There was no opportunity to linger, but as he had promised us, we were shown how at a crisis the government is accomplished. He took for illustration, the "Proclamation of the Emancipation" of the slaves. There had been previous discussion of the matters pertaining to the time, and previous teachings, and

the majority had leant to the opinion, that by this measure the divine intent was to be wrought out, through the rebellion.

This session was one of great solemnity, befitting the settlement of such question.

The majestic forms were each in his own place, with Washington in the central dais.

With intense earnestness he implored the revelation of the Divine will.

There was in response, the sound of a mighty "rushing wind," and flames of fire like tongues darting through the air. They knew then that they would be guided by the influx from the Supreme Heaven, for all light and knowledge is from the Lord, through the heaven in which He abides, through the next below, till the point of need is reached.

But in intense need, if it is possible to be endured, the influx comes directly from the inmost sphere.

With great rejoicing, but unspeakable awe, they awaited the manifesting. It came in a flood of burning glory, through the eastern archway, in the representation by angels, of the casting out of demons from a possessed person, by our Lord while on earth.

As there was no evil unsubdued by the Lord in His humanity, so there can never arise any emergency in all ages to come, which may not be illustrated by the representation of some of His acts. To the illuminated understanding of these waiting ones, the evil spirit, or demon of slavery was cast out, and destroyed.

As the scene died away, the angels vanished, the

members by one impulse arose, with the dear old chorus "Glory, and honor, and dominion, and power to the Lord God Almighty."

There is instant communication between the two houses, and as the tidings flashed through and were received, their voices also echoed the strains of adoration, and all united in a grand outpouring of praise. The Will had been manifested, and the oppressed were to go free.

Mr. B. inquired "How this decision reached the earth?"

"By the same means," our guide replied, "as from one house to the other. The agencies are the same in all worlds, only here more perfect, because the instruments are perfection. Spirit answers to spirit. Electricity as known on the earth, is a cumbrous mode in comparison." So the souls in human form, waiting in solemn silence to hear the divine will, received the same impulse, though their eyes were holden that they could not see the glory that surrounded them.

I can't describe it as if I had witnessed it, but as the angels spoke to us, our very hearts melted within us at the marvellous telling. It is so good to know that even here, there are those who love their own land so devotedly, that it is their delight to preside over and direct its destinies.

They are truly "taught of God," and in utter abnegation of self, serve their fellows still bound in the flesh.

Yet in the perfect order, which is perfect law and

perfect beauty, only in crises like these, the Great Leaders appear from the higher spheres of being, to furnish unhindered avenues of communication.

Father enquired "If all the members of the lower house appeared after service there, in the upper house?"

"No," said our guide, "there are those who love faith supremely, and those who love it as a means to the attainment of good. The former always serve in one house, the latter after training appear in the upper one. There are also those recently passed from human life, whose devotion and love are so intense that they tarry long enough in the lower, only to learn how their affairs are transacted. There are two of those, whose names are precious exceedingly" to those who love our dear old flag—notable instances of this.

Mr. B. as a good New Englander, had to enquire if an idol of that section was not preeminent, and was greatly hurt, and surprised to find that he was still purifying in the spirit world. How miserably little such truths make greed, and selfishness appear. No matter how grand the intellect, the heart must be unselfish and pure, to be of use here. It is the waiting, and contrite humble heart, that receives the heavenly influx, which is power irresistible.

I had one question that I wanted to ask, but scarcely dared, and at last our patient friend turned to me and said smiling,—

"You wish greatly to know if there is any Senate of 'woman.' You have seen today the lower house of

the lowest spiritual heaven. In the celestial degree of the spiritual heaven, the members are of one, both male and female, or rather if your eyes could pierce thro' the enfolding glory, you would not know whether you saw two or one. They are so truly united as to appear like one."

I said, "Is Washington of this celestial house?"

"Yes," he replied, "but he comes alone to the house in this natural or ultimate heaven, because the sphere is not sufficiently refined, for the purer principle of his inner soul, if I may so express it. But in the celestial house all are angels, and of the marriage state. But of those in this lower house, some are not yet of the marriage state, and hence are not yet angels."

Mr. B. looked at him a moment and said very gravely, "For those who are worthy of that resurrection, neither marry, nor are given in marriage."

Our guide smiled as he said, "Finish your quotation, my brother." Mr. B. added, "Then are they like the angels of God in heaven?"

"Yes," our guide answered as he turned upon us a face flashing with light, "those who attain, are those in whom heavenly good, and heavenly truth are eternally united, which is the marriage state. For as good without truth, is of no avail, so truth without good is dead, but together are a perfect creation. And as all truths or principles must be ultimated in form, or they are but as a dream, void of substance, so the good is manifest in the woman whose external is love, and wisdom in the man whose external is

truth. This is the heavenly marriage, in verity and in form."

We were answered, and made lowliest acknowledgment, and as we had reached the entrance took our departure.

Our thoughts were busy on our way home, and father and Mr. B. concluded that they should again seek permission to go, and see how matters were introduced for discussion, and how any debate, was possible in such illumination.

There are more unanswered questions in our minds than in any of our previous excursions, but the subject has so many details, that we cannot have them all satisfied at once.

CHAPTER XVI.

GLORIFICATION.

We have a lovely trysting place, a tree near Father's dwelling, under which we sit a great deal, and where many of the discussions between himself and Mr. B. are held.

It is a noble tree, shaped more like an Elm, than any earthly one of which I can think, with drooping foliage that nearly sweeps the ground. The branches are four in number, one towards each quarter of the heavens, and each as large as a great tree trunk.

These have long, slender rods at intervals, and on those again more slender rods drooping, and giving a lovely tent-like form.

On the tip of these very slenderest rods is a bell of purest gold color, and with deep blue stamens, like the tongue of a bell. They vibrate so prettily when the wind blows thro' the branches, and make a tiny musical sound, and the leaves are clear and bright as emerald. It always seems like a "living" tree to me, as if it had a soul.

On this particular day we were there, and Father and Mr. B. were talking of the Glorification of things, though the conversation began with the Transfiguration of Christ. We could not understand it as we

wished, and had gotten into quite a tangle between our earthly prejudices, or opinions, and the new light given to us here.

We saw a white cloud floating overhead, and it descended, and came towards us, becoming more compact, and finally we saw a form which approached us?"

It was a noble, majestic being, and as he came to us, we rose to receive him, and he raised his hands, and blessed us in a voice of exceeding sweetness.

He sat down among us, and then Mr. B. asked him, if he had known "of our desire and came to instruct us."

He said "Yes, but we must wait for others."

So we sat for a little speaking with him, till a second cloud descended from another quarter of the heavens, and a number of persons appeared, who coming nearer to us, saluted the first comer with great reverence.

Then he gave us, what I will repeat as well as I can, though not a tittle of his teaching.

He began by saying, "that the Glorification of all things was because of the indwelling Divinity. That Jehovah—which he pronounced *Sehouah*—the J being S and the V, U—gave each particle, or atom an eternal existence, or, as I can better understand it, an indestructible nature—and this could only be done by making its *inmost* of His own nature or substance. The outer or natural form, is induced by its uses and surroundings.

Thus for instance. He took up a stone, pure white,

excepting where tiny veins of blue ran through it, but it was opaque, like the round stones we used to gather at the seashore, and though pretty was in no way remarkable.

“Here,” he said, “is the lowest form of life, either on the earth, or in this sphere. It is not even ground, and nothing can take root or grow in it. Nor is it apparently of any use, save as a part of a roadway. Yet in its place and use, it is as perfect as a blooming fruit-bearing plant.” He bade us watch it and see it purify and glow.

As we watched we could see it become less opaque, then translucent, until finally it seemed as if its heart was pure white fire, while every vein glowed like sapphire. I can’t tell you how beautiful it was.

He proceeded to say that the inmost of even this stone, was a portion of the Infinite Being, and that he was allowed to cause this manifestation of the innermost, as an illustration.

Mr. B. Enquired if “all stones or minerals on earth were capable of such glory, or possessed this indwelling Divinity.”

“Yes,” he replied, “or they could not *be* at all.” He proceeded saying that, “as the Creative life flowed down through the heavens, and through mankind into the material, all things were clothed, according to the state of those through whom the creative life passed to them.”

“For instance,” Father suggested, “when Indians possessed America their free uncontrolled, sensuous natures, produced the wild and beautiful, or savage

animals that flourished then, and that have disappeared, because there was no fountain of savage life to create them from, as an avenue of the Infinite."

To which Mr. B. added, as another illustration, "that deadly and venomous serpents, abound where the character of the persons is subtle and deceitful," to all of which the attendant spirits listened with great interest. They seem always to delight in hearing anything from our earth, which illustrates the doctrines they receive.

"Yes," our teacher said, "it must be so as a part of the one system, which is the same in all the creations of the Lord."

He gathered a portion of the ground in his hand, and still talking, told us to watch. It was brown earth, like soil, only clean and nice. As we looked there were tiny specks of green, then leaves, and at last the loveliest blue flowers, each on a slender stem.

He said, "the inmost of this ground is Life, and being quickened by the power given me for your illustration, it is glorified, in the producing of this beautiful blooming, from the minute receptacles of life in its substance. Now each blossom has within it a life of its own, also, and as we looked at it, each little petal glowed like living light, and most delicious fragrance pervaded the air.

"The inmost of each plant is also of the Divine," he said, "and shows itself, as the power is excited of glorifying it." There were little bright winged creatures—insects—about us, and he took some of them into his hand. They lighted on the flowers, and

began to send forth such tiny but sweet sounds, and raised their wings, while their bodies became brilliant, and every colored spot sparkled like jewels.

It was no less a wonderful than a beautiful lesson to us all. It came into my mind, "The kingdom of Heaven is within you."

But Mr. B. is so possessed of his lifelong idea of the final triumph of good over evil, that the truths made manifest fairly burned within him, and he said.

"If it is permitted, will you show us a thoroughly evil soul, that is, one as totally evil as a soul can be, passing through changes till it is purified, and therefore glorified?"

Our teacher replied, "To bring such a soul here, would be to inflict unendurable agony upon it, and that cannot be permitted even for illustration, but *I can represent* such a truth, or process. But you will remember it is but a representation."

We eagerly assented, and we sat quietly for a few minutes. The place about us darkened, and began to grow cold, and with a thrill of dread, we drew closer together, as there appeared before us a dark, dismal, rocky cavern, with a man's body lying on the floor.

So black and evil was his face, and so vile and horrible the surroundings, that we did not need to be told that he was as evil as humanity can become, a "murderer and a fugitive in the earth."

As we watched, the spirit became visible escaping from the form, till it was just above it, and oh how loathsome, black and deformed it was.

Nearly animal, yet human enough to be horrible, it did not even stand erect, as the body had done in mortal life, but grovelled on all fours, like a beast. Oh it was too awful! and I gasped out the question that would come.

“But is not a human soul, like a human body?”

He looked on me so sadly, as he said, “Such as you see, the soul imbruted by vile animal passions becomes, when the flesh is laid aside. You will understand that for such a spirit, and there are myriads of them coming from earth, long years, or rather ages, are needful to restore it to the innocence which its infancy possessed. An innocence, which yet contained the germs of this monstrous development.

“Other ages must pass, before, from that restored, ignorant innocence can be developed the angel-hood, which it contains.

“I can represent to you in hours that which ages would be needed to effect. It is *but a representation.*”

Father said, “It seems strange to us, that sin which could have had but a few years to work out such results, should so have debased the whole nature, as to require ages to erase its effects.”

Our teacher replied, “The human race has become exceedingly *complex*, by its mixture of good and evil. It is difficult to explain in any reasonable compass, how *all* things of his being, material, natural, mortal, and spiritual, are partly evil, and partly good. Every grain of wheat has its root of tares growing beside it, and thus the purification of even an average human

being, consumes in many instances, as long time as the whole of its earthly life. But when the being chooses to render every particle of its nature, in all its complexity, evil, and has made every fibre of its many natures, one infolded in the other, utterly subject to its worst passions, it must necessarily be a long labor to cleanse and purify.

“The one work was of debasing all the faculties *at once*, as the natural overcame the mental, moral, and spiritual, by the same act and deed.

“The work of restoration must commence in the first place by the man’s own desire, for all are in freedom. When this desire is formed, which is often after long experience, and satiation with evil, the inmost spark of Divine life must proceed first, in the regeneration, or cleansing of the spiritual, then of the intellectual, and finally of the natural. A debased natural, by closing natural avenues, debases the mental, and a debased intellectual condition, almost necessitates a low spiritual state.

“Hence man, by closing the doors of the natural to good, debases all his being at once. But on the contrary, the inmost life must commence with that, which is nearest its own substance, or the spiritual.

“A rational, spiritual condition may exist with a great amount of intellectual darkness, as no doubt your earthly experience is still recent enough to recall.”

We could all recall any number of stupid, good people, or *moral* persons, and said so.

Our teacher proceeded. “When the spiritual is

awakened or cleansed, the enlightening and awakening of the intellectual follows, and finally the cleansing of the natural, or ultimate follows."

We professed to understand the reason of the length of time required for the regeneration, though I doubt if I did fully, for I have thought of it ever since. It has revealed to me what a mass of differing appetites, passions and desires we are, or as the guide expressed it, "How complex."

During this explanation we had continued to watch the creature in the cavern.

It had grovelled and crept about, till finding itself hungry—though our teacher explained that this was simply the easiest representation of longing, or desire, and that it was not an actual need of food—and finding its desire could only be gratified by standing upright, arose, and stood erect.

It began presently to look on its surroundings, with great disgust which might be interpreted, as the satiation which came of long experience of its effects, and as the work of long periods of time.

At last as if attracted by the light from the entrance of the cave, it slowly went in that direction—hesitating—shading its eyes—stopping—then going forward—but never *quite* turning back, much to Mr. B.'s delight, who found therein the confirmation of his lifelong faith.

Arrived at the entrance, the creature, who was perfectly black, and covered with long matted hair—oh, it was ugly—stopped to gaze at a very forbidding

landscape, of desert sand and rocky formation, under a leaden sky.

However, as Mr. B. remarked, "He's gotten out of that cave."

He went on at last, often stumbling and falling, as if from dim sight. He went on, and at last we perceived that the land sloped upward, and by very slow degrees led to an eminence.

He still went upward, and finally we began to notice that every time he rose after a fall, he moved more vigorously, and was not quite so black.

But how to describe his many delays and back-drawings, before he could pass through a stream of water—ditch water at that—but he did at last, and our teacher explained it as representing a very low form of truth, such as he could receive.

When he emerged on the farther side, his skin was smooth and human, so that he lost his animal coat or exterior, by immersion in even such truth.

He appeared to be pleased and examined himself with much interest, looking to see where the rough hair had gone.

By slow degrees, as he journeyed, he ate, selecting the green food that grew in the more fertile spots, and rejecting coarse dark food beside it, and drank water, rejecting what looked like liquor.

Very slowly—oh so slowly—his exterior changed and he became white, or rather less black, and cleaner until he appeared like a coarse, rough man, such as we see in mortal life.

Then there came in his way, a poor cur, limping along, and for a time he did not notice it, but then knelt, called the dog, and tried to bind up its broken limb.

That was a *great* step—Again he crossed a stream of purer water, very reluctantly, and after many attempts to find a shallow place.

He could not, and was swept off his feet, and only saved by the dog which he had helped, and which he patted, and was grateful to. This the teacher explained was his first perception of gratitude, the *lowest* form of Love. Thence again up another long ascent, where trees—poor, scrubby trees—but living growths—were, and where he rested and chose their fruit, in place of that growing on the ground.

His progress was much more rapid now, and he came among beings like wretched women, and sick children, whom he tried in his poor way to help, and grew more human in the effort.

His outer form did not as yet appear more refined, but he had a light from within.

His eyes grew clear and bright, his skin fairer and clearer, and his step more springing and elastic. So on and up till he stood before us, glowing and radiant, with the glory streaming from his refined and purified body, through garments “whitened as no fuller on earth can whiten them.”

“I have omitted many steps in his regeneration, though I ought to say that the final Glorification came upon him, when he knelt in humble supplication and adoration, before his unseen Guide and Saviour.”

It was a marvellous teaching, and scarce less marvellous to see the radiance which came from every face, as the mighty truth took possession of us, of "A Saviour for all."

Nothing new, perhaps in one sense, yet very new in this wonderful lesson.

The spirits who were a portion of our number, were greatly impressed, and it appeared that this "object lesson" was largely for their instruction, who had never known evil, having been translated while infants.

We wondered at this knowledge being given to them, when our teacher, perceiving our thought said, "They must know the depths, as they will the heights of redeeming Love, or lack the fulness of Wisdom."

Father then stated our perplexity concerning the Transfiguration.

Our Teacher answered, "To the sight of angels, the Lord was like every spirit of a child in His infancy, but there were no *shadowy* places in His development. In every temptation—and He was tempted in all points—He gained strength, and energy, till in the fulness of time, He has so purified His human nature, by constant victories, as to permit of His receiving the Divine influx, needful for the manifestation of His miracles of healing. Then He was enveloped in a halo of glory."

He said, "If I could but impress upon you, that glory is not a *gift*, but a *consequence*, a necessary consequence, of orderly and obedient development."

He resumed, "The Lord growing always more glorious, as He grew in power, came to the Mount of Transfiguration, for it was necessary to show His chosen disciples, His glory, lest the fearful scenes soon to begin, should altogether overcome their faith. To angels, He was no other than as always seen, but the spiritual sight of Peter, James and John, who represented Faith, Love and Charity, was opened, and they beheld, not only Him in His glory, but Moses and Elias, and heard by spiritual hearing, the end spoken of, as that which had been long since ordained."

Much more he told us, in answer to questions, each new reply suggesting a new inquiry, until as the day declined, our teacher rose, blessing us, and resuming his glorious form we saw him pass up and away, till like those of old we stood gazing as "the heavens received him out of our sight."

And as we still stood looking into the radiance, where he had disappeared, our dear old friend's voice full and rich with emotion, exchanged, "Oh the depth and richness of the fulness of God. How unspeakable are his judgments and His ways past finding out. For *of* Him and *through* Him and *to* Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC.

I must try to tell you of an experience, very foreign to all my preconceived ideas of spiritual life, which did not include military displays. Milton to the contrary notwithstanding.

We all went of the two households, Father's and our old friends the Bs—though they have other names now,—my boys, and a number of others of the same convictions, or loves, to witness a great gathering, which took place in a far away part of this great spirit world.

Perhaps I do not need to reiterate the fact, that all things on earth have their origin in the spiritual spheres, but so it is, and this meeting corresponds to what would be known on earth as a gathering of the "Grand Army of the Republic." Only that in this army are found those alone who fought because they loved liberty and right; or perhaps it would be nearer the fact to state, that those who fought for any other reason are not included.

It had its origin in the dark days of the Rebellion, when such myriads of spirits, bound together by one love and dying in one cause, were drawn into eternal association on arriving where there is perfect free-

dom, and like seeks, and finds its like. But now it has constant accessions to its numbers. No matter if engaged in outer conflict or not, all those who love liberty and are willing to sacrifice for it, can be, and are members of this Grand Army. Here they are men only, but in the higher societies, they are both male and female. In the heavenly marriage state, the two are but one, and cannot be separated.

The city, to which we went, was more like a city on earth than any I have seen here before. The streets were paved with stone, and the buildings are of dark stone, not in continuous block, but each in its own enclosure with lawns and trees about them. All the avenues were very broad and straight, and lined with rows of trees, which met and interlaced overhead in the noblest arches, and underneath the softest greenest grass, but not many flowers. It looked as if it might be a useful place, but it appeared as if it might be on earth, but very clean and noble. There were many fountains rising from little lakes, lovely and sparkling sheets of water, a hundred feet across, some of them. All about the city were low hills, and on these were places where one could look down into the valley, in one end of which the city lay.

We were taken just within the limits into a vast public building, and there were great books, records of those who belong to this Grand Army. The Recorder said that there were millions of names. Here we were each given a badge and it was red, white and blue. On a white ground, denoting Purity, was a red Cross, —Sacrificing Love—surrounded by blue stars,

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Heavenly Truths. Love, and Truth, and Purity. So we had the dear old colors, not arranged like our flag, though there were plenty of those too.

The Recorder asked our dear old friend, B., if he would march with the army, but he said he preferred to be a spectator. The Recorder said that he could march if he chose, and showed him his name, written in the last book. Father belongs to the army of his society, having been promoted from this one.

After waiting awhile, if that can be called so, when every moment is full of happy learning of great truths, we heard martial music. It was a magnificent volume of sound, like billows upon billows that thrilled and throbbed through the air. We were shown to a window balcony, and had a perfect view of the parade. It was a marvellous sight. Rank after rank, column after column, twelve abreast, and every four ranks a band of music. Instead of each one playing what they chose, with no regard to the others, the same air was used by all, and made a mighty swell and sweep of harmony, with not one discordant note.

What noble men this army was, so full of life, health and vigor, for here, the inhabitant saith no more "I am sick." There were no weaklings, no stragglers, every face was full of triumph and strength and every one was a Hero. They marched for a long time, and while the shining columns still passed on, apparently without end, we went out on the hillside to see the whole in the valley. Oh, how I wish that I could make every one

on earth see that "Grand Army of the Republic." The lovely green valley stretching away, and still away, to the great hills that lay like guardians about it. And all that vast space filled with the "Noble Army of Martyrs" in the most brilliant colors, for each wore his Company Uniform. There were banners innumerable, all with Red, White, and Blue in some combination and our dear old "Star Spangled Banner" borne by so many Companies. These were all in scarlet and gold, for our flag is an emblem of the "celestial man," and the colors are scarlet and gold. "Divine Love, and Truth."

Such marvellous combinations of color, light, and glory, and oh so many men, truly a multitude which no man can number. They were in ranks—companies—battalions—in the most perfect order, finally in squares, each with its banner in the centre, and such music, with all those thousands joined together. After a while, I noticed that each Company, forming a square, were in the same colors and had the same kind of metal for their accoutrements. Some carried swords, some spears, some lances, but no cannon or firearms of any description.

Father explained this, by saying that such weapons were devised by societies of evil spirits, and hence had no place here.

Some squares were in green, living green, and their weapons glittered like emeralds. Some were in blue and their weapons were of silver. There were all the colors I ever saw, and many that I never did see before. But there was one Company, preeminent

even in this assembly, and oh how glorious they were. Noble expresses nothing. They were magnificent, and clothed in the richest purple; and all their arms, everything made of metal, was like a blaze of amethysts. It was too blinding to look at, even with spiritual eyes.

We saw that the smaller squares of the same colors, joining, made a great square, in the centre of which was an elevated platform. Where these speakers came from, I do not know, but there they were, and each of the same kind and color of the surrounding squares.

They seemed to be giving directions to their audience, truths they should pursue, and then of the present condition of affairs on the earth.

At last they appeared to direct each Company to some special duty, and place. We could hear from our distance but partially, but the nearest Company to us was a green one, and they were directed, as well as we could judge, to take some action regarding Ireland.

As usual, we saw, after a while, a very noble looking person approaching us and to him applied for information.

He told us that each Company corresponded to a society on earth, that they are limited in number, and that when a society is formed here, a new society is formed on earth, though of much smaller numbers. Each society here is in constant communication with its earthly counterpart, and there is a continual influx from the spiritual to the earthly.

But owing to the present disorderly condition of earthly affairs, this influx often, or rather always, suffers such changes in its reception, as to lose much of its spiritual force.

For instance, these only use truths for weapons, and these, translated into human consciousness become force, and too often violence, though in America this is not often the case.

He said that these societies in America are more orderly, tend towards forming the members into a Brotherhood for mutual help and comfort, and that this is one of the very highest truths they can learn or practice. At the same time, their association causes a renewal of their love for freedom, and will furnish an immense moral force, whenever occasion arises to call it into action.

In the societies corresponding to those in some nations, the miserable external condition, physical needs and sufferings, create an atmosphere of hatred and revengeful desire, which perverts this influx, and causes it to appear earthly and cruel. This can only be overcome, as the internal brings the external into harmony with the eternal forces of love and wisdom.

As we talked, or rather listened, we noticed a change coming over the light which grew soft, though still brilliant. A large white cloud spread itself like a canopy, and gradually grew brighter, as if the light was in its centre, till it became painfully vivid.

Each man in all that vast multitude, sank to his knees and extended both hands, holding them flatly

out and close together. Then descended a dense shower of what looked like large snow-flakes, and in a moment, the outstretched hands were filled with the pure white food.

One dear old friend said reverently, "He giveth them bread from Heaven to eat." We saw then that all arose and ate of the food received, and the cloud passed away.

The bands began to play a most solemn yet triumphant harmony, and so continued for some time.

Then there appeared in the East a dark cloud, and as it approached, it acquired solidity till it towered up above us all, a great Rock fit to make a "shadow in a weary land."

Before it, appeared a most majestic and venerable figure, and in his hand he held a rod. I perceived that this was to be representative of the smiting of the rock by Moses, but before I could say so, the rod descended, the rock was smitten, and torrents of sparkling water leaped forth.

At the same instant, there sprang up, in the centre of each square, a fountain of crystal water bright as diamonds.

Each man had a cup among his accoutrements, and filled and drank of this "Living Water."

If they were noble before, they were glorious now. They had received and appropriated, water corresponding to truth, and food corresponding to good, and were strengthened and vivified with Divine Life. They shone like cohorts of angels.

The fountains ceased, the vision faded, the end had

come. But before they dispersed, the bands began to play a most sublime and solemn strain, and all that great host sang. Such a volume of sound. The rush of mighty waters was all I could think of. Wave upon wave, surge upon surge, it rose, it sank—rose—gathering strength and force, then burst in one great rush of harmony that seemed to scale the very Heavens, one grand outpouring of triumph and adoration.

“Halleluiah, Halleluiah—The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. He overcometh and prevaieth, and all the kingdoms of the earth shall be His kingdom forever. Halleluiah to our God. Glory in the highest.”

There was a wonderful glory and brightness over the place, till the vast multitude, marching and countermarching in perfect order, disappeared. Then the triumphant strains coming back fainter, till that too was swallowed up in the distance. And we too went our way to recall, as best we could, the wonders of our first meeting with the “Grand Army of the Republic.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

BY THE SEA.

My boys came to me very smiling and happy, and to my inquiries, replied that there "is to be an exhibition of color by the spirits of that society, and we thought that you would like to see it."

"Surely, I will." I said, "Are any of the others here, to go?"

"All," said my boys, and truly they were all ready. In a few moments, we had met and greeted all of our little Company, for we are quite a society of ourselves, though constantly coming and going to other places, and meeting so many lovely and loving ones. Yet we few, comparatively, who have earthly memories and ties, seem more sympathetic than those of whom we know only spiritual things.

I was much surprised to find myself between my boys, held firmly, and rising.

"Are we to go to another society?" I inquired.

"No" answered Father, "But this spirit world is a vast place, and we have to go to the sea."

"The Sea," I repeated, "I thought there was 'no more Sea,' in this land."

"We shall find one, nevertheless," said Gerald, and on we passed high above the hills, valleys, streams,

and homes of this sphere, till we reached an outer barrier of high rocks, almost mountains, and from the height to which we descended, looked out on an apparently boundless expanse of water.

I was so surprised, for I had an idea that here, all was land excepting the streams of the "Water of Life," which make all the place beautiful, and this expanse was an ocean without limit.

And what a multitude of people were coming from every direction, and such masses already arrived. It gave me a realizing of the immensity of this "Waiting place," such as I never had before.

The shore was one living mass. "Like the sands of the sea" was all I could think of. The spot where we were placed seemed to be a part of a long line of coast, nearly straight, and on either side, as in front, we could see but the same boundless sheet of water.

The sky was perfectly cloudless like a vast crystal vault, for the blue had so nearly faded, as to leave it a white expanse above, as below, for the water was colorless.

The singularity of it first struck me, and I remarked it to Mrs. B. She said, "It must be that the colors may be perfectly shown."

We remained for some time, waiting and watching the increasing multitude. At once we felt a thrill, as if a supreme moment had arrived, and settled ourselves, "all eyes."

Along the opposite horizon line ran a faint flush, if flush can be said of any tint so inconceivably faint. It deepened, spread slowly upward, till the vault above

was one clear, soft blush, and the water, whose tiny ripples had become as smooth as a steel plate one great sheet of rose.

Between the two, we seemed to float in an atmosphere of purest rose. A delicious fragrance floated about us, and a faint exquisite strain of melody seemed like a pulse of the air. I cannot describe it. It was the most perfectly satisfying moment I have ever known. Such ministry to every sense, and a perfect peace and quietude, that was a part of that beautiful experience.

The rose deepened, darkened, all the air was full of it. A light ripple ran over the water. Every wave was vivid scarlet, and the sounds swelled and grew distinct, till in place of wrapping us about like waves, it was clear, loud, and urgent like the call of trumpets.

All about and above us, the fiery waves swept, and beat, billows, and surges of the most vivid scarlet deepening into crimson. It was a moment of intensity. Every nerve stretched to its utmost tension. There was no sense of fear, that does not enter into our emotions. We are always sure that "underneath are the everlasting arms." But if we had seen in the midst, one of the mighty angels who "excel in strength, who do his Commandment, hearkening to the voice of His word," it would have been a fit environment. One of those, who, freed from every taint of imperfection, stand near to the Inmost, to hearken to His voice and to hasten, supreme in energy and strength, girt with love and power, like consuming fires, to do His will.

It had become almost as fearful as the first experience was peaceful, when through the dark flaming color along the horizon, ran a clear ray of light blending with the darker hue. Intense orange, too brilliant to convey an idea of by word. Vivid, clear, and glowing it spread, till the expanse above and the still water beneath was like flame. The trumpet calls were merged with a sound of many instruments, like a martial band. Such a triumphant swell and beat, measured but intensely moving. We perceived also a deeper perfume, sensuous and heavy.

Then the deeper hue, born of the red, was fading, and we lived and breathed in an atmosphere of pure gold. An ecstasy of glory. It was indescribable. From the golden sea at our feet to the golden skies above us, all was pure glory. And the music was subdued, as if the louder instruments had ceased and the stringed ones only sounded. We sat entranced, scarcely breathing, lest we should lose one atom of this surpassing scene.

We saw a change that grew slowly along the line between sea and sky, scarcely distinguishable in the glowing color. It was like a vast sphere, of which we were the centre. The hue grew deeper, then the gold was tinged with a lovely shade, clear green, soft, delicate and so beautiful. It grew and spread with the gold still lingering through it, till about us was such lucid emerald, that we seemed in water depths of transparent light. An odor of fresh new-growing things, pure and sweet, was the next sensation, but with the cool color came also a change in

the music, and with the stringed instruments were clear living tones.

Mrs. B. murmured as if to herself, "It is the Creation," and truly so it seemed. The light, intense and deep, yet crystal clear, was like living radiance. It lingered, encircling us, a perfect dream of joy, then faded, faded, changing into hues I never dreamed of before, so perfectly blended with each other, that each was a distinct beauty, yet one.

At last it was gone, all but the faintest hue, the sky tinged as if we looked through light at perfectly white surfaces. Then the air seemed to deepen. I cannot express it in any other way, as if the color was in it, and such color. Soft shades enveloped us, a rapture of blue. It seemed purer than white, such a cool, crystal, clear color.

It swept over the sky and water till it appeared as if nothing could ever have been so lovely before. Soft hues, and deeper tints, and odor of unspeakable purity and fragrance, and human voices liquid, gentle, and loving.

It grew deeper, purer, a purplish tinge crept through it, and we floated, breathed, lived in a sea of amethyst, and a very ecstasy of melody, breaking in waves about us. How can I express what words can never convey? A deep calm and peace held us bound, brooded in the air, and then as by one impulse, we rose and turned inland.

Along the inner horizon lay a deep hue of red, then each tint in order, a glorious rainbow covering half the concave, all in some inconceivable way at last

meeting in perfect whiteness, a glory, from the midst of which shone a star, blazing rays of blinding light.

With one movement we bowed down, and the voices swelled and gladdened, into a strain of immortal sweetness.

“Glory and honor, and thanksgiving, and power, unto our Lord God Almighty, the Bright and Morning Star.”

We knelt and gazed, and slowly, slowly the light faded, the glory softened, the angel voices passed singing away, and we turned and looked into each other's faces in silent awe, while the “peace that passeth all understanding” abode with us as we passed to our own homes.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HEAVENLY BIRTHDAY.

Why do you dwell on the last days of my earthly life, and the suffering attending them? They are gone forever, and have no power over me, excepting through your sorrowing remembrance which at once attracts me to you, and oppresses me.

It is so with all for whom I care. They wear garments of heaviness for the robes of thanksgiving and all because I am free from pain, and at peace forever, only out of sight.

And to prove to you how little cause you have, to regard my departure from mortal life an occasion of sorrow, I am come specially to tell you how my first heavenly birthday was celebrated.

We have no sense of time in reality, yet we newcomers are still so bound to the old earthly ways, that the others fall into them when there is no violation of order, and any unpleasantness to come forth.

To begin at the beginning of the day, I was not so early in rising as usual, because I was thinking of my coming here, an earthly year ago, and was so intent on my recollections that I did not notice a little more stir than usual. In this home of love and tenderness, everything is as far as possible adapted to our wishes

and needs, and if one desires quiet, all noise is hushed.

At last I noticed it and on rising to make my toilet, discovered a snowy white soft woolen robe, and around the sleeves and hem, a delicate embroidery of gold, roses, buds, and leaves exquisitely wrought.

My silver head clasp was gone, and in its place was a golden one wrought with roses, each with a drop of diamond dew at its heart, and the girdle and necklace were of gold in the same device.

I was greatly touched to find that the loving ones had prepared such a pleasure for me, and went into the gallery comforted and happy, though I felt even then, the shadow of the grief that came from those on earth, to whom the day was one of said reminders.

But as soon as my door opened, my dear boys, with Florence, Harry, Bertie and Charlie—I use their mortal names—and the lovely ones who always accompany them, burst into a song of welcome, each verse ending with, "Your first birthday in Life."

I had to stand still and look into the upturned faces in the circular hall below, they were so beautiful, and when the singing was finished, I saw that every place was literally full of roses.

The balustrades were twined with them, wreaths and clusters everywhere, and such roses—from purest white, to deepest crimson, every shade and tint, of lovely rose color, and the air was heavy with fragrance.

As I came down the stairway Father took me in his arms, kissed me again, and again, and blessed me in his peculiarly tender way. So did each of the others.

Then they covered me with blush roses and showered the loveliest gifts upon me.

Father gave me a rose of most exquisite workmanship carved from one rose-colored stone, so frail it looked like the most fragile bloom, yet is imperishable as a diamond.

Gerald gave me a snow-white dove made of pearls, and David a silver clasp, also in the form of a dove.

Florence came with a cluster of moss roses, pink and white, too beautiful, if such a thing can be, but unfading.

Each of the others brought me a gift, till I was fairly loaded, and all in the forms of roses and doves. All but one.

Willard brought it, saying that it was a remembrance from Frances, "a gift fashioned by the sorrowful love, that kept the day with such grief on earth." It was a cross of great pure pearls, but even there the center one was carved like a rose.

"See," he said, "even her cross bears a bloom of sweet memories."

Truly love is the one mortal fact of life, wherever its outward lot is cast.

My eyes began to moisten, for I cannot endure too much bliss without being overcome.

Afterward we went to the morning meal, if such glorified food can be known by that name, delicious fruits, the whitest bread, and sweet golden wine.

Father prayed while we all knelt in our places, for us all, especially for me, and for those to whom my memory would make the day sorrowful.

Then we partook of the food, and talked and laughed and were as happy as it was possible for us to be.

Afterwards I held a kind of reception though I did not dream of such a thing, but all the friends kept coming, and saying the kindest and most loving things, and each with a gift of remembrance.

So the day passed till it was time for another meal, when we had quite a company.

All of our particular friends came to stay for that occasion, and such a table I never even dreamed of. Everything was in the shape of roses, the dishes of softest rose color, and all the viands served in such shapes.

We had a very happy gathering, with congratulations, and singing, and speeches and the pleasant chat that comes naturally uppermost, at such meetings.

At length, leaving the table, we passed into the hall which is our state apartment. Standing there and feeling—or I was—very peaceful, we felt a strong though soft breeze which blew from the East, and a most delightful fragrance. Of course, it was of roses. There was a delicate rosy light, like sunset flush upon earth through all the air, and a strain of music too liquid sweet for description, and as I wondered, "What next can come to me," I saw that all the material of the house was becoming luminous, as if light was within.

Every block of stone was translucent, and the balustrade was like a tracery of alabaster. And before I

had half enjoyed the beautiful sight, there came through the outer doorway, a majestic being, so gentle though so glorious, that I could not feel fearful or troubled. He raised his hands, and blessed us in the name of the Lord, and then went to each of those present with a special salutation, coming to me the last of all.

He took both of my hands in his, and kissed me on the forehead, but did not say a word.

In a moment he placed his hands over my eyes, and I felt a strange quick thrill go through me, like Electricity.

In a few moments I saw still with my eyes closed, a cloud of snow-white doves. They came from all directions, and alighted all around me.

Then came a shower of roses most beautiful, but nearly all of them deep rose color, till I seemed to stand knee-deep in a drift of exquisite blooms.

Then a short pause, and I saw a light coming towards me, and a baby face in the midst, growing lovelier and sweeter, and in a brighter glory, till it stood nearly above my head, and stretched its dimpled hands towards me.

I cried out, "Oh you precious darling," and put out my hands to receive it, but down they fell again, for the child extended its arms, and put its little limbs straight down, and I saw it was the form of the cross.

Rays of light streamed from the hands, and feet, and glory burned all around it, too dazzling to look upon.

I seemed to fall on my knees and worship. Then it passed out of sight ; I opened my eyes. The friends were all about me, waiting, and the new comer said.

“My sister, will you tell us your vision?”

So I told them and he grew brighter all the time, till I had finished. He made the sign of the cross on my forehead, and said smiling as he spoke.

“You are one of the Child’s Society, henceforth. Blessed are the eyes to whom the Christ Child appears.”

He took me by the hand, and led me to the doorway, and in front of the house, was a multitude of people, all dressed in white and with wreaths of roses around head, neck, waists, and arms, and with the sign of the cross glittering in pure white light, on their foreheads.

They came to me, one by one, each kissed me on hands and forehead and said a few words of kindly salutation. And then they gathered together in a body, facing outward from the house, and looking towards the East.

We saw a brightness, which grew smaller till it formed a brilliant star.

A light cloud of singing spirits came above us, and floated near enough for us to see their faces, so full of tenderness and they sang the song sung so many centuries ago on earth,—“Glory to God in the highest, peace and good will to all, in earth or in the Heavens.”

They repeated it over and over again, now singly, now in grand chorus, till as we watched and listened,

they floated away singing, till their voices were lost in the distance.

And then the multitude in front of the house, rose and floated away in the soft rosy twilight, and last of all, our new friend lifting his hands, blessed us, and was gone.

I had to go to my room and look in the mirror to see if the sign of the cross was on my forehead, and it was. I went down again and looking on our family, I saw that each bore the same sign.

"Why," I said, "I never noticed it before, did you always have it?"

Father replied, "All who belong to the Christ Child's Society bear His sign, my child, but it only appears when the Society is called together."

"Where do the members of the Society stay?" I inquired, "Must I go to another place now?"

"No, dear Mother," Gerald said, "We all stay in our places, wherever our duty is, but we are drawn together by a summons which we feel, when it is right and orderly to do so. We are told that the Society is gathered together in one of the superior Heavens, but the members until they arrive at that state, must remain progressing wherever their place may be. We are examined at a certain state of our development and sealed, and when in process of progression we arrive at the society, we are not only members of it, but live and remain within its boundaries.

"You love little children, and hence have come into the Christ-Child's service."

There was much more in the way of explanation,

for I was quite excited by my experience, but at last we gathered in the hall again.

Father read from the dear old Word, the same here as on earth, prayed, and blessed us, and we went to rest and surely for me the promise was fulfilled,—

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.”

CHAPTER XX.

CHORUS OF CREATION.

One of the most wonderful of the many experiences which crowd upon me in this life, is the manner in which we are continually instructed.

Nothing, however rich in glory and beauty, is without its use. Nothing for our enjoyment alone. Always some truth conveyed through the revelation of loveliness, which seems to fix in our minds the knowledge so essential to our growth.

Shall I illustrate this provision of the Infinite Love, in which we "live, and move, and have our being," by giving to you what language can express—it is so little—of the "Chorus of Creation?"

It is given at certain periods of time—I cannot unlearn the old way of expressing myself—when newly arrived spirits have reached the point of reception of such instruction. Not at stated seasons but whenever answering the need, the Divine wills it to be.

Every one can go. To those who have been, it is not a novelty, but is so lovely that many embrace every opportunity. Father did not go with us, but the boys and the rest of the children, and our dear friends, the B.s.

Through the beauty which lies about our homes we

went, till reaching a high mountain, peculiarly formed. An easy slope of gradual ascent, which went up on one side, and on the top a large plateau sloping slightly towards the outer edge, which was nearly perpendicular. There were seats arranged for comfortable waiting, and we rested, while others literally poured in.

I never can become accustomed to the multitudes of these people. There are such "unnumberable hosts" on such occasions, and all so happy and contented, and so anxious to see and receive.

At last I began to look about me and saw, stretching away from the foot of the mountain, a vast plain of what appeared to be pure white sand, without a break or rise to diversify its surface.

The sky was perfectly cloudless, and the effect of the two great expanses, one of blue, and one like snow, was most peculiar. We seemed to wait for a long time—again time—and then perceived a faint strain of music, like pulsation of the air and very soothing to the nerves.

The sky and sand began to darken—not as if cloudy, but close thick darkness, though where we sat there was a dim twilight. The space below us seemed like tossing waves, and there were sad, wailing mournful tunes. A dreary wilderness of sound, with an occasional mingling of soft chords, as of longing, but not of suffering.

For some time, these beseeching and yearning sounds, that nearly brought tears continued. Then through the darkness, came a faint streak of light,

far away on the horizon, rosy like dawn but very faint, and the music was less sorrowful. A bit of hope seemed to creep into it.

As the light grew brighter and stronger, one flush after another creeping up the sky, the dark shadows fleeing away, the strains became softer, yet stronger.

At length the sun arose, as much more glorious than our earthly sun-rising as can be imagined, and the music came in floods of melody, filling the air and vibrating about us. It was clear and triumphant, but with no particular harmony, only gladness expressed in tones.

The sun seemed to roll up over the broad white plain, and gradually we could see the sand appear to part and shift. At last, though I cannot tell how or whence, there was a tiny trickling stream limpid and pure, through the plain, like the "Just beginning of Truth," Mr. B. said. It deepened and broadened till it rolled, a broad diamond-flashing stream, so clear that it seemed like rolling light.

There was a soft liquid shimmering from it, and the music seemed to become flowing, if I may so express it.

A faint shadow appeared on the borders, and grass began to grow, and creep up over the river banks, and low shrubs to appear, and leaves and trees to form.

It was most singular, the processes of nature, only moments did the work of weeks, months, and years. It was lovely too. Everything was so fresh and new.

Flowers bloomed, leafy branches tossed in the

wind, and it was deep and strong with the sound of voices. Before it was sweet vibrations, or waves. Now there seemed to be words, or distinct sounds.

It was a long time before the plain was covered. The process was gradual, and so smooth that the gradations were scarcely noticeable, but at last, where there had been a desert of whiteness, there was a Paradise with rippling streams, grass, blossoms, noble clumps of trees, and it seemed as if the never ceasing music was in some way the soul of it, changing, pulsing, the source of it all.

Among the greenery, we began to see bright eyes and beautiful forms. Deer and Fawns, snow white—jet black, with wide branching horns, or budding tips, and tiny creatures, lovely in form, all perfect and harmless, and their voices seemed to mingle in the strain, with a harmony of their own. As Mr. B. said, "Life, how incomplete we feel it was before, though so beautiful."

It did make a difference, and then we heard such soft liquid notes. The music seemed to die away into a kind of accompaniment to the living voices of birds, and oh how they sang.

Never loud or strenuous, but so liquid, sweet and clear. The air was full of it. Living music, expressions of joy without one discord.

We sat and listened, satisfied. In softest cadence, the sounds died away, again to rise in fuller volume. Mrs. B. said, "Hark! Are not those human voices?"

There were forms of children running among the flowers, leaping and playing through the tree

shadows, their childish voices making the sweet additions to the strains.

They were the rosiest, happiest creatures, full of vitality and fun, and so friendly with the brilliant plumaged birds who circled in flocks about them, lighting on their hands and shoulders, flying off again, singing, singing, all the time.

The animals too, bounded and leaped about, frolic-ing with the little ones, a very Paradise of innocence and joy. I think that it was the loveliest sight I have yet seen, not glorious, but so simple and homelike, yet perfect of its kind.

And still as we looked, there was a change, but so slow and subtle that we did not perceive it for a time. We saw then that the children were growing up, and their treble voices took a deeper tone, no less pure and sweet, but matured, and a more serious thrill through the singing.

And at last, how can I make it clear to you—there was a multitude of noble, beautiful forms of men, and women, pure and sinless, and then rich, full notes mingled with all the living sounds.

Streams rippled, the winds were pulsations of melody, birds, animals, all in harmony, one after another joining in, till there was a great glad chorus of praise, and thanksgiving.

The other music that had receded came nearer, and there was the sound of stringed instruments, then of heavier, resonant tones in one inexpressibly glorious burst of adoration. The whole space from our abiding place to the heavens, was full.

Wave upon wave, surge upon surge, it rose and beat and rose again, the sound of a countless multitude, till it was almost a pain, the emotion was so intense.

Floating overhead came the beautiful forms we knew so well, and from heights above, such heavenly notes answered the worshipping throngs below, and the grand chant grew deeper and softer, the very outpouring of adoring love.

“Glory to God in the highest. Glory to the Holiest from the depths. Let all creatures, and peoples, and tongues, and angels, and archangels, praise and glorify His holy name—the King of kings the Lord of Lords, the Lord God Almighty.”

It seemed our very soul were poured forth in worship. I looked above me. We were all singing with might and strength. Tears of rapture, else inexpressible, streamed down my cheeks, and of many another.

“Wrapt in the spirit”—I know what that means now. We were folded close to the Infinite Heart of the Universe, and felt the clasp of the “Everlasting Arms.”

Gradually, very gradually, we perceived the strains growing softer, fainter, soft fleecy clouds rose and fell, till meeting, there was a sea of roseate mist where the vision of Creation had been, and still murmurs of music stirred through the lovely foldings, like the memory of a dream.

The multitude, like those “Walking in a Vision,” passed silently away, we also going down the moun-

tain slope. None spoke till Mr. B. stopped, raised his hands and said with a thrill of great emotion in his voice.

“We thank Thee, Lord of Heaven and earth, that Thou hast revealed Thy glory to our eyes. Glory and honor and thanksgiving and praise to Thy Holy Name.”

We felt expressed, and went our ways to our own homes, not speaking much by the way. When Father came in I had to try to tell him of our experience, and he explained the meaning of what we had seen. How it represented the Regeneration of the soul, or Mankind. First the darkness of ignorance, the yearning for light or knowledge, the clear waters of truth—watered and nourished by these, beautiful knowledges spring up—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. Nourished again by these, pure affections or living forms—aspirations like winged creatures—and finally the innocence which comes of knowledge, and heavenly nurture, and afterwards the wisdom and love of a regenerate human soul, “The measure of a man that is of an angel” whose upreaching can win response from the glorious ones, who worship in the innermost. And so being changed from glory to glory, we come at last to see the face of the Father, and dwell in His presence forever.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SPIRIT HOME.

Shall I give a more detailed account of the home which I found awaiting me, when I laid aside the "Mortal for the immortal life?"

First it is like Mount Zion, beautiful for situation, though not at the top of the mountain by any means.

Far below us is a valley smooth and green as emerald velvet, and enamelled with flowers of rare and fadeless loveliness, and with a clear pure river of "living water," in great loops and curves of silver, reflecting the deep purplish blue of the sky.

Great clumps of trees are in every direction, some massive like oaks, some slender and drooping like elms, some with tiny flower bells of various color, at the tips of the pensile branches, some erect, and others stirring continually as if a breeze rustled through them, but all wonderful, perfect.

There are vines looping about many of the trees, laden with fruit like grapes, that is, growing in clusters. Some deep purple veined with pearl, some ruby red with silver veins, others like pearls in network of gold, some like those on earth, others unknown, excepting in the Kingdom. It is a part of my pleasant duty, to replenish daily the beautiful

silver baskets with abundance of this delicious food for household use, a duty in which one of my boys always helps, before I am through. They seem to know when I am doing anything, and here they are, though how they come I seldom see.

From this vale of peace and abundance, there is an uphill road, to the plateau where our dwelling stands. It is quite a lengthy walk or would be if one knew weariness here, but it is one long delight. Every day there is something new by the way, to delight and instruct.

One day a rose-tree will have poems, written in characters of silver on the crimson petals, for me to wear on my bosom and learn all day; another, a bright winged bird will alight on my shoulder and sing like an angel as it is. Always something to remind of the love that "never slumbers or sleeps."

On one occasion Mr. B. came flying down the slope to meet me, with a lily in whose snowy heart he had found a golden sentence.

"Look," he exclaimed, "do look at this. Do you find something new every day? I do, and always something that is just what I need."

I looked and saw like tracery of gold:

"He shall be called the Mighty God."

"Always," he repeated, "something about the Divine Humanity. Do you see such things?"

I took the rose off my breast and gave to him, and he read:

"Little children love, love, love, every created thing."

"How wonderful it is," he went on, "Do you suppose that everybody finds such things fresh every morning, and new every evening?"

"Why not, if we do?" I replied.

"Truly who not?" he repeated, and as his face fairly kindled with rapture he continued.

"How infinite are Thy mercies oh Lord of Hosts, how great is the sum of them. Infinite is the only word that expresses Him or His loving kindness, Love is His name, glorious above all other names."

I am not often as long on my road uphill as this account would lead you to suppose, only I like to tell of the little everyday doings which here, as on earth, are so much of the daily life.

It is a very gentle slope though leading to an elevation. The house is beautiful as one comes up from the valley. It stands on a knoll like an emerald wave, and it is pure white like marble. Nearly square, with a long portico across the front, supported by pillars of the same white stone. In the middle of the portico is a semi-circular projection also surrounded by pillars, and with a double stairway, one flight from either side leading into it. It is a noble and simple approach, and very symbolic of the life of noble simplicity, which modelled it for a resting place for "his own."

There is an arched portal leading from the portico into a circular hall, and on each side of the open archway, commences a flight of stairs which follow the sweep of the hall, until they reach a gallery which

runs around the whole interior, and from which the doors of the chambers open.

Above is a dome, a clear bubble of glass, it looks like. It is singular, until one becomes familiar with the truth that changes of state express themselves in one's surroundings, to note the different hues of the lights which pour through it. Sometimes the blue of the vault above fills the hall like liquid azure. Sometimes the softest rose-light, again it is clear emerald green, and loveliest of all the rich golden glow which transfigures us all into angelic beauty. At night a dim transparent whiteness like moonlight, floods the house, sufficient for all purposes of sight, and a very boon of rest and peace.

From the central hall, there open below great rooms of fine proportion. The hall is the heart of the house, the place of reception for guests. All our holidays are kept there. It is a perfect place to decorate, and we make it lovely on all occasions of ceremony with many devices. You will recall the roses that were in masses on my birthday.

On the left of the entrance is a room corresponding to a library, full of books, maps, and whatever can help one to learn.

On the right is the dining-room, with every article of use of exquisite form and material, and between the two at the back of the building, a noble apartment arched and lofty, with pictures, statues, and all sorts of wonderful and beautiful things.

There is a fountain in the middle playing delicious

perfumed spray, and always falling in likeness of birds and flowers.

The hue of the water, is always the same as that of the light coming thro' the dome in the hall. Sometimes it is like flame, then of rosy diamonds and oftentimes like streams of gold.

I said to Father one day, that I never expected to find such adornings here.

He smiled as he said, "The pleasantest part of this ornamenting, is that my children furnished it."

Of course, I thought that he meant those whose passing away in my childhood, had thrown the shadow, and mystery of death over my early days, and so, replied—

"It must have been a labor of love to them, and worthy of even their sinless lives to do."

"No," he answered, "you do not understand me. Every beauty here, came from my earth-bound children. No loving act, or self-denying word, or deed, but is here crystallized into form.

"In many cases all earthly experiences are forming the person's spiritual habitation, and while in the flesh creates their future home, but the Loving Infinite has granted to me to gather my children into my house, and it is for this reason, that their influence tends here to enlarge and beautify."

Of course I cannot describe it all—scarce any part of it—but can illustrate.

There is a wreath of snowy-white sculptured flowers, around the room close beneath the ceiling, of every kind of lovely bloom. That was formed leaf

by leaf, or rather atom by atom, by the soft answer, when there was need of an effort to return it, to cold, or cruel words. Each one means a victory gained by some one of us, over a biting tongue.

A statue of charity relieving a poor child, was formed by a long course of self-denial, to relieve another's need.

Again, is a picture of an angelic form, raising, and healing a bruised, crushed creature.

That was formed by patient effort through weary years, to bring an erring one back to the righteous way.

But the fountain Frances made, or rather her friend Mr. S. and she together. His teaching of the "Divine Humanity" that was such a blessing to her and her earnest reception and joy in believing, found expression here in that up-burst of "living water," symbolizing that mighty truth. When Mr. S. came here, he was attracted to this home, for "like seeks like" and Father showed him his work, for really it was his, though as it was a part of Frances' spiritual experience, the showing, came into her part of this sphere. He (Mr. S.) was delighted, and expressed in his quaint way how happy he was to find spiritual results from earthly deeds.

"I did notice to her," he said so earnestly, "that whenever we meet, the rain was sure to descend, and told her that always the "truth came in showers" and she answered, with such a sad little smile as she looked out into the avenue, "I am fearful it falls in stony places. But it did not, did not? It sprang

up a fountain of living waters, to refresh and bless many beside her, with its healing."

When our cousin James arrived, he brought him here, to see the fountain whose unsealing was in his earthly home. It was a revelation to him also of the identity of earthly, and spiritual existence. They are one, in a far more intimate sense than he had ever realized.

To me it is the loveliest of all things, that we on earth hampered and heart-sick, tempted and struggling, can adorn our "Father's house" with our victories over evil.

"The defeats," I said, "the failures, they do not appear here?"

"No, my child," father answered, "evil is temporary and does not enter into eternal habitations. If it appeared here it would be as a shadow, and we have no place for shadows or stains. It would pass away, and has no place where we build for eternity."

To return to my description. That is all of the lower floor. All the doorways are arched, and wide, and have beautiful hangings.

The windows are very lofty, and all of stories told in colors. Our Father created those himself. They are a perfect record of his loving benevolent life. His left hand was not suffered to know what his right hand was doing, but he found it all here in unfading hues.

The stairs have balustrades, with carving that looks like lace, of the same material of the house, indeed it

is all of the same white stone—if it is stone—within, and without.

Above are the chambers of which there are six. They are nearly square, though in each is an alcove—formed by the circle of the hall—in which the couch stands.

One room is always Father's for he will remain here, portions of the time, till all of his flock is "gathered in."

One is the nursery, also grandmama's room, for she took all the babies as she did on earth.

When a little one was to come, a crown of blossoms would form in the air and a bed underneath it, and from the wreath a veil of light that covered the couch, enclosing it like a curtain. Always of a color, and form and flowers according to the character of the new-comer.

The other chambers have been the resting places for a space, of those who have now passed on to "their own places," in the different societies, though they are continually returning for short terms to the first home, which will be precious to them for ages to come.

But first and best of all is the guest chamber all, rose-color and beautiful as it can be. An arched window faces the East and whenever a friend is "entered in," a flood of rosy light fills the room.

It is too wonderful, too indescribably beautiful, sometimes unbearably so, to realize how all things external answer to one's state, and beautify the

dwelling here. Beyond the windows of every room is a balcony carved like marble lace, and we get lovely outlooks from these airy perches.

Back of the house, is a hillside smooth and green, but always there are clumps of trees, and vines and flowers, and occasionally a spray of water fall, to make music as it flows away to join the river below.

The rise continues like a rich and beautiful "hill country" on earth, with valleys like dimples, in each of which a house nestles.

Irregular in detail, but always following the upward sweep and away, far away, in the horizon, the hills merge into mountains, to which all earthly mountains are shadows and nothingness. So lofty, so pure, so far, and the glory covers them like intense snowy light. There the holiest and most internal of the Heavenly societies have their nurseries, so to speak. Before the dwellers here are received into the societies to which they belong, they reside for a season in the mountain retreat, which corresponds to their own society.

Sometimes as we sit and watch them the glittering veil will partly withdraw, and such gleams of glory flash through as no sight can endure.

Rose, and gold, azure, and emerald, in perfect arches of vivid light, with wondrous hues unknown to mortal eyes.

Then we know there are rejoicings in that place, for these are the "outward signs of the internal glory." Always too, such strains of surpassing melody come down to us, that even our home lovely as it

is, seems but a halting-place to that which lies beyond. "For it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

Oh! if those still on earth knew what homes await them, and how every pure thought, word and deed, every victory over self, and its evils are perpetuated here, how could each soul purify itself, and make ready to "arise and go to the Father's house, of many mansions."

I have told nothing, a faint shadow of the truth only, for how can I express what is inexpressible?

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SPIRITUAL LANGUAGE.

In trying to communicate to you some idea of the spiritual existence, it seems as if it is well to mention the language we use, write and read. I can scarcely say we learn it, for it comes to one naturally, without effort, though to some with a greater ease than to others, according to their receptive state. I use English as on earth, in speaking to those newly arrived, but I imagine that those who have been here longer, forget the earthly tongue, and use only the spiritual. I note that Father uses the old familiar words, and he taught the little ones who came from earth, the same, so that if they communicated with the earth-bound, they would be understood, but I think that they employ it only for that use. When we visited the societies I have written of, they seemed to understand us, and we could understand their speech, and it was because the two so nearly approximated.

There is a difference, but I am instructed that it comes from the characters of the people using it. Some are harsher in expression and some colder, if you can conceive the applying of heat to a language, but the real words are the same.

The difference is like the change of expression, among those of the same nation, a dialect not the same, in portions of the country.

Our differences are those of character and development, and not of locality. The sounds are according to one's characteristics. If one is loving, the language is very sweet, smooth and flowing, as if there is a liquid quality. If one is inclined more to Wisdom, the sounds are clearer, more distinct, and not so smooth, and yet the words are the same. The simplest speech of heavenly spirits is more melodious than any earthly sounds, and you may try to imagine, what the singing is, if you can. I often find myself using these sounds instead of English words, and notice that on such occasions, all those about me seem pleased, and I receive it as a sign that I am becoming more spiritual. When we visit any public place, I find no difficulty in understanding, and have never had any, but Father tells me that it agreed with my development, or was congenial to me. But I am like one to whom a foreign language conveys ideas, without having an equal ability to use it myself, as if the understanding it is a preparation to the using it myself. There are not many words that suggest the old familiar ones, but Halleluiah is the same as we use on earth. I enquired if this was because it was an untranslatable Hebrew word, and was answered "No. It is the same, because no other combination of sounds, so perfectly expresses the idea of worship."

The use of the speech is much easier than the writ-

ten or printed words. Nearly all of the letters or parts of words, are segments of circles, concave or convex according to the expression of opposite ideas. For instance, if the affirmation is expressed by convex signs, the negative of the same subject is expressed by the same signs reversed.

I do not spell the sentences as in learning a new earthly tongue, but am not able to read as fluently as in an English book. The ideas expressed in this language, are of thousands compared to one of earth, and our mortal language here, would be like trying to make a grand oration from the meaningless sounds of an infant. Does this seem exaggerated? It is not. When we see anything, we perceive not only its external forms, but its History from the earliest moment of existence, and all of its uses, what it will achieve and in what it will fail. All this is expressed in briefer phrase, than we use on earth to tell the mere outer form. Hence when we speak a name, we feel its meaning in its fullness, for there are many degrees of natures, and the name expresses them all. I do not believe that an Angelic spirit could say Jehovah without feeling awe, love, adoration, self abnegation, so complete as for the time being, to make the whole nature only an expression of worship. We are all or nothing in every act. Unless the whole nature goes into an action, it is impossible to perform it at all. There are no triflers here. "Whatsoever we find to do, we do with all our might."

I asked Florence who is the type of Love, to repeat some sentences after me, and it seemed as if all

the angles in the letters of every word were in the sound of my voice, as compared with hers. When she writes the same sentence on the page, it is the same way. My words are sharp and bristling with points, and hers to express the same ideas in spiritual writing, look like waves, curves, or anything lovely and flowing.

"Like water," I told her. Well, she said, "it is like water, because only truth can be written, and water is truth."

Everything joins in beautiful series here. No arbitrary forms, freaks, or signs. One thing is joined to another, a beautiful portion of a perfect whole. Even the lives we think we have left behind, evil, dark, troubled, full of pain, we see them here illumined by heavenly light, and perceive that every step, even those that seemed the farthest astray, was ordered by the same law of fitness, and by the transfiguring power of Infinite Love and Wisdom, becomes, incredible as it seems, a proper part of a beautiful whole. Be patient with the growing angel, whose imperfect development is such a trial now. Be patient with your own mistakes and slips, wrong doing, and evils, knowing that "He who is mighty to save, uses everyone to the upbuilding of the angelhood, which shall be a Temple, fit for the indwelling of His Holy Spirit."

CHAPTER XXIII.

SPIRITUAL FLORISTS.

The impression has been so universally diffused, of the separation between the life on earth, and that of the spiritual worlds, that I can do nothing more useful than to correct such false belief.

The idea that the only connection is in the *result* of mortal living, is so far removed from the truth, that the reality of constant and intimate influence, cannot be too strongly insisted upon. I will give as far as permitted, an illustration, which will appeal to the desire for beauty, which is a part of every nature—the soul-life of flowers.

The beginning is where all life must commence, the great source of all being, the Infinite God and Father of all, and learn how His life, flowing down through the heavenly societies, comes at last through our spirit world into yours. His life or influx flows first into the society most advanced in development and purity and yet even here, *one* society cannot receive, or transmit it, for the Divine Wisdom flows in fuller measures into the Spiritual Heaven, as the Divine Love into the Celestial Heavens.

No *created* intelligence can ever receive the *fulness* of Divine life, only such portion as the degree of de-

velopment will allow, and that is partial, as belonging to an imperfect creature.

We will say then that the great current of life divides, and flows into two distant directions. The spiritual Heavens receive more largely of the Divine Wisdom, than of the Divine Love, and the Celestial Heavens, more largely of the Divine Love, than of Divine Wisdom.

From thence, these streams of life flow into less developed societies, and into this spirit world of ours, where we divide in communities, more or less separated, according to our natures. That is according to our loves, whether we are lovers of wisdom, or of charity.

Again, this divine life flows through our world, into the earth, and there is a steady influx from us to you. The portion of this inflowing which is adapted to human needs, flows into human receptacles. There is a less spiritual or more animal life, that flows into the animal creation, and there is a yet different, though it is scarcely a lower form of life, flowing into inanimate natural objects, and the most refined, or elusive of this, is received into growing forms like plants.

As nothing is left without special care, or tendance, so those who have been lovers of flowers in natural life, are interested in this culture here, and form societies, whose chief employment and interest centers in the propagation, and originating new blossoms.

Their delight is to create that which is lovelier

than ever seen before. As flowers are of spontaneous growths, and appear in forms correspondent to our states, these florists are no less devoted to their culture and tending than when on earth, and as the love of such refined creations, is a most elevating and purifying influence, the effect of a large number of such spirits engaged in one pursuit, is evident in the rich, and wonderful growths, that surround them.

The beauty of their gardens, and the variety of forms is simply indescribable, but the environment of that community is most wonderful in loveliness.

It is given to a spirit to express himself without the many hindrances of mortal life, and hence every advance in wisdom, or love, gives an added power to create and perfect the forms of beauty, in which they delight.

When one succeeds in perfecting—comparatively, for there is but one perfection—he is desirous of communicating it to others as that is one of the chief pleasures of this sphere, for we *know* that “it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

These new flowers are nurtured and cared for and subjected to a course of treatment, until they are capable of being transplanted into earthly surroundings. Does that seem a backward transplantation? It is not. It is flux and reflux, and mortal life if pure and elevated has its influence here. The angels in the vision “*ascended and descended.*” First the desire and then the answer.

This bloom is the spirit of the earthly plant. The person to whom is given the care of this bloom, or

plant, seeks one on earth with whom he is in sufficient sympathy to be able to use his organization, for the purpose of transmitting this spirit into an earthly form

There are always those who are lovers of the same things in each sphere of existence, and one has but to seek to find. Of course there are certain needful preliminaries to be observed, and if the word "conditions" had not been so foully abused, I might express this, as the requisite condition to be observed, to make this implanting possible.

The earthly recipient, has this knowledge inserted into his internal perception.

As the multitude speak, "they think it out," but really this is knowledge conveyed by a superior mind. When the various preparations are made, and the required condition arrived at, its perfecting point, or the spirit of the blossom, is infused into the waiting receptacle, and a new flower is presented to the world.

One has only to recall how many new varieties of flowers there are now, than there were within the memory of adults, to realize the truth of this process, and yet the greater part of the change, is in the perfecting of species.

For example, the varieties of Roses, within a quarter of a century, differ so greatly from the few known then, that they are really new creations, and this is true of all kinds of plants. The influx of spiritual life is so much less hindered, and hence more powerful than even a lifetime since, that these changes are

very marked, and will appear in increasing rates in the times to come, because the humanity is becoming—more alive to the spiritual—or as we may express it, more refined. What a hundred years ago, would have been impossible because of the “closed doors,” now that the “gates are ajar,” pours in, in a multitude of avenues and produces its effects.

The people who make a profession of flower raising talk learnedly of hybridization, and various methods of developing special qualities in plants, but all their “labor would be in vain,” did not the correspondent society here, do *its* portion of the work, and in due season insert the spirit bloom into the new form prepared for it, by their guidance and instruction.

And if this is the case with flowers, the fairest and purest of earthly forms, rest assured that it is so with all things whether higher or lower, in the scale of living; for one cannot advance without the other.

Nothing can say to its neighbor, “I have no need of thee,” for all are bound together, and mutually dependent members of one great union. The same law is noticeable in fruits, vegetables and animals. A degree of perfection has been aimed at in each class, that a few years since would have been impossible, and the impetus once given, can never be withdrawn. The only difficulty is in the natural, which is not half so eager to receive, as the spiritual is to impart, and hence the conditions are not provided, which renders reception possible.

This also is changing, as the many agitations ap-

pearing on earth, are but the prelude to the closer external union of the spheres of life, the natural and the spiritual. I say external, because there is but one life, and that in its essential, is of the Divine.

And for the ending take this. "If, He so careth for the flowers, shall He not much more care for you."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE MOHAMMEDAN SOCIETY.

You will recall my statement of our dear friend, Mr. B's, that "To his mind the Infinity of the Lord is more clearly shown in the vanities of the human races, and the principles they represent, or, as he expressed it "Each as a thought of God" than in any other method.

Our visits to the Indian and African heavens had been such a revelation to us, that we desired greatly to continue our experience, and were at length allowed to do so, and to go to the Mohammedan Society, The lowest of them, of course, into which their world is divided.

We went in the manner before described, and found ourselves at the end of our journey on a height not like the mountains that encircled the other societies, and yet quite an elevation.

From thence, we saw a vast plain watered by broad clear rivers, and studded with extensive tracts of lofty and beautiful trees. All of them were either in bloom, or heavily fruited, which typified the sensuous nature of the Oriental. The trees, for their delight, must not only give shade and refreshment, but minister to the sense of beauty.

The Fruits corresponded, not like those we see on earth, even in the Tropics. Oranges alone of familiar aspect though they were glorified, translucent like golden porcelain, and some of deep crimson, and all shades between.

There were any quantity of birds, something like doves, gray or a dull bluish color. Among the trees were many noble buildings, some like palaces for size and splendor, and all, great or small, crowned with the Crescent.

This also was typical of them, and their faith. As the Crescent moon emits but a faint uncertain light, so their faith gave a very partial guidance in matters of human growth, and progress, in the anarchy and strife, which prevailed the Eastern nations.

Still it was brighter, for all the Oriental races were idolaters, and Mahomet taught the Unity of God, and to revere the Christ as the greatest of prophets.

There was so much light in the darkness, but it was but a faith. There was no loving, or Divine life, as a portion of his teaching.

We saw also many dwellings, light airy structures of white stone carved like intricate lace work, and with the peculiar round arch, seen in Moorish architecture. They were always adorned with fountains or with water flowing near, and this seemed also a type of their longing for truth.

I did not notice any animals, as in the Indian and African Societies, or any birds but the grayish ones, and they were without songs, unless a monotonous chirp, can be so described.

We stood for a long time gazing at a scene so different from any we had seen, and with so many suggestive features.

We began at length to doubt if we were to be allowed to go further, when through a lofty avenue of trees, we noticed three stately, very noble looking men approaching us, clad in flowing robes glittering with heavy embroideries of gold, and silver, with precious stones intermingled.

The one in the middle, carried a green standard or banner, on which was a crescent wrought in rubies, that flashed like fire, and above it a cross of diamonds, whose radiance was more than our eyes could endure.

These men were very dark in complexion, with the blackest eyes. The middle one who seemed to be in some sort the superior, had a silver white beard, that reached to his waist, the others had black beards not nearly as long. They all wore snowy turbans with jewels in the front, and really they added much to the stateliness of their appearance.

They came forward very slowly, and had nearly reached us, when they planted the staff of the standard deeply in the ground, so that it stood upright, and advancing a few steps, made obeisance nearly to the ground.

They then retired a short distance, and appeared to watch the banner closely. We also watched, to discover what engaged their attention, and soon perceived that the Crescent ceased to emit light, and grew dull and dim, while the Cross, simply blazed

in the midst of rays of glory. After a time the snowy bearded one came forward and taking up the Standard, carried it back a little way, and again planted it in the earth.

They approached us and bowed low as before. They took each of them, Father, Mr. B., and the boys by the right hand, with their right hand, and pressed the clasped hands to their hearts, lips and foreheads, but to we feminines, offered the left hand and without touching us, performed the same motions. Then they invited us to go with them and enjoy their hospitality.

As we walked with them, leaving the standard, Father looked surprised at its being left, and the elder noticing it said,

“We are taught by the light, whom we are receiving, and by that means learn how to make our guests welcome.”

Father replied, “You scarcely need that to inform you of the faith of our nation, for they differ from you in person, even if otherwise unknown.”

“Nay,” the elder said, “there are many who may come of other nations who do not worship the Lord Christ, and in that case the Crescent would emit light, as soon as their influence was felt. There is but one Lord we know, but the crescent represents all degrees of unbelief, and doubt, and hence would make manifest the state of those approaching.

Father inquired, “What does it teach of us?”

“My brother,” he answered, “It showed us that you were of the Christians, as in your profession.

You not only believe in the Lord Christ but you love Him, and do His will."

One of the others answering the unspoken question, said, "We left our standard at the entrance, because no other can approach by that way, until it is removed, and you will be secured from interruptions."

We soon reached a building in the nearest grove, most exquisite in form and ornament.

"Frozen music," Mrs. B. said, and I concluded it was "stone flowering." The carving was wonderful in delicacy, and amid its filmy openings, were spaces left plain and white and on each of these an inscription in gold or gems.

Though it was substantial, it was airy for a dwelling, or so appeared to us. Arrived at the arched doorway, the ceremony of reception was repeated, and with low obeisances, and much reverence we were bidden to enter.

Here we were met by a number of young boys, dressed in flowing white robes, and each bearing a cup of gold colored liquor. The men took the cups from them, and in ending their welcome, presented it to the person welcomed. It was most delicious, ice cold and very invigorating.

We entered the hall, and all around it upon the floor were cushions of richest handiwork, disposed to form couches and seats. It was so like the descriptions we used to have of Eastern life, that there was no need to be told here, that the spiritual formed the natural.

We were seated upon the cushions and were silent

for a space, and then the softest sweetest music, like breathings of melody began to pervade the room. The air was full of it. It is impossible to know whether it was the liquid we had partaken, or the music or both, but a sensation of perfect physical rest came over me, and to judge by expression, the others also.

This continued for some time, and then some lovely young girls clothed in white, with jeweled girdles came into the hall, and taking each of us women by the hand, led us into another hall, quite as beautiful as the first, though not so gorgeous. Through this, another, and into a court, where there was a great pool of water and fountains sparkling under the trees.

Here they disrobed us, so gently, so quietly, that we could not think of resisting, and led us down the marble steps into the water, and placed us beneath the fountains. It was delightful.

The liquid was so cold, clear and refreshing. After a while we were led up again, and as gently re-clothed, in garments of great richness, but in fashion more like those they wore. They dressed and curled our hair in ringlets down to the shoulders, and draped it with a sort of coronet, but each of different gems. Mine were sapphire, Mrs. B.'s emeralds, Elsie's were beryl, and Florence, had pearls.

We were led back into the hall of reception, where we found the others as much changed in dress as ourselves.

Another silence followed our reseating, music again

breathing and pervading all things, and then a number of persons entered, and having welcomed us as the first had done, sat gravely down about the room on the cushions.

Another silence and then fine mist, began falling all about us, very fragrant and delicious and the elder arose and said:

“My brethren, we have the sign of a Wisdom that shall impart knowledge to us. Will you speak the words you have to give us?”

Mr. B. answered him that, “We were newly come from the earth, and were permitted to visit the different communities, to learn what we were able to receive, of the attributes of the Infinite.”

“My brother, you have a great truth to show us, or the sign would not be given,” the elder persisted.

Mr. B. arose and stood in the midst and said, “We are of those who believe that there is One God.”

At this point, all in the hall bowed until their foreheads touched the ground, and murmured as with one voice, “Allah il Allah.”

We were so surprised that we could only gaze on this adoring assembly, and Mr. B. stopped speaking, till all those great black eyes were again fastened upon him. Then he resumed:

“We believe that He made of one blood, all the nations of the earth. Thus we are all brethren, brethren in love and service, children of one Father, sons of one family. We believe that God loves all those who do His will, and those also, who are so

unhappy as not to know that in His service alone there is perfect freedom, perfect peace. We believe also, that He found no other way to redeem those erring ones—and we are all very imperfect, even the best of us coming far short of our privilege—than to come into the world and take on Himself the form of man, and teach us by His love, and service, how we could love and serve Him, by loving and serving each other.

“We believe that this was the Lord Christ, who will at last bring to His Father’s house the last wanderer, the last sinful one, washed clear from sin, made pure and holy, to dwell to all the ages in the many mansions of the Father’s house.”

He ceased—The mist still fell and a soft brilliant light rosy, and lovely filled the hall, and shot in rays through the air. Every one was prostrated with foreheads to the ground, and so remained till the light slowly faded, and the mist fell no longer. Then they rose slowly and sat in deep silence for a while, when the elder arose and spoke.

“The sign is fulfilled, and the All Seeing has given us a mighty truth, a great Wisdom. Will our brother speak to us more of the wonderful message, he has borne to us?”

Mr. B. said, “So it is new to you who have dwelt here so long.”

The elder replied, “We are but small vessels for the Almighty to fill with His truth, and we receive only as we are able. We were taught that those who do

justly and worship Him, are accepted at His hands, but we believed, also, that many were without in the deserts, to wander thro' all the ages."

It is but little idea that I can give of Mr. B.'s address as he again arose, feeling at liberty to express himself. He took the dear old Bible stories, the lilies of the field, how they in their frail and fleeting lives were clothed in beauty, of the birds of the air, so weak and helpless, and of the tenderness which guided their flight, and spread its protecting hand over their tiny nests. Of the Shepherd leaving the obedient ones of His flock to follow the wandering one, through dark mountain passes, over deserts, through deep waters, among ravening evils, till finding it weak and fainting, He gathers it in His Bosom, and carries it back again, all that devious way to the fold in the green pastures, and beside the still waters. And again of the Father whose prodigal son, spurning His love, laden with treasures of His gift going into a far country and squandering in sin, what he should have cherished, and when wearied of evils he turnstoward his Father's home, to ask there a servant's place, the Father sees him afar off, and runs to meet him, folding him to the heart he had bruised, and broken, and carried him home with rejoicing to be his own beloved forever. And last of all that most solemn wonderful prayer, when from the cross the redeeming love spoke in ineffable tenderness, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do."

How he wove all these together. The love that follows its wanderers, never wearying, never forsak-

ing, never slumbering, or sleeping, patient, long-suffering, passing all human conception, waiting, over-ruling even our mistakes and wrong into instruments of redemption, till in the fullness of time, and experience, He draws to himself, uplifted in the very agony and rapture of redeeming love, all the creatures of His hand, to dwell with Him, blessed forever.

It was a marvellous outpouring. He seemed almost transfigured, lifted out of himself and, oh, the words burned and glowed with his favorite theme, love, love love. Again the rosy light filled and drifted through the room, and the fragrant mist fell softly, and all present bowed, prostrated to the floor. As our friend ceased there was a short pause, and the elder rose and said:

“My brother, will you speak to the Great God whom you worship, that he may cause this truth to abide in our hearts?” And then again our dear friend spoke—prayed—as if the heavens were opened, and he could see the face of the Infinite, to whom he spoke. It was an ecstasy of loving and beseeching, and as he concluded with the ascription “Glory, and honor, and dominion, and power unto our God forever and ever,” the place was flooded again with light so soft, and yet so full of radiance, that it was a revelation of what glory may be in a higher sphere. We sat or bowed like those entranced, and at length the light died away, and we were as quiet as at first. A feeling of awe and deepest reverence seemed to brood over us, and yet it was perfect peace. After a long time the old man arose and said:

"My brother will you speak to the Great God, and ask him to send us the book of this truth?"

"Yes," Mr. B. replied, "He will send to you all that you desire, but by other hands than ours."

Afterward we were served with delicious food, unlike any of which I had partaken, and still more delicious drink, and were taken to the palatial buildings, we had noticed as we came in. They were libraries filled with books, far exceeding in number my utmost idea. It was as if the world could not have contained them.

All the buildings were alike of white carved stone, with domes of glass in each building of different color, and very lofty and magnificent. There were a great many men in the halls, and they seemed to be wrapt in study, and yet arose to give us most courteous welcome.

There were many of these places, and we passed through them, and then under noble great trees, through winding paths, and by clear lakes, and everything was so stately and perfect of its kind. Our long circuit brought us to the same hall of reception. We heard more dream like exquisite music, and at length were conducted again to the point of entrance.

The standard was still there, the cross ablaze amid rays of glory. We were escorted by a multitude but the three who met us on our arrival seemed to be leaders, and scarce any spoke but these. They were the gravest, and quietest persons I ever saw, and even the young girls, and boys, were as quiet and grave as the elders.

The ceremony of our meeting was repeated at our parting, and we saw them standing as we floated away homeward, as if watching where we went. Father said that they appeared to receive what was taught them without any doubt, though evidently it was not only new, but directly opposed to their previous belief.

"Well," I remarked, "They had a sign, or several signs to invite belief."

"No one ever believed from a sign," Father answered, "For it loses its force, as its remembrance grows fainter."

Mr. B. said, "I can account for it only by the theory that their genius is receptive, and their reasoning powers not actively exercised. They appear to be forms of faith, without much reasoning about it. They receive, and so believe from a preception of the truth, and are thus an expression of the purest and highest faith."

We finally all agreed that this was the case, and so peacefully exchanging our impressions went homeward. We laid aside our gorgeous garments beside the other tokens from the Indian, and African societies, and rested, feeling that another and beautiful experience had been added to us.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.

As one of my chief aims in these communications, is the resolving of questions which hinder, and trouble, I will write of the effects, or consequences of sin, as I have been instructed since coming here.

We are taught that there is but One, who passed through the earthly life sinless, though "tempted in all points like as we are." The Israelites were His nation, "as to the flesh," or He was an inheritor of Jewish nature, in His Humanity, and that was because they were the most sensuous, as well as the most sensual people, of sufficient intellectual development, to make it possible that a highly developed humanity should be of their race. I doubt if such a combination of self-righteousness, and stiff-necked obstinacy, could be found in any other nation. And for the reason, that they were in spiritual life—not knowledge—for they were taught of God, the lowest of all intellectual races then on earth, He was born of them as to His humanity. As He could redeem only by cleansing even to the lowest, "He took on Him the seed of Abraham." Hence the temptations which assailed Him were threefold, as relating to His physical, intellectual, and spiritual natures.

The first class, one represented by His hungering, or desiring physical comfort the selfishness of the human nature, is personified by the devil urging Him to use His power, for His own relief, by commanding that "stones be made bread."

The second or intellectual temptation, is signified by the desire to give the proof of a divine mission, by presenting Himself unharmed after flinging Himself from the top of the Temple, as showing that He had supernatural care or support.

The third is represented, by the desire to claim worship, and the dominion of all the earth in acknowledgment of His divine nature. The passing through all these classes from the lower, to the higher, unscathed, shows His divinity as it makes manifest our want of spiritual life, that we fail where He triumphed. But as His road is ours also, we meet the same kind—though not the same degree—of temptations. For instance we desire—and many never rise above that state in mortal life—the comfortable things of earthly living,—plenty to eat and drink—good clothing—a fine dwelling, etc., and with these evidences of prosperity, the respect and esteem of our fellows, and the position of those not only known, but influential. The list may be extended to meet the yearnings of differing natures, for ease and power. There is nothing innately disorderly in these desires, if they are regarded as means, and not as ends. If we wish wealth as a power to do good, it is good, and so of each of these other desires. It is the lowest form of temptation, and the consequences of sin in these matters,

are by immediate judgment or return according to our deserts. If we violate the law of health, we suffer consequently and at once. Some excesses seem to defer their returns, but it is only seeming, as the consequences commence immediately on the violation of law, though by reason of great physical strength it appears to be delayed outwardly. So of one who makes money his end or idol. He loses in the mean pursuit, the freshness and vigor of manliness, and self-respect, and in due season the respect of his fellows.

The second class of temptations is much more refined and subtle, and is that of the intellect. As there is nothing in our life on earth nobler, than a cultivated mind, devoted to the service of the highest, so there is nothing more pitiful, than its cultivation for the low ends of one's own advantage and elevation, in worldly position.

It is the more subtle because it entails self-denial, and the conquest of lower appetites. In this class we included those whose end and aim is mental supremacy, the people who amass intellectual riches for their own sake, and as an end, and even come at last to feel contempt—that deadliest of sins—for those less cultivated than themselves. Not only is this class more dangerous because it includes the subduing of lower appetites, but for the reason, that it is apparently the most enduring of all possessions. While the natural must perish in the using, and be utterly left behind at death, these attainments are

imperishable, and must endure in the immortality of the soul. Nevertheless they are a miserable aim, considered as an end.

But of all temptations, the most fatal, assails the spiritual nature, as this is built on the conquest of both natural, and intellectual desires, and is symbolized as the worship which had as its reward the kingdoms of the earth, and the power of them. Perhaps the most usual form is that of self-righteousness, and surely there is nothing more subversive of real spiritual life. In its essence it is self-worship, and the more dangerous because it assumes the form of faith in God. "He will not suffer my foot to be moved," because I acknowledge Him in the face of the world, is a very different thing from "He careth for me," because He is Infinite Love. The outward manifestation may be the same in both cases, while the inner motive in the one is trust in the Lord, and in the other, the taking to ourselves of His protection, because our own perfections demand it.

And because this class of temptations attack the inmost of our being, it is by far the most difficult to overcome. A defiled nature may have intellectual development, and in so far fulfil the mental uses of life, but the defiled spiritual closes the avenues to the influx of life from the Lord, which inflowing is into the inmost, or spirit of every human being. A person who is in a defiled natural condition, and at the same time intellectually developed, may feel his spiritual need and be open to a conviction of want,

which may result in desire, and such desire is always responded to. There is no "surer promise" than that those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled."

But when one whose natural loves, hates, passions, and appetites, are in a state of subjection, and whose intellect is cultivated more or less, comes to a state of rest and satisfaction with his spiritual attainments, his inner life reverses, and instead of receiving from the Lord a constant influx of strength, and power, he receives only the apparent and altogether sjourious support of his own lower nature, the Satan of perverted intellect.

There are no more hopeless examples of yielding to temptation than this, and in many cases it is really because the evil seems like good, and the arrogance of self-righteousness, masquerades as humility, and faith.

As to the consequences of sin, they are threefold. Not only the loss of happiness, consequent on right-doing, but impaired power of resistance to the next attack of temptation, and, as a final result, not only the weakness of the particular faculty to which the temptation is addressed, but of the whole nature. And as the usual course of life is of alternate victory, and defeat, there is a mingling of weakness and strength, of good and evil, which robs the conquests of their real effect. A continual see-saw, up and down, where the victory gained in one struggle, may be lost in the next defeat.

So of those who through mortal life are in conflict, falling and rising, heart-sick and discouraged, and longing to be rid of themselves, more urgently than anything else. They bear the burden all their lives, and vainly hope to be rid of it at death.

I think so often of the saying that to those who believe themselves safe, the old theology is the more comfortable, since they are persuaded that death is a glorification which immediately lifts them to angelic life, and perfection. But we are taught that the consequences of sin are never ending. As one goes through mortal life, always missing the limb that was destroyed, so we go into spiritual life, maimed because some faculty has been deprived of development, or dead. It is of the Infinite pity that nothing can be eternally dead, that ever had life, but the dwarfed faculty is to all eternity, like the maimed, or missing limb. Nothing can ever restore the vital strength that perfect exercise of every faculty would have given. No lost opportunity can ever be regained, no lost time recovered.

There is but one way in which such loss may be gained. It occurs when a human soul, feeling itself incorruptible, and in perfect moral health, yielding to sudden and urgent temptation, discovers how like a "house built on sand," its perfection was, and in the shock of self revealing is awakened to a sense of its need, and so comes into a higher state, through the apparent fall. There is often a powerful influx into human life of divine truth, and to those whose "in-

iquities are filled up," the day of judging, or revealing comes.

Those who have been as princes among their fellows, go into felons' cells, or cast out by those who respected, and loved them pass into voluntary exile, lost, to human judgment, but saved to their heavenly guardians. And those who come here as the majority do, their worst failings and follies known only to themselves, and the unsleeping love; the judging or revealing is in this spirit world, and is often a most pitiful awakening. Many a one coming here hoping and expecting the "crown and palm" finds itself ragged and filthy, covered with wounds, maimed, halt, and blind.

But glory and thanksgiving to His name, who became perfect through suffering, that He "Might succor those that are tempted," the fallen and destitute come to Him at last, humbled and "willing to be helped." No evil is eternal, though we feel its consequences in our feebler spiritual development, and know that to all eternity we shall always be a step behind where we "might have been," had all our life been obedient, pure and above all, loving. Love redeems us, not only by its power from without, but by the cleansing power of its own unselfishness. We may make mistakes, and honestly doubt, but if we are unselfish in both doubt, and mistake, the sting is gone, and no consequences result to be an eternal reminder of loss.

Those who enter here, after a life of deliberate evil, are like new-born babes in their immaturity and weak-

ness, only with this spiritual infancy, there is united, perverted natural and intellectual development. Much to unlearn, much to overcome, beside the almost perished, or rather dormant germ of spiritual life, to nourish and strengthen. Verily the way of the transgressor is hard, when the attempt is made to retrace this long evil way.

As to outward surroundings in this existence, each one is surrounded, with that which agrees with the character which is the result of earthly experience. Evil is cold, hard, destitute of real life, hence one who has chosen it, awakes to a cold, cheerless, dead surrounding. Rocks, sand, destitute of verdure or living forms. As only love, and life, are prolific of living results, so the outer clothing or spiritual body appears dead also, like a lifeless body, ghastly, and cadaverous.

This state continues, until the misery of the consequences of their evils awakens regret, repentance and finally desire for higher things, and the upward progress begins to consume ages of life, which will always be so much lost to the possibilities of a spirit.

It is true that in the outset, the relief of knowing that help is possible, will overcome the remorse of loss, but I imagine that as we rise, we shall be able to perceive more and more clearly, what the real waste is. It may be, that eternal regret will haunt us, like a minor strain amid the songs of heaven. It may be too, that we shall recognize that with our inherited tendencies, this experience was the best possible for our right education, and our sense of

what has been granted, or rather of the Wisdom that made the "best of us," will overbear this sorrow or as Paul expresses it "Death may be swallowed up of victory."

If so, thanks to Him through whom we are victorious, redeemed, and made fit to be partakers of His holiness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONSEQUENCES OF SIN (*Continued*).

To continue the subject last considered, and answer some of the questions suggested by the truths there advanced.

The eternal consequence of sin, must of necessity obtain with those against whom we sin. If a man refuses to pay a just debt, he not only chooses to do wrong, but weakens his moral force, and lays himself open to temptation. If the payment he withholds is essential to the prosperity of his creditor, he forces upon him a need or a want which unsupplied, will affect his life forever. In the case of women, and children, this is especially true. A man as one more versed in money getting, will oftentimes compass his ends in some other way, and thus in a measure recover his losses.

But, for instance, to quote the nearest familiar form of fraud, in the case of a widow with children, whom she is unable to properly educate, and train for lack of her just due, withheld.

Here is a need and injury suffered, which no after years can supply. I do not understand that eternity will alway feel that particular need, but in each character thus deprived, there will be a lack suffered

at the time of development, some gracious gift neglected, or talent undiscovered, for need of the means of cultivation. Hence there will be weakness, where there should be strength, narrowness where there should be broad and liberal culture, a dwarfed nature, incomplete, that should be a power in the world for holy ends.

It is of the Infinite and tender pity, which overrules and somewhat compensates for these things, that oftentimes there is a strength, and self-dependence, which might have been wanting under more favorable circumstances. A great deal of evil is permitted, but not ordained, to the end that freedom may be secured, for without these we are but machines.

But these things are no less disorderly on the part of the sinners, because the Lord brings a certain amount of good out of them. All violations of the law of Love are to be dreaded, and when the world is as it should be, and will be, there will be no such deeds possible.

No one has any right, to feel relief from the remorse attendant upon evil, because the effect has been beneficial to its victims, for that is solely due to Divine Providence, whose gracious interference, the doer of the evil can least of all appropriate to himself.

There are none who come here, even the best, who do not remember and regret, the violations of the "Law of Love." It is a fearful retribution, to be obliged to trace the consequences of such acts, and

realize the mischief which results. Many labor more diligently to undo what was done on earth, than they did to accomplish the selfish and evil ends there. To illustrate in our midst. We easily recall the wrong done by V. to Mrs. H. He has wrought diligently to return to her what he withheld from her, and has suffered intensely, at witnessing in the weary dwarfed lives of her children, the consequences of his dishonesty. So of his two brothers who have at last realized, how cruelly she, and her family have been wronged by them. It is a matter of course that the place of their habitation must be far from that of my pure, loving, and noble father, but it is not pleasant to know how very different their lot is.

In the place of heavenly society, glory, and rejoicing to which they looked forward so confidently, they found themselves in surroundings very little better than those in their mortal lives, though freed from mortal bodies, and the pains of mortal life. But their deeds, and the consequences were before them, and the need of repairing these wrongs was imperative, before they could free themselves, from the remorse which a quickened conscience, and a more correct knowledge of duty gave them. It was particularly so with V. for his self-righteousness had become so large a part of his nature, that he was nearly reduced to insanity, when he realized what he was, and saw it as well, for all outward surroundings are the outgrowth of the internal state.

On his arrival in the spiritual state, it was necessary to his instruction that his eyes should be opened

to his real character, and Father was sent to him, as one known on earth. For the purpose of recognition, he appeared to V. in the form familiar to him, and greeted him as one friend would salute another. But when the necessary questions were asked, why he had broken the solemn oath to do justice to Mrs. H. he could only stammer, that he thought it was sufficient if he did what human law allowed. Then Father presented before him her toilsome life, the narrow cultivation of her children, the different positions in life into which they had been forced by his dishonesty, and showed beyond any pretense that V. was responsible for all these evils. He said that little as these particulars were presented before his eyes, but finally took refuge in his alleged merits through his faith in the sacrifice of the Cross, which he claimed had removed that sin and all others from him. When Father told him that if his faith had removed the sin, he would not have been suffering the consequences of it, he retorted that he was evidently as well circumstanced as Father was, notwithstanding his unselfish life.

Upon which Father explained to him that this appearance, was due to the necessity of recognition, which compelled a resuming of the form familiar to him, but his errand being finished, as he departed the radiance streamed from his form, till he was a marvel of glory, and V. hid his face, and fell prostrate not able to look upon him.

When Father had passed upward a long distance above him, and he could endure to gaze upon him, he

confessed with agony that the consequences of his sin were indeed upon him, and the evil was not removed, and that he had lost years of progress in his selfish living.

Father says that oftentimes those coming here, perceive the truths thus presented by their former associates, more clearly than when given through angelic spirits, of whom they have no previous knowledge.

I have since visited these three brothers, and find them in very similar circumstances. They occupy comfortable dwellings, but are far removed from the places they hoped for, and are now students in the divine truths, they presumed so arrogantly to teach others on earth. As they had each their share of self-esteem, the unveiling of their real characters has cost them no little anguish. They are striving now to undo their deeds but making slow progress, as in every case they so persistently opposed the truths of spiritual communion, as to close in a great degree the "open door" of possible intercourse.

They are not and never will be, what pure noble earthly life would have made them, or it may be better understood if I express the truth, by saying that they will never reach the position to which they would have attained, had they entered this life with the exalted characters, that they might have possessed. Alway just so much behind what they might have been, and alway feeling it the more keenly, as they learn to appreciate the loss. As one striving in mature life, to supply the lack of culture, regrets

the mental facility that early training would have given.

Oh, if humanity could only see how mean, and poor, all that earth can give is, in exchange for integrity, purity and holiness, the prodigals would cease from their swine's husks, and go to the Father's house, and eat angel's food, and grow worthy of the high calling of His sons. Evil can never be good, either to the doer or the sufferer therefrom, and only the Divine Providence could overrule it to any worthy ending.

Praise and glory His Holy name, who permits the worst of our evils, from affecting those whom we injure.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CHRISTMAS. WRITTEN JANUARY 8TH, '87.

I am certain that nothing which I can give you, would be more acceptable than the faint idea words can convey, of our celebration of the Christ's *earthly* birthday, which is held here at the same time as on earth.

It may appear that the period of His actual incarnation would be chosen for this purpose, but it is not so. The *earthly* anniversary was ordained from above, to occur in the cold, dreary time of year, that the hearts of those who love Him, may be moved to manifest that love to the poor, and suffering, who feel more than at any other season, the hardships of their lot.

I awoke before the light began to deepen, conscious for a while of only exquisite music, and such peace and quietude as no words can express.

After a long enjoyment of this, I arose and looked out, to see bands of singing spirits, floating in rainbow waves of light, and chanting.

"Glory to God in the highest, Hallelujah to the Lamb of God."

I stood entranced, every sense wrapt in the wonderful melody which filled the air. Troop after troop came across the skies, and vanished singing, only to

be succeeded by others, a multitude of sweet faces, and sweeter voices. It was very lovely, and I noticed by the light around them, what looked like showers of snow flakes falling, and with overpowering fragrance. As the light of our day grew brighter, I saw that the lawns, and all about the house, was covered with the purest white lilies. They were so perfect that we could not admire them enough, and gathered quantities of them, and adorned our beautiful dwelling, and made it more beautiful. "Annunciation Lillies" we call them.

Afterward we met in the Hall, where Father read from the Word the sweet "old, old story," and prayed, and we sang together. *All* were at Home that day, and we partook of our usual morning meal, only it was entirely of fruits and wine. Pure food, and drink of Divine Good.

We went then to the Temple on the mountain top, where we were the day the vision was given, of the "crown of thorns." It was thronged within and without. Such multitudes of people, and all happy and smiling, or with the deeper joy of perfect satisfaction, in their eyes. We heard exquisite music quivering and pulsing through the air, and a noble, majestic being appeared "in the midst," and spoke to us. There was but one subject of course, but he so illustrated and unfolded it in his loving wisdom, that like those of old, "our hearts burned within us by the way."

As the blossom and fruit lie folded in the bud, so all the Divine Power, Wisdom and Love, manifested in

His Humanity, was enfolded in the Child, who was born in Bethlehem, and our teacher opened to us truth after truth, more and more interior, till we seemed to feel and know the Infinite Heart of the Universe, in all its tender Pity, and redeeming Love. I do not try to reproduce what no language of mine could even faintly suggest.

He made us feel as if Christ the Lord was born for each of us, so perfect was our conception of His personal care; and yet as if His love embraced *all*, even to the farthest wanderer, and the most desolate, uncared for lot.

The grandest chants—the rapt thanksgiving—and after numberless greetings, and sweet wayside communion, we went homeward.

After we had finished the midday repast, my dear boys proposed to me, to visit the “Babies Christmas.” We were soon on the hillside overlooking their homes, and saw the little creatures, so pure, and perfect, playing in their innocent loveliness. I could scarcely refrain from the wish that no one need come to maturity on earth. We gazed awhile, then went down among the rainbows, and flowers, and talked and caressed the dear little ones, who were as full of fun as “wee folk” ought to be.

At length we heard a sweet singing call, and as by one impulse, the children moved towards one place, a kind of open amphitheatre among the trees and greenery, and there were the beautiful ones who cared for them.

They arranged the babies in a mass, the tiniest

ones on the grass in front, those larger in the rear, according to size, that all might see perfectly. As they nestled together such a sea of tossing curls and bright eyes, not one unlovely feature, or imperfect form, it surely was the most *satisfying* sight one could imagine.

The light began to grow dim and faint, and the darkness to gather, till the skies were deep and dark, and spangled with stars, and the dear ones cuddled closer, and watched, their clear eyes full of wonder. In the space before them appeared flocks of snow-white lambs, and persons tending them, as of old in Judea. Even the least particular in costume was represented. The lambs lay about in groups on the grass, and the shepherds gathered together and, seemed to consult each other about their herds; but finally rested beside their respective charges.

Then a star arose in the East, and made a flood of pure radiance. The shepherds gathered together again, and seemed full of wonder and awe, as they gazed upon the star. As they watched, came sounds of sweet singing, and from the heavens appeared a band of angelic spirits, singing as they floated downward, and they sang the same sweet old words that we learned on earth so long ago.

There is nothing that makes one feel so sure of being in the Father's house, as these continuous experiences, whence we discover that all our life, whether here, or on earth, is *one*.

As the angels sang, one separated from the glittering mass, and came down to the affrighted men, who

were apparently overcome with awe. How sweet was the gentle, "Fear not. The good tidings of great joy to all people," and then the grand ascription, as "Glory, glory, glory," burst from every shining one, and they ascended, till their brightness vanished in the heavens.

The shepherds watched, trembling and agitated, and after much consultation girded up their robes, and took each his crook, and hastened towards the Star. As they went, the flocks of sheep seemed to grow dim, and dissolve, and in their place formed the Khan as it was in Bethlehem, so many centuries ago. There were the low arched doorways—the great horned heads of cattle with their soft eyes—the lowly manger—and there too the lovely face of "Mary, Mother," and the Babe lying on her heart, weak, pale and helpless, just like a new-born child.

As we gazed, she unfolded the garments about the baby, and he seemed to grow stronger and fuller of life, and light began to stream from His face and body, till it was all a glory about him; but such soft, pure radiance, as suited His infantile beauty.

It was a perfect picture, and the children noted every change, and motion with their clear eyes. Then from one side of the Khan, the shepherds came hastening with their eager questionings, and the wondrous tale of the heavenly vision, and the angels message, of "Peace on earth, and glory in the highest to God in heaven."

As they knelt, and worshipped in their rough garb, with bearded faces full of the wonder of their experi-

ence, there appeared the train of the Magi, "the Wise Men," who followed the guidance of the Star. It was a strange contrast, as if to indicate how extremes meet in the adoration of absolute good. The stately, majestic, noble mien of the magi, the rich garments, the gorgeous state in which they journeyed, the splendor of their gifts, gold in wrought and chased forms of beauty. Frankincense in costly vessels, the Myrrh enclosed in oriental wrappings, all laid before the Babe, and the silver haired men, bowing to the ground in humblest adoration.

In the Khan, among the most primitive surroundings, lay the gift for Kings, the royal gold; the Frankincense used in the Temple worship; the gift laid before the High Priest; the Myrrh used for the burial of the dead.

The types and offerings suited to and expressing His threefold mission, as King of Kings, the Great High Priest, the Sacrifice Divine. These thoughts like a revelation rushed upon me, and made the scene before me too wonderful for endurance. As I became able to again note the changes in the pictured life before me, I saw the Child had become radiant, and above the kneeling forms He raised His little dimpled hands, in blessing, and clouds of roseate light began to form all about and above Him. Lovely faces came, luminous in angelic beauty through the soft foldings, and the very heavens seemed to open above us, with row upon row, and rank upon rank of radiant forms, and dazzling splendor.

I had never witnessed such glory before. From

the manger to the zenith was one flaming glorious company of angels, thousands upon thousands of forms too marvellous for any expression in human language, and oh, such surges of "Halleluiah, Glory, Glory, Glory in the Highest."

The upper rank swept down, one glittering mass, and knelt before the Babe, whose hands were extended in benediction, through the darting rays that streamed from every part of His form, a living glory. They rose, passed on, a wondrous presence of light, and rapture of melody. Then the rank highest in their turn, and so on, till there seemed but one flood of unbearable light, passing and re-passing, till at length, there were two bodies of angelic spirits, resting on either side, and the Child in the midst.

The children had been perfectly rapt and immovable, but they began to sing, and their voices sounded so sweet and loving after the mighty chorus of the angelic ones.

Their guardians led them forward, all singing, and then I noticed that each little one had flowers, which they laid before the Child, as they knelt to worship, and when they arose, each taking their offering again, it was changed into pure light, of such brilliancy that only such innocent eyes could look on them undazzled. Each blossom just as perfect, but changed into a glory.

The boys told me these were taken to their homes and retained their radiance, until the following anniversary. It was a vision of wonderful beauty, but when the last row of children had risen, the angels in

waiting came together in the midst, surrounding the Babe and all its environment, which rose and rose until only a bright cloud remained, and but the faintest sounds came to us of their rapturous music.

There were many others beside ourselves who had gathered as spectators, and as we departed I said, "Oh, how sorry I am that we could not have gone to worship also."

David folded his arms about me, and said so gently, "Mother, dearest, you were kneeling with tears of adoring love streaming down your cheeks. Did you not know that you were worshipping, too?"

Gerald added, "See, here is the sign," and I found the lilies I wore at my throat were just like the children's, a silver glory. There were three of them, and they are glowing like stars this minute on my wall, just beneath the pictured face of the Divine Child. The room is illumined from them, every corner of it, with light perfectly clear, but soft as moonlight. We came home full of peace and happiness, and found the friends nearest to us in the Hall. We related our experience, and showed the glorified lilies, and talked, and loved, and worshipped, as only those can do who feel themselves safe in the Father's house. Father told me that the earthly life of the Lord, is represented to the children during their youth to maturity. Only, as to-day, they see both sides, that which appeared to earthly, and that which was manifest to heavenly eyes. So the same dear old story is repeated to every living soul, until all are taught of His love, "from the least unto the greatest."

Long after our friends were gone, and we were resting, such soft, roseate flushes would fill the air and skies, and I fell asleep with the sweet voices chanting as they floated by, band after band of glorified ones, singing their way home.

How I wish that I could make it real to you, as vivid as sight, but I can only use poor feeble words, and they express nothing, even of the tender love, and sympathy, with which I think of all those I left behind, in the clouds and darkness of the lower earth.

Praise and thanksgiving to His holy name, that I know, that He is just as truly there with all I love, as here where it is given us to behold something of His glory.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WRITTEN MARCH 27TH, 1887.—CONCERNING AN
EMINENT MINISTER.

As in the days when we took "counsel together" I feel, as if I ought to say a "word in season," to those whom I loved, and whose lives have been saddened, more than I ever dreamed possible, by my "passing away." With all my "heart, and mind, and strength and all that in me is," I wish that all who cared for me, could remember me without sitting in "sack-cloth and ashes."

To those, who must have known how all my earthly life was one long weariness, and pain, every year adding to the burden, as the "strength to endure" gave away, it seems as if the blessedness of the change, which removed me from my diseased body, must be apparent.

And yet all of you when you think of me, go down into the "valley of the shadow of death" as if you expected to find me there. If these things which I am allowed to tell you, mere fragments of this life, do not convince you, yet I know that you all think that it is "well with me." I would if possible rid you of the sadness, that comes to you with the thought of death for others. You do not seem to

dread it for yourselves. And now, a heavier burden, or an addition to the old one has come. For days you have been mourning over the voice that is stilled, the loving heart that has found rest, and but One, can know how welcome it was to him.

Though he has gone with the light, you abide in the shadows, though largely, as I perceive, from your sympathy, with those who mourn his absence from home. Suppose he is not from home, that his tender heart, and yearning for affectionate remembrance, leads him to stay "just there," until he is satisfied to leave them to the "Comforter," "who will come unto" all, in time of loss and grief. His place is there, and he draws near when the stricken and sorrow-laden turn unto Him in need, and longing. The Holy Spirit comes always, to those who call on Him for help and strength, rather He is always present, more ready to give than we are to receive, but when we turn, in sorrow, and longing, and open the doors, he inflows with healing, and blessing, and fills the empty, with the life that He "hath in Himself."

For his—coming here, there is a flood of tenderness, in which he bathes his weary soul, and realizes to the depths of his great nature, how "blessed are the courts of the living God." He praises continually, the "loving kindness and tender mercy" of the dear Lord, as he loved to call his Master.

His mortal life was so full of love, and service, for how "can one love God whom he hath not seen, unless he loveth the brother whom he hath seen"—that he is well fitted to receive, what he so freely gave, help,

and comfort, strength and peace, from the exhaustless fountain of all life. If it was not in his way to be so full of profession, to adore and worship, as some with his great gifts would have been, it was largely because he had a just orderly perception, of the true growth of spiritual life.

First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, or rendered into every day phrase, first love your own kind, your family and friends, for those you know being of them, and understanding in some sort the nature of which you partake. When the heart has grown enough, to be able to receive a more unselfish love, there is the neighbor,—any one who needs you or your help. When this love has led from selfish desires, into giving the life in service, you are in a manner prepared to touch the hem of His garment. Not to understand, for the finite can never comprehend the Infinite, but to begin to love, and adore. Those who expect to rise from sensual life, and earthly pleasures in one bound, attaining to the heights, while their garments are defiled with the soil of mortal passions, are but exhibiting their ignorance, of the first principles of the Gospel, or good tidings. We climb, step by step, the weary ascent. Our lower and baser attributes are under our feet as we mount. It is life crucifixion oftentimes, for one's selfhood is hard, and cold, and clings like the very life. Every evil subdued, every low passion and energy cleansed, and rededicated to the service of our brothers, is a step upward, and the loving thought that ascends, brings help and strength that, answer-

ing, descends from the source of light. As in the wilderness the Angels ascended, and then descended, to the vision of the Patriarch. So do we fare upward, thro' clouds and darkness oftentimes, till we stand on the "Mount of Vision" and see the loving face of the "Son of Man," who is also the "Son of God."

From thenceforth, the service that has sometimes been one of weariness by reason of ungratitude, and misunderstanding, is filled with His life, and love who gave Himself for those who not only rejected the blessing He came to impart, but slew Him.

There is no other way, than the royal road, trodden by the footsteps of the "King of Kings." We learn before we can teach, we creep before we can stand erect, and walk, then we walk freely, until with execution comes strength, to move with energy and help, and finally we "mount up with wings as Eagles," to fall in perfect adoration at His feet, who has made us, to be "Kings and Priests of the Highest."

Not in vain is the least unselfish deed, the faintest effort to unselfish living. It is the fructifying of the buried seed, that will make a little greenness presently, to finally rear its beautiful frondage, beside the "river of the water of life."

So learned, and taught, the noble heart, and mighty brain, so lately come to its crowning.

He knew "whoso loveth, is born of God." He knew also, that there is no other way to manifest that love, than by loving service to his brethren. He has

served the lowliest, and poorest, those who never heard his name, or knew what he did for them, for he gave to all good, and noble causes, the help, and strength, that made them powers for good, whose fruitage only the ages can tell. He served also, the crying spiritual needs of those, who hungering, and thirsting after righteousness, came to him as a visible source of strength. He served those also, who seeing his face as he talked with the Almighty, as "friend talketh with friend," were led to walk beside him, up to the mountain top, and there saw as he did, the dear loving face of the "Christ," "Emmanuel," "God with us." As he learned, and taught, "watered, and was watered," he came to the end of one phase of his being, when he could not longer be "held of the flesh." What was a help in his earlier service, outgrown, became a hindrance, and the call "Come up higher" was but a consequence, of the fitness, wore through brotherly service, to rise into another sphere, and among other surroundings.

He is working still. His lips are burning yet, with the adoration of his great, loving capacity, filled to overflowing, and the brightness of his countenance, is that of those, who abode with the Lord, in the mount of Transfiguration.

He is full of desire to help, and to serve, and his whole nature, flows serenely, and powerfully on, like a mighty river, lit by the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, whose radiance is reflected in a thousand sparkling, and gleaming lights. So let him abide in your thoughts, as one who "loved his fellow

men," and whom therefore, "the Lord has blessed." It is well with him, it will be well with those who love him, if they walk in his footsteps, trust as he trusted, serve as he served, love as he loved. As death was to him the path way to eternal life, look for him among the immortals, for he is not in the tomb, "but risen."

So shall they rise, who follow and imitate him, as he followed and imitated his Lord and Master, and in due time, the home comers will find themselves beside him again, serving, loving and blessed forever.

CHAPTER XXIX.

CONCERT IN THE HOUSE OF DAVID.

Shall I make another attempt to describe the indescribable, and express what no human language can compass, in the effort to relate one experience, in attending what—for lack of a better word—may be called a Concert. Poor as the result may be, I am desirous of giving some idea of this new delight, an evidence of the brooding love, continually manifested here.

It was a Grand occasion to me, as my dear boys and girls, were joined with the members of their Society on the occasion. They belong to the, “House of David,” and before I begin my story, I must state that David was representative of the Lord Christ, as a King, just as other persons represented Him in other respects. Hence the members of this Society, are as we should say, representative of that aspect of the Lord. Not that they are *Kings*, but they have the kingly attribute of Power, and can make wonderful use of it, when needful. These are they of whom David spoke.”

“Bless the Lord, ye and his angels which excel in strength,—it should be Power,—that do His commandment, hearkening to the voice of His word.”

They can manifest what seems to us boundless energy, but it is so beautiful, that it is exercised in His service, By those as young as our dear ones are, it is of course, under the direction of more advanced spirits. It was not possible for the "Newly arrived" to go within the precincts of the society, but we were provided for without, and in a place so lovely, that we could but gaze and admire for a time. It was not so very different from our world, but more refined and delicate, and I could sympathize with Mrs. B. when she said:

"It seems as if the old clumsy unsatisfactory,"— isn't that just like her,—"body had gotten us again."

It is true, that several times already, my spiritual body seems as much too gross, as my earthly one would have been when I first came here, and it certainly was so, on this occasion.

The Concert, if I may so designate it, was in the "Society of David," but there were many to whom the experience would be a profit as well as a delight, and we were made comfortable in the suburbs of the place. We seemed to be outside a vast structure, but of what material, it was not possible to discern. We saw all things through a mist, or haze, which, without being cloud-like, was a veil, to temper the glory to our eyes. It was the most elusive of substances, yet must have been of material, as occasionally it seemed as if the sounds made rifts in it, and the splendor "shining forth" was unendurable, though but for the moment.

There were lofty trees above us and flowers about us, the "rare and wondrous blooms," that Florence

and my boys bring to me, and there were luxurious resting places.

Sweetest fragrance and music that was like the vibration of the air, made every moment a delight, and yet we so longed for what we had come to hear and see. We did not hear or perceive any more, till every sense was steeped and lulled into a most restful peace, that held us like a spell. For the first time, I, who had so rejoiced in the quietude of my Home, learned what "Peace" could mean.

I had a question answered then. "How could I be happier to all eternity, than now?"

It came to me that my capacity would increase, and so need more fulfilling.

The peace I had enjoyed so fully, seemed almost earthly in its contrast with this utter rest, and refined repose, which was yet full of energy and a sense of ability, to do anything I should have to do. Is it possible for you to understand my meaning in these contradictions?

We were lapped in perfect peace, but with every sense stimulated to the utmost. Gradually, as if our state had been the preventing before—the vast masses within the veil, became less indistinct, and we could perceive its immensity, towering far above us, with light spires and pinnacles, springing like points of glory into the skies. Where we were, was dusky in comparison with the inner portion, and though the particulars of the structure were hidden from us, we could dimly see that it was vast in extent, and most delicate in detail.

At length we heard such a happy mingling of sweet voices, as if all matters were ready for the commencement, and settled ourselves to be overwhelmed by the tremendous mass, if I may so express it—of the sounds from within.

It was like a sea, a mighty volume, yet in its might, so unutterably tender, and sweet,—another of my seeming contradictions—There were organ notes like thunder, the whisper of flutes, the crash of martial bands, the almost human notes of violins, and yet all so mingled, and pervaded, one by the others that no words could express the effect, It was so powerful, yet so liquid sweet, and gentle.

Gradually all mingled and swelled into a magnificent ascription of Praise. The power seemed to be absorbed in adoration, and the great masses swept us upward, as if to the foot of the "Great White Throne," such a very ecstasy, an agony of adoring, as if one could only be satisfied with the giving up, of every thought, the surrender of every emotion at His feet.

I do not believe, that I was ever as susceptible to music as some people, and on earth I never could feel as many professed to do, the meaning of tones without words. A melody with which language was associated, always took the character of the words and reminded me of them, but that was all.

It is like the gift of a new sense, to distinguish in tones power, lover, tenderness, longing, might, adoration, but it is a keen delight. So of this opening. It was without words, all emotions swallowed up, in one overwhelming ascription of praise.

We were exhausted by the emotions which were excited, and began to question, as if we had not ventured too far, "within the veil," but as the strains finally died away, a pure sweet breeze swept over us like a soothing influence and we were reposed and rested.

We perceived after an interval, a peculiar light in the great building. It was almost metallic in its clear blue, and were a little prepared for the next tone manifestation. A few voices and instruments, liquid sweet like flutes, began a Psalm and we perceived that it was one of David's descriptions of the coming of the Lord, the announcing of the Truth. Clear, pure and sweet the voices chanted the inspired words, and the light spires above us glittered through the mist like lances of sapphire. It was very quieting and satisfactory and we scarcely noticed the showers of tiny blue flowers, that fell about us, with clean, pungent odors.

Again there was a pause, and Mrs. B. touched me, and motioned towards the spires, which alone were distinct above us. The blue, seen through golden haze, were changed into points of emerald light. We were prepared for the next Psalm, the description of the beauty of the earth, as forth-showing the praise of the Lord. It was clear, pure tone, but with an element of joy interfused. Living, it is all expressed in that word.

Again a pause, and again a change in the pinnacles. The same change must have taken place in the whole structure, but we could not see it distinctly. The

mist seemed to enfold the color within, and when it was suffered to become thinner above us, we could see the upper portions, though not at all clearly. The rosy flush struck through the haze and made a lovely glow, and the slender spires were like soft flame. A voice, only one, yet how full of Love, and Power, began the dear old Psalm.

“Bless the Lord, oh my soul,” only in the new language which is flowing, and liquid, and having chanted one sentence, the chorus took up the words and made them flood upward to the heavens. So through all the Psalm, every change in language, changed the tone of the phrase.

“Thou rememberest that we are dust,” was so unspeakably appealing and tender. But the close was magnificent.

“Bless the Lord, ye His angels,”—“ye His hosts,”—“Ye His works,” each sentence more and more intense in its adoration, and the mist was full of darting, rosy flames, as if the strains burst it asunder, and the rose and gold burned through. Then came the last.

“Bless the Lord oh my soul, and all that is within me, bless His Holy name.” How in that sweep and surge, mind, heart, soul and strength, the every pulse and energy of a soul was flung in adoration before Him, its Lord and its Redeemer. Wave upon wave, surge upon surge, lifted and swept us up, till we scarcely knew whether we were sentient creatures, or pulses of adoring love.

Then the soft perfumed breezes came again ; verita-

ble winds of God; which swept over us, and restored us to peace and quietude. Again we rested and gazed and found that all about us were drifts of rose colored blossoms, which had fallen unnoticed in our excitement.

Oh, if I could only make you see or hear the end, but I can only stumble and stammer, for I must use the same words to express so much more than language can ever tell.

We watched the spires grow whiter and whiter, till they were silver light, so brilliant that we could not distinguish their forms but as shafts of blinding snow, and through the mist came darting lances of radiance, keen but so beautiful. Then a voice of exquisite purity and sweetness began to chant the sublime passage from the Vision of St. John.

“I saw a great multitude from every nation, and tribe, and people and tongue, before the Throne and before the Lamb saying—”

Oh! the burst of voices that broke in a surge of melody, whose power was like a sea, billow upon billow.

“Salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever, Amen.” Such a swell of harmony, a majestic rush and surge as up, higher and higher, fuller and fuller, wave upon wave, it rose and beat like a boundless sea, whose billows were the voices of a multitude no man could number.

Again the voice, whose pure liquid sentences were unspeakably tender and pathetic.

“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and He spreadeth His tabernacle over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun strike on them, or any heat.”

If ever perfect love found voice, it was in these words, while we scarcely breathed lest one tone should be lost. “The Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne is their Shepherd and leadeth them unto living fountains of water, and God hath wiped all tears from their eyes.” The intense sweetness paused holding the last note, when as if all above and below were joined in the ascription.

“Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain, to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing, for ever and ever, Amen.” There swelled forth, voices, instruments, the thunder like organ tones, over and over, again and again, higher and higher, stronger and stronger, till the very universe seemed to sway and tremble. Still wave upon wave, surge upon surge, the outpouring of thousands, and tens of thousands redeemed and rejoicing spirits, and in the midst of it all, the mist divided and we saw that glorious company; those perfect angelic forms, rank upon rank, and high above them all, the figure of a Lamb, encircled with blinding rays of glory.

It was but for a moment, but it was one of the moments, that eternity can never efface. How we bore the intolerable blaze I cannot tell. Only by the same power that gives us always strength, but it is more than I ever expected to behold, and live. It was simply indescribable, the great multitude of glittering forms—the blinding radiance—the volume of praise—and the adoration of the immeasurable company, as they swept and bowed before the glory of the upraised form, of the snow white “Lamb of God.”

We sank back, faint to exhaustion. It seemed that if we could have died, we must have done so, and yet the emotion, intense to agony, was a source of strength. The spirit seemed as if it would break away now from even these bodies, and lose itself in the Infinite, “be swallowed up of life.” We sat or rather knelt, for we involuntarily bowed at the glorified image of Him who was “slain for us,” and scarcely breathed as the sea of melody, swelled up and still upwards, till as the last wave dashed and fell back in drops of liquid melody, we wept with intense joy, and longing, and adoration.

Then through the mist came the sweet and noble faces so dear to us, and our boys and girls were beside us, and we went homeward. I could not help feeling half afraid, or not afraid either, but a kind of awe, as I recalled how glorious they had been, but a few moments before. The gentle Home faces so subdued to my need, had a different look to me, now that

“Mine eyes have seen”

what I knew,—yet had not quite realized before, how they laid aside their usual appearance when they came to me. At last Gerald said very softly,

“Mother dearest, you look at us as if we are not as we have been, We are not always as you saw us there, but the act of adoration brings its divine influx, and fills us as vessels are filled. We keep—or rather He keeps the vessels pure and clean, and He fills them with His divine love. We are not such a glorious company at other times, and you should not feel as if we were in any way different.”

I know that they are not, that in all the universe, there is no one more gently, and tenderly cared for than myself, but I cannot help feeling how far beyond and above me, my dearest are. Sometimes I wish that we were all here, and could go on and be satisfied to go, but I cannot be content to sever the connection with my earth bound ones yet, and ought not to long for them to leave their work till their hour cometh.

CHAPTER XXX.

CONCERT IN THE HOUSE OF DAVID (*Continued*).

I cannot employ this occasion more profitably, it seems to me, than by answering some of the queries, and doubts, of which you are perhaps not fully conscious, respecting the Concert in the "House of David." You are troubled about the "Lamb" as if it was merely an image, not a reality and as if the adoration of it, was a form of Idolatry.

Let us go back to the beginning, the One, I am, Jah—Jehovah—God, for He is the only "Uncreate," and hence the source of all creation.

In the words of the Christ,
"God is a Spirit."

"A Spirit hath not flesh, and bones, as ye see me have."

"Ye have neither seen His shape or heard His voice."

"No one hath seen the Father at any time."

"The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father,

He hath seen him,"—and so on, indefinitely. This will suffice, as to the personal appearance of the Jehovah, for Christ expressly declares many times that He, "Who was with Him before the world was,"

alone had "seen Him." No less the record reads, "And God talked with Moses as friend with friend." Also that he spake to Abraham, and to many others in the course of the Old Testament. But it is also true that, "no one has heard His voice, or seen His shape."

The universal spirit of Life, pervading, creating and sustaining all things, flows from the Uncreate, the Jehovah, and nothing can have existence but through this influx. In the days when all avenues of approach to the natural world were open, the appearance of Angels was not a matter of surprise. There was nearly open intercourse between the Spiritual and material worlds. But neither spirit, or angel, was suffered or desired to go, where they had no cause, or business, for the kingdom of God is a kingdom of uses, and we do not waste our strength in deeds without purpose. When it becomes necessary for a special messenger to convey a truth, or give direction, the spiritual influx or the inpouring of the Divine Life, filled the person chosen for this service, to the utter exclusion of the character of the individual, and the angel speaking, spoke as of himself, and was received by the hearers as the very presence and voice of God. "The Father, quickeneth whom He will," to do His errands.

The same influx entered at times into the "Leaders of Israel," for instance, for generations into the "High Priest" at certain portions of his public ministrations, when he thus became a type of the "great High Priest," who is passed into the heavens.

“Even as late, as immediately preceding the trial and condemnation of the Lord, the High Priest Caiaphas prophesied that “One should die for the nation, and this he spoke not of himself, but being High Priest that year, he prophesied,” (St. Jno. 12-51). In other words the influx of the Divine Spirit gave him for the moment, the gift of prophecy.

In like manner, the divine life was infused into the prophets who were persons provided by birth, and experience, for this very purpose. They spake as of the Lord, that is, as if they for the time were the “voice of God.” Really they were, for the divine spirit so completely possessed them, that they spake His words with authority, and delivered His will, commands, threatenings, or promises.

So to, those fitted for this work, and inspired by the Divine Life, poured forth the matchless prophecies, praises, and ascriptions, known as the “Psalms of David.”

The difference as we are taught, between this inspiration and that of the Christ, is, that whereas in the one case, this influx was but the occasional gift, in the Lord, He being “of the Father,” that is, His inmost being, or soul, was of the direct life of God, and hence Divine, the spirit always abode in Him. “It was given to Him without measure.” He was uncreate, as to the inmost or life, though He was created as to the human nature.

He was human and divine in one, the “Divinity in Humanity,” the uncreate in created nature. He had

life in Himself, "He laid it down of Himself, He had power to lay it down and to take it up again."

When the earthly manifestation of His power was over, and He had "finished the work" and "He was glorified with the glory, which He had before the world was" He became the only form of God, that we shall ever know, as He is the Divine in a human form. He does not appear to any, unless it may be the "Angels of the inmost Heaven." He is the media through which, by His unity with the Uncreate, all spirit, and life flows. In this sense the Mediator, making it possible for the Divine life to flow into our degraded, debased human nature.

In these spiritual and heavenly worlds, or rather states of being, the same media is necessary. We are all being "taught of God" but by means suited to our needs, and capacities. As one could not impress pure mathematical truths on a child's understanding, without illustration by lines, angles, arcs, and circles, all the paraphernalia of Geometrical signs, so we, mere babes or beginnings of life, need the signs to express to us the truths, or rather to bring them into the scope of our capacity. It is a common form of speech on earth, that "Truth is one" but the fact is, that while there is, but one "Way, truth and Life"—the Infinite which is not to be comprehended by the finite, must be presented in innumerable forms, and sub-divisions to be received by all. The inmost heaven, we are allowed to believe, is of pure white light, and those who abide there are so purified, as to be fitted to

receive, and exist, in that unendurable glory, but if we in our present condition, should receive of that influx, we should simply shrivel like paper, and be annihilated. Hence for us, the light is in all beautiful and lovely gradations, suited to us, though we know perfectly well, that each colored ray, is but a part of the intense and blinding white, and so far imperfect as a result, though perfect as a means, or part of the whole.

So of the divine life. Though it is one, we can only receive it as we are able, and though to all eternity the finite, can never comprehend the Infinite, we are taught what is needful for us, by signs and appearances. As already given on former occasions, we have presentations of facts, truths, or parts of truths. The Rainbow colors, merging with the pure white light, and then into the Morning Star,—the Crown of thorns on the noble and beautiful head. The babe presented to the children's society, all are instances of the influx of Divine Life, into sentient forms. The child Christ, was really an angel of the inmost heaven, who was able to so receive the divine life, as to confer life and light on this occasion, as shown in the changing the lilies into light in form, and their continuance for a season. So of the others presented, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men, all were really angels and for the occasion so filled with the divine life, as to lose their personality in the representing of truths. So of the Lamb which appeared in the House of David.

The intention was to present to the society, a new

truth, or rather to emphasize a truth already known. These societies are of individuals, and the character of the society, is the aggregate of the character of the members. It may be, that in developing their Power, the truth had been overshadowed, that real life is only possible through the serving of others, as the Lord instructed His immediate followers. The "Son of God" came to minister, and as He had washed their feet, they must also serve. It is a part of the beautiful idea of spiritual life, that even truth needed for reproof, is given with exquisite loving tenderness.

On this occasion the particulars were so directed, that while they were the voluntary choice of those by whom the festival was given, every selection was inspired by a divine ordering, that the truth should be presented through an experience of great rejoicing, and happiness. Hence all the renderings were of the Lord's earthly life, or taken from the prophecies, and records of that life, for all the old Testament is but a prophecy of Him, and His work, in the internal sense—which is all that we perceive. At the close, to emphasize the fact of His continual love and service, was presented thro' an angelic form, capable of receiving the divine influx the whole wondrous fact of His love, and care in the figure of the "Lamb slain for us." The culminating points to which all the rest led gradually, was the divine sacrifice, the very life laid down for us. Those to whom these representations are given are thoroughly taught in these signs, and they look alway through the type of the truth behind, the antetype.

It is to them what a lofty or noble deed is on earth, and inspired by the same spirit of divine love, for we are all of one body and have one indwelling spirit. As it is given to some to clearly apprehend and love the truth, and to present them through words, and deeds full, and glorious, as we are able to receive them. It is true that capacity is the only limit, for the divine life is always present and always overflowing, full and abundant. "Grace does always much more abound." The sunlight is too glorious for natural eyes to endure without fatigue, but it is only a faint type of the "spiritual sun," which "lightens every man born into the world." We cannot appropriate it, any more than our mortal vision could endure the blaze of the noontide sun. That sun reveals itself, in all the lovely, natural forms created by its light and vitalizing heat, and the spiritual sun by all the noble self sacrifice, of the spiritual life, and the intellectual purity of truths, which we are all able to receive and transmit. But our treasure is in eastern vessels, frail, weak, often shattered by the stress of the receiving. Yet so often we take to ourselves the credit of all we do, when all that we can do, is to turn towards the truth and as Gerald says, "keep the vessels pure and clean," and in order for the receiving of the inflowing love, and wisdom, and the divine life must flow in, by its very nature. Perhaps if earthly eyes could see, even mortal deeds would be perceived as taking forms, and the loving and pure heart, would be surrounded by innocent

forms representative of its life. It is thus that we see the state of those still earth-bound. It is thus that they will see themselves when their eyes are opened, and "they know even as also they are known."

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DELIBERATELY EVIL.

In your mind are queries which perhaps it will be more profitable to answer, as far as wisdom is given me so to do, than to describe that which is after all but the outcome of our condition here.

You question how could one, who was so depraved as to deliberately defraud or injure another, ever come into a state of peace, unless through the undoing of his evil deed, and how can that be accomplished here, if the evil deed was done on earth. It will simplify the matter to consider that the motive is the first point to decide, and afterward the facts of the man's character, and whether the deed was in harmony with, or in opposition to the usual course of conduct. The ulterior act is decided according to its motive, and as that can be evil, only in a deliberately evil act, we will consider only that class of actions whose motive is evil.

A person whose moral nature is not strong, often is led by the force of a great temptation, into acts totally at variance with his usual conduct. He may know by the law of cause and effect that only evil can follow an evil act eventually, but may hope to secure a good for those dear to him, or by such means to

avert and escape a great calamity. In such a case, though there follows the decadence of power that would have come as the fruit of victory, with loss of self-control, and a liability to fall again, especially if his sinful deed is successful, yet the remorse which follows inevitably, oftentimes proves a stronger motive for resistance, than a course of uninterrupted good could attain to.

The consequences of sin once recognized as inevitable, the loss of peace, and self respect, may be a safeguard against such violation in future. It is also the truth that although every transgression is to be atoned, yet the result to the spiritual state, depends on the whole character, and not on an isolated action. If the evil deed is contrary to his habitual life-course, the keenness of his remorse will combine with his usual motives, to be a redemption from evil, and thus his sin, will raise him above the level otherwise attained.

But for a class who on entering responsible life resolve, from any cause,—whether hereditary, or acquired by false education—on a course of selfish, and sensuous life, there is a wholesale deterioration of character, that will be no more redeemed by isolated acts of right-doing, than the former will be condemned by an isolated act of evil.

Their downward tendency—though to the world their conduct may result in great material prosperity—is confirmed by every means, until they become as nearly wholly sensuous, and selfish, as a human being is ever suffered to be. They find their

only ease on reaching the Father's house, and perceiving their real state, in the humility of the Prodigal son, "Make me as one of thy servants."

Once convinced of their evils, and aroused from the awful despair that comes with this knowledge, their only comfort is in undoing what they so carefully did. Often these persons are anxious to return to earthly life, to try to help and comfort, those who owe their ruin to them.

The deliberately evil are seldom weak. The mere transgression of every moral sense, presupposes a certain strength of will, or hardihood, far removed from weakness of intellect, and when the truth becomes manifest, the repentance is proportioned to the energy of the character. Hence the first impulse to act to "do something." The spectacle of a soul whose whole whole earthly life has been one of selfish indulgences, striving to atone, by relieving his victims, is pitiful in its many discouragements, and at the same time inspiring, as evidence of the imperishable nature of the truth, and good, implanted in them, by virtue of which they are human.

Discussing this matter on one occasion, we had as usual an instructor who having opened some of the interior mysteries to us, proposed to lead us, where we could witness the practical working of such a penitent. The sight of evil in any form, or stage, is painful to a pure spirit, but we are yet earthly enough to endure it, and desiring knowledge of all things, we followed and beheld what I will try to describe, though my account must be a very partial one.

We seemed to go downward, into a much denser atmosphere, It was explained that this soul had passed the despairing stage, and was working "out his own salvation," with an energy proportioned to his evil deeds. We came into a dark yet lurid place, though it was simply the sphere surrounding the spirit. The lurid appearance was produced by the atmosphere about him, which was thick and gloomy, and the light was perverted, and made very unlike the pure light ray. Such as it was, it seemed a comfort to him, and he often looked upon it as an encouragement.

We were suffered to enter into his knowledge of his sense of his duty, and saw that he was then engaged in the effort to alleviate the lot of some poor, little children, whose Father he had destroyed by furnishing liquor, to a depraved taste, and whose Mother had perished from over exertion in caring for them. As in a picture, we saw his sense of the many disadvantages under which they labored. For instance, there appeared to be a boy somewhat older than the other three, who was trying to support them, and keep them together in a sort of a Home. To see how earnestly this penitent spirit strove to impart a portion of strength, some intelligent perception born of his own long experience to the boy's crude immature mind, his exultation when he succeeded, his despair when he failed, was a commentary on the "wages of sin," one could never forget. The passion with which he strove to prevent injustice to the children, the indignation which drove him frantic at the

cruelty of those about them, at the same time the consciousness that he was the cause of their destitute, and desolate condition, was a sight almost indescribable in its agony, and yet full of hope.

Our guide informed us that the life of this person, was absorbed in going from one to another of his victims, and expending his whole energy in redressing their wrongs. There was one instance in which he exulted, and told our guide of his success. He had attained such power over one of his former associates, that he was largely under his control.

"I have not as yet reached him, in such a way as to make him loathe the poison, I taught him to love, but I can so control his muscular system, that by constant attention I have prevented his drinking, one drop of it for days together. In one way and another I compel him to drop the glass, or upset the contents, and though at first he was enraged, at what he called his failing nerves, he is beginning to realize that he is under the control of a power, that he is unable to resist, and a kind of fear is coming over him, that will greatly assist in his redeeming."

There was a such a triumph in even this victory, that he was quite exultant in the telling.

Our guide said, "Do you not need sometimes to leave this kind of work, and gather strength in other society?"

"No," he replied earnestly, "I cannot leave this work. It is mine, and strength comes to me from Him whose laws I outraged, and whose justice I humbly acknowledge."

And he turned to his work, cheered by this poor result. I cannot describe him—the energy—the sorrow—the remorse—the almost despairing sense of his unworthiness—the enormous task before him, made a picture of conflicting and intense expiation.

“How long will this continue,” I inquired.

“Until his own conscience is satisfied,” our teacher replied. “It is not a task laid upon him from without. It is the protest of a strong and awakened soul, against its own evils, and the desire of atoning, by working out the deliverance of those whom he has injured. To such an one, whose mortal life has begotten a commercial conscience, to whom exchange is a second nature, the word will almost literally apply, “Thou shalt not come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.” A great portion of his agony comes from the knowledge, that his own family are making his financial success, an excuse to their own consciences for following in his foot-steps. His most intense and desperate efforts, are directed to the awakening in them some sense of the wrong they are doing, and so to prevent them from repeating his experience. He strives with all his power to awaken them to a higher perception of life, and its duties and is hopeful of success in due time.

Mr. B. said with profound sorrow, “How true it is that the way of the transgressor is hard. Even in his penitence, and progress there is an element of bitter anguish.”

In common with many others of his class this man while crushing his fellow men, professed to serve

God, even taking the wages of his iniquity, to build temples for worship. He learns now, that he who serves not the brother whom he hath seen, can never in any acceptable sense, serve the God whom he cannot see.

As the Word declares, he "with the same lips praised the Lord, and cursed his brethren," and held himself blameless. How strange it is that human beings do not understand, that the love of the Highest, must of necessity be the result of growth and development, and so not present the pitiful spectacle of one who can only creep on the ground, striving to mount on wings, to the theme of Infinite glory.

"Is this instance a peculiar one?" Mr. B. inquired.

"Only in its intense concentration," our guide replied. "The way is the same. No one truly repents, who does not strive towards restitution, and until this is accomplished there is no peace."

It would be a singular study to one who knows of this tremendous spiritual energy and effort to trace its operation in human life. It would furnish a clue to many mysterious events and unexpected turns of circumstance.

"How large a proportion of those coming here have such an experience," I asked.

"Not as many as one would at first suppose," he replied.

"The great mass of mankind make the mistake, in the exercise of their avocations, of placing undue value on material success, and not on spiritual

attainment. But it is a mistake, and not a deliberate evil. While there is always a great mixture in human motives, and consequent action, the majority are not really intentionally evil in their aims. These must learn to readjust their many conceptions, and often strive from affection to those remaining, to teach and guide them, but that does not necessitate such intense experience as this. The pursuits whose success depends upon the degradation, and ruin of the human beings who constitute their victims are few, compared with the great body of human effort, and achievement."

"Perfect through suffering," said Mr. B., thoughtfully.

"Perfect thro' suffering," said our teacher reverently, as he raised his hands in benediction, and passed from our sight.

Let those be grateful whose sufferings are not the result of deliberate transgression, but rather the outcome of a discipline and training of powers, to reach the "measure of a man, that is of an angel."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CITY BEYOND THE RIVER.

It occurs to me that I have not given any account,—excepting in our visit to the encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic—of any very large buildings, standing together, like a city. And as I wish to give as clear an idea as possible of this great “waiting place,” I will tell of the city which lies nearest to us.

Standing on the balcony in the upper part of the house, we look down into a valley through which runs a river, and throughout this vale are groups of trees, scattered about of various kinds.

Beyond the river, the land rises in a gradual slope to a high range of hills, and beyond the crest as if upon the other slope, are the spires and house tops of a city. We go there very often, for as on earth, such places are centres of accumulation for many treasures. We pass over the river as suits our convenience, walk or float as we choose, and go from the farther bank, by any of the many pleasant paths that lead upward.

Then downward a little though the suburbs of the city extend nearly to the top of the hills, and are very delightful, with beautiful dwellings among gardens and groves, much like an earthly neighborhood.

Passing through these pleasant places, we come at length to the more central portion of the city.

It is not of continuous buildings, but each stands by itself among lawns and greenery. No two are alike, though equally magnificent, and suited to the uses for which they were intended.

One especially interested me. It is of the purest cream-colored stone. It is as pure as white could be, having a peculiar shade of that clear color,—if I may so express it—but has a richer look. My first expression was, “It is like a piece of lace.” Its tall slender spires seem to rest on the sky, its upper lines were so faint and delicate. The light showed through the traceries above the roof of the building, and gave it a very fragile appearance. As I examined it, however, the pillars, arches, and ornaments built into its front, were substantial, though wrought into the finest designs.

The lower portion was like trees, or rather like Gothic architecture, whose many ribs and spreading arches suggested trees, and the capitals of the pillars were bound about with leaves, and wreaths of flowers, and among these again were wrought heads, and limbs of animals. One I remember particularly was a splendid front of a stag, with wide branched antlers, and the legs drawn backward, as if for a spring, free, and full of action. He had not the whole story above poised on the tips of his slender horns, like the poor squeezed figures in earthly sculpture, where the weight often seems cruelly disproportionate to the means of support.

Arising from this so naturally, that it is impossible to decide where one ends, and the other begins, is the next division. It had human faces intermingled with the pillars and arches—Forms of statuary in niches, strong, noble faces, and perfect forms, no doubt the semblances of great, powerful souls on earth, who were skillful in art, and manifested their beauty to the world, through their works.

Above these again the design was more aerial, and there were lovely delicate forms as if half floating, and above these the lace-like spires melted into the skies.

As the entrances were all open, we went through the central archway, and rising before us was a splendid staircase, whose balustrades were wrought in the same designs, of delicate and seemingly fragile beauty. The walls were of the same stone, but polished like glass, and covered from the very entrance, with paintings of the grandest, or most refined character. It was a revelation of beauty, and each seemed lovelier than the other, though we found the same order as without. On the lower floor were landscapes and water views, some delicate like the green recesses of a forest shot through with golden green light, and others a great rolling flood like Niagara, or the ocean in its might. Mountains and valleys—every form of natural beauty, but so perfect, that it seemed as if the trees might sway to the breezes, and one could hear the liquid chime of the waters.

I was impressed with one great picture of Swiss scenery, and expressed my surprise, that anything so

desolate should be represented here. It was of an immense mountain range, one mass of snow and ice, but lovely too, with the sunset light upon it, and the rosy afterglow over the snow whiteness, and away in the middle was a dwelling so quaint and tiny, among those tremendous masses, that it was like a birds nest, clinging to the face of a precipice.

I stood gazing at it, and not prepared for such desolation, when one spoke to me.

“A Swiss, who had no earthly development in art, but a most passionate love for it, and an unsatiable hunger for his mountain home, could not rest, until he had created it, and wrought out at once, his homesickness, and his passion.”

It is so comfortable to know that such a longing was not ignored. Again the promise was fulfilled, “You shall be satisfied.”

Again we passed upward, and saw that forms of animal life came into the pictures, the landscapes that were backgrounds for them, and such beautiful birds, flashing among the green, and flowers, like jewels. Next were human forms of beauty, or of power, combined with natural scenes, and then in groups about a central idea, and finally stories of human achievement, in which lovely angel faces and forms mingled.

So on we went, from gallery to gallery, tho' on one floor were all similar paintings. There were no rooms, but very wide corridors, built around a central shaft, and lighted from above.

Many of the pictures were familiar to us, and at

length we came to the "Assumption of the Mary Mother," of which we had had a copy or engraving, and it seemed so homelike, and I of course said so.

Then I was informed that no pure orderly desire, to make beauty manifest on earth but had its perfect counterpart here, or its ideal rather. It was such an overwhelming thought to me, that I had to sit down, and let it sweep over me. To know that no poor human creature, striving thro' never so many disappointments, needs and imperfections, to show forth the light that comes to him, but has here in this land of purity and peace, the perfect fulfilment of what he tried to do.

I inquired if "what had been told me of such persons, having visions of what they strove to paint, was the sight of these perfected here?"

I was answered, "No. The ideal comes from the attraction to them of those whose development corresponds to their own, and these suggestions and efforts create the visions, sometimes seen by those more spiritual, and so better fitted to receive." As earthly work progressed its spiritual counterpart grew; the purer and nobler here, the less elevated in a lower plane of this sipiritual world. Until finally, as false and cruel things are not permanent, but fade away, the good inherent in even the most evil, shows its cleansing and purifying power, and evil is once more overcome of good.

The beautiful reproductions we have, though only in photographs, and engravings of the noble works

of the great masters, here they were, more lovely than language can tell. Fra Angelico's angels fairly flew, thought their wings, clumsy things, were transmuted into the lightest mist of drapery and color. The ten thousand efforts to represent the Mother in Mary's face, were here, radiant with mother love, and abounding tenderness, and the Babe—always with light—real light I mean, radiating from His lovely form. It was a place of perfect delight, but I must "get forward" to another pile of stone, white as snow,—pure as light, and noble in its massiveness. Here as in the former, the gradations, animals below humanity above, and over all the ideal forms and faces of angelic beings. All in snowy marble.

Every sculptor's dream fulfilled, his ideal perfected, his imperfect work utterly faultless.

So of another immense dark stone building, where room after room, hall after hall, were lined and filled with books. Everywhere the most exquisite order, and gradual leading upward. First elementary or scientific books, through gradations of knowledge, more and more interior, dealing with causes and motives, to the very uppermost of all, those written in elucidation of the Word. Here too, all earnest loving effort, however faulty its earthly execution, was found with its idea perfectly developed, every imperfection disappearing, and every rough place smooth.

I mention these as specimens of the treasures con-

tained in this city. They are only specimens, as there are many structures devoted to each branch of art. Precious stones wrought into forms of marvellous richness, bronzes, gold, silver and other metals articles of daily use, only perfect. Everything that can interest or develop the newly arrived, or fit them for their higher sphere, and in unimaginable profusion. And everywhere teachers. Noble, majestic, wise and holy, these chosen for their love of knowledge and of imparting what they know, were always ready—and always surrounded by eager listeners. We go there very often. My dear boys were taught in these lovely places before they went up “higher,” and so were all our little ones. Flora and Bertie go there every day to their different schools, tho’ they are not schools in any sense of earthly acquirement, but to their instructors. I inquired of the schools of music, and was told that these were not within the limits of this city. The many branches of musical education require so large a space, and are so unfavorable to the quiet enjoyment of such pursuits as are followed here, that the fitness of all orderings here, require them to be elsewhere. I love the pictures best, and spend long days wandering among them, until I am specially drawn to one particular painting, and then sit down before it and let its meaning sink into my being, and the truth it shadows forth, strengthens and invigorates me. For instance, I had a little despondency come over me, one day, thinking of the baby, and her motherless condition,

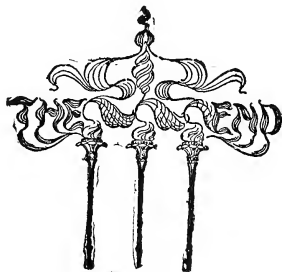
and while half unconsciously dwelling upon it, sat down before a picture of a lovely green nook in a wood, where among grass, and flowers, and shadows from overhanging boughs, with little glimpses of sky overhead, was a nest of tiny birdies, just old enough to balance on the edge of their home, but not to fly, or seek their food. And they were so hungry, poor little helpless things, and had no visible mother. But away up on one side—tho' not within their sight—she was coming, full of eagerness to minister to them, and somehow, tho' more like an impression than a real seeing, so shadowy and refined, was the shape, there seemed a light beautiful form hovering over the nest, and making a little halo of light about it, into whose limit no hurtful thing could intrude, while the mother was coming.

“If He so careth for the birds of the air,” came to me, with its message of consolation that angel form hover over them, shall He not much more care for my little birdie in her motherless nest? There is an idea in all such work, it is wrought out in perfection, and there is no imperfect execution, or doubtful strokes to deface, and hide its inner meaning.

I am learning, too, of the Lord's earthly life. We go to a class, all who desire to see the internal or heavenly side, of His mortal or human experiences, and it is reproduced before us in the most vivid manner.

The scene, whatever it may be, and then how it really was on the other side, to the angels' vision.

It is wonderful in its power, and more wonderful in its pitying love and tenderness, that He who walked in glory before the holy ones, should so accept the humiliations of the early lot, and bear so patiently all its pains, and sorrows, that so He might be the Author of our salvation, "leading many souls into glory."









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