

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal:

'A. Farnese – Forgotten Mystic Amanuensis (to Franchezzo)'

Issue Fifteen

Compiled by Marilyn Hughes

The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!

www.outofbodytravel.org

**A Wanderer
in the
Spirit Lands**



Franchezzo

*A classic true story
of the afterlife*

'A Wanderer in the Spirit Lands' By Franchezzo
through Amanuensis A. Farnese

(To have your Questions, Articles, Poetry or Art included in future
editions, submit to: MarilynnHughes1@outofbodytravel.org!)

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The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal:

'A. Farnese – Forgotten Mystic Amanuensis (to Franchezzo)'

Issue Fifteen

By Marilyn Hughes

In this issue of forgotten mystics, we encroach upon a word which was often used in the 19th century to describe a person who had a special relationship with one particular soul in the spirit world who would show them visions of the afterlife and teach them regarding the laws and mechanisms of the world beyond. A. Farnese was one of these, although there were quite a few. One of the more well-known of these was Phyllos the Tibetan whose work 'A Dweller on Two Planets' is kept in print by a small following even today though it was written by Amanuensis, Yol Gorro, in the 19th century, as well. In this better known work, Phyllos tells the story of many of his lifetimes going back to the time of Atlantis and explains the mechanisms of karma. But in our forgotten mystic's work, the theme is the other life, the world beyond and Franchezzo takes him on many journeys to this world and teaches him about the laws that abide within it.

As with many of our forgotten mystics, not much is known about his life. He left a short note about the nature of his work in his work 'A Wandering in the Spirit World,' which is also known by the title 'A Wanderer in the Spirit Lands.'

"The following narrative was written more than a year ago, and in giving it to the public I do not claim to be its author, since I have only acted the part of an amanuensis and endeavored to write down as truthfully and as carefully as I could, the words given to me by the Spirit Author himself, who is one of several spirits who have

desired me to write down for them their experiences in the spirit world.

I have had to write the words as fast as my pen could travel over the paper, and many of the experiences described and opinions advanced are quite contrary to what I myself believed to be in accordance with the conditions of life in the world of spirits.

The Spirit Author Franchezzo I have frequently seen materialized, and he has been recognized on these occasions by friends who knew him in earth life.

Having given the narrative to the public as I received it from the Spirit Author, I must leave with him all responsibility for the opinions expressed and the scenes described."

*FARNESE, A., A Wandering in the Spirit World,
London, 1896*

All that is known about what brought Farnese to the transformation into mystic hood is written in two accounts he included in his writings. 1.) My Death, and 2.) My Second Death.

My Death.

"I have been a Wanderer through a far country, in those lands that have no name--no place--for you of earth, and I would set down as briefly as I can my wanderings, that those whose feet are pointed to that bourn may know what may in their turn await them.

On earth and in my life of earth I lived as those do who seek only how the highest point of self gratification can be reached. If I was not unkind to some--if I was indulgent to those I loved--yet it was ever with the feeling that they in return must minister to my gratification--that from them I might purchase by my gifts and my affection the love and homage which was as my life to me.

I was talented, highly gifted both in mind and person, and from my earliest years the praise of others was ever given to me, and was ever my sweetest incense. No thought ever came to me of that all self-sacrificing love which can sink itself so completely in the love for others that there is no thought, no hope of happiness, but in securing the happiness of the beloved ones. In all my life, and amongst those women whom I loved (as men of earth too often miscall that which is but a passion too low and base to be dignified by the name of love), amongst all those women who from time to time captivated my fancy, there was not one who ever appealed to my higher nature sufficiently to make me feel this was true love, this the ideal for which in secret I sighed. In everyone I found something to disappoint me. They loved me as I loved them--no more, no less. The passion I gave won but its counterpart from them, and thus I passed on unsatisfied, longing for I knew not what.

Mistakes I made--ah! how many. Sins I committed--not a few; yet the world was often at my feet to praise me and call me good, and noble, and gifted. I was feted--caressed--the spoilt darling of the dames of fashion. I had but to woo to win, and when I won all turned to bitter ashes in my teeth. And then there came a time upon which I shall not dwell, when I made the most fatal mistake of all and spoilt two lives where I had wrecked but one before. It was not a

golden flowery wreath of roses that I wore, but a bitter chain--fettters as of iron that galled and bruised me till at last I snapped them asunder and walked forth free. Free?--ah, me! Never again should I be free, for never for one moment can our past errors and mistakes cease to dog our footsteps and clog our wings while we live--aye, and after the life of the body is ended--till one by one we have atoned for them, and thus blotted them from our past.

And then it was--when I deemed myself secure from all love--when I thought I had learned all that love could teach--knew all that woman had to give--that I met one woman. Ah! What shall I call her? She was more than mortal woman in my eyes, and I called her "The Good Angel of My Life," and from the first moment that I knew her I bowed down at her feet and gave her all the love of my soul--of my higher self--a love that was poor and selfish when compared to what it should have been, but it was all I had to give, and I gave it all. For the first time in my life I thought of another more than of myself, and though I could not rise to the pure thoughts, the bright fancies that filled her soul, I thank God I never yielded to the temptation to drag her down to me.

As so time went on--I sunned myself in her sweet presence--I grew in holy thoughts that I deemed had left me for ever--I dreamed sweet dreams in which I was freed from those chains to my past that held me so cruelly, so hardly, now when I sought for better things. And from my dreams I ever woke to the fear that another might win her from me--and to the knowledge that I, alas! Had not the right to say one word to hold her back. Ah, me! The bitterness and the suffering of those days! I knew it was myself alone who had built that wall between us. I felt that I was not fit to touch her, soiled as I was in the world's

ways. How could I dare to take that innocent, pure life and link it to my own? At times hope would whisper it might be so, but reason said ever, "No!" And though she was so kind, so tender to me that I read the innocent secret of her love, I knew--I felt--that on earth she never would be mine. Her purity and her truth raised between us a barrier I could never pass. I tried to leave her. In vain! As a magnet is drawn to the pole, so was I ever drawn back to her, till at last I struggled no more. I strove only to enjoy the happiness that her presence gave--happy that at least the pleasure and the sunshine of her presence was not denied me.

And then! Ah! Then there came for me an awful, and unexpected day, when with no warning, no sign to awaken me to my position, I was suddenly snatched from life and plunged into that gulf, that death of the body which awaits us all.

And I knew not that I had died. I passed from some hours of suffering and agony into sleep--deep, dreamless sleep--and when I awoke it was to find myself alone and in total darkness. I could rise; I could move; surely I was better. But where was I? Why this darkness? Why was no light left with me? I arose and groped as one does in a dark room, but I could find no light, hear no sound. There was nothing but the stillness, the darkness of death around me.

Then I thought I would walk forward and find the door. I could move, though slowly and feebly, and I groped on--for how long I know not. It seemed hours, for in my growing horror and dismay I felt I must find some one--some way out of this place; and to my despair I seemed never to find any door, any wall, anything. All seemed space and darkness round me.

Overcome at last, I called out aloud! I shrieked, and no voice answered me. Then again and again I called, and still the silence; still no echo, even from my own voice, came back to cheer me. I bethought me of her I loved, but something made me shrink from uttering her name there. Then I thought of all the friends I had known, and I called on them, but none answered me. Was I in prison? No. A prison has walls and this place had none. Was I mad? Delirious? What? I could feel myself, my body. It was the same. Surely the same? No. There was some change in me. I could not tell what, but I felt as though I was shrunken and deformed? My features, when I passed my hand over them, seemed larger, coarser, distorted surely? Oh, for a light! Oh, for anything to tell me even the worst that could be told! Would no one come? Was I quite alone? And she, my angel of light, oh! Where was she? Before my sleep she had been with me--where was she now? Something seemed to snap in my brain and in my throat and I called wildly to her by name, to come to me, if but for once more. I felt a terrible sense as if I had lost her, and I called and called to her wildly; and for the first time my voice had a sound and rang back to me through that awful darkness.

Before me, far, far away, came a tiny speck of light like a star that grew and grew and came nearer and nearer till at last it appeared before me as a large ball of light, in shape like a star, and in the star I saw my beloved. Her eyes were closed as of one in sleep, but her arms were held out to me and her gentle voice said in those tones I knew so well, "Oh! My love, my love, where are you now; I cannot see you, I only hear your voice; I only hear you call to me, and my soul answers to yours."

I tried to rush to her, but I could not. Some invisible force held me back, and around her seemed a ring I could not

pass through. In an agony I sank to the ground, calling upon her to leave me no more. Then she seemed to grow unconscious; her head sank upon her breast, and I saw her float away from me as though some strong arms had borne her. I sought to rise and follow her, but could not. It was as if a great chain held me fast, and after some fruitless struggles I sank upon the ground in unconsciousness."

*FARNESE, A., A Wandering in the Spirit World,
London, 1896*

My Second Death.

"The meetings for materialization were held once a fortnight, and from the number of them I judged that about three months had passed, when I was told by Ahrinziman to prepare myself for a great change which was about to take place in myself and my surroundings, and which would mean my passing into a higher sphere. I have heard the spheres divided differently by different spirit teachers, and it is not very important that they should be all divided by the same standard, since these divisions are very similar to mapping out a country where the boundaries melt so imperceptibly into one another that it is not very essential to have the limits defined with perfect exactitude, since the changes in the countries and the people will of themselves mark their different states as you progress on your journey. Thus, then, some will tell you there are seven spheres and that the seventh means the heaven spoken of in the Bible; others say there are twelve spheres; others again extend the number. Each sphere is, however, divided into circles, usually twelve to a sphere, though here again some spirits will reckon them differently, just as your standards of measurement on earth differ in different countries, yet the thing they

measure remains the same. For myself, I have been used to count that there are seven spheres above the earth and seven below it--using the terms above and below as signifying the nearness to, or distance from, the great central sun of our solar system, the nearest point of attraction towards that sun being considered to be our highest point of attainment (while in the limits of the earth spheres), and the farthest away being regarded as our lowest or most degraded sphere. Each sphere, then, being subdivided into twelve circles, which are blended so closely into each other that you appear to pass almost insensibly from one to the other. I had hitherto been in what is called the earth plane, which like a great broad belt circles around the earth and permeates its atmosphere. This earth plane may be said to comprehend within its bounds the first of the seven spheres above and the first of those below the earth, and is used commonly in describing the habitations of those spirits who are said to be earth-bound in a greater or less degree because they are not able to sink below the earth attractions nor to free themselves from its influences.

I was now told that I had so far freed myself from the earth's attractions and overcome my desires for earthly things that I was able to pass into the second sphere. The passing from the body of a lower sphere into that of a higher one is often, though not invariably, accomplished during a deep sleep which closely resembles the death-sleep of the spirit in leaving the earthly body. As a spirit grows more elevated, more etherealized, this change is accompanied by a greater degree of consciousness, till at last the passing from one high sphere to another is simply like changing one garb for another a little finer, discarding one spiritual envelope for a more ethereal one. Thus the soul passes onward, growing less and less earthly (or

material) in its envelopment, till it passes beyond the limits of our earth spheres into those of the solar systems.

It happened, then, that upon my return from one of my visits to the earth, I felt overpowered by a strange unusual sense of drowsiness, which was more like paralysis of the brain than sleep.

I retired to my little room in the Twilight Land, and throwing myself upon my couch, sank at once into a profound dreamless slumber like unto the unconscious sleep of death.

In this state of unconsciousness I lay for about two weeks of earthly time, and during it my soul passed from the disfigured astral body and came forth like a newborn child, clothed in a brighter, purer spiritual envelope, which my efforts at overcoming the evil in myself had created for it. Only I was not born as an infant but as a full grown man, even as my experience and knowledge had been those of a mature spirit. There are some mortals whose knowledge of life is so limited, whose minds have been so little cultivated, and whose natures are so simple and childlike, that they are born into the spirit world as mere children, however many years of earth life they may have known, but it was not so with me, and in assuming my new condition I also possessed the development in age which my earth life had given me.

In a state of perfect unconsciousness my newborn soul was borne by the attendant spirit friends into the second sphere, where I lay sleeping my dreamless sleep till the time came for my awakening.

The discarded astral envelope I had left was by the power of attendant spirits dissolved into the elements of the earth plane, even as my earthly body left at my first death would decay into the earthly material from which it had been taken,--dust returning unto dust again, while the immortal soul passed on to a higher state.

Thus did I pass through my second death and awake to the resurrection of my higher self."

*FARNESE, A., A Wandering in the Spirit World,
London, 1896*

Farnese's writings present such a thorough and fascinating view of both the heavenly and hellish realms, that we've included excerpts from his writings for our 'Other Voices' section. In our Question and Answers, we will be answering a solemn plea from Nieves Ruggiero in Curacao about why it is so difficult to 'hear' God. Why to so many of the mortal questions we all ask, and which are also addressed in the writings of Farnese.

We hope you enjoy this interesting journey into another yet forgotten wanderer in the spirit lands!

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The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal:
Question and Answer Forum!

Please Send Your Questions to:

magazine@outofbodytravel.org

For Future Inclusion in this Section!

Question from Nieves Ruggiero, Antilles, Curacao: If you are from GOD, I wish in the name of Jesus for you to help me.

Marilynn: If I can help you, I will. Tell me what you need, I'm listening. Marilyn

Question from Nieves Ruggiero, Antilles, Curacao: Hello Mrs. Marilyn, First of all thank you for contacting me, I appreciate it from my heart. It is my wish to contact Jesus, I do pray, I go within me, but I seem not to be able to reach the level of neglecting completely the flesh to reach God. If I had the ability to neglect the flesh completely and be pure spirit, my desire would be to talk to Jesus, and ask him why have the ones that love him in spirit, that try, have to suffer, when know we have the gift of the divine spirit to be free. I cannot understand why suffering for those, when they should be free, why is it so hard for me to reach my father? why??

I have cried to GOD and JESUS asking them WHEN.... will he make all my clean heart wish come true. He knows I have a big temper, but he also know how much kindness and care for the reach of faith in love is within me.

I believe that dreams come true. I believe that I can have health, and give others. I believe I can have alot of money, and help others, for god is abundance, and to meet the

men of my dream, my fairy tale dream in pureness, without damaging no one, and in the name of God to help others.

I only see sparkles of light some time in my daily life, I feel in my heart they are present. But if so I ask.... GOD PLEASE why as my father is it so hard to reach you, I am trying to adore you in spirit and truth.....Please make my dreams of pureness and help for others come true. Show me that what others say, that I am dreaming, is not true, and that what all the pure, clean wishes in my heart will come true, Amen..... 'Thank you, Nieves.....

Marilynn: Your question is a common one, yet it is also a contradiction, the same contradiction that faces millions of others who ask themselves this question everyday. On the one hand, you speak of neglecting the flesh completely to reach God. On the other, you speak of believing you can have a lot of money, albeit to help others because you believe God is abundance, to meet the person of your dreams, to live a fairy tale, albeit in pureness without causing harm to others - and all this in the name of God to help others. Allow me to let the wise ones of old speak on this subject.

"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it."

World Scripture, Self-denial and No-self, Christianity, Mark 8:34-36

"The pursuit of learning is to increase day after day. The pursuit of Tao is to decrease day after day."

World Scripture, Self-denial and No-self, Taoism, Tao Te Ching 48

“Seek not for life on earth or in heaven. Thirst for life is delusion. Knowing life to be transitory, wake up from this dream of ignorance and strive to attain knowledge and freedom.”

World Scripture, Self-denial and No-self, Hinduism, Srimad Bhagavatam, 11.13

“Torah abides only with him who regards himself as nothing.”

World Scripture, Self-denial and No-self, Judaism, Talmud, Sota 21b

“The Man of the Way wins no fame, the highest virtue wins no gain, the Great Man has no self.”

World Scripture, Self-denial and No-self, Taoism, Chaung Tzu 17

“Remember, those who fear death shall not escape it, and those who aspire to immortality shall not achieve it.”

World Scripture, Self-denial and No-self, Islam, Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 43

“O Son of Man! If you love ME, turn away from yourself; and if you seek My pleasure, regard not your own; that you may die in Me and I may eternally live in you.”

World Scripture, Self-denial and No-self, Baha'i, Hidden Words of Baha'u'llah, Arabic 7

In Catholic Mystical Theology, it is considered an incorrect aspiration to seek after riches for the sole purposes of doing charity. Why is this so? Because we are to accept the lot that the Lord gives each of us in this life and use it to the best of our ability. We are not to 'regard our own' idea of what God wishes for us to do, but rather do with what God has given us. If God gives us gifts that we use well and they achieve such riches and we then choose them in the service of good, then that is following the Way. But to seek the end rather than the beginning is a false path.

Sometimes, it is our own perception of what we believe God wishes of us which blocks us from finding Him in the way He has chosen for us.

There is a very well-known Sufi story about a master whose disciple asked what he must do to see the Lord. The Master holds his head under water until he is gasping for breath. When he emerges the stunned disciple asked, "What are you doing?!" And the Master calmly said, "When you wish to see God with the same fervor for which you wished to breathe just now, you will find Him."

In the seeking of God we must let go of all expectations. We must seek Him for Himself alone with no attachment to any material or even spiritual gain. We must be content with what He chooses for us.

When we have an end in mind in loving God, we are not truly seeking Him. HE is the end. If our heart is pure, loving God alone is enough.

He is not difficult to reach, sometimes it may seem so to us on the earth, but God has left His messages in the writings of the prophets, saints, mystics and sages from throughout the world and time. Sometimes we want the answers to come only through ourselves, but this stems from pride, for these writings are communications from our Father and they apply to us all. This is why He inspired these great souls to write them down; for many at great hardship to themselves when you understand what kinds of writings tools and materials were available to them at the time.

We must humble ourselves and allow God to determine our destiny and fate. And in the pursuit of the spiritual

life, we must remain steadfast and true, patient and wise, and accepting of whatever the Lord chooses to bring our way, even if it is different than what we wanted or expected.

“Borrowed trousers and garments never fit a man well; they are usually either too tight or too loose. Proper fitting is achieved when one wears one’s own dress.”

World Scripture, Responsibility and Self-Destination, African Traditional Religions, Yoruba Proverb, Nigeria

“All a gentleman can do in starting an enterprise is to leave behind a tradition which can be carried on. Heaven alone can grant success.”

World Scripture, Responsibility and Self-Destination, Confucianism, Mencius I.B.14

“When one follows unswervingly the path of virtue it is not to win advancement. When one invariably keeps one’s word it is not to establish the rectitude of one’s actions. A gentleman merely follows the norm and awaits his destiny.”

World Scripture, Responsibility and Self-Destination, Confucianism, Mencius VII.B.33

It is part of our human nature and our society in this day and age to wish for and expect that things come to us quickly. But in the spiritual life, we can expect a lifetime of seeking and even then we will only contain a miniscule shadow of the knowledge of God. We must seek grace knowing that it is a gift, but it comes in its own time not ours.

Never give up seeking the Father, but cease expecting Him to come in your own way. Accept Him in the ways in which He comes to you. And remember that the path of the spirit is long and arduous, requires great discipline, and comes slowly, never ending . . .

“Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”

*World Scripture, Responsibility and Self-Destination, Christianity,
Matthew 7.13-14*

Our biggest misunderstanding about God is that He thinks like we think. We cannot comprehend how God thinks, but we must seek to understand it as well as we can. In the Qur'an, the Lord says “Be mindful of me, and I will be mindful of you.” 2.152 And “God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves.” 13.11

We must stop expecting God to respond to our own personal whims about how He should react to our desire to know Him. Rather, we should seek Him on His own terms. Those terms are laid out in the Ancient Sacred Texts and the writings of the Prophets, Saints, Mystics and Sages from throughout the world and time. Go there and follow the pathway that He left behind for us through some of His greatest souls. It is in their words that we find what it is that WE must do for God to reach towards us, rather than what HE must do to fulfill our desire for Him.

Finally, the question of suffering and why it happens in the world is probably the most commonly wondered about plight of the human being. Christ made the answer clear when He said to His disciples that the Servant is not greater than the Master, and what they do to the Master they shall also do to you. It is also said in Biblical Scripture that “it rains on the just and the unjust alike.” Suffering is part of the human condition.

We live in the mortal realms wherein the battles between good and evil rage. This means that, like it or not,

suffering will be our lot. We struggle with the evil in the world, but also the evil within ourselves and each individual human being. Therefore, we will suffer at the hands of world events, at the hands of others and at our own hands when we follow inferior paths. This is a purificatory process. Buddhism has a saying from the Lankavatara Sutra - Illness, being a teacher of great piety, is not to be avoided. In the Sutta Pitaka, the Buddha tried to explain the intricate path that a soul must follow in order to eventually reach liberation from that which holds us to earth - in essence, craving.

"Through the total fading away and extinction of Ignorance, however, the Karma-formations become extinguished; through extinction of the Karma-formation: Consciousness (in a new birth); through extinction of Consciousness: Mind and Corporeality; through extinction of Mind and Corporeality: the Six Bases; through extinction of the Six Bases: Impression; through extinction of Impression: Feeling; through extinction of Feeling: Craving; through extinction of Craving: Clinging; through extinction of Clinging: the Process of Becoming; through extinction of the Process of Becoming (Karma-Process): Rebirth; through extinction of Rebirth: Decay and Death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

Thus takes place the extinction of this whole mass of suffering." Path to Deliverance C Wisdom, S XII 17, Page 154, Paragraph 1 (Sutta Pitaka from the Pali Canon, Translation by Nyanatiloka

What is the meaning of this? Confucius says it best.

"The Master said, 'At fifteen I set my heart upon learning. At thirty, I had planted my feet upon firm ground. At forty, I no longer suffered from perplexities. At fifty, I knew what were the biddings of Heaven. At sixty, I heard

them with a docile ear. At seventy, I could follow the dictates of my own heart; for what I desired no longer overstepped the boundaries of right."

World Scripture, Self Cultivation and Spiritual Growth, Confucianism, Analects 2.4

The path is long, the road is hard and the discipline must remain steady. Not for a year, or for a decade or even a lifetime – but for eternity. There is no point along the way where you can say, "I am there," and it be true. There is always a higher summit.

But we can find the Way to go by following that left behind by those who have gone before us. Be willing to glean from what they have left behind.

"Make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness."

World Scripture, Self Cultivation and Spiritual Growth, Christianity, 2 Peter 1.5-11

There is no point in our life when we can say, 'Now I can serve, now I can be charitable, now I have enough money, wealth, knowledge, power, etc.' If we seek to be charitable in this manner, it may never come. We recognize those opportunities to alleviate the suffering of others around us that come upon us day to day with the gifts that we have in this present moment – NOW. And by doing so, we are living the Way.

There is no point in our life when we can say, 'Now I have reached the summit, I have been shown things, and the Father speaks to me, etc.' If we seek to know the Father in this manner, it may never come. We recognize those opportunities to speak to the Father and to listen to Him in the ways around us that come upon us day to day in the

gifts of which we are already aware in this present moment - NOW. And by doing so, we are living the Way.

Blessings,

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The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal:

Different Voices!

This is our section devoted to the writings and opinions of others, which may not reflect the views of author, Marilyn Hughes. Inclusion of any author's writings or work does not denote an endorsement or recommendation in regards to their writings.

Some of these will be individual writings of others on subjects of spiritual interest, other people's out-of-body experiences - some which may agree with and/or contradict the experiences of the author, poems, journals of spiritual transformation, and critiques - both positive and negative opinions and/or analysis, of the author's work.

We choose to include ALL of these because we feel that the ability to discuss our similarities and differences openly is 'ALL GOOD' as GANDHI used to say.

We welcome and encourage your submissions for possible future inclusion in this section, although we stress that we are a non-profit organization and payment is not available:

magazine@outofbodytravel.org

We have found that some of the best critiques, analysis, writings and experiences come from people all over the world in different walks of life who are pursuing their spiritual path with passion and are completely unknown.

THANK YOU ALL, whether you agree or disagree with our work, FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO SEEK THE TRUTH IN WHATEVER WAY THAT TRUTH MAY COME TO SEEK YOU!

Excerpts from a Wandering in the Spirit World

By Franchezzo through A. Farnese

Twilight Lands--Love's Gifts--The Valley of Selfishness--The Country of Unrest--The Miser's Land--The Gambler's Land.

When my period of work in any place was finished, I used to return to the Twilight Land to rest in another large building which belonged to our brotherhood. It was somewhat like the other place in appearance only not quite so dark, nor so dismal, nor so bare, and in the little room which belonged to each there were such things as we had earned as the rewards of our labors. For instance, in my room, which was still somewhat bare-looking, I had one great treasure. This was a picture of my love. It seemed more like a reflection of her in a mirror than a mere painted image, for when I looked intently at her she would smile back at me in answer, as though her spirit was conscious of my gaze, and when I wished very much to know what she was doing, my picture would change and show me. This was regarded by all my companions as a great and wonderful privilege, and I was told it was as much the result of her love and constant thought for me as of my own efforts to improve. Since then I have been shown how this living image was thrown upon the light of the astral plane and then projected into its frame in my room, but I cannot explain it more fully in this book. Another gift from my darling was a white rose-bud, which I had in a small vase and which never seemed to fade or

wither, but remained fresh and fragrant and ever an emblem of her love, so that I called her my white rose.

I had so longed for a flower. I had so loved flowers on earth and I had seen none since I saw those my darling put upon my grave. In this land there were no flowers, not even a leaf or blade of grass, not a tree or a shrub however stunted--for the dry arid soil of our selfishness had no blossom or green thing to give to any one of us; and it was when I told her this during one of the brief visits I used to pay her, and when through her own hand I was able to write short messages--it was, I say, when I told her that there was not one fair thing for me to look upon save only the picture of herself, that she asked that I might be given a flower from her, and this white rosebud was brought to my room by a spirit friend and left for me to find when I returned from earth and her. Ah! you who have so many flowers that you do not value them enough and leave them to wither unseen, you can scarce realize what joy this blossom brought to me nor how I have so treasured it and her picture and some loving words she once wrote to me, that I have carried them with me from sphere to sphere as I have risen, and shall, I hope, treasure them evermore.

From this Twilight Land I took many journeys and saw many strange and different countries, but all bore the same stamp of coldness and desolation.

One place was a great valley of grey stones, with dim, cold, grey hills shutting it in on every side, and this twilight sky overhead. Here again not a blade of grass, not one poor stunted shrub was to be seen, not one touch of color or brightness anywhere, only this dull desolation of grey stones. Those who dwelt in this valley had centered their lives and their affections in themselves and had shut

up their hearts against all the warmth and beauty of unselfish love. They had lived only for themselves, their own gratification, their own ambitions, and now they saw nothing but themselves and the grey desolation of their hard selfish lives around them. There were a great many beings flitting uneasily about in this valley, but strange to say they had been so centered in themselves that they had lost the power to see anyone else.

These unhappy beings were invisible to each other until such time as the thought of another and the desire to do something for some one besides themselves should awaken, when they would become conscious of those near to them, and through their efforts to lighten another's lot they would improve their own, till at last their stunted affections would expand and the hazy valley of selfishness would hold them in its chains no more.

Beyond this valley I came upon a great, dry, sandy-looking tract of country where there was a scanty straggling vegetation, and where the inhabitants had begun in some places to make small attempts at gardens near their habitations. In some places these habitations were clustered so thickly together that they formed small towns and cities. But all bore that desolate ugly look which came from the spiritual poverty of the inhabitants. This also was a land of selfishness and greed, although not of such complete indifference to others' feelings as in the grey valley, and therefore they sought for a certain amount of companionship even with those around them. Many had come from the grey valley, but most were direct from the earth life and were now, poor souls, struggling to rise a little higher, and wherever this was the case and an effort was made to overcome their own selfishness, then the dry

soil around their homes would begin to put forth tiny blades of grass and little stunted shoots of shrubs.

Such miserable hovels as were in this land! Such ragged, repulsive, wretched-looking people, like tramps or beggars, yet many had been amongst earth's wealthiest and most eminent in fashionable life, and had enjoyed all that luxury could give! But because they had used their wealth only for themselves and their own enjoyments, giving to others but the paltry crumbs that they could spare from their own wealth and hardly notice that they had given them--because of this, I say, they were now here in this Twilight Land, poor as beggars in the true spiritual wealth of the soul which may be earned in the earthly life alike by the richest king or the poorest beggar, and without which those who come over to the spirit land--be they of earth's greatest or humblest--must come here to dwell where all are alike poor in spiritual things.

Here some of the people would wrangle and quarrel and complain that they had not been fairly treated in being in such a place, seeing what had been their positions in earth life. They would blame others as being more culpable than themselves in the matter, and wake a thousand excuses, a thousand pretences, to anyone who would listen to them and the story of what they would call their wrongs. Others would still be trying to follow out the schemes of their earthly lives and would try to make their hearers believe that they had found means (at the expense of someone else) of ending all this weary life of discomfort, and would plot and plan and try to carry out their own schemes, and spoil those of others as being likely to interfere with theirs, and so on would go the weary round of life in this Land of Unrest.

To all whom I found willing to listen to me I gave some word of hope, some thought of encouragement or help to find the true way out of this country, and so passed on through it and journeyed into the Land of Misers--a land given over to them alone, for few have sympathy with true misers save those who also share their all-absorbing desire to hoard simply for the pleasure of hoarding.

In this country were dark crooked-looking beings with long claw-like fingers, who were scratching in the black soil like birds of prey in search of stray grains of gold that here and there rewarded their toil; and when they had found any they would wrap them up in little wallets they carried and thrust them into their bosoms that they might lie next to their hearts, as the thing of all things most dear to them. As a rule they were lonely, solitary beings, who avoided each other by instinct lest they should be robbed of their cherished treasure.

Here I found nothing that I could do. Only one solitary man listened for a brief moment to what I had to say ere he returned to his hunt in the earth for treasure, furtively watching me till I was gone lest I should learn what he had already got. The others were all so absorbed in their search for treasure they could not even be made conscious of my presence, and I soon passed on from that bleak land.

From the Misers' Country I passed downwards into a dark sphere, which was really below the earth in the sense of being even lower in its spiritual inhabitants than parts of the earth plane.

Here it was very much like the Land of Unrest, only that the spirits who dwelt here were worse and more degraded looking. There was no attempt made at cultivation, and the

sky overhead was almost dark like night, the light being only such as enabled them to see each other and the objects near them. Whereas in the Land of Unrest there were but wranglings and discontent and jealousy, here there were fierce fights and bitter quarrels. Here were gamblers and drunkards. Betting men, card sharpers, commercial swindlers, profligates, and thieves of every kind, from the thief of the slums to his well-educated counterpart in the higher circles of earth life. All whose instincts were roguish or dissipated, all who were selfish and degraded in their tastes were here, as well as many who would have been in a higher condition of spiritual life had not constant association on earth with this class of men deteriorated and degraded them to the level of their companions, so that at death they had gravitated to this dark sphere, drawn down by ties of association. It was to this last class that I was sent, for amongst them there was hope that all sense of goodness and right was not quenched, and that the voice of one crying to them in the wilderness of their despair might be heard and lead them back to a better land.

The wretched houses or dwellings of this dark Land of Misery were many of them large spacious places, but all stamped with the same appalling look of uncleanness, foulness and decay. They resembled large houses to be seen in some of our slums, once handsome mansions and fine palaces, the abodes of luxury, which have become the haunts of the lowest denizens of vice and crime. Here and there would be great lonely tracts of country with a few scattered wretched houses, mere hovels, and in other places the buildings and the people were huddled together in great gloomy degraded-looking copies of your large cities of earth. Everywhere squalor and dirt and wretchedness reigned; nowhere was there one single

bright or beautiful or gracious thing for the eye to rest upon in all this scene of desolation, made thus by the spiritual emanations from the dark beings who dwelt there.

Amongst these wretched inhabitants I wandered with my little star of pure light, so small that it was but a bright spark flickering about in the darkness as I moved, yet around me it shed a soft pale light as from a star of hope that shone for those not too blinded by their own selfish evil passions to behold it. Here and there I would come upon some crouched in a doorway or against a wall, or in some miserable room, who would arouse themselves sufficiently to look at me with my light and listen to the words I spoke to them, and would begin to seek for the better way, the returning path to those upper spheres from which they had fallen by their sins. Some I would be able to induce to join me in my work of helping others, but as a rule they could only think of their own miseries, and long for something higher than their present surroundings, and even this, small as it seems, was one step, and the next one of thinking how to help others forward as well would soon follow.

One day in my wanderings through this country I came to the outskirts of a large city in the middle of a wide desolate plain. The soil was black and arid, more like those great cinder heaps that are seen near your iron works than anything I can liken it to. I was amongst a few dilapidated, tumble-down little cottages that formed a sort of fringe between the unhappy city and the desolate plain, when my ears caught the sound of quarreling and shouting coming from one of them, and curiosity made me draw near to see what the dispute might be about and if even here there might not be someone whom I could help.

It was more like a barn than a house. A great rough table ran the length of the room, and round it upon coarse little wooden stools were seated about a dozen or so of men. Such men! It is almost an insult to manhood to give them the name. They were more like orangutangs, with the varieties of pigs and wolves and birds of prey expressed in their coarse bloated distorted features. Such faces, such misshapen bodies, such distorted limbs, I can in no way describe them! They were clothed in various grotesque and ragged semblances of their former earthly finery, some in the fashion of centuries ago, others in more modern garb, yet all alike ragged, dirty, and unkempt, the hair disheveled, the eyes wild and staring and glowing now with the fierce light of passion, now with the sullen fire of despair and vindictive malice. To me, then, it seemed that I had reached the lowest pit of hell, but since then I have seen a region lower still--far blacker, far more horrible, inhabited by beings so much fiercer, so much lower, that beside them these were tame and human. Later on I shall describe more fully these lowest beings, when I come to that part of my wanderings which took me into their kingdoms in the lowest hell, but the spirits whom I now saw fighting in this cottage were quarreling over a bag of coins which lay on the table. It had been found by one of them and then given to be gambled for by the whole party. The dispute seemed to be because each wanted to take possession of it himself without regard to the rights of anyone else at all. It was simply a question of the strongest, and already they were menacing each other in a violent fashion. The finder of the money, or rather the spiritual counterpart of our earthly money, was a young man, under thirty I should say, who still possessed the remains of good looks, and but for the marks that dissipation had planted on his face would have seemed unfit for his present surroundings and degraded associates. He was

arguing that the money was his, and though he had given it to be played for fairly he objected to be robbed of it by anyone. I felt I had no business there, and amidst a wild chorus of indignant cries and protestations that they "supposed they were as well able to say what was honest as he was," I turned and left them. I had proceeded but a short way, and was almost opposite another deserted little hovel when the whole wild crew came struggling and fighting out of the cottage, wrestling with each other to get near the young man with the bag of money whom the foremost of them were beating and kicking and trying to deprive of it. This one of them succeeded in doing, whereupon they all set upon him, while the young man broke away from them and began running towards me. In a moment there was a wild yell set up to catch him and beat him for an imposter and a cheat, since the bag was empty of gold and had only stones in it, the money, like the fairy gold in the stories, having turned, not into withered leaves, but into hard stones.

Almost before I realized it the wretched young man was clutching hold of me and crying out to me to save him from those devils; and the whole lot were coming down upon us in hot pursuit of their victim. Quick as thought I sprang into the empty hovel which gave us the only hope of asylum, dragging the unfortunate young man with me, and slamming the door I planted my back against it to keep our pursuers out. My Goodness! How they did yell and stamp and storm and try to batter in that door; and how I did brace myself up and exert all the force of mind and body to keep them out! I did not know it then, but I know now that unseen powers helped me and held fast that door till, baffled and angry that they could not move it, they went off at last to seek for some fresh quarrel or excitement elsewhere.

My House in the Twilight Lands-- Communion Between the Living and the Dead.

In my home in the Twilight Land I rested now for a time, studying to learn more of myself and the powers I had within me, and seeking to apply the lessons I had learned in my wanderings. My chief instructor at this time was a man like myself in many respects, who had lived a similar life on earth and had passed through the lower spheres, as I was now doing, and who had become a dweller in a bright land of sunshine from which he came constantly to teach and help those of the Brotherhood who, like myself, were his pupils.

There was likewise another teacher or guide whom I sometimes saw, whose influence over me was even greater, and from whom I learned many strange things, but as he was in a much more advanced sphere than the other, it was but seldom that I could see him as a distinct personality. His teachings came to me more as mental suggestions or inspirational discourses in answer to some questioning thought on my part. This spirit I shall not now describe to you, as at this time of my sojourn in the Twilight Land I saw him but very dimly, and only clearly when my progression had carried me into a brighter state.

Though this man was not fully visible to me I was often conscious of his presence and his aid, and when later on I learned that he had been my principal guardian spirit during my earthly life, I could easily trace many thoughts and suggestions, many of my higher aspirations, to his influence; and it was his voice that had so often spoke to me in warning or in comfort when I struggled on almost overwhelmed with my terrible position on first entering

the spirit world. In the days of darkness I had been faintly conscious of his form flitting in and out of my little cell, and soothing my terrible sufferings with his magnetism and his wonderful knowledge and power.

On returning to the Twilight Land from the darker spheres I had visited, I felt almost like returning to a home, for, bare and shabby as my room looked, and small and narrow as it was, it yet held all my greatest treasures: my picture mirror in which I could see my beloved, and the rose, and the letter she had sent to me. Moreover I had friends there, companions in misfortune like myself, and though we were as a rule much alone, meditating upon our past mistakes and their lessons, yet at times it was very pleasant to have one friend or another come in to see you, and since we were all alike men who had disgraced ourselves by our earthly lives and were now seeking to follow the better way, there was even in that a bond of sympathy. Our life, could I make you fully realize it, would indeed seem strange to you. It was like and yet unlike an earthly life. For instance, we ate at times a simple sort of food provided for us, it would seem, by magic whenever we felt hungry, but often for a week at a time we would not think of food, unless indeed it was one of us who had been fond of good eating on earth, and in that case the desire would be much more frequent and troublesome to satisfy. For myself my tastes had been somewhat simple, and neither eating nor drinking had in themselves possessed special attractions for me.

There was always around us this twilight, which was never varied with dark night or bright day, and which was most especially trying to me in its monotony. I so love light and sunshine. To me it was ever as a life-giving bath.

I had been born in a land of earth where all is sunshine and flowers.

Then although we usually walked about this building and the surrounding country much as you do, we could float a little at will, though not so well as more advanced spirits do, and if we were in a great hurry to go anywhere our wills seemed to carry us there with the speed almost of thought.

As for sleep, we could spend long intervals without feeling its need, or, again, we could lie and sleep for weeks at a time, sometimes semi-conscious of all that passed, at others in the most complete of slumbers. Another strange thing was our dress--which never seemed to wear out and renewed itself in some mysterious fashion. All through this period of my wanderings and while I was in this abode it was of a dark--a very dark--blue color, with a yellow girdle round the waist, and an anchor worked in yellow on the left sleeve, with the words, "Hope is Eternal," below it. There were close-fitting undergarments of the same dark color. The robe was long and such as you see penitent brotherhoods or monks wear on earth, with a hood hung from the shoulders, which could be used to cover the head and face of any who desired to screen their features from view; and indeed there were often times when we wished to do so, for suffering and remorse had made such changes in us that we were often glad to hide our faces from the gaze of those we loved. The hollow eyes, sunken cheeks, wasted and bent forms, and deep lines suffering had traced upon each face told their own story but too well, and such of us as had dear friends on earth or in the spirit land still grieving for our loss, sought often at times to hide from their eyes our disfigured forms and faces.

Our lives had somewhat of monotony about them in the regular order in which our studies and our lectures followed each other like clockwork. At certain stages--for they did not count time by days or weeks, but only as advance was made in the development of each spirit--when a lesson had been learned, in a longer or shorter time according to the spiritual and intellectual development, the spirit was advanced to a higher branch of the subject studied.

Some remain a very long time before they can grasp the meaning of the lesson shown to them; if so, the spirit is in no way hurried or pressed on as is done in earth education, where life seems all too short for learning. As a spirit a man has all eternity before him and can stand still or go on as he pleases, or he may remain where he is till he has thought out and grasped clearly what has been shown, and then he is ready for the next step, and so on. There is no hurrying anyone faster than he chooses to go; no interference with his liberty to live on in the same state of undevelopment if he wishes, so long as he interferes with the liberty of no one else and conforms to the simple rule which governs that great Brotherhood, the rule of freedom and sympathy for all. None were urged to learn, and none were kept back from doing so; it was all voluntary, and did anyone seek (as many did) to leave this place, he was free to go where he would, and to return again if he wished; the doors were closed to none, either in going or returning, and none ever sought to reproach another with his faults or shortcomings, for each felt the full depth of his own.

Some had been years there, I learned, for to them the lessons were hard and slow to be learned. Others, again, had broken away and gone back to the life of the earth

plane so many times that they had descended to the lowest sphere at last, and gone through a course of purification in that other House of Hope where I had first been. They had appeared to go back instead of forward, yet even this had not been in truth a retrogression, but only a needful lesson, since they were thus cured of the desire to try the pleasures of the earth plane again. A few, like myself, who had a strong and powerful motive to rise, made rapid progress, and soon passed on from step to step, but there were, alas! too many who required all the hope and all the help that could be given to sustain and comfort them through all their trials; and it was my lot to be able, out of the storehouse of my own hopefulness, to give a share to others less fortunate who were not blessed, as I was, with a stream of love and sympathy flowing ever to me from my beloved on earth, cheering me on to fresh efforts with its promise of joy and peace at last.

The Astral Plane and Its Inhabitants-- Spooks, Elves, Vampires, etc.

I can hardly give you a better idea of the course of our journey than by asking you to imagine a vast spiral or corkscrew winding upwards and downwards in circling rings. A tiny speck no bigger than a pin's head in the middle of a large cart-wheel might represent the earth in the centre of these circling rings, an equal number of which are above and below the earth, all winding in a connected series from the lowest to the highest around this speck, and the head of the spiral pointing towards our central sun--this being regarded as the highest point of the most advanced sphere.

This will give you a faint idea of the earth and its attendant spirit spheres, and help you to understand how in our

journey we passed from the second into the lowest sphere, and in doing so passed through the earth plane. As we entered it I perceived many spirits of mortals hurrying to and fro just as I had been wont to see them, but now for the first time I also saw that mingling with them were many floating spectral shapes similar to those wraiths I had seen haunting the spirit in the icy cage in the Frozen Land. These wraiths seemed to be floating to and fro like driftweed upon a seashore, borne here and there by the different astral currents which revolve and circle round the earth.

Some were very distinct and life-like till a closer inspection revealed to me that the light of intelligence was wanting in their eyes and expressions, and there was a helpless collapsed look about them like wax dolls from which the stuffing has run out. For the life of me I can think of nothing that will so well express their appearance.

In my former wanderings through the earth plane I had not been conscious of any of these beings, and on asking Hassein the reason of this he answered: "First, because you were so much absorbed in your work, and secondly, your powers of sight were not sufficiently developed. Now look," he added, pointing to a strange little group of beings like elves which were approaching us hand in hand, gamboling like children. "Look at those; they are the mental and bodily emanations cast off from the minds and bodies of children which consolidate into these queer, harmless little elementals when brought into contact with any of the great life currents that circle around the earth, and which bear upon their waves the living emanations cast off from men, women and children. These curious little beings have no real separate intelligent life such as a soul would give, and they are so evanescent and ethereal

that they take their shapes and change them, as you will observe, like the clouds on a summer sky. See how they are all dissolving and forming again afresh."

As I looked I saw the whole little cloud of figures shift into a new form of grotesque likeness, and whereas they had looked like tiny fairies in caps and gowns made from flowers, they now took wings, becoming like a species of half butterflies, half imps, with human bodies, animal's heads, and butterflies' wings. Then as a fresh strong wave of magnetism swept over them, lo! they were all broken up and carried away to form fresh groups elsewhere with other particles.

I was so astonished at this, the real living appearance and the unreal disappearance, that I suppose Hassein read my puzzled state of mind, for he said, "What you have now beheld is only an ethereal form of elemental life, which is not material enough for a long continued existence on the earth plane, and is like the foam of the sea thrown up by the wave motions of pure earthly lives and thoughts. See now how much stronger on the astral plan can be the consistency of that which is not pure."

I beheld approaching us a great mass of aerial forms, dark, misshapen, human, yet inhuman, in appearance. "These," said he, "are the beings which haunt the delirium of the drunkard, which gather round him, drawn by his corrupted magnetism and unable to be repelled by one who has lost the will-force needful to protect him from such creatures which cling like barnacles to him, and like leeches suck his animal vitality with a strange ghoulis intelligence akin to that of some noisome plant which has fastened itself upon a tree. For such a one as the unfortunate drunkard the best help which can be given is

by obtaining some one upon the earth side of life who possesses a strong will and mesmeric powers, and let him place the drunkard under the protection of his will and the strong influence of his magnetism, till the last of these phantoms drops off from inability to hold on longer under the stream of healthy magnetism poured upon them and the unlucky man upon whom they have fastened. The healthy magnetism acts like a poison upon these creatures, and kills them so that they drop off, and their bodies, unable to hold together, decay into immaterial dust. Should these beings, however, not encounter such a strong dose of healthy magnetism they will go on for years floating about and drawing away the animal vitality of one human being after another, till at last they become endowed with a certain amount of independent animal life of their own. At this stage they can be used by higher, more intelligent beings to carry out such work as their peculiar organizations fit them for, and it is these soulless creatures, though created and earth-nourished, whom a certain class of practitioners of the so-called black magic made use of in some of their experiments, as well as for carrying out their evil designs against any one who had offended them. But like deadly weeds at the bottom of a dark pool, these astrals draw down and destroy in their soulless clutches those who venture to meddle with them unprotected by the higher powers."

"And now tell me, friend Hassenin," said I, "if these astrals, when they fasten upon a drunkard, can or do influence him to drink more, as is the case when the earth-bound spirit of a departed drunkard controls one still in the flesh."

"No! These beings do not derive any pleasure from the drink a man swallows, except in so far as by corrupting his

magnetism it makes him such that they can more readily feed upon him. It is his animal or earthly life-force they desire. It means existence for them and is much the same as water to a plant, and beyond the fact that by draining the victim of his vitality they cause a sense of exhaustion which makes him fly to stimulants for relief, they do not affect the question of his continuing to drink. They are mere parasites, and possess no intelligence of their own except of so rudimentary a character that we can scarcely give it that name.

"To originate a thought or to impress your thoughts upon another requires the possession of an intelligent soul germ or spark of the divine essence, and once this has been given the being becomes possessed of an independent individuality it can never again lose. It may cast off envelope after envelope, or it may sink into grosser and still grosser forms of matter, but once endowed with soul-life it can never cease to exist, and in existing must retain the individuality of its nature and the responsibility of its actions. This is alike true of the human soul and the intelligent soul-principle as manifested in the animals or lower types of soul existence. Whenever you see the power to reason and to act upon such reasoning manifested either in man, the highest type, or in animals, the lower type, you may know that a soul exists, and it is only a question of degree of purity of soul essence. We see in man and in the brute creation alike a power of reasoning intelligence differing only in degree, and from this fact the school of thought to which I belong draws the inference that both alike have a conscious individual immortality, differing, however, in the type and degree of soul essence, animals as well as men having an immortal future for development before them. What are the limits of the action of this law we cannot pretend to say, but we draw our conclusions

from the existence in the spirit world of animals as well as men who have alike lived on earth, and both of whom are found in a more advanced state of development than they were in their earth existences.

"It is impossible for the soulless parasite to influence the mind of any mortal; and it is therefore undoubtedly the souls which have been incarnated in earthly bodies and have so indulged their lower passions in that state that they are not able to free themselves from the fetters of their astral envelopes, that haunt the earth and incite those yet in the flesh to indulgence in drink and similar vices. They, as you know, can control man in many ways, either partially or completely, and the most common way is for the spirit to partly envelop the man he controls with his spirit body until a link has been formed between them, somewhat after the nature of that uniting some twin children who possess distinct bodies, but are so joined to each other and interblended that all which one feels is felt by the other. In this fashion what is swallowed by the mortal is enjoyed by the spirit who controls the unfortunate man, and who urges him to drink as much as possible, and when he can no longer do so the spirit will then try to free himself and go elsewhere in search of some other weak-willed man or woman of depraved tastes. Not always, however, can either the spirit or the mortal free themselves from the strange link woven between them by the indulgence of their joint desires. After a long-continued connection of this sort it becomes very difficult for them to separate, and the spirit and the man may go on for years sick of each other yet unable to break the tie without help from the higher powers, who are always ready to assist those who call upon their aid. Should a spirit continue to control men for the purpose of self-gratification as I have described, he sinks lower and lower, and drags his victims

down with him into the depths of hell itself, from which they will both have a bitter and weary task to climb when at last the desire for better things shall awaken. To a soul alone belongs the power to think and to will, and those other soulless creatures but obey the laws of attraction and repulsion, which are felt likewise by all the material atoms of which the universe is composed, and even when these astral parasites have, by long feeding upon the vital force of men or women, attained to a certain amount of independent life, they have no intelligence to direct their own or others' movements; they float about like fever germs generated in a foul atmosphere, attracted to one person more readily than to another, and like such germs may be said to possess a very low form of life.

"Another class of elemental astrals are those of the earth, air, fire, and water, whose bodies are formed from the material life germs in each element. Some are in appearance like the gnomes and elves who are said to inhabit mines and mountain caverns which have never been exposed to the light of day. Such, too, are the fairies whom men have seen in lonely and secluded places amongst primitive races of men. Such, with the variations caused by the different natures of the elements from which they are formed, are the water sprites and the mermaids of ancient fable, and the spirits of the fire and the spirits of the air.

"All these beings possess life, but as yet no souls, for their lives are drawn from and sustained by the lives of earthly men and women, and they are but reflections of the men amongst whom they dwell. Some of these beings are of a very low order of life, almost like the higher orders of plants, except that they possess an independent power of motion. Others are very lively and full of grotesque

unmeaning tricks, with the power of very rapid flight from place to place. Some are perfectly harmless, while others again are more malignant in their instincts as the human beings from whom their life is drawn are of a more savage race. These curious earth elementals cannot exist long amongst nations where the more intellectual stage of development has been reached, because then the life germs thrown off by man contain too little of the lower or animal life to sustain them, and they die and their bodies decay into the atmosphere. Thus as nations advance and grow more spiritual, these lower forms of life die out from the astral plane of that earth's sphere, and succeeding generations begin at first to doubt and then to deny that they ever had an existence. Only amongst those ancient religions of the East who have kept still unbroken the threads of record, are there to be found accounts of these intermediate dependent races of beings and the causes of their existence.

"These soulless elementals of earth, air, fire and water, are a class distinct from those others which I have drawn you as emanating from the debased intelligence of man's mind and the evil actions of his body. Behold now, oh! man of a Western nation, the knowledge which your philosophers and learned men have shut out and locked away as being harmful fables, till man, shut into the narrow bounds of what he can with his physical senses alone see, hear, and feel, has begun to doubt if he has any soul at all; any higher, purer, nobler self than is sustained by the sordid life of earth. See now the multitudinous beings that surround man on every side, and ask yourself if it would not be well that he should have the knowledge which could help to keep him safe from the many pitfalls over which he walks in blind ignorance and unconsciousness of his danger. In the primitive ages of the earth man was

content to look like a child for help and succor to his Heavenly Father, and God sent his angels and ministering spirits to protect his earthly children. In these latter ages man, like a full-grown troublesome youth, seeks in his self-conceit no higher help than his own, and rushes into danger with his eyes bandaged by his pride and ignorance. He scoffs at those things which he is too limited in his powers to understand, and turns aside from those who would instruct him. Because he cannot see his soul, cannot weigh it and analyze it, he says, forsooth, that man has no soul and had better enjoy this earthly life as one who shall some day die and turn to dust again, consciousness, individuality, all forever blotted out.

"Or, again, in abject fear of the unknown fate before him, man takes refuge in the vague superstitions, the shadowy creeds of those who profess to act as guides upon the pathway to the Unknown Land, with little more certain knowledge than man has himself.

"Thus, then, it is in pity to his wandering, struggling children that God has in these later days opened once more--and wider than ever before--the doors of communion between the two worlds. He is sending out again messengers to warn man, ambassadors, to tell him of the better way, the truer path to the happiness of a higher life, and to show him that knowledge and that power which shall yet be of right his inheritance. As the prophets of old spake, so speak these messengers now, and if they speak with clearer voice, with less veiled metaphor, it is because man is no longer in his infancy and needs now that he should be shown the reason and the science upon which his beliefs and hopes must be founded.

"Listen, then, unto this voice that calls, oh! ye toilers of the earth!" cried Hasein, turning and stretching out his hands towards a small dark ball that seemed to float far away on the horizon of our sight--a small dark globe that we knew to be the sorrowful planet called Earth. "Listen to the voices that call to you and turn not a deaf ear, and realize ere it be too late that God is not a God of the dead but of the living, for all things are alive for evermore. Life is everywhere and in everything; even the dull earth and the hard rocks are composed of living germs, each living according to its own degree. The very air we breathe and the boundless ether of universal space are full of life, and there is not one thought we think but lives for good or ill, not one act whose image shall not live to torture or to solace the soul in the days of its release from its incarnation in an earthly form. Life is in all things, and God is the central Life of All."

Hasein paused, then in a calmer voice he said to me: "Look yonder! What would you say those things were?"

He pointed to what seemed to me at first a mass of spirit forms which came sweeping towards us as though blown by a strong wind. As they came near I saw they were evidently soulless astral envelopes, but unlike those floating wraiths I had seen haunting the man in the icy cage, these were solid, and to my spiritual sight life-like and full of animal vigor; yet they were like automatons and did not seem to possess any intelligence. They were drifting and bobbing about like buoys at sea to which boats are anchored. As they drifted close to us my friend put forth his will-force and captured one, which then remained floating in mid air.

"Now look," said he, "you will observe this is somewhat like a great living doll. It is the result of countless little living germs which man is continually throwing off from his earthly body, emanations solely of his animal or lower life, material enough when brought into contact with the magnetic forces of the astral plane, to form into these imitations of earthly men and women, and immaterial enough to be invisible to man's purely material sight, although a very small degree of clairvoyant power would enable him to see them. A stronger and higher degree of clairvoyant power would enable him to see, as you do, that this is not a true spirit envelope, since the soul principle is wanting; and a yet higher degree of clairvoyant power would show that a soul has never been in this form, and that it has never had a conscious existence as a soul's astral envelope.

"Amongst ordinary clairvoyants the subject of astral spirits is not studied sufficiently to develop these degrees of soul-sight, therefore few clairvoyants in your earthly country could tell you whether this was a true soul-enveloping astral form or one from which the soul had departed, or yet again one in which the soul had never been present at all. Presently I shall show you an experiment with this astral form, but first observe that being such as it is, it is fresh and full of the animal life of the earth plane, and has not the collapsed appearance of those you saw before, which had once contained a soul and which were there in a state of rapid decay yet. And mark this carefully: this fresh looking astral will decay far faster than the others, for it has none of the higher principle of life clinging to it, which, in the case of an astral that has once contained a soul, often remains for a long time animating and keeping it from perfect decay. Astral forms must draw their life

from a higher source (from soul germs in fact), or they soon cease to exist and crumble away."

"But," I asked, "How do they assume the shapes of men and women?"

"By the action of the spiritualized magnetic currents which flow through all the ether space continually, as the currents flow in the ocean. These magnetic life currents are of a more etherealized degree than those known to scientific mortals, being in fact their spiritual counterpart, and as such they act upon these cloud masses of human atoms in the same way that electricity acts upon the freezing moisture upon a window pane, forming them into the semblance of men and women as the electricity forms the freezing moisture into a likeness of trees, plants, etc.

"It is an acknowledged fact that electricity is an active agent in the formation of the shapes of leaves and trees, etc., in vegetable life, but few know that this refined form of magnetism has a similar share in the formation of human forms and animal life. I say animal life as applied to those types which are lower than man."

"Are there, then, also the astral forms of animals?"

"Certainly, and very queer, grotesque combinations some of them are. I cannot show them to you now, because your powers of sight are not yet fully developed, and also because we are traveling too rapidly to enable me to develop them for you, but some day I shall show you these, as well as many other curious things relating to the astral plane. I may tell you that atoms may be classed under different heads, and that each class will have a special attraction for others of its own kind; thus vegetable

atoms will be attracted together to form astral trees and plants, while animal atoms will form into the semblance of beasts, birds, etc., and human atoms into men and women's forms. In some cases, where the human beings from whom the atoms come are very low in the scale of humanity and nearly akin to animals, their atoms will blend with those of the lower forms of life and create grotesque horrible creatures which resemble at once animals and men, and having been seen by clairvoyants in a semi-trance condition are described as nightmare visions. In the earth spheres an immense amount of these living atoms are thrown off continually from man's lower or animal life, and these sustain and renew the astral forms, but were we to transport one of these shells to a planet whose spheres had been spiritualized beyond the stage of material life, or in other words freed from all these lower germs, the astrals could not exist, they would become like a noxious vapor and be blown away. These astrals being, as I have said, created from the cloud masses of human atoms, and never having been the envelope of any soul, are very little more permanent in their nature than the frost flowers on a window pane, unless the power of some higher intelligence acts upon them to intensify their vitality and prolong their existence. They are, as you will see, expressionless and like wax dolls in appearance, and readily lend themselves to receive any individuality stamped upon them, hence their use in ancient times by magicians and others. Astral atoms, whether of trees, plants, animals, or human beings, must not be confounded with the true spirit or soul-clothing atoms which constitute the real spirit world and its inhabitants. Astrals of every kind are the intermediate degree of materiality between the gross matter of earth and the more etherealized matter of the spirit world, and we talk of a soul clothed in its astral envelope to express that earth-bound condition in

which it is too refined or immaterial for earth existence, and too grossly clad to ascend into the spirit world of the higher spheres, or to descend to those of the lower."

"Then you mean that a spirit even in the lowest sphere is more spiritualized as regards its body than an earth-bound spirit?"

"Certainly I do. The astral plane extends like a belt around each planet and is, as I said, formed of the matter which is too fine for reabsorption by the planet, and too coarse to escape from the attraction of the planet's mass and pass into the spheres of the spirit world to form either matter in the course of disintegration or change from one form to another, and it is only the vitalizing power of such soul magnetism as it retains which enables it to cling together in any shape at all.

"In the case of human astral forms which have possessed individualized life as a soul's envelope, the astral atoms have absorbed a greater or less degree of the soul's magnetism, or true life essence, according as the earthly existence of the soul has been good or evil, elevated or degraded, and this soul magnetism animates it for a longer or shorter period, and forms a link between it and the soul which has animated it. In the case of a soul whose desires are all for higher things, the link is soon severed and the astral envelope soon decays, while with a soul of evil desires the tie may last for centuries and chain the soul to earth, making it in fact earth-bound. In some cases the astral of a soul of very evil life will have absorbed the lower or higher spheres. Astral matter is practically so much of the soul's vitality that after the soul itself has sunk into the lowest sphere of all, the empty shell will still float about the earth like a fading image of its departed owner.

Such are sometimes seen by clairvoyants hanging about the places where they once lived, and are truly 'spooks.' They have no intelligence of their own, since the soul has fled, and they can neither influence mediums nor move tables, nor do any other thing except as mechanical agents of some higher intelligence, whether that intelligence be good or evil.

"The astral before us now has no soul magnetism in it; it never possessed any, therefore it will soon decay and its atoms be absorbed by others. But see to what use it can be turned when acted upon by my will power and animated for the time being by my individuality."

I looked as he spoke and saw the astral doll become suddenly animated and intelligent, and then glide to one of the Brotherhood whom Hasein had selected and touch him upon the shoulder, seeming to say, "Friend, Hasein Bey salutes you." Then bowing to the amused and wondering brother, it glided back to us as though Hasein had held it by a string like a performing monkey.

"Now you see," he said, "how if I chose I might use this astral as a messenger to execute some work I wished done at a distance from myself, and you will understand one of the means made use of by the old magicians to carry out some work at a great distance from themselves and without their appearing to take any share in it. These astrals, however, are only capable of being made use of upon the astral plane. They could not move any material object, although they would be visible to material sight at the will of the mortal using them. There are other astrals more material in substance who could be used to penetrate into the earth itself and to bring forth its hidden treasures, the precious metals and the gems deeply buried from the

eyes of men. It would not, however, be lawful or right for me to explain to you the power by which this could be done, and those magicians who have discovered and made use of such powers have sooner or later fallen victims to those powers they could summon to their aid but rarely continue to control."

"Then were this astral to become animated by an evil intelligence it would be an actual danger to man?" I said.

"Yes, without doubt it might; and you will also observe that although I should not care to descend to clothe myself in this astral form, yet a spirit more ignorant than myself could easily do so in order to make himself felt and seen upon the earth in a more palpable form than possible to any spirit who has left the earth plane; but in doing so he would run a danger of creating a link between himself and the astral envelope not easily broken, and which might thus tie him to the astral plane for a considerable time. You will, therefore, see how the idea has arisen that men on earth, in seeking to see their departed friends, draw the spirits back into earthly conditions and do them harm. Many an ignorant spirit who is good and pure himself, has committed the mistake of reclothing himself in one of these fresh astral shells when he would have turned away from those which he knew to have been left by another spirit, and has found to his cost that he has thereby made of himself a prisoner upon the earth plane, till a higher intelligence comes to his aid and releases him.

"In a like manner spirits of a low type can clothe themselves in these empty astral garments, but in their case the very grossness of the spirit (or soul) prevents them from retaining possession long, the dense magnetism of the low spirit's own body acting as a strong noxious vapor

or gas would do upon a covering made, say, of a spider's web of fine gossamer, and rending it into a thousand pieces. To a spirit above the astral plane an astral envelope appears almost as solid as iron, but to one below it these fragile shells are like a cloud or vapor. The lower the soul the stronger is its envelope and the more firmly does it hold the soul, limiting its powers and preventing it from rising into a more advanced sphere."

"You mean, then, that spirits sometimes use these astral shells as they do earthly mediums, and either control them independently or actually enter into the form?"

"Yes, certainly. A spirit above the earth plane, anxious to show himself to a clairvoyant of the lowest or first degree of power, will sometimes enter one of these shells which he at once stamps with his identity, and in that way the clairvoyant will truly see and describe him. The danger lies in the fact that when the good spirit of limited knowledge seeks to leave again the astral shell, he finds he cannot do so; he has animated it and its strong life holds him prisoner, and it is often difficult to release him. In similar manner the too complete, too long continued control of an earthly medium by a spirit, has been found to create a link between them which becomes at last a chain. To a spirit of the lowest spheres an astral envelope is but a convenient, all too evanescent cloak with which to hide his own degraded spirit body, and thus impose upon clairvoyants unable to see the vile spirit underneath; but to a good and pure spirit the astral envelope is as a suit of iron capable of imprisoning him."

"Then in the case of what are called personations by one spirit of another at seances upon earth, are these astrals made use of?"

"Very often they are, where the mischief-making spirit is of too low a type himself to come into direct contact with the medium. You must know by this time how wonderfully the thoughts of mortal men and women are mirrored upon the atmosphere of the astral plane, and as pictures they can be read and answered by spirits possessing the knowledge of how to read them. All spirits have not the power, just as all men and women on earth are not able to read a newspaper or a letter. It requires intellect and education with us as with those on earth. The spirits, then, of which men should most beware are not so much the poor ignorant half developed spirits of the earth plane and lower spheres, whose degraded lives have made them what they are and who are often glad of a helping hand to raise them, but it is of the intellectually evil, those who have great powers alike of mind and body and who have only used them for wrong purposes. These are the real dangers to guard against, and it is only by the increase of knowledge amongst the mediums incarnated in the earthly body that it will be successfully done, for then mortals and spirit workers will labor in unison, and mutually protect the spiritual movement from fraud and from the mistakes of the well meaning but half-ignorant spirits and mortals who are doing good work in directing the attention of mankind to the matter, but who often do harm both to themselves and others. They are like ignorant chemists and liable to bring destruction and harm upon others as well as on themselves in their experiments in search of knowledge."

"You do not think, then, that the purity of their motives will suffice to protect them?"

"Would purity of motive save a child from being burnt if it thrust its hands into a blazing furnace? No! Then the only

way is to keep the child as far from the fire as possible. This good and wise spirit guardians do in a great measure, but if the children are continually hovering near the danger, and try at all sorts of odd times and fashions to get just another peep at the dangerous thing, it is impossible but that some of them will get scorched."

"Then you would not advise the indiscriminate cultivation of mediumistic powers by all mortals?"

"Certainly not. I would have all men use the powers of those who have been carefully developed under wise guardians, and I would have all assisted to cultivate them who are truly anxious to develop their powers as a means of doing good to others. But when you consider how manifold and how selfish may be the motives of those mediumistically endowed, you will see how exceedingly difficult it would be to protect them. Perhaps my ideas are colored by the circumstances of race and my earthly education, but I confess I should wish to limit the practice of mediumship to those who have proved their readiness to give up more material advantages for its sake. I would, in fact, rather see them set apart as a body who have no share in the ambitions of mankind. But enough of our discussion. I am now about to let this astral shell go and draw your attention to another type of the same class."

As he spoke he made a swift upward motion with his hands over it and uttered some words in an unknown language, whereupon the astral--which had hitherto floated on beside us--stopped and seemed to waver about for a few seconds until an advancing current of magnetism caught it, and it was swept away from us like a piece of driftwood upon the waves. As I turned from watching it I saw a small cluster of dark, weird, horrible looking forms

approaching us. These were astral shells which had never known soul life, but, unlike the pleasant waxy looking astral from which we had just parted, these were in all respects repulsive.

"These," said Hasein, "are the emanations thrown off by men and women of a low intellectual type and evil, sensual lives. They are from the slums of the earth life--not alone the social slums, but also from a higher grade of society where there are moral slums quite as degraded. Such beings as these, when animated by an evil intelligence can be used for the very worst purposes. Being so very material, they can even be used to affect material matter upon earth, and have been so used in the practice of what is known as Black Magic and witchcraft, and they are also (but very rarely) used by higher intelligences to effect physical phenomena at seances. Where wise and good intelligences control them no harm will be done, but under the direction of the evil or ignorant they become a danger beyond my power fully to express. To these astrals, and to those of a similar class in which the soul germ yet lingers as in a prison, are due those rough and dangerous manifestations sometimes seen in spirit circles (seances), where men of bad lives, and others too ignorant to protect themselves, are assembled from motives of curiosity or mere amusement."

"And amongst what class of spirits do you place those ghouls and vampires so firmly believed in, in many parts of the world?"

"Vampire spirits are those who have themselves known earth life, but have so misused it that their souls are still imprisoned in the astral envelope. Their object in sucking away the animal life principle of men and women is in

order to retain thereby their hold upon the life of the earth plane, and so save themselves from sinking to far lower spheres. They are anxious to cling to their astral envelope and to prolong its life, just as men of very evil lives upon earth cling to the life of the earthly body because they fear that when they are separated from it they will sink into some unknown depths of darkness and horror. The constant renewal of the animal and astral life often enables these vampire spirits to hang about the earth for centuries."

"Is it possible for a vampire spirit to possess itself of a sufficient amount of materiality to appear in mortal form and mingle with men as described in many of the tales told of such creatures?"

"If you mean to ask if the vampire can make to itself a material body, I say no, but it can and does sometimes take complete possession of one belonging to a mortal, just as other spirits do, and can cause its acquired body to act in accordance with its will. Thus it is quite possible for a vampire spirit clothed in the mortal body of another to so change its expression as to make it bear some resemblance to the vampire's own former earthly appearance, and through the power obtained by the possession of a material body he (or she, for the vampires are of both sexes) might really lead the curious double life ascribed to them in those weird tales current and believed in in many countries. By far the larger number of vampire spirits, however, are not in possession of an earthly body, and they hover about the earth in their own astral envelope, sucking away the earthly life of mediumistic persons whose peculiar organization makes them liable to become the prey of such influences, while they are themselves quite ignorant that such beings as these astrals exist. The

poor mortals suffer from a constant sense of exhaustion and languor without suspecting to what it is to be attributed."

"But cannot spirit guardians protect mortals from these beings?"

"Not always. In a great measure they do protect them, but only as one may protect a person from infectious fevers, by showing them the danger and warning them to avoid spots where, owing to the associations with their earthly lives, the vampire spirits are specially attracted. This the guardian spirit does by instilling into the mind of the mortal an instinctive dread of the places where crimes have been committed, or persons of evil lives have lived. But since man is and must be in all respects a free agent, it is not possible to do more. He cannot be directed in all things like a puppet, and must in a great measure gather his own experience for himself, however bitter may prove its fruits. Knowledge, guidance and help will always be given, but only in such a manner as will not interfere with man's free will, and only such knowledge as he himself desires; nothing will ever be forced upon him by the spirit world."

The Approach to Hell.

I would have liked to ask Hasein a great many more questions about the astral plane and its many curious forms of life, but we were now fast leaving it behind, and passing downwards through those lower spheres which I had partly explored before. We were traveling through space at a wonderful velocity, not quite with the rapidity of thought but at a speed difficult for the mind of mortal to conceive. Onward and still onward we swept, sinking ever

lower and lower away from the bright spheres, and as we sank a certain sense of awe and expectancy crept over our souls and hushed our talk. We seemed to feel in advance the horrors of that awful land and the sorrows of its inhabitants.

And now I beheld afar off great masses of inky black smoke which seemed to hang like a pall of gloom over the land to which we were approaching. As we still floated on and down, these great black clouds became tinged with lurid sulphurous-looking flames as from myriads of gigantic volcanoes. The air was so oppressive we could scarcely breathe, while a sense of exhaustion, such as I had never experienced before, seemed to paralyze my every limb. At last our leader gave the order for us to halt, and we descended on the top of a great black mountain which seemed to jut out into a lake of ink, and from which we saw on the horizon that awful lurid country.

Here we were to rest for a time, and here, too, we were to part from our friends who had so far escorted us upon our journey. After a simple repast consisting of various sustaining spiritual fruits and food which we had brought with us, our leader on behalf of the whole company offered up a short prayer for protection and strength, and then we all lay down upon that bleak mountain top to rest.

**The Fires of Hell--A Vengeful Spirit--
Pirates--The Sea of Foul Mud--The
Mountains of Selfish Oppression--The
Forest of Desolation--Messages of Love.**

Away before me stretched a narrow path, and curious to see where it would lead I followed it, sure that it would

somehow lead me to those whom I could help. After following it for a short time I came to the foot of a range of black mountains, and before me was the entrance to a huge cavern. Horrible reptiles were hanging on to the walls and crawling at my feet. Great funguses and monstrous air plants of an oozy slimy kind hung in festoons like ragged shrouds from the roof, and a dark pool of stagnant water almost covered the floor. I thought of turning away from this spot, but a voice seemed to bid me go on, so I entered, and skirting round the edge of the dark pool found myself at the entrance to a small dark passage in the rocks. Down this I went, and turning a corner saw before me a red light as from a fire, while dark forms like goblins passed and repassed between it and myself. Another moment and I stood at the end of the passage. Before me was a gigantic dungeon-like vault, its uneven rocky roof half revealed and half hidden by the masses of lurid smoke and flames which arose from an enormous fire blazing in the middle of the cavern, while round it were dancing such a troop of demons as might well typify the Devils of Hell. With shrieks and yells of laughter they were prodding at the fire with long black spears and dancing and flinging themselves about in the wildest fashion, while in a corner were huddled together a dozen or so of miserable dark spirits towards whom they made frantic rushes from time to time as if about to seize and hurl them into the fire, always retreating again with yells and howls of rage.

I soon perceived that I was invisible to these beings, so taking courage from that fact, I drew nearer. To my horror I discovered that the fire was composed of the bodies of living men and women who writhed and twisted in the flames, and were tossed about by the spears of those awful demons. I was so appalled by this discovery that I cried

out to know if this was a real scene or only some horrible illusion of this dreadful place, and the same deep mysterious voice that had often spoken to me in my wanderings answered me now.

"Son! they are living souls who in their earthly lives doomed hundreds of their fellow men to die this dreadful death, and knew no pity, no remorse, in doing so. Their own cruelties have kindled these fierce flames of passion and hate in the breast of their many victims, and in the spirit world these fiery germs have grown till they are now a fierce flame to consume the oppressors. These fires are fed solely by the fierce cruelties of those they now consume; there is not here one pang of anguish which has not been suffered a hundred fold more in the persons of these spirits' many helpless victims. From this fire these spirits will come forth touched by a pity, born of their own sufferings, for those they wronged in the past, and then will be extended to them the hand of help and the means of progression through deeds of mercy as many and as great as have been their merciless deeds in the past. Do not shudder nor marvel that such retribution as this is allowed to be. The souls of these spirits were so hard, so cruel, that only sufferings felt by themselves could make them pity others. Even since they left the earth life they have only been intent upon making others more helpless suffer, till the bitter hatred they have aroused has become at last a torrent which has engulfed themselves. Furthermore, know that these flames are not truly material, although to your eyes and to theirs they appear so, for in the spirit world that which is mental is likewise objective, and fierce hatred or burning passion does indeed seem a living fire. You shall now follow one of these spirits and see for yourself that what seems to you cruel justice is yet mercy in disguise. Behold these passions are burning themselves

out and the souls are about to pass into the darkness of the plain beyond."

As the voice ceased the flames died down and all was darkness save for a faint bluish light like phosphorus that filled the cavern, and by it I saw the forms of the spirits rise from the ashes of the fire and pass out of the cavern. As I followed them one became separated from the others and passing on before me went into the streets of a city that was near. It seemed to me like one of the old Spanish cities of the West Indies or South America. There were Indians passing along its streets and mingling with Spaniards and men of several other nations.

Following the spirit through several streets we came to a large building which seemed to be a monastery of the order of Jesuits--who had helped to colonize the country and force upon the unhappy natives the Roman Catholic religion, in the days when religious persecution was thought by most creeds to be a proof of religious zeal; and then, while I stood watching this spirit, I saw pass before me a panorama of his life.

I saw him first chief of his order, sitting as a judge before whom were brought many poor Indians and heretics, and I saw him condemning them by hundreds to torture and flames because they would not become converts to his teachings. I saw him oppressing all who were not powerful enough to resist him, and extorting jewels and gold in enormous quantities as tribute to him and to his order; and if any sought to resist him and his demands he had them arrested and almost without even the pretense of a trial thrown into dungeons and tortured and burned. I read in his heart a perfect thirst for wealth and power and an actual love for beholding the sufferings of his victims,

and I knew (reading as I seemed to do his innermost soul) that his religion was but a cloak, a convenient name, under which to extort the gold he loved and gratify his love of power.

Again I saw the great square or market place of this city with hundreds of great fires blazing all round it till it was like a furnace, and a whole helpless crowd of timid gentle natives were bound hand and foot and thrown into the flames, and their cries of agony went up to Heaven as this cruel man and his vile accomplices chanted their false prayers and held aloft the sacred cross which was desecrated by their unholy hands, their horrible lives of cruelty and vice, and their greed for gold. I saw that this horror was perpetrated in the name of the Church of Christ--of him whose teachings were of love and charity, who came to teach that God was perfect Love. And I saw this man who called himself Christ's minister, and yet had no thought of pity for one of these unhappy victims; he thought alone of how the spectacle would strike terror to the hearts of other Indian tribes, and make them bring him more gold to satisfy his greedy lust. Then I beheld this man returned to his own land of Spain and reveling in his ill-gotten wealth, a powerful wealthy prince of the church, venerated by the poor ignorant populace as a holy man who had gone forth into that Western World beyond the seas to plant the banner of his church and preach the blessed gospel of love and peace, while, instead, his path had been marked in fire and blood, and then my sympathy for him was gone. Then I saw this man upon his deathbed, and I saw monks and priests chanting mass for his soul that it might go to Heaven, and instead I saw it drawn down and down to Hell by the chains woven in his wicked life. I saw the great hordes of his former victims awaiting him there, drawn down in their turn by their thirst for

revenge, their hunger for power to avenge their sufferings and the sufferings of those most dear to them.

I saw this man in Hell surrounded by those he had wronged, and haunted by the empty wraiths of such as were too good and pure to come to this place of horror or to wish for vengeance on their murderer, just as I had seen in the Frozen Land with the man in the icy cage; and in Hell the only thought of that spirit was rage because his power on earth was no more--his only idea how he might join with others in Hell as cruel as himself and thus still oppress and torture. If he could have doomed his victims to death a second time he would have done it. In his heart there was neither pity nor remorse, only anger that he was so powerless. Had he possessed one feeling of sorrow or one thought of kindness for another, it would have helped him and created a wall between himself and these vengeful spirits, and his sufferings, though they might be great, would not have at last assumed the physical aspect in which I had beheld them. As it was, his passion of cruelty was so great it fed and fanned into fresh life the spiritual flames which theirs created, till at last when I saw him first they were dying out exhausted by their own violence. Those demons I had beheld were the last and most fierce of his victims in whom the desire for revenge was even then not fully satisfied, while those I had beheld crouching in the corner were some who, no longer desirous of tormenting him themselves, had yet been unable to withdraw themselves from beholding his sufferings and those of his accomplices.

And now I beheld that spirit with the newly awakened thought of repentance, returning to the city to warn others of his Jesuit fraternity, and to try to turn them from the path of his own errors. He did not yet realize the length of

time that had elapsed since he had left the earth life, nor that this city was the spiritual counterpart of the one he had lived in on earth. In time, I was told, he would be sent back to earth to work as a spirit in helping to teach mortals the pity and mercy he had not shown in his own life, but first he would have to work here in this dark place, striving to release the souls of those whom his crimes had dragged down with him. Thus I left this man at the door of that building which was the counterpart of his earthly house, and passed on by myself through the city.

Like the Roman city this one was disfigured and its beauties blotted out by the crimes of which it had been the silent witness; and to me the air seemed full of dark phantom forms wailing and weeping and dragging after them their heavy chains. The whole place seemed built upon living graves and shrouded in a dark red mist of blood and tears. It was like one vast prison house whose walls were built of deeds of violence and robbery and oppression.

And as I wandered on I had a waking dream, and saw the city as it had been on earth ere the white man had set his foot upon its soil. I saw a peaceful primitive people living upon fruits and grains and leading their simple lives in an innocence akin to that of childhood, worshiping the Great Supreme under a name of their own, yet none the less worshiping him in spirit and in truth--their simple faith and their patient virtues the outcome of the inspiration given them from that Great Spirit who is universal and belongs to no creeds, no churches. Then I saw white men come thirsting for gold and greedy to grasp the goods of others, and these simple people welcomed them like brothers, and in their innocence showed them the treasures they had gathered from the earth--gold and silver and

jewels. Then I saw the treachery which marked the path of the white man; how they plundered and killed the simple natives; how they tortured and made slaves of them, forcing them to labor in the mines till they died by thousands; how all faith, all promises, were broken by the white man till the peaceful happy country was filled with tears and blood.

Then I beheld afar, away in Spain, a few good, true, kindly men whose souls were pure and who believed that they alone had the true faith by which only man can be saved and live eternally, who thought that God had given this light to but one small spot of his earth, and had left all the rest in darkness and error--had left countless thousands to perish because this light had been denied to them but given exclusively to that one small spot of earth, that small section of his people.

I thought that these good and pure men were so sorry for those who, they thought, were in the darkness and error of a false religion, that they set forth and crossed that unknown ocean to that strange far-away land to carry with them their system of religion, and to give it to those poor simple people whose lives had been so good and gentle and spiritual under their own faith, their own beliefs.

I saw these good but ignorant priests land on this strange shore and beheld them working everywhere amongst the natives, spreading their own belief and crushing out and destroying all traces of a primitive faith as worthy of respect as their own. These priests were kind good men who sought to alleviate the physical lot of the poor oppressed natives even while they labored for their spiritual welfare also, and on every side there sprang up missions, churches and schools.

Then I beheld great numbers of men, priests as well as many others, come over from Spain, eager, not for the good of the church nor to spread the truths of their religion, but only greedy for the gold of this new land, and for all that could minister to their own gratification; men whose lives had disgraced them in their own country till they were obliged to fly to this strange one to escape the consequences of their misdeeds. I saw these men arrive in hordes and mingle with those whose motives were pure and good, till they had outnumbered them, and then thrust the good aside everywhere, and made of themselves tyrannical masters over the unhappy natives, in the name of the Holy Church of Christ.

And then I saw the Inquisition brought to the unhappy land and established as the last link in the chain of slavery and oppression thus riveted round this unhappy people, till it swept almost all of them from the face of the earth; and everywhere I beheld the wild thirst, the greed for gold that consumed as with a fire of hell all who sought that land. Blind were most of them to all its beauties but its gold, deaf to all thought but how they might enrich themselves with it; and in the madness of that time and that awful craving for wealth was this city of Hell, this spiritual counterpart of the earthly city built, stone upon stone, particle by particle, forming between itself and the city of earth chains of attraction which should draw down one by one each of its wicked inhabitants, for truly the earthly lives are building for each man and woman their spiritual habitations. Thus all these monks and priests, all these fine ladies, all these soldiers and merchants, yea, and even these unhappy natives had been drawn down to Hell by the deeds of their earthly lives, by the passions and hatreds, the greed of gold, the bitter sense of wrongs

unrequited and the thirst for revenge which those deeds had created.

At the door of a large square building, whose small grated windows looked like a prison, I stopped, arrested by the cries and shouts which came from it; then guided by the mysterious voice of my unseen guide I entered, and following the sounds soon came to a dungeon cell. Here I found a great number of spirits surrounding a man who was chained to the wall by an iron girdle round his waist. His wild glaring eyes, disheveled hair and tattered clothing suggested that he had been there for many years, while the hollow sunken cheeks and the bones sticking through his skin told that he was to all appearance dying of starvation; yet I knew that here there was no death, no such relief from suffering. Near him stood another man with folded arms and bowed head, whose wasted features and skeleton form scarred with many wounds made him an even more pitiable object than the other, though he was free while the other was chained to the wall. Around them both danced and yelled other spirits, all wild and savage and degraded. Some of them were Indians, a few Spanish, and one or two looked, I thought, like Englishmen. All were at the same work--throwing sharp knives at the chained man that never seemed to hit him, shaking their fists in his face, cursing and reviling him, yet, strange to say, never able to actually touch him, and all the time there he stood chained to the wall, unable to move or get away from them. And there stood the other man silently watching him.

As I stood looking at this scene I became conscious of the past history of those two men. I saw the one who was chained to the wall in a handsome house like a palace, and knew he had been one of the judges sent out from Spain to

preside over the so-called courts of justice, which had but proved additional means for extorting money from the natives and oppressing all who sought to interfere with the rich and powerful. I saw the other man who had been a merchant, living in a pretty villa with a beautiful, a very beautiful, wife and one little child. This woman had attracted the notice of the judge, who conceived an unholy passion for her, and on her persistently repulsing all his advances he made an excuse to have the husband arrested on suspicion by the Inquisition and thrown into prison. Then he carried off the poor wife and so insulted her that she died, and the poor little child was strangled by order of the cruel judge.

Meantime the unfortunate husband lay in prison, ignorant of the fate of his wife and child and of the charge under which he had been arrested, growing more and more exhausted from the scanty food and the horrors of the dungeon, and more and more desperate from the suspense. At last he was brought before the council of the Inquisition, charged with heretical practices and conspiracy against the crown, and on denial of these charges was tortured to make him confess and give up the names of certain of his friends who were accused of being his accomplices. As the poor man, bewildered and indignant, still protested his innocence he was sent back to his dungeon and there slowly starved to death, the cruel judge not daring to set him at liberty, well knowing that he would make the city ring with the story of his wrongs and his wife's fate when he should learn it.

As so this poor man had died, but he did not join his wife, who, poor injured soul, had passed at once with her little innocent child into the higher spheres. She was so good and pure and gentle that she had even forgiven her

murderer--for such he was, though he had not intended to kill her--and between her and the husband she so dearly loved there was a wall created by his bitter revengeful feelings against the man who had destroyed them both.

When this poor wronged husband died, his soul could not leave the earth. It was tied there by his hatred of his enemy and his thirst for revenge. His own wrongs he might have forgiven, but the fate of his wife and child had been too dreadful. He could not forgive that. Before even his love for his wife came this hate, and day and night his spirit clung fast to the judge, seeking for the chance of vengeance; and at last it came. Devils from Hell--such as had once tempted me--clustered round the wronged spirit and taught it how through the hand of a mortal it could strike the assassin's dagger to the judge's heart, and then when death severed the body and the spirit he could drag that down with him to Hell. So terrible had been this craving for revenge, nursed through the waiting years of solitude in prison and in the spirit land, that the poor wife had tried and tried in vain to draw near her husband and soften his heart with better thoughts. Her gentle soul was shut out by the wall of evil drawn round the unhappy man, and he also had no hope of ever seeing her again. He deemed that she had gone to Heaven and was lost to him for evermore. A Roman Catholic of the narrow views held nearly two hundred years ago when this man had lived, he believed that being under the ban of its priests and denied the ministrations of the church when he died, was the reason he was one of the eternally lost, while his wife and child must be with the angels of Heaven. Is it wonderful, then, that all this poor spirit's thoughts should center in the desire for vengeance, and that he should plan only how to make his enemy suffer as he had been made to suffer? Thus, then, it was he who inspired a man on earth to kill

the judge; his hand guided the mortal's with so unerring an aim that the judge fell pierced to his false, cruel heart. The earthly body died but the immortal soul lived, and awakened to find itself in Hell, chained to a dungeon wall as he had chained his victim, and face to face with him at last.

There were others whom the judge had wronged and sent to a death of suffering to gratify his anger or to enrich himself at their expense, and these all gathered round him and made his awakening a Hell indeed. Yet such was the indomitable strength of will of this man that none of the blows aimed at him could touch him, none of the missiles strike, and thus through all the years had those two deadly enemies faced each other, pouring out their hatred and defiance while those other spirits, like the chorus of a Greek tragedy, came and went and amused themselves devising fresh means to torment the chained man whose strong will kept them at bay.

And away in the bright spheres mourned the poor wife, striving and hoping till the time should come when her influence would be felt even in this awful place, when her love and her unceasing prayers should reach the soul of her husband and soften it, that he might relent in his bitter purpose and turn from his revenge. It was her prayers which had drawn me to this dungeon, and it was her soul which spoke to mine, telling me all the sad cruel story, and pleading with me to carry to her unhappy husband the knowledge that she lived only in thoughts of him, only in the hope that he would be drawn by her love to the upper spheres to join her in peace and happiness at last. With this vision strong upon me, I drew near the sullen man who was growing tired of his revenge, and whose heart was full of longing for the wife he loved so passionately.

I touched him upon the shoulder and said: "Friend, I know why you are here, and all the cruel story of your wrongs, and I am sent from her you love to tell you that in the bright land above she awaits you, wearying that you do not come and marveling that you can find revenge more sweet than her caresses. She bids me tell you that you chain yourself here when you might be free."

The spirit started as I spoke, then turning to me grasped my arm and gazed long and earnestly into my face as though to read there whether I spoke truly or falsely. Then he sighed as he drew back, saying: "Who are you and why do you come here? You are like none of those who belong to this awful place, and your words are words of hope, yet how can there be hope for the soul in Hell?"

"There is hope even here; for hope is eternal and God in his mercy shuts none out from it, whatever man in his earth-distorted image of the divine teachings may do. I am sent to give hope to you and to others who are, like you, in sorrow for the past, and if you will but come with me, I can show you how to reach the Better Land."

I saw that he hesitated, and a bitter struggle went on in his heart, for he knew that it was his presence which kept his enemy a prisoner, that were he to go the other would be free to wander through this Dark Land, and even yet he could hardly let him go. Then I spoke again of his wife; his child; would he not rather go to them? The strong passionate man broke down as he thought of those loved ones, and burying his face in his hands wept bitter tears. I put my arm through his and led him, unresisting, out of the prison and out of the city. Here we found kind spirit friends were awaiting the poor man, and with them I left him that they might bear him to a bright land where he

would see his wife from time to time, till he worked himself up to the level of her sphere, where they would be united forever in a happiness more perfect than could ever have been their lot on earth.

I did not return to the city, for I felt my work there was done, and so wandered on in search of fresh fields of usefulness. In the middle of a dark lonely plain I came upon a solitary hut, in which I found a man lying on some wisps of dirty straw, unable to move and to all appearance dying.

He told me that in his earth life he had thus abandoned and left to die a sick comrade, whom he had robbed of the gold for which they had both risked their lives, and that now he also was dead he found himself lying in the same helpless deserted way.

I asked him if he would not wish to get up and go and do something to help others and thus atone for the murder of his friend, because if so I thought I could help him.

He thought he would like to get up certainly. He was sick of this hole, but he did not see why he should work at anything or bother about other people. He would rather look for the money he had buried, and spend that. Here his cunning eyes glanced furtively at me to see what I thought of his money and if I was likely to try to find it.

I suggested to him that he ought rather to think of trying to find the friend he had murdered and make reparation to him. But he wouldn't hear of that, and got quite angry, said he was not sorry he had killed his friend, and only sorry he was here. He thought I would have helped him to get away. I tried to talk to this man and make him see how

he really might better his position and undo the wrong he had done, but it was no use, his only idea was that once given the use of his limbs again he could go and rob or kill some one else. So at last I left him where he lay, and as I went out his feeble hand picked up a stone and flung it after me.

"What," I asked mentally, "will become of this man?"

I was answered: "He has just come from earth after dying a violent death, and his spirit is weak, but ere long he will grow strong, and then he will go forth and join other marauders like himself who go about in bands, and add another horror to this place. After the lapse of many years--it may even be centuries--the desire for better things will awake, and he will begin to progress, but very slowly, for the soul which has been in chains so long and is so poorly developed, so degraded as in this man, often takes cycles of time to develop its dormant powers."

After I had wandered for some time over this dreary desolate plain I felt so tired, weary of heart, that I sat down, and began musing upon what I had seen in this awful sphere. The sight of so much evil and suffering had depressed me, the awful darkness and heavy murky clouds oppressed my soul that ever had loved the sunshine and the light as I fancy only we of the Southern nations love it. And then I wearied. Ah! How I wearied and longed for news from her whom I had left on earth. No word had reached me as yet from my friends--no news of my beloved. I knew not how long I had been in this place where there was no day to mark the time, nothing but eternal night that brooded and reigned in silence over everything. My thoughts were full of my beloved, and I prayed earnestly, that she might be kept safe on earth to

gladden my eyes when the time of probation in this place should be over. While I prayed I became conscious of a soft pale light suffused around me, as from a glowing star, that grew and grew till it expanded and opened out into a most glorious picture framed in rays of light, and in the centre I saw my darling, her eyes looking into mine and smiling at me, her sweet lips parted as though speaking my name; then she seemed to raise her hand and touching her lips with her finger tips, threw me a kiss. So shyly, so prettily, was it done that I was in raptures, and rose to return her that kiss, to look more closely at her, and lo! The vision had vanished and I was alone on the dark plain once more. But no longer sad, that bright vision had cheered me, and given me hope and courage to go on once more and bring to others such hope as cheered myself.

I arose and went on again, and in a short time was overtaken by a number of dark and most repulsive-looking spirits; they wore ragged black cloaks and seemed to have their faces concealed by black masks like spectral highwaymen. They did not see me, and I had found that as a rule the dwellers of this sphere were too low in intelligence and spiritual sight to be able to see anyone from the spheres above unless brought into direct contact with them. Curious to see what they were about, I drew back and followed them at a little distance. Presently another party of dark spirits approached, carrying what looked like bags with some sort of treasure. Immediately they were attacked by the first-comers. They had no weapons in their hands, but they fought like wild beasts with teeth and claws, their finger nails being like the claws of a wild animal or a vulture. They fastened upon each other's throats and tore them. They scratched and bit like tigers or wolves, till one-half at least were left lying helpless upon the ground, while the rest rushed off with

the treasure (which to me seemed only lumps of hard stone).

When all who were able to move had gone, I drew near the poor spirits lying moaning on the ground to see if I could help any of them. But it seemed to be no use doing so; they only tried to turn upon me and tear me in pieces. They were more like savage beasts than men, even their bodies were bent like a beast's, the arms long like an ape's, the hands hard, and the fingers and nails like claws, and they half walked and half crawled on all-fours. The faces could scarcely be called human; the very features had become bestial, while they lay snarling and showing their teeth like wolves. I thought of the strange wild tales I had read of men changing into animals, and I felt I could almost have believed these were such creatures. In their horrible glaring eyes there was an expression of calculation and cunning which was certainly human, and the motions of their hands were not like those of an animal; moreover they had speech and were mingling their howls and groans with oaths and curses and foul language unknown to animals.

"Are there souls even here?" I asked.

Again came the answer: "Yes, even here. Lost, degraded, dragged down and smothered, till almost all trace is lost, yet even here there are the germs of souls. These men were pirates of the Spanish main, highwaymen, freebooters, slave dealers, and kidnappers of men. They have so brutalized themselves that almost all trace of the human is merged in the wild animal. Their instincts were those of savage beasts; now they live like beasts and fight like them."

"And for them is there still hope, and can anyone help them?" I asked.

"Even for these there is hope, though many will not avail themselves of it for ages yet to come. Yet here and there are others who even now can be helped."

I turned, and at my feet lay a man who had dragged himself to me with great difficulty and was now too exhausted for further effort. He was less horrible to look upon than the others, and in his distorted face there were yet traces of better things. I bent over him and heard his lips murmur: "Water! Water for any sake! Give me water for I am consumed with a living fire."

I had no water to give him and knew not where to get any in this land, but I gave him a few drops of the essence I had brought from the Land of Dawn for myself. The effect upon him was like magic. It was an elixir. He sat up and stared at me and said:

"You must be a magician. That has cooled me and put out the fire that has burned within me for years. I have been filled with a living fire of thirst ever since I came to this Hell."

I had now drawn him away from the others, and began to make passes over his body, and as I did so his sufferings ceased and he grew quiet and restful. I was standing by him wondering what to do next, whether to speak or to go away and leave him to himself, when he caught my hand and kissed it passionately.

"Oh! Friend, how am I to thank you? What shall I call you who have come to give me relief after all these years of suffering?"

"If you are thus grateful to me, would you not wish to earn the gratitude of others by helping them? Shall I show you how you could?"

"Yes! Oh! Yes, most gladly, if only you will take me with you, good friend."

"Well, then, let me help you up, and if you are able we had better leave this spot as soon as we can," said I, and together we set forth to see what we could do.

My companion told me he had been a pirate and in the slave trade. He had been mate of a ship and was killed in a fight, and had awakened to find himself and others of the crew in this dark place. How long he had been there he had no idea, but it seemed like eternity. He and other spirits like him went about in bands and were always fighting. When they did not meet another party to fight they fought amongst themselves; the thirst for fighting was the only excitement they could get in this horrible place where there was never any drink to be got which could quench the awful burning thirst which consumed them all; what they drank only seemed to make them a thousand times worse, and was like pouring living fire down their throats. Then he said: "You never could die, no matter what you suffered, that was the awful curse of the thing, you had got beyond death, and it was no use trying to kill yourself or get others to kill you, there was no such escape from suffering.

"We are like a lot of hungry wolves," he said, "for want of anyone to attack us we used to fall upon each other and fight till we were exhausted, and then we would lie moaning and suffering till we recovered enough to go forth again and attack someone else. I have been longing for any means of escape. I have almost got to praying for it at last. I felt I would do anything if God would only forgive me and let me have another chance; and when I saw you standing near me I thought perhaps you were an angel sent down to me after all. Only you've got no wings nor anything of that sort, as they paint 'em in pictures. But then pictures don't give you much idea of this place, and if they are wrong about one place why not about the other?"

I laughed at him; yes, even in that place of sorrow I laughed, my heart felt so much lightened to find myself of so much use. And then I told him who I was and how I came to be there, and he said if I wanted to help people there were some dismal swamps near where a great many unhappy spirits were imprisoned, and he could take me to them and help a bit himself he thought. He seemed afraid to let me go out of his sight lest I should disappear and leave him alone again. I felt quite attracted to this man because he seemed so very grateful and I was also glad of companionship of any sort (except that of those most repulsive beings who seemed the majority of the dwellers here) for I felt lonely and somewhat desolate in this far-off dismal country.

The intense darkness, the horrible atmosphere of thick fog, made it almost impossible to see far in any direction, so that we reached the land of swamps before I was aware of it except for feeling a cold, damp, offensive air which blew in our faces. Then I saw looming before me a great sea of liquid mud, black, fetid and stagnant, a thick slime of oily

blackness floating on the top. Here and there monstrous reptiles, with huge inflated bodies and projecting eyes were wallowing. Great bats, with almost human faces like vampires, hovered over it, while black and grey smoke wreaths of noisome vapor rose from its decaying surface, and hung over it in weird fantastic phantom shapes that shifted and changed ever and anon into fresh forms of ugliness--now waving aloft wild arms and shaking, nodding, gibbering heads, which seemed almost endowed with sense and speech--then melting into mist again to form into some new creature of repulsive horror.

On the shores of this great foul sea were innumerable crawling slimy creatures of hideous shape and gigantic size that lay sprawling on their backs or plunged into that horrid sea. I shuddered as I looked upon it and was about to ask if there could indeed be lost souls struggling in that filthy slime, when my ears heard a chorus of wailing cries and calls for help coming from the darkness before me, that touched my heart with their mournful hopelessness, and my eyes, growing more accustomed to the mist, distinguished here and there struggling human forms wading up to their armpits in the mud. I called to them and told them to try and walk towards me, for I was on the shore, but they either could not see or could not hear me for they took no notice, and my companion said he believed they were both deaf and blind to everything but their immediate surroundings. He had been in the sea of foul mud himself for a time, but had managed to struggle out, though he had understood that most were unable to do so without help from another, and that some went on stumbling about in it for years. Again we heard those pitiful cries, and one sounded so near us that I thought of plunging in myself and trying to drag the wretched spirit out, but faugh! It was too horrible, too disgusting. I

recoiled in horror at the thought. And then again that despairing cry smote upon my ears and made me feel I must venture it. So in I went, trying my best to stifle my sense of disgust, and, guided by the cries, soon reached the man, the great phantoms of the mist wavering and swooping and rushing overhead as I did so. He was up to his neck in the mud and seemed sinking lower when I found him, and it seemed impossible for me alone to draw him out, so I called to the pirate spirit to come and help me, but he was nowhere to be seen. Thinking he had only led me into a trap and deserted me, I was about to turn and struggle out again, when the unfortunate spirit besought me so pitifully not to abandon him that I made another great effort and succeeded in dragging him a few yards and drawing his feet out of a trap of weeds at the bottom in which they appeared to be caught. Then, somehow, I half dragged, half supported him till we reached the shore where the unfortunate spirit sank down in unconsciousness. I was a good deal exhausted also and sat down beside him to rest. I looked round for my pirate friend, and beheld him wallowing about in the sea at some distance and evidently bringing out someone along with him. Even in the midst of my awful surroundings I could not help feeling a certain sense of amusement in looking at him, he made such frantic and exaggerated efforts to haul along the unlucky spirit, and was so shouting and going on that it was calculated to alarm anyone who was timid, and I did not wonder to hear the poor spirit almost imploring not to be so energetic, to take it a little slower, and to give him time to follow. I went over to them, and the poor rescued one being now near the shore I helped to get him out and to let him rest beside the other one.

The pirate spirit seemed greatly delighted with his successful efforts and very proud of himself, and was quite

ready to set off again, so I sent him after someone else whom we heard calling, and was attending to the other two when I again heard most pitiful wailings not far from me, though I could see no one at first, then a faint, tiny speck of light like a will-o'-the-wisp glimmered in the darkness of that disgusting swamp, and by its light I saw someone moving about and calling for aid, so, not very willingly, I confess, I went into the mud again. When I reached the man I found he had a woman with him whom he was supporting and trying to encourage, and with considerable trouble I got them both out and found the pirate spirit had also arrived with his rescued one.

Truly a strange group we must have made on the shores of that slimy sea, which I learned afterwards was the spiritual creation of all the disgusting thoughts, all the impure desires of the lives of men on earth, attracted and collected into this great swamp of foulness. Those spirits who were thus wallowing in it had reveled in such low abominations in their earth lives and had continued to enjoy such pleasures after death through the mediumship of mortal men and women, till at last even the earth plane had become too high for them by reason of their own exceeding vileness, and they had been drawn down by the force of attraction into this horrible sink of corruption to wander in it till the very disgust of themselves should work a cure.

One man I had rescued had been one of the celebrated wits of Charles the Second's court, and after his death had long haunted the earth plane, sinking, however, lower and lower till he had sunk into this sea at last, the weeds of his pride and arrogance forming chains in which his feet were so entangled that he could not move till I released him. Another man had been a celebrated dramatist of the reign

of the early Georges. While the man and woman had belonged to the court of Louis the Fifteenth and had been drawn together to this place. Those rescued by the pirate were somewhat similar in their histories.

I had been somewhat troubled at first as to how I was going to free myself from the mud of that horrible sea, but I now suddenly saw a small clear fountain of pure water spring up near to us as if by magic, and in its fresh stream we soon washed all traces of the mud away.

I now advised those whom we had rescued to try what they could do to help others in this land of darkness as a return for the help given to themselves, and having given them what advice and help I could I started once more upon my pilgrimage. The pirate, however, seemed so very unwilling to part from me that we two set forth together once more.

I shall not attempt to describe all whom we sought to help in our wanderings. Were I to do so this narrative would fill volumes and probably only weary my readers, so I shall pass over what seemed to me like weeks of earthly time, as nearly as I am able to reckon it, and will describe our arrival at a vast range of mountains whose bleak summits towered into the night sky overhead. We were both somewhat discouraged with the results of our efforts to help people. Here and there we had found a few who were willing to listen and to be helped, but as a rule our attempts had been met with scorn and derision, while not a few had even attacked us for interfering with them, and we had some trouble to save ourselves from injury.

Our last attempt had been with a man and woman of most repulsive appearance who were fighting at the door of a

wretched hovel. The man was beating her so terribly I could not but interfere to stop him. Whereupon they both set on me at once, the woman spirit doing her best to scratch my eyes out, and I was glad to have the pirate come to my assistance, for, truth to tell, the combined attack had made me lose my temper, and by doing so I put myself for the moment on their level, and so was deprived of the protection afforded me by my superior spiritual development.

These two had been guilty of a most cruel and brutal murder of an old man (the husband of the woman) for the sake of his money; and they had been hanged for the crime, their mutual guilt forming a bond between them so strong that they had been drawn down together and were unable to separate in spite of the bitter hatred they now felt for each other. Each felt the other to be the cause of their being in this place, and each felt the other more guilty than themselves, and it had been their eagerness each to betray the other which had helped to hang both. Now they seemed simply to exist in order to fight together, and I can fancy no punishment more awful than theirs must have been, thus linked together in hate.

In their present state of mind it was not possible to help them in any way.

Shortly after leaving this interesting couple we found ourselves at the foot of the great dark mountains, and by the aid of a curious pale phosphorescent glow which hung in patches over them we were able to explore them a little. There were no regular pathways, and the rocks were very steep, so we stumbled up as best we might--for I should explain that by taking on a certain proportion of the conditions of this low sphere I had lost the power to rise at

will and float, which was a privilege of those who had reached the Land of Dawn. After a toilsome ascent of one of the lower ranges of the mountains we began to tramp along the crest of one, faintly lighted by the strange gleaming patches of phosphorescent light, and beheld on either side of us vast deep chasms in the rocks, gloomy precipices, and awful looking black pits. From some of these came wailing cries and moans and occasionally prayers for help. I was much shocked to think there were spirits down in such depths of misery, and felt quite at a loss how to help them, when my companion, who had shown a most remarkable eagerness to second all my efforts to rescue people, suggested that we should make a rope from some of the great rank, withered-looking weeds and grass that grew in small crevices of these otherwise barren rocks, and with such a rope I could lower him down, as he was more used to climbing in that fashion than I, and thus we might be able to draw up some of these spirits out of their dreadful position.

This was a good idea, so we set to work and soon had a rope strong enough to bear the weight of my friend, for you should know that in spiritual, as well as in material things, weight is a matter of comparison, and the materiality of those low spheres will give them a much greater solidity and weight than belongs to a spirit sphere more advanced, and though to your material eyes of earth life my pirate friend would have shown neither distinct material form nor weight, yet a very small development of your spiritual faculties would have enabled you to both see and feel his presence, though a spirit the next degree higher would still remain invisible to you. Thus I am not in error, nor do I even say what is improbable, when I thus speak of my friend's weight, which for a rope made of spiritual grass and weeds was as great a strain as would

have been the case with an earthly man and earth materials. Having made one end of the rope fast to a rock, the spirit descended with the speed and sureness acquired by long practice as a sailor. Once there he soon made it fast round the body of the poor helpless one whom he found lying moaning at the bottom. Then I drew up the rope and the spirit, and when he had been made safe I lowered it to my friend and drew him up, and having done what we could for the rescued one we went on and helped a few more in like fashion.

When we had pulled out as many as we could find, a most strange thing happened. The phosphorescent light died out and left us in utter darkness, while a mysterious voice floating, as it seemed, in the air, said, "Go on now, your work here is done. Those whom you have rescued were caught in their own traps, and the pitfalls that they made for others had received themselves, till that time when repentance and a desire to atone should draw rescuers to help them and free them from the prisons they had themselves made. In these mountains are many spirits imprisoned who may not yet be helped out by any, for they would only be a danger to others were they free, and the ruin and evil they would shed around make their longer imprisonment a necessity. Yet are their prisons of their own creating, for these great mountains of misery are the outcome and product of men's earthly lives, and these precipices are but the spiritual counterparts of those precipices of despair over which they have in earthly life driven their unhappy victims. Not till their hearts soften, not till they have learned to long for liberty that they may do good instead of evil, will their prisons be opened and they be drawn forth from the living death in which their own frightful cruelties to others have entombed them."

The voice ceased, and alone and in darkness we groped our way down the mountain side till we reached the level ground once more. Those awful mysterious dark valleys of eternal night--those towering mountains of selfishness and oppression--had struck such a chill to my heart that I was glad indeed to know there was no call of duty for me to linger longer there.

Our wandering now brought us to an immense forest, whose weird fantastic trees were like what one sees in some awful nightmare. The leafless branches seemed like living arms held out to grasp and hold the hapless wanderer. The long snake-like roots stretched out like twisting ropes to trip him up. The trunks were bare and blackened as though scorched by the blasting breath of fire. From the bark a thick foul slime oozed and like powerful wax held fast any hand that touched it. Great waving shrouds of some strange dark air plant clothed the branches like a pall, and helped to enfold and bewilder any who tried to penetrate through this ghostly forest. Faint muffled cries as of those who are exhausted and half smothered came from this awful wood, and here and there we could see the imprisoned souls held captive in the embrace of these extraordinary prisons, struggling to get free, yet unable to move one single step.

"How," I wondered, "shall we help these?" Some were caught by the foot--a twisted root holding them as in a vice. Another's hand was glued to the trunk of a tree. Another was enveloped in a shroud of the black moss, while yet another's head and shoulders were held fast by a couple of branches which had closed upon them. Wild ferocious looking beasts prowled round them, and huge vultures flapped their wings overhead, yet seemed unable to touch any of the prisoners, though they came so near.

"Who are those men and women?" I asked.

"They are those," was the reply, "who viewed with delight the sufferings of others, those who gave their fellow men to be torn in pieces by wild beasts that they might enjoy the excitement of their sufferings. They are all those who for no reason but the lust of cruelty have, in many different ways and in many different ages, tortured and entrapped and killed those who were more helpless than themselves, and for all now here release will only come when they have learned the lesson of mercy and pity for others and the desire to save some one else from suffering, even at the expense of suffering to themselves. Then will these bands and fetters which hold them be loosed, then they will be free to go forth and work out their atonement. Till then no one else can help them--none can release them. Their release must be effected by themselves through their own more merciful desires and aspirations. If you will but recall the history of your earth and think how men in all ages have enslaved, oppressed and tortured their fellow men in every country of that globe, you will not wonder that this vast forest should be well peopled. It was deemed right that for your own instruction you should see this fearful place, but as none of those you see and pity have so far changed their hearts that you can give them aid, you will now pass on to another region where you can do more good."

After leaving the Forest of Desolation we had not gone far upon our road when to my joy I saw my friend Hassein approaching. Mindful, however, of Ahrinziman's warning I gave him the sign agreed upon and received the countersign in return. He had come, he said, with a message from my father and from my beloved who had sent me what were indeed sweet words of love and

encouragement. Hasein told me that my mission would now lie amongst those great masses of spirits whose evil propensities were equaled only by their intellectual powers, and their ingenuity in works of evil. "They are those," said he, "who were rulers of men and kings of intellect in all branches, but who have perverted and abused the powers with which they were endowed till they have made of them a curse and not a blessing. With most of them you will have to guard yourself at all points against the allurements they will hold out to tempt you, and the treachery of every kind they will practice on yourself. Yet amongst them are a few whom you are sent to succor and whom your own instinct and events will point out as those to whom your words will be welcome and your aid valuable. I shall not in all probability bring you messages again, but some other may be sent to do so, and you must, above all things and before all things, remember to distrust any who come to you and cannot give the sign and symbol I have given. You are now in reality about to invade the enemies' camp, and you will find that your errand is known to them and resented, whatever it may suit them to pretend. Beware, then, of all their false promises, and when they seem most friendly distrust them most."

I promised to remember and heed his warning, and he added that it was necessary I should part for a time from my faithful companion, the pirate, as he could not safely accompany me in those scenes to which my path would now lead, but he promised he would place him under the care of one who could and would help him to leave that dark country soon.

After giving him loving and helpful messages to my beloved and my father, which he promised to deliver to

them, we parted, and I set forth in the direction pointed out, greatly cheered and comforted by the good news and loving messages I had received.

CHAPTER XXXII.--Through the Gates of Gold--My Mother--My Home in the Land of Bright Day--I Am Joined by Benedetto.

I was always fond of watching the clouds float over the sky and shape themselves into pictures suggested by my thoughts. Since I reached the second sphere of the spirit land my skies have always had clouds floating over them, lovely light fleecy clouds which shape themselves into a thousand forms and take on the most lovely shades of color, sometimes becoming rainbow hued and at others of the most dazzling white, and then again vanishing away altogether. I have been told by some spirits that in their skies they never see a cloud, all is serene clear beauty; and no doubt it is so in their lands, for in the spirit world our thoughts and wishes form our surroundings. Thus, because I love to see clouds they are to be seen in my sky, at times veiling and softening its beauties and making cloud-castles for me to enjoy.

Now, some time after I obtained my little home in the Morning Land I began to see between myself and my cloud-pictures a vision which, like the mirage seen in the desert, hovered on the horizon, distinct and lifelike, only to melt away as I gazed. This was a most lovely ethereal gate of wrought gold, such as might be the entrance to some fairy land. A clear stream of water flowed between myself and this gate, while trees so fresh, so green, so aerial, they seemed like fairy trees, arched their branches over it and clustered at the sides. Again and again did I see this vision, and one day while I was gazing at it my father came

unnoticed by me and stood by my side. He touched my shoulder and said:

"Franchezzo, that gate is inviting you to go nearer and see it for yourself. It is the entrance to the highest circle of this second sphere, and it is within those gates that your new home is waiting for you. You might have gone some time ago into those circles which lie between you and it, had not your affection for this little cottage made you content to remain in it. Now, however, it would be as well for you to go forth and see if the wonders of that new land will not still more delight you. I am, as you know, in the third sphere, which will, therefore, be still above you, but the nearer you approach to me the more easily can I visit you, and in your new home we shall be much oftener together."

I was so surprised I could not answer for a little time. It seemed incredible that I should be able so soon to pass those gates. Then, taking my father's advice, I bade a regretful adieu to my little home (for I grow much attached to places which I live long in) and set forth to journey to this new country, the gate shining before me all the time, not fading away as it had done before.

In the spirit land where the surface is not that of a round globe as with the planets, you do not see the objects on the horizon vanishing in the same way, and earth and sky meeting at last as one. Instead you see the sky as a vast canopy overhead, and the circles which are above you seem like plateau resting upon mountain tops on your horizon, and when you reach those mountains and see the new country spread out before you, there are always on its horizon again more mountains and fresh lands lying higher than those you have reached. Thus also you can look down on those you have passed as upon a succession

of terraces, each leading to a lower, less beautiful one, till at last you see the earth plane surrounding the earth itself, and then beyond that again (for those spirits whose sight is well developed) lie another succession of terrace-like lands leading down to Hell. Thus circle melts into circle and sphere into sphere, only that between each sphere there exists a barrier of magnetic waves which repels those from a lower sphere who seek to pass it until their condition has become in harmony with the higher sphere.

In my journey to the golden gates I passed through several circles of this second sphere, whose cities and dwelling-places would have tempted me to linger and admire them had I not been so eager to view the fair land which was now the goal of my hopes. I knew, moreover, that I could at any time on my way to earth stop and explore those intermediate lands, because a spirit can always retrace his steps if he desires and visit those below him.

At last I reached the top of the last range of mountains between me and the golden gates, and saw stretched out before my eyes a most lovely country. Trees waved their branches as in welcome to me and flowers blossomed everywhere, while at my feet was the shining river and across it the golden gates. With a great sense of joy in my heart I plunged into that beautiful river to swim across, its refreshing waters closing over my head as I dived and swam. I had taken no heed to my clothing and as I landed on the farther side I looked to see myself dripping with water, but in a moment I found my clothing as dry as could be, and what was still stranger, my grey robe with its triple bordering of white had changed into one of the most dazzling snowy luster with a golden girdle and golden borderings. At the neck and wrists it was clasped with little plain gold clasps, and seemed to be like the

finest muslin in texture. I could scarce believe my senses. I looked and looked again, and then, with a trembling, beating heart I approached those lovely gates. As my hand touched them they glided apart and I passed into a wide road bordered by trees and flowering shrubs and plants of most lovely hues--like flowers of earth, indeed, but ah! How much more lovely, how much more fragrant no words of mine can convey to you.

The waving branches of the trees bent over me in loving welcome as I passed, the flowers seemed to turn to me as greeting one who loved them well, at my feet there was the soft green sward, and overhead a sky so clear, so pure, so beautiful, the light shimmering through the trees as never did the light of earthly sun. Before me were lovely blue and purple hills and the gleam of a fair lake, upon whose bosom tiny islets nestled crowned with the green foliage of groups of trees. Here and there a little boat skimmed over the surface of the lake filled with happy spirits clad in shining robes of many different colors--so like to earth, so like my beloved Southern Land, and yet so changed, so glorified, so free from all taint of wrong and sin!

As I passed up the broad flower-girt road a band of spirits came to meet and welcome me, amongst whom I recognized my father, my mother, my brother and a sister, besides many beloved friends of my youth. They carried gossamer scarfs of red, white and green colors, which they were waving to me, while they strewed my path with masses of the fairest flowers as I approached, and all the time they sang the beautiful songs of our own land in welcome, their voices floating on the soft breeze in the perfection of unison and harmony. I felt almost overcome with emotion; it seemed far too much happiness for one like me.

And then my thoughts even in that bright scene turned to earth, to her who was of all the most dear to me, where all were so dear, and I thought, "Alas that she is not here to share with me the triumphs of this hour; she to whose love more than to any other thing I owe it." As the thought came to me I suddenly beheld her spirit beside me, half asleep, half conscious, freed for a brief moment from the earthly body and borne in the arms of her chief guardian spirit. Her dress was of the spirit world, white as a bride's and shimmering with sparkling gems like dew drops. I turned and clasped her to my heart, and at my touch her soul awoke and she looked smilingly at me. Then I presented her to my friends as my betrothed bride, and while she was still smiling at us all, her guide again drew near and threw over her a large white mantle. He lifted her in his arms once more, and like a tired child she seemed to sink into slumber as he bore her away to her earthly body, which she had left for a time to share and crown this supreme moment of my joy. Ah, me! even in my joy I felt it hard to let her go, to think I could not keep her with me; but the thread of her earthly life was not yet fully spun, and I knew that she like others must travel the path of her earthly pilgrimage to its end.

When my beloved was gone, my friends all clustered round me with tender embraces, my mother whom I had never seen since I was a little child--caressing my hair and covering my face with kisses as though I had been still the little son whom she had left on earth so many, many years ago that his memory of her had been but dim, and that the father had supplied the image of both parents in his thoughts.

Then they led me to a lovely villa almost buried in the roses and jasmine which clustered over its walls and

twined around the slender white pillars of the piazza, forming a curtain of flowers upon one side. What a beautiful home it seemed! How much beyond what I deserved! Its rooms were spacious, and there were seven of them, each typical of a phase in my own character or some taste I had cultivated.

My villa was upon the top of a hill overlooking the lake which lay many hundreds of feet below, its calm waters rippled by magnetic currents and the surrounding hills mirrored in its quiet bosom, and beyond the lake there was a wide valley. As one looks down from a mountain top to the low hills and the dark valley and level plains below, so did I now look down from my new dwelling upon a panorama of the lower spheres and circles through which I had passed, to the earth plane and again to the earth itself, which lay like a star far below me. I thought as I looked at it that there dwelt still my beloved, and there yet lay the field of my labors. I have sat many times since gazing out on that lone star, the pictures of my past life floating in a long wave of memory across my day-dream, and with all my thoughts was interwoven the image of her who is my guiding star.

The room from which I could see this view of the distant earth was my music-room, and in it were musical instruments of various kinds. Flowers festooned the walls and soft draperies the windows, which required no glass in their frames to keep out the soft zephyrs of that fair land. A honeysuckle, that was surely the same sweet plant which had so rejoiced my heart in my little cottage in the Morning Land, trailed its fragrant tendrils around the window, and on one of the walls hung my picture of my darling, framed with its pure white roses which always seemed to me an emblem of herself. Here, too, I again

found all my little treasures which I had collected in my dark days when hope seemed so far and the shadow of night was ever over me. The room was full of soft masses of lovely spirit flowers, and the furniture was like that of earth only more light in appearance, more graceful and beautiful in every way. There was a couch which I much admired. It was supported by four half-kneeling figures of wood-nymphs, carved as it would seem from a marble of the purest white and even more transparent than alabaster. Their extended arms and clasped hands formed the back and the upper and lower ends; their heads were crowned with leaves and their floating draperies fell around their forms in so graceful, so natural a manner, it was difficult to believe they were not living spirit-maidens. The covering of this couch was of a texture like swan's down, only it was pale gold in color; so soft was it, it seemed to invite one to repose, and often have I lain upon it and looked out at the lovely scene and away to the dim star of earth with its weary pilgrims--its toiling souls.

The next apartment was filled with beautiful pictures, lovely statues, and tropical flowers. It was almost more like a conservatory than a room, the pictures being collected at one end of it and the statues and flowers forming a foreground of beauty that was like another and larger picture. There was a little grotto with a fountain playing, the water sparkling like diamonds and rippling over the sides of the smaller basin into one larger still, with a murmuring sound which suggested a melody to me. Near this grotto was one picture which attracted me at once, for I recognized it as a scene from my earthly life. It was a picture of one calm and peaceful evening in early summer when my beloved and I had floated on the quiet waters of an earthly river. The setting sun glowing in the west was sinking behind a bank of trees, while the grey

twilight crept over the hollows through the shade of the trees; and in our hearts there was a sense of peace and rest which raised our souls to Heaven. I looked around and recognized many familiar scenes, which had likewise been full of happiness for me and in whose memories there was no sting.

There were also many pictures of my friends, and of scenes in the spirit world. From the windows I could behold another view than from my music-room. This view showed those lands which were yet far above me, and whose towers and minarets and mountains shone through a dim haze of bright mist, now rainbow hued, now golden, or blue, or white. I loved to change from the one view to the other, from the past which was so clear, to the future that was still dim, still veiled for me.

In this picture salon there was all which could delight the eye or rest the body, for our bodies require repose as well as do yours on earth, and we can enjoy to rest upon a couch of down earned by our labors as much as you can enjoy the possession of fine furniture bought with gold earned by your work on earth.

Another saloon was set apart for the entertainment of my friends, and here again, as in the lower sphere, there were tables set out with a feast of simple but delicious fruits, cakes, and other agreeable foods like earthly foods, only less material, and there was also the delicious sparkling wine of the spirit world which I have before mentioned. Another room again was full of books recording my life and the lives of those whom I admired or loved. There were also books upon many subjects, the peculiarity in them being that instead of being printed they seemed full of pictures, which when one studied them appeared to

reflect the thoughts of those who had written the books more eloquently than any words. Here, too, one could sit and receive the inspired thoughts of the great poets and literary men who inhabit the sphere above, and here have I sat, and inscribed upon the blank pages of some book laid open before me, poems to her who filled the larger half of all my thoughts.

From this room we passed out to the garden, my father saying he would show me my chamber of repose, after our friends were gone. Here, as in the house, flowers were everywhere, for I always loved flowers, they spoke to me of so many things and seemed to whisper such bright fancies, such pure thoughts. There was a terrace around the house, and the garden seemed almost to overhang the lake, especially at one secluded corner which was fenced in with a bank of ferns and flowering shrubs and backed by a screen of trees. This nook was a little to the side of the house and soon became my favorite resort; the ground was carpeted with soft green moss as you have not on earth--and flowers grew all around. Here there was a seat whereon I loved to sit and look away to the earth, and fancy where my beloved one's home would be. Across all those millions of miles of space my thoughts could reach her as hers could now reach me, for the magnetic cord of our love stretched between us and no power could ever shut us out from each other again.

When I had seen and admired all, my friends led me back to the house and we all sat down to enjoy the feast of welcome which their love had prepared for me. Ah! what a happy feast that was. How we proposed the progression and happiness of each one, and then drank our toast in wine which left no intoxication behind, no after reckoning of shame to mar its refreshing qualities! How delicious

seemed this fruit, these numerous little delicacies which were all the creations of someone's love for me. It seemed too much happiness, I felt as in a delightful dream from which I must surely wake. At last all my friends left except my father and mother, and by them I was conducted to the upper chambers of the house. They were three in number. Two were for such friends as might come to stay with me, and both were most prettily furnished, most peaceful looking; the third room was for myself, my own room, where I would retire when I desired to rest and to have no companion but my own thoughts. As we entered, the thing which attracted me most and filled me with more astonishment than anything I had yet seen, was the couch. It was of snowy white gossamer, bordered with pale lilac and gold, while at the foot were two angels, carved, like the wood-nymphs, out of the dazzling white alabaster I have vainly tried to describe. They were much larger than myself or any spirits whom I had seen, and their heads and extended wings seemed almost to touch the roof of my room, and the pose of these two most lovely figures was perfect in its grace. Their feet scarce touched the floor and with their bending forms and half-outstretched wings they appeared to hover over the bed as though they had but just arrived from their celestial sphere.

They were male and female forms, the man wearing on his head a helmet and bearing in his hand a sword, while the other hand held aloft a crown. His figure was the perfection of manly beauty and grace, and his face with its perfect features so firmly moulded, expressing at once strength and gentleness, had to my eyes a look of calm regal majesty that was divine.

The female figure at his side was smaller--more delicate in every way. Her face was full of gentle, tender, womanly

purity and beauty. The eyes large and soft even though carved in marble, the long tresses of her hair half-veiling her head and shoulders. One hand held a harp with seven strings, the other rested upon the shoulder of the male angel as though she supported herself with his strength, while the lovely head was half bent forward and rested upon her arm, and on her head she wore a crown of pure white lilies.

The look upon her face was one of such exquisite sweetness, such maternal tenderness, it might well have served for that of the Virgin Mother herself. The attitudes, the expressions of both were the most perfect realization of angelic beauty I have seen, and for some moments I could but gaze at them expecting them to melt away before my eyes.

At last I turned to my father and asked how such lovely figures came to be in my room, and why they were represented with wings, since I had been told that angels had not really wings growing from their bodies at all.

"My son," he answered, "these lovely figures are the gift of your mother and myself to you, and we would fain think of you as reposing under the shadow of their wings, which represent in a material form the protection we would ever give you. They are shown with wings because that is the symbol of the angelic spheres, but if you will look closely at them you will find that these wings are like a part of the drapery of the forms, and are not attached to the bodies at all as though they grew from the shoulder in the fashion earthly artists represent them. The wings, moreover, express the power of angelic beings to soar upon these outstretched pinions into Heaven itself. The shining helmet and the sword represent war, the helmet the war of

the Intellect against Error, Darkness and Oppression. The sword, the war man must ever wage against the passions of his lower nature. The crown symbolizes the glory of virtue and self-conquest.

"The harp in the woman's hand shows that she is an angel of the musical sphere, and the crown of lilies expresses purity and love. Her hand resting on the man's shoulder is to show that she derives her strength and power from him and from his stronger nature, while her attitude and looks as she bends over your couch express the tender love and protection of woman's maternal nature. She is smaller than the man, because in you the masculine elements are stronger than the feminine. In some representations of the angels of men's souls they are made of equal size and stature, because in those characters the masculine and feminine elements are both equal, both evenly balanced, but with you it is not so, therefore are they represented with the woman dependent upon the stronger one.

"The male angel typifies power and protection. The female angel purity and love. Together they show the eternal dual nature of the soul and that one-half is not complete without the other. They also are the symbolical representation of the twin guardian angels of your soul whose wings may be said in a spiritual sense to be ever outstretched in protection over you."

Shall I confess that even in that beautiful home there were times when I felt lonely? I had this home, earned by myself, but as yet I had no one to share it with me, and I have always felt a pleasure to be doubly sweet when there was some one whom I could feel enjoyed it also. The one companion of all others for whom I sighed was still on earth, and alas! I knew that not for many years could she

join me. Then Faithful Friend was in a circle of the sphere above me in a home of his own, and as for Hassen, he was far above us both, so that though I saw them at times as well as my dear father and mother, there was no one to share my life with me *en bon camarade*, no one to watch for my home-coming, and no one for whom in my turn I could watch. I was often on earth--often with my darling--but I found that with my advanced position in the spirit world I could not remain for so long at a time as I had been wont to do. It had upon my spirit much the effect of trying to live in a foggy atmosphere or down a coal mine, and I had to return more frequently to the spirit land to recover myself.

I used to sit in my lovely rooms and sigh to myself, "Ah, if I had but some one to speak with, some congenial soul to whom I might express all the thoughts which crowd my mind." It was therefore with the greatest pleasure that I received a visit from Faithful Friend, and heard the suggestion he had to make to me.

"I have come," said he, "on behalf of a friend who has just come to this circle of the sphere, but who has not yet earned for himself a home of his own and therefore desires to find one with some friend more richly endowed than himself. He has no relatives here and I thought that you might be glad of his companionship."

"Most truly, I would be delighted to share my home with your friend."

Faithful Friend laughed. "He may be called your friend also, for you know him. It is Benedetto."

"Benedetto!" I cried in astonishment and delight. "Ah! Then he will indeed be doubly welcome. Bring him here as soon as possible."

"He is here now--he awaits at your door; he would not come with me till he was sure you would really be glad to welcome him."

"No one could be more so," I said. "Let us go at once and bring him in."

So we went to the door and there he stood, looking very different from when I had last seen him in that awful city of the lower sphere--then so sad, weighed down, so oppressed--now so bright, his robes, like mine, of purest white, and though his face was still sad in expression yet there was peace, and there was hope in the eyes he raised to mine as I clasped his hand and embraced him as we of my Southern Land embrace those we love and honor. It was with much pleasure that we met--we who had both so sinned and so suffered--and we were henceforth to be as brothers.

Thus it was that my home became no more solitary, for, when one of us returns from our labors, the other is there to greet him, to share the joy and the care, and to talk over the success or the failure.

My Vision of the Spheres.

How can I tell of the many friends who came to visit me in this bright home, of the cities I saw in that fair land, the lovely scenes I visited? I cannot. It would take volumes, and already my narrative has reached its limits. I shall only tell of one more vision that I had, because in it I was

shown a new path wherein I was to labor, one in which I could apply to the aid of others the lessons I had learned in my wanderings.

I was lying on the couch in my room and had awakened from a long slumber. I was watching, as I often did, those two most beautiful figures of my guardian angels, and seeing fresh beauties, fresh meanings in their faces and their attitudes every time I looked at them, when I became conscious that my Eastern guide, Ahrinziman, in his far-off sphere was seeking to communicate with me. I therefore allowed myself to become perfectly passive and soon felt a great cloud of light of a dazzling white misty substance surrounding me. It seemed to shut out the walls of my room and everything from me. Then my soul seemed to arise from my spirit body and float away, leaving my spirit envelope lying upon the couch.

I appeared to pass upwards and still upwards, as though the will of my powerful guide was summoning me to him, and I floated on and on with a sense of lightness which even as a spirit I had never felt before.

At last I alighted upon the summit of a high mountain, from which I could behold the earth and its lower and higher spheres revolving below me. I also saw that sphere which was my home, but it appeared to lie far below the height upon which I stood.

Beside me was Ahrinziman, and as in a dream I heard his voice speaking to me and saying:

"Behold, son of my adoption, the new path in which I would have you labor. Behold earth and her attendant spheres, and see how important to her welfare is this work

in which I would have you to take part. See now the value of the power you have gained in your journey to the Kingdoms of Hell, since it will enable you to become one of the great army who daily and hourly protect mortal men from the assaults of Hell's inhabitants. Behold this panorama of the spheres and learn how you can assist in a work as mighty as the spheres themselves."

I looked to where he pointed, and I beheld the circling belt of the great earth plane, its magnetic currents like the ebb and flow of an ocean tide, bearing on their waves countless millions upon millions of spirits. I saw all those strange elemental astral forms, some grotesque, some hideous, some beautiful. I saw also the earth-bound spirits of men and women still tied by their gross pleasures or their sinful lives, many of them using the organisms of mortals to gratify their degraded cravings. I beheld these and kindred mysteries of the earth plane, and I likewise beheld sweeping up from the dark spheres below waves of dark and awful beings, ten times more deadly unto man in their influence over him than those dark spirits of the earth plane. I saw these darker beings crowd around man and cluster thickly near him, and where they gathered they shut out the brightness of the spiritual sun whose rays shine down upon the earth continually. They shut out this light, with the dark mass of their own cruel evil thoughts, and where this cloud rested there came murder and robbery; and cruelty and lust, and every kind of oppression were in their train, and death and sorrow followed them. Wherever man had cast aside from him the restraints of his conscience and had given way to greed and selfishness, and pride and ambition, there did these dark beings gather, shutting out the light of truth with their dark bodies.

And again I saw many mortals who mourned for the dear ones they had loved and lost, weeping most bitter tears because they could see them no more. And all the time I saw those for whom they mourned standing beside them, seeking with all their power to show that they still lived, still hovered near, and that death had not robbed of one loving thought, one tender wish, those whom death had left behind to mourn. All in vain seemed their efforts. The living could not see or hear them, and the poor sorrowing spirits could not go away to their bright spheres because while those they had left so mourned for them they were tied to the earth plane by the chains of their love, and the light of their spirit lamps grew dim and faded as they thus hung about the atmosphere of earth in helpless sorrow.

And Ahrinziman said to me: "Is there no need here for the means of communication between these two, the living and the so-called dead, that the sorrowful ones on both sides may be comforted? And, again, is there no need for communication that those other sinful selfish men may be told of the dark beings hovering around them who seek to drag their souls to hell?"

Then I beheld a glorious dazzling light as of a sun in splendor, shining as no mortal eye ever saw the sun shine on earth. And its rays dispelled the clouds of darkness and sorrow, and I heard a glorious strain of music from the celestial spheres, and I thought surely now man will hear this music and see this light and be comforted. But they could not--their ears were closed by the false ideas they had gathered, and the dust and dross of earth clogged their spirits and made their eyes blind to the glorious light which shone for them in vain.

Then I beheld other mortals whose spiritual sight was partly unveiled and whose ears were not quite deaf, and they spoke of the spirit world and its wondrous beauties. They felt great thoughts and put them into the language of earth. They heard the wondrous music and tried to give it expression. They saw lovely visions and tried to paint them, as like to those of the spirit as the limits of their earthly environments would allow. And these mortals were termed geniuses, and their words and their music and their pictures all helped to raise men's souls nearer to the God who gave that soul--for all that is highest and purest and best comes from the inspiration of the spirit world.

Yet with all this beauty of art and music and literature--with all these aspirations--with all the fervor of religious feeling, there was still no way opened by which men on earth could hold communion with the loved ones who had gone before them into that land which dwellers upon earth have called the Land of Shades, and from whose bourn, they thought, no traveler could return--a land that was all vague and misty to their thought. And there was likewise no means by which those spirit ones who sought to help man to a higher, purer knowledge of Truth could communicate with him directly. The ideas and the fallacies of ancient theories formulated in the days of the world's infancy continually mixed with the newer, more perfect sight which the spirit world sought to give, and clouded its clearness and refracted its rays so that they reached the minds of mortals broken and imperfect.

Then I beheld that the walls of the material life were pierced with many doors, and at each door stood an angel to guard it, and from each door on earth even to the highest spheres I saw a great chain of spirits, each link

being one stage higher than the one below it, and to mortals upon earth were given the keys of these doors that they might keep them open and that between mortals and the spirit world there might be communication.

But, alas! As time passed on I saw that many of those who held these keys were not faithful. They were allured by the joys and the gifts of earth, and turned aside and suffered their doors to close. Others again kept their doors but partly open and where only light and truth should have shown they suffered errors and darkness to creep in, and again the light from the spirit world was sullied and broken as it passed through these darkened doorways. Still more sad, as time passed on, the light ceased to shine at all and gave place to the thick impure rays from dark deceitful spirits from the lower sphere, and at last the angel would close that door to be opened no more on earth.

Then I turned from this sad sight and beheld many new doors opened where mortals stood, whose hearts were pure and unselfish and unsullied by the desires of earth; and through these doors poured such a flood of light upon the earth that my eyes were dazzled, and I had to turn aside. When I looked again I saw these doorways thronged by spirits, beautiful, bright spirits, and others whose raiment was dark and their hearts sad because their lives had been sinful, but in whose souls there was a desire for good, and there were spirits who were fair and bright, but sorrowful, because they could speak no more with those whom they had left on earth; and I beheld the sorrowful and the sinful spirits alike comforted and helped by means of the communication with the earth, and in the hearts of many mortals there was joy, for death's dark curtain was

drawn aside and there was news from those beyond the grave.

Then I saw pass before me great armies of spirits from all the higher spheres, their raiment of purest white and their helmets of silver and gold glittering in the glorious spiritual light. And some among them seemed to be the leaders who directed the others in their work. And I asked, "Who are these? Were they ever mortal men?"

And Ahrinziman answered me: "These were not only mortal men but they were many of them men of evil lives, who by reason thereof descended to those Kingdoms of Hell which you have seen, but who because of their great repentance and the many and great works of atonement which they have done, and the perfect conquest over their own lower natures which they have gained, are now the leaders in the armies of light, the strong warriors who protect men from the evils of those lower spheres."

From time to time I saw dark masses of spirits, like waves washing on a shore and flowing over portions of the earth, drawn thither by man's own evil desires and greedy selfishness, and then I would see them driven back by the armies of light spirits, for between these two there was a constant conflict, and the prize for which they contended was man's soul; and yet these two contending forces had no weapons but their wills. They fought not save with the repelling powers of their magnetism which was so antagonistic that neither could long remain in close contact with the other.

Ahrinziman pointed out to me one door at which stood a mortal woman, and said: "Behold the chain there is incomplete; it wants still one link between her and the

spirit chain. Go down and form that link, and then will your strength protect her and make her strong; then will you guard her from those dark spirits who hover near, and help her to keep open her door. Your wanderings in those lower spheres have given you the power of repelling their inhabitants, and where stronger power is required it will be sent to protect her--and those who seek to communicate through her will do so only when you see fit, and when you desire to rest in the spirit world another guide will take your place. And now look again at the earth and the conflict that surrounds it."

I looked as he spoke, and saw black thunder clouds hovering over the earth and gathering dark as night, and a sound as of a rushing storm swept upwards from the dark spheres of hell, and like the waves of a storm-tossed ocean these dark clouds of spirits rolled up against the sea of bright spirits, sweeping them back and rolling over the earth as though to blot out from it the light of truth, and they assailed each door of light and sought to overwhelm it. Then did this war in the spirit world become a war amongst men--nation fighting against nation for supremacy. It seemed as though in the great thirst for wealth and greed for conquest, all nations and all peoples must be engulfed, so universal was this war. And I looked to see were there none to aid, none who would come forth from the realms of light and wrest from the dark spirits their power over the earth. The seething mass of dark spirits were attacking those doors of light and striving to sweep away those poor faithful mortals who stood within them, that man might be driven back to the days of his ignorance again.

Then it was that like a Star in the East I saw a light, glittering and dazzling all by its brightness, and it came

down and down, and grew and grew till I saw it was a vast host of radiant angels from the heavenly spheres, and with their coming those other bright spirits whom I had seen driven back by the forces of evil gathered together again and joined those glorious warriors, and this great ocean of light, this mighty host of bright spirits swept down to earth and surrounded it with a great belt of glorious light. Everywhere I saw the rays of light, like spears, darting down and rending the dark mass in a thousand places. Like swords of fire flashed these dazzling rays and cut through the dark wall of spirits on all sides, scattering them to the four winds of heaven. Vainly did their leaders seek to gather their forces together again, vainly seek to drive them on. A stronger power was opposed to them, and they were hurled back by the brightness of these hosts of heaven till, like a dark and evil mist, they sank down, rolling back to those dark spheres from which they had come.

"And who were these bright angels?" I asked again, "these warriors who never drew back yet never slew, who held in check these mighty forces of evil, not with the sword of destruction but by the force of their mighty wills, by the eternal power of good over evil?"

And the answer was: "They are those who are also the redeemed ones of the darkest spheres, who long, long ages ago have washed their sin-stained garments in the pools of repentance, and have, by their own labors, risen from the ashes of their dead selves to higher things, not through a belief in the sacrifice of an innocent life for their sins, but by many years of earnest labors--many acts of atonement--by sorrow and by bitter tears--by many weary hours of striving to conquer first the evil in themselves that they who have overcome may help others who sin to do so

likewise. These are the angels of the heavenly spheres of earth, once men like themselves and able to sympathize with all the struggles of sinful men. A might host they are, ever strong to protect, powerful to save."

My vision of the earth and its surroundings faded away, and in its stead I beheld one lone star shining above me with a pure silver light. And its ray fell like a thin thread of silver upon the earth and upon the spot where my beloved dwelt. Ahrinziman said to me:

"Behold the star of her earthly destiny, how clear and pure it shines, and know, oh! beloved pupil, that for each soul born upon earth there shines in the spiritual heavens such a star whose path is marked out when the soul is born; a path it must follow to the end, unless by an act of suicide it sever the thread of the earthly life and by thus transgressing a law of nature plunge itself into great sorrow and suffering."

"Do you mean that the fate of every soul is fixed, and that we are but straws floating on the stream of our destiny?"

"Not quite. The great events of the earth life are fixed, they will inevitably be encountered at certain periods of the earthly existence, and they are such events as those wise guardians of the angelic spheres deem to be calculated to develop and educate that soul; how these events will affect the life of each soul--whether they shall be the turning point for good or ill, for happiness or for sorrow--rests with the soul itself, and this is the prerogative of our free will, without which we would be but puppets, irresponsible for our acts and worthy of neither reward nor punishment for them. But to return to that star--note that while the mortal follows the destined path with

earnest endeavor to do right in all things, while the soul is pure and the thoughts unselfish, then does that star shine out with a clear unsullied ray, and light the pathway of the soul. The light of this star comes from the soul and is the reflection of its purity. If, then, the soul cease to be pure, if it develop its lower instead of its higher attributes, the star of that soul's destiny will grow pale and faint, the light flickering like some will-o'-the-wisp hovering over a dark morass; no longer will it shine as a clear beacon of the soul; and at last, if the soul become very evil, the light of the star will die out and expire, to shine no more upon its earthly path.

"It is by watching these spiritual stars and tracing the path marked out for them in the spiritual heavens, that spirit seers are able to foretell the fate of each soul, and from the light given by the star to say whether the life of the soul is good or evil. Adieu, and may the new field of your labors yield you the fairest fruits."

He ceased speaking and my soul seemed to sink down and down till I reached the spirit body I had left lying on my couch, and for a brief moment as I re-entered it I lost consciousness; then I awoke to find myself in my own room, with those beautiful white angels hovering over me, symbols, as my father had said, of eternal protection and love.

A. Farnese Amanuensis to Franchezzo

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Author, Marilyn Hughes, Photo by Harvey Kushner

The fifteenth issue of the 'The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation Journal' continues a series of issues covering forgotten mystics from different religious traditions, this month A. Farnese – forgotten Amanuensis to Franchezzo!

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