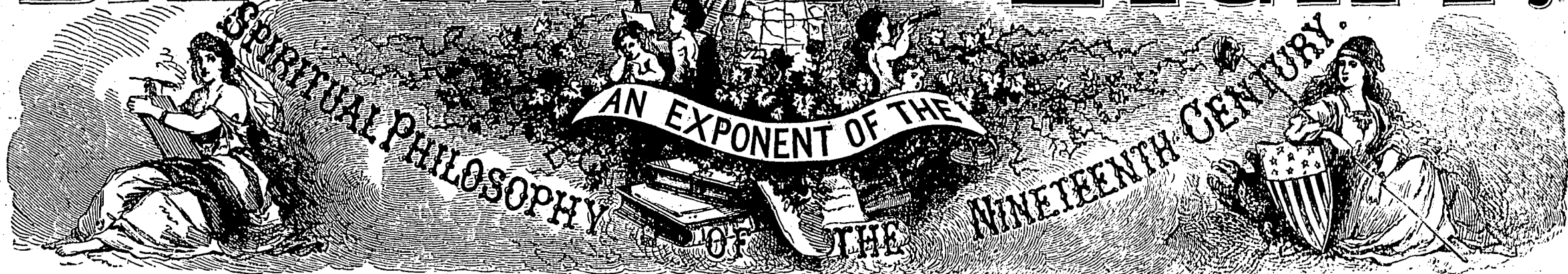


# BANNER OF LIGHT.



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A Highly Interesting Original Story,  
Complete in Two Numbers of the Banner.

## CHARITY;

OR,

## WHO WAS TO BLAME?

Written Expressly for the Banner of Light,

BY MRS. ELIZA M. HICKOK,

Author of "Linda's Trials," "Claire Devine," "The Artist's Hope," or, "The Inspiration of a Rose," etc., etc., etc.

### CHAPTER I.

Down by the Sea.

Blank and dreary and gray; 'out by the wide, cold sea. Only a barren sand-hill on one side, a few leafless trees, with a rough road, stretching away from view, on the other; while far back lay the track of the iron horse, which had just stopped at the lonely place here briefly sketched. And over all the desolate scene hung the pall of a clouded twilight, while low and sad to the ear of the listener came the moan of the ever-restless sea—the grand old sea, so terribly sublime when its hoarse murmurings rise to wildest chantings as the breath of the storm-king sweeps over its broad surface, so gloriously beautiful as it smiles and sparkles beneath the loving glance of the sunlight, but ever telling, in its thunderous surges, of the Almighty Power which fixed its limits in the years ago.

It is possible, my dear reader, that thoughts like these had never intruded themselves upon the minds of the good, practical people of this small settlement, which for a convenient name we will call Priam, situated, as it was, far out upon a point of land, which a short distance beyond lost itself in the boundless ocean.

But one passenger in the single car which had left the crowded city in company with a long, well-filled train—one silent, closely-veiled passenger felt the force of every surrounding—one heart echoed over and over again, as the twilight deepened and darkened, these words—"blank and dreary and gray; so like my own wrecked life!"

There were few arrivals at this little station, and of course a stranger would attract universal attention, more especially a lady, so closely veiled and enveloped in a disquieting water-proof.

And as it was Saturday night, quite an unusual number were gathered in the one small waiting-room, toward which, after a little hesitation, the strange lady made her way; and seating herself by the furthest window—one which commanded a view of the sea—kept her veiled face turned steadily in that direction.

She must have felt the magnetic force of so many questioning eyes turned upon her, and perhaps heard some of the comments and suppositions of the wondering crowd; but she made no sign.

"Who could she be?" "Where was she going?" "Had she mistaken her stopping-place, or could it be possible she was deranged, or escaping in disguise from some one?" were just the most important questions among the waiting, interested people; for there was no public house or conveyance in Priam.

But no indication of mental aberration or disappointment appeared in the demeanor of the lady. She seemed to be quietly waiting. It was very tantalizing, certainly, that not even a passing glimpse of her face could be obtained; and the most persistent watchers could only confine their descriptions to a delicate foot and nicely-gloved hand; and no doubt she was young, for the rich, dark abundance of her hair had the glossy brightness which belongs to youth.

Her ample water-proof, too, was of the finest texture, and a large trunk had been left on the platform; but this afforded no satisfaction, bearing simply the initials, H. L. D., and the place of destination. Evidently, then, this young, mysterious stranger was not utterly poor, though she might be friendless.

Later in the season the arrival of an unknown person would not have occasioned so many wondering remarks, for quite recently people from the distant city had discovered the summer-attractions of Priam; and a few boarders for such families as were disposed to accommodate them had been the result. But now it was early spring, and the cold, sweeping winds, and desolate grayness which so often brooded over all the scene, were anything but pleasant to one whose home had not been made down there by the sea.

Now, though Priam was very far from being a village, its houses were mostly built in clusters, giving it rather a social appearance; and it possessed two small stores (one containing the post-office), at convenient distances, and just where you would least expect to find them.

They displayed no signs, probably deeming that an unnecessary expense, as indeed it would have been, since every one in the place knew that Mr. Taft's "store" was easily nestled among his other outbuildings, and very convenient to his house. While Mr. Brand's was, indeed, the ell part of his dwelling-house, stocked with the usual varieties of a country store.

Then, Priam had its neat little church upon the hill; and this the good people would point out with considerable pride, for it was by far the most stylish building in the place. It was new, tastefully finished within, and quite modern in architecture. And from its exalted position it could be seen in gleaming whiteness for some distance.

As the families of Priam were in comfortable circumstances, nearly every one owned a horse and a carriage of some kind; so distance was but a slight barrier, especially in going to church.

But, while we note these few simple facts regarding the people in question, their surprise was rather increased than lessened by seeing Dr. Harmon—their one physician—and a highly respected man, rather past middle age, drive rapidly up to the depot, and, without pausing to secure his well-trained horse, hasten directly to the waiting-room. His usual genial smiles and nods of recognition were freely dispensed as he passed along, but did not slacken his brisk foot-steps.

All eyes near enough were intently watching him as he advanced toward the veiled lady, who arose at his coming. There was a little hesitancy in the manner of each, as when two strangers meet for the first time and are not positively certain of each other's identity; and this fact appeared more singular still. But as the Doctor addressed a few words to the lady, in a very low tone, she bowed in response and replied briefly, when they at once made their way to the Doctor's close-covered carriage.

Dr. Harmon carefully adjusted the warm robes about his silent companion, engaged a friendly neighbor with more commodious vehicle to take the large Saratoga trunk to his residence, then, taking his own place in his carriage, drove quickly away, and the neighbors were left to talk over the strange affair at their leisure.

Before a week had passed every resident of Priam who had reached the years of understanding (including the minister, who was not a resident,) was thoroughly acquainted with the facts here related, and had nearly exhausted conjectures, suppositions, and questions, without having gained any definite knowledge regarding the Doctor's visitor, boarder, or patient, whichever she might be.

No one had yet been able to get a near view of her. She had not attended church on the Sabbath following her arrival; and that was not very remarkable, since Dr. Harmon's family were not especially noted for regular church attendance, and a stranger visiting there would not find such a systematic, plan-of-worship influence brought to bear upon him, as might have been experienced at Deacon Brown's for instance.

For the Doctor the exercise of his profession might be offered; but there was really no visible reason why his wife should not attend church every Sunday, instead of once in a while. Mrs. Barker was wont to say that she "did think Sarah Harmon ought to set a better example before the world's people, especially as she was such a favorite with the young folks and could influence them so easily." But her next door neighbor, Mrs. Gray, also a worthy church-member, with a Christian character far above reproach, had the moral courage to reply that "to her mind, a regular attendance at any place of worship could not possibly constitute religion of such a type as his who discarded and disdained all forms and ceremonious restraints, which impeded the progress of simple truth. And also that there were times when one might praise God more acceptably in the quiet of his own home, or in contemplating Nature's wonderful, instructive lessons, than in any prescribed manner, amid a public gathering."

Mrs. Barker might be silenced by this logic (Mrs. Gray being the most fluent talker), but she was not convinced. However, the neighbors were always friendly, and their relations pleasant. Indeed, a social, kindly feeling seemed to prevail in the small community of Priam.

### CHAPTER II.

Mrs. Dorothy Sharp.

If there ever was danger of family disturbance or religious dissension, it must come through Mrs. Dorothy Sharp, whose house was so severely neat and prim, whose husband always wore a look half-fearful, half-resigned, whose very cat seemed to know when Sunday came, and to behave with fitting propriety on that day. In fact Mrs. Sharp was what is sometimes called a religious bigot; and perhaps minds enjoying the light of liberal, progressive ideas should pity rather than condemn.

Her Baptist faith was stern, rigid, and tenaciously adhered to, and she could not tolerate the least disregard of the Sabbath. It was her day to worship God; and if she forgot his teachings in the other six, we surely must not blame her for devoting one day exclusively to him. She was not lenient toward those she regarded as evil-doers, and rather harsh in her judgment of "sinners." But let us be as charitable as we can, and consider for a moment what circumstances may have done toward giving this lady her unreasonable, non-liberal ideas; and when we hear directly from her, as we very soon shall, we will remember them in extenuation.

With her early life we do not profess to be familiar; though the bias of religious training and the influence of creedal authority are obvious. She was no longer young when she married Samuel Sharp; and in those earlier years we do not know what blight or disappointment may have chilled the joy and hope which belong to youthful hearts. For clearly this marriage of the dull, plodding widower of fifty and the angular maiden of thirty-eight was more a matter of economy than love.

Then, too, the softening influences of a mother love had never dawned in Mrs. Sharp's heart. No baby face and tiny form had ever nestled there; no little dimpled hands thrilled her with their caresses; no sweet baby voice and innocent ways had reminded her of Jesus' love. So we know that she had missed one of life's highest, best experiences, although she was the very last person to realize it. She saw nothing to admire or love in childhood, and never dreamed of the holy, blessed, baptizing influences which come to a true mother. She was just a smart, busy, practical woman, who, having no family save herself and husband (he usually came last), could briskly accomplish her own household work, and then find considerable leisure time. So it was not strange that she interested herself, to some extent, in her neighbors' affairs.

Perhaps it never occurred to her that the world had any claim on her—that she might sometimes perform a charitable act or kindly office for another. Why should these thoughts trouble her? Had she not experienced the wonderful power of regenerating grace? was she not a strict church-member with a strong faith in the atoning principle? Of course, then, her eternal salvation was well secured. Alas for those blasphemers who think to buy their way to heaven by good deeds and consistent lives! by following out the spirit of the teachings of the lowly, loving Nazarene!

As I have said, Mrs. Sharp found ample time to acquaint herself with her neighbors' affairs; and it did seem as though curiosity must be her besetting sin; she was so persistent in her efforts in that direction.

We may judge, then, of what she endured for a few weeks after the advent of a stranger, about whom appeared to linger something mysterious, to say the least. How many calls, timely and untimely, she made at Dr. Harmon's; how many excuses she invented for dropping in when least expected, it is useless to enumerate.

But one sunny afternoon in May beheld her rapidly making her way toward the house of Mrs. Barker, her friend and confidant in matters of importance, her countenance and bearing expressive of some wonderful discovery; her very step indicating the burden of a terrible secret.

As she opened the kitchen door—callers were not often ceremonious at Priam—Mrs. Barker paused in the act of returning her dinner-dishes to the closet, and exclaimed, "Good afternoon, Mrs. Sharp. You're a stranger. Work all done, I suppose, and over here so early in the afternoon? Well, you are the spryest woman about. Help yourself to a chair, and lay off your bonnet. I am almost ready to sit down."

As Mrs. Sharp complied with this request she drew a long, deep respiration, which was not properly a sigh or groan, but rather a combination of both. And then Mrs. Barker's countenance evinced a more lively interest as she hastened to complete her work before sitting down to the enjoyment of a long talk, for she knew from past experience that something was to come.

But Mrs. Dorothy Sharp chose to keep her solemn secret inviolate for a little while, so she talked calmly on commonplace affairs, until her friend could not refrain from asking directly, as though she suspected who was connected with the visitor's unwelcome manner: "You have n't found out anything about the Doctor's boarder, I suppose?"

Again that sighing breath, as heavily drawn as if the woes of a nation rested upon the heart of this anxious lady, and then came her reply in slow and measured tones.

"Well, I think I have, and something too that I never dreamed of, Harriet Barker."

"Why, Mrs. Sharp! But have you seen her?" was the next eager question.

"Yes, I have seen her," replied Mrs. Dorothy, with the triumphant air of a conqueror. "I was determined I would, and you know when I make up my mind to anything I'm not easily defeated." Mrs. Barker nodded appreciatively. "To be sure, there is still a great mystery about that person. I could n't learn her history, or how she happened to come here into our hitherto respectable place. The Doctor and his wife seem bound to say nothing about her, and you know Aunt Dorcas never would tell anything. But I've learned enough—enough, Sister Barker, and I can but sigh that such a reproach has come upon our neighborhood. And our young people, too, so carefully nurtured in the ways of the Lord, oh what can they think? For this is something which must soon be known."

Here Mrs. Sharp moved nearer to her friend, and spoke a few words in a low tone, accompanied by meaning looks, which appeared to be well understood, and to which the latter responded, with an astonished "Oh! why! Can it be possible, Sister Sharp?"

"Yes, it is," was the calm reply, but every word came with vindictive weight and measure. "And she's come out here to hide, you see. I'd like to have had her come to my house and ask to be taken in! And I don't think there is another place in Priam where she could have gone, but to Dr. Harmon's. Those people do have some queer ideas, I must say, though I don't know anything against their characters."

But it is likely we may hear more about this affair, for such sins will come to light, you know. Yes they will—though it's just like the Doctor's folks to shield her all they can."

"You are sure she is not married?" questioned Mrs. Barker, anxious to discover the extent of her friend's knowledge.

"Oh, as sure as can be, for I took particular notice when she was introduced. You see, I stepped right into the sitting-room without any warning, and there she sat in the great easy-chair, by the back window, and though she at first made a movement to leave the room she concluded to stay. Well, you know how very precise and proper spoken Sarah Harmon is (used to be a school-teacher, I believe), and she never says Miss for Mrs. So, though she spoke the name as lightly as she could, I am positive that she called the strange woman Miss Darian. Beside, I should know by watching her face and manner, which I did pretty closely, that something was wrong with her. She's very young; and handsome, I must say; but there—what is beauty—what is beauty, Sister Barker?—only a danger and a snare; and all the worse for her, no doubt, it has proved. More than all this, I went in there the very next day, and Mrs. Harmon being alone I asked her the question plainly, if the young woman had a husband? And she very coolly told me that she did not feel at liberty to speak of the stranger's history, only that she had seen great sorrow and ought to be pitied. Well, ain't that proof enough that all's not right? As I said before, Dr. Harmon's folks seem bound to shield that woman, and what their motives are I cannot tell. But I do think," added Mrs. Sharp, more emphatically, "that it is a sin and a shame for respectable people to uphold such characters."

"Oh, well, this is a sinful, deceptive world!" sighed Mrs. Barker, with the air of a martyr to all its sin and deception.

"Yes," declared Mrs. Sharp; "and how is it ever going to be made better, I would like to know, when such evil is countenanced even in this small respectable place?—when a perfect stranger can come out here from the great wicked city and hide her sin and shame from all who know her, and be as kindly cared for as though she was honest and respectable; and then perhaps go back and pass herself off for a good virtuous woman. But I shall give Sarah Harmon a piece of my mind about it some day, and I think it your duty too, Sister Barker."

Alas! kind reader, there was not in all the conversation of these ladies one expression of womanly pity or Christian sympathy—only stern condemnation, and a self-righteous indignation at the existence of such iniquity.

### CHAPTER III.

The Doctor's Home.

Dr. Harmon had been a resident of Priam for two years. Formerly a city physician, as such, an extensive practice had been his, and at one time he was considered in rather affluent circumstances. But his rare benevolence and generosity prevented his accumulating a fortune to retire upon, as many do. Then, in his later years, misfortunes—in a worldly sense—came upon him, until he was reduced to the simplest mode of life. At the same time his falling health warned him to seek a change of residence, and nothing seemed so well adapted to his constitution as the bracing air of the seaside.

So after obtaining what debts he could without distressing or harassing any one, he concluded to locate in Priam. The change proved very beneficial; and though his practice was not lucrative, the expenses of living were so light, and the family liked their surroundings so well, that they decided to make Priam their permanent home, provided the Doctor could manage to pay for the place, which was one of the most desirable for miles around. The house was the last one upon the road leading down to the sea; or rather, the road terminated at this house, while a well-worn path extended to one of the most beautiful spots along the beach. The Doctor's house was a large, old-fashioned structure, solid and square, with plenty of windows, allowing the health-giving air and sunlight ample means of ingress. From every side but one, a good view of the sea could be obtained. The ample yard was also square, with four tall trees, one in each corner, like guarding sentinels, with numerous bushes and flowering shrubs scattered between. Everything looked substantial, cheerful, and homelike.

But the greatest charm of hospitality was unrealized until you entered the house. There, every piece of furniture, every book, picture and ornament, seemed alike inviting. There was no sense of restraint, nothing too dignified, nothing staid or forbidding. Perhaps it was the cordial welcome extended to all who crossed that threshold, which diffused over even the inanimate objects this pleasing, attractive glow.

The Doctor and his wife were alike, very social in disposition; admirably adapted to each other they seemed, and as devotedly attached as when, thirty years before, they pledged themselves to walk life's changing way together. Children there were none, though in the years gone by two darling little ones had blessed and brightened the parent home for a brief time. But now, two beautiful, painted pictures, hanging in the great square parlor, with a look of Heaven in the clear, innocent eyes of each—some sweet and tender memories—some little, carefully folded garments, sagely treasured—were all that remained.

But a third person completed the harmonious little home-circle. This was Miss Dorcas Harmon, the Doctor's maiden sister, a few years younger than himself. Though we refer to her

last, she is by no means least in that household but I am at a loss how to describe her, to do her justice. I wish you, dear reader, to know "Aunt Dorcas"—as every one called her—well enough to love her, for I very much fear that you will not find such a pure, loving, unselfish character more than once in a life-time.

I cannot tell you why "Aunt Dorcas" chose a single life, for choice it must have been, and doubtless for a good reason. She was fair, with features regular and pleasing, and must have been attractive in her youth. Indeed, at middle age, she was more than ordinarily good-looking; add to this the beauty of soul, and we may safely call her "handsome." But I fancy the reason that this worthy lady always bore her maiden name, was because she had never met with one whom she could love, according to her ideas of what wedded love should be. And from the sweet, satisfied expression which always rested upon her placid countenance, and from the dreamy, expectant look which sometimes stole into her soft, dark eyes, I think that by some mysterious, intuitive power (which might well be given to such a pure soul) the knowledge had come to her that her lofty ideal—her true soul-lover—had missed her in the changing, confusing drama of life, but waited for her on the other side.

In religious faith, Aunt Dorcas differed from the other members of her family, being a member of the Society often styled "Quakers," but more properly, from their peaceful proclivities, "Friends"; and certainly no name could have better suited her character than the latter. A friend she truly was to all who came within the circle of her influence. Her large sympathy went out to every suffering, unfortunate one. Her great charity never paused to question causes, or ferret out past deeds.

Even a stranger who was at all susceptible, would feel the calming power of her presence at once; and Dr. Harmon often declared that Dorcas by her gentle touch could quiet a restless, excited patient when all medicine failed to do so. Wherever she went, she was as welcome as the sunshine; and she often visited a brother and sister in another State, though the physician's house was her permanent home.

To such a retreat as this—peaceful, restful, genial—had the sorrowing stranger come on the night of her first introduction. Weary, oh so weary in body and spirit, she had shrunk from the curious gaze of all those who were gathered at the little station; and felt that she only wished to get away from every human face, asking no sympathy, making no friends; her only hope that in the coming agony she might die. But when she had entered the warm, well-lighted sitting-room at Dr. Harmon's, so expressive of comfort and cordiality, with its neat tea-table, glittering with polished china and glassware, drawn near the open fire, that it might seem more pleasant to the expected traveler; when she had received the kind greeting of Mrs. Harmon, and looked into the loving eyes of Aunt Dorcas, a new feeling of peace seemed trying to assert itself in her torn heart.

And when the gentle voice addressed her, saying, "Thou art fatigued with thy long journey, dear child; lie down here and rest a few moments before tea," Hellen Darian (for we will call her by that name at present) thought that this peaceful woman could have willed her anywhere, or to anything she chose. And when her wrappings had been removed, she unloosed the wealth of rich, dark hair, which fell in natural curls, and allowed her head to press the snowy pillow which had been placed upon the lounge for her comfort.

Aunt Dorcas had followed her sister-in-law into the kitchen, leaving the young stranger to a few moments' needed rest and quiet. And Hellen mused thus, to herself: "Oh, what a restful place this is. Some good angel must have directed me to this blessed haven. I cannot feel a stranger in that dear woman's presence—how tenderly she welcomed me. I never dared to hope for such kindness. Not one glance of suspicion or scrutiny. So different, oh so different!" and a deep sigh and the saddest look of pain finished the sentence.

And at this time these benevolent people knew no more of the young stranger's history than did Mrs. Sharp, who so readily condemned her. There had come from the distant city a written request that Dr. Harmon would, if possible, take charge of a sorrowing, friendless young lady for a length of time indefinite—that matter to be afterward arranged. Of course it was not like Dr. Harmon's family to refuse. And from the moment that Hellen Darian had thrown aside her veil, revealing a sad but very beautiful face, and raised her large, mournful eyes to the placid countenance of Aunt Dorcas, that good, Christian woman had taken her to the shelter of her own motherly heart, and henceforth Hellen had a loving, faithful friend.

A few days after Mrs. Sharp's memorable call and discovery, while all Priam was gossiping over her well-circulated "news," Hellen Darian sat beside an open wood fire in the pleasant chamber which had been assigned her. The afternoon was sombre and chilly for the season, and the moan of the sea came hoarse and deep-toned to her ear. Aunt Dorcas, as was usual in these days, sat near her, engaged with some plain sewing—for Hellen seldom left her room now; and she was so depressed and nervous when alone, so fond of having Aunt Dorcas there, that the good lady spent most of her time upstairs, where there was no fear of intrusion from prying neighbors.

A deep sadness rested on Hellen's beautiful face, and she was very pale, as with closed eyes she half reclined in an easy-chair.

There had been silence for a few moments, when Hellené said, as if resuming a conversation:

"I never expected to find such a home as this, or such friends among strangers; I do not know how to thank you all for your kindness; I speak of this now, good Aunt Dorcas, because I can but hope that it may be for me to-day down this weary burden of life before long; for I have nothing to live for."

"Nay, my dear child," came the soothing tone of Aunt Dorcas. "I cannot allow these such gloomy fancies and rebellious thoughts. Don't forget, Hellené, that a wise Father's love is over all; and if he wills that through much suffering and anguish we shall be called up higher, let us try to bear it bravely, and await his own good time. Thou art indeed most severely tried, and hast great cause for sorrow, no doubt; but thou shalt never want for friends or comforts while this little home exists."

"Oh, Aunt Dorcas! I know God was very good to direct me here in my wild grief; but how can I accept patiently this lot? Anything but this—oh! anything but this! I might rise above it; but now I shall always be crushed to earth! No, I cannot be willing to live! But now," Hellené continued, making a great effort to speak more calmly, "it is due you that I should give a part at least of my painful history. You have all been so kind and forbearing, believing without question when I told you that I was innocent of guilt or wrong, though I am doomed to be a mother without the title of wife. Oh God! how can I help the prayer that we both may die!"

"Do not distress thyself to recall anything painful just now, Hellené," said Aunt Dorcas, laying aside her work, and pressing with her soft, magnetic hand the pain contracted brow of the young girl. "We are not over-anxious to know of thy past; when thou hast gained more strength we will hear it, if thou so desirest; but now fear not; thou wilt be as tenderly cared for as a sister."

"Well, I will tell you all to-morrow," said Hellené, closing her eyes wearily, soothed at once by the loving touch. "Oh my dear, good friend," she continued, "it seems almost as if my own mother was near whenever your hand rests upon my head."

"And even so; thy mother may not be so very far away, in this thy hour of need," replied Aunt Dorcas, with a sweet smile.

"Oh! do you think that possible?" questioned her young companion.

"Yea, verily, my child; I have the strongest faith that it is so; I often feel the influence of ministering spirits, who I think the dear Lord allows to return to us. Sometime I will tell thee more of this belief; it will comfort thee, dear. And now, Hellené, I will leave thee in their loving hands for a few moments, while I go down to prepare thy tea and toast."

And as Aunt Dorcas softly closed the door, Hellené still rested with closed eyes, the power of some calming influence, which seemed to lift her sad heart and quiet her troubled thoughts for the time.

#### CHAPTER IV. The Bitter Wee.

Hellené Darrien was not able to give her story to her kind friends on the following day, nor for many subsequent days; for then commenced the weary struggle between the opposing powers of Life and Death; but care and skill prevailed at last; and one more pure, innocent life dawned on earth.

It was a most beautiful child, one which should have brought rare joy and gratitude to a mother's heart. But Hellené, though she loved it almost to worship, would gaze so sadly into its sweet little face, that her sight more than once brought tears to the eyes of Aunt Dorcas.

The good lady loved little children, though she had never been much accustomed to them. It was but natural that a heart like hers should welcome the helpless innocents, and so from her love and sympathy she could care for them remarkably well.

So this little waif became her especial charge; and as Mrs. Barker (who had ventured in once to see the child, but by no means to take it in her arms) declared, "there was very little prospect of its dying, as no doubt its mother would be glad to have it."

And Mrs. Sharp was heard to respond, "Oh, such children always live, unless they are helped out of the world!"

But when Hellené had grown strong again, and was trying to school her aching heart to patience, and to be willing to live for her little child's sake, there came a day when she related to her kind friend—Aunt Dorcas—her history, which we shall sketch, a little more briefly, perhaps, and give as follows:

Hellené Darrien had been motherless from many years, and fatherless since the age of fourteen, at which time a distant relative gave her a home, poor enough, and grudgingly offered. Her father had been a man of much intellect, but spending all his money in vain theories and useless speculations, had left his only child nothing but a thorough education and a well-stocked library.

She was proud, sensitive, and would not be dependent. So there seemed no way but for her to earn her living with her own delicate hands; and this her natural taste and pleasing manner enabled her to do in such a large city. The only danger attending her situation, perhaps, was her rare beauty; but of this the innocent girl had never thought.

After some experience in smaller stores, Hellené obtained a situation in a large millinery establishment—in fact, the most extensive and stylish in the city. This was considered quite desirable, as the wages were fair, and work comparatively light.

But with Hellené's sensitive spirit, her natural tastes and inclinations, and a fretful madame at the head, it was a hard, slavish life for her. Yet the fair girl bore all bravely, and gave such satisfaction that when she attained her eighteenth birthday she had been two years in this fashionable establishment, where many young ladies could not remain more than two months, so very particular were the employers.

But at this time one of those little events, which do not seem wholly accidents, changed all the tenor of her young life.

One pleasant afternoon two haughty, fashionable ladies sailed into the spacious apartment where Hellené was employed, with airs and graces plainly indicating their self-importance.

ling. The younger, also fair and lady-like in appearance, but echoed the wishes of her mamma, and seemed to rely wholly upon her superior judgment.

After a good test of patience and an unusual amount of display, some purchases were made, and instructions given to send the delicate fabrics and flowers (which were to result in a stylish and costly hat) to the address indicated by a card, which the proud lady carelessly threw upon the counter.

It was Hellené Darrien's lot to deliver the elegant affair at the promised time, as she was by far the prettiest, most lady-like girl in the establishment.

When Hellené rang the bell at the stately residence, she was startled to see answering the summons, instead of a servant, a handsome, courteous young gentleman, who in turn appeared to have been expecting to meet some friend of his own.

There was, however, nothing of his mother's cold hauteur about him (for this was the only son of the proud house of Darrell)—nothing which indicated his supposed elevation above his fellow-mortals—nothing, in fact, but involuntary admiration expressed in his handsome face, as with deferential politeness he invited her to enter.

Mrs. Darrell hastened to interpose with her most frigid mien, for she was not well-pleased at her son's visible admiration of the beautiful girl. She coldly bade Hellené wait until she procured the money in payment of the accompanying bill, not even inviting her beyond the threshold of the spacious hall.

But Lyon Darrell's cheek flushed, and something of his mother's scornful spirit gleamed in his keen black eyes, as he threw wide open the parlor door, and drawing forth one of the sumptuous chairs, with courtly grace invited the young lady to be seated. The lady mother's look might have annihilated them both, but did not. And this, in brief, was the commencement of Hellené's acquaintance with Lyon Darrell.

Very delicate were all his attentions—very gradual the way in which he won her heart, until the friendless girl loved him with a worshiping, absorbing affection. She was perfectly innocent of guile, ignorant of deceit, and, knowing the great gulf fixed by society between their social positions, knowing, also, of his proud, disdainful mother and sister, she often questioned him regarding the wisdom of pursuing their acquaintance. She had learned enough of the world to fear a little for her own security, yet it was hard to doubt his fervent protestations of love; harder still to crush down her own strong love for him.

"Hellené, darling," he said to her one evening, when he had persuaded her to drive out into the surrounding country, "do you think that I mean less than honorable marriage by you? I ask this question plainly, because I think our pleasant acquaintance of more than a year and your own evident anxiety at times justifies it. But, Hellené, before God, I do not; and I only desire you to name the day when I may be empowered to take you from the menial life so little suited to your taste and intellect."

"But your mother will never sanction it," replied the young girl, though her heart thrilled with joy at his earnest words and tender glance.

"Fortunately, my dear Hellené, my mother does not hold our lives' happiness in her hands. I claim to be my own master."

"But, Lyon, she does not even know of our intentions, does she?" pursued Hellené, awaiting with much anxiety his answer.

"No; for I feared she might annoy you. It is not necessary that she should know at present. When we are married (if you will it so, Hellené,) I shall tell her; then she can welcome us if she chooses; but if her false pride is stronger than her love, she can cast us off. I shall be content for your sake, although I wish that our relationship might be pleasant, because she is my mother."

How could the young girl doubt his sincerity after that? And, though she was troubled at the thought of marriage without his mother's consent or knowledge, Lyon silenced every argument in his loving way, and, in the end, his pleading and her own worshiping love overcame all scruples, and they were quietly married—as she supposed—and immediately took rooms in a pleasant, retired part of the city. There, though surrounded by strangers, and hearing never a word from Lyon's proud family, the presence of her heart's idol compensated for all other society, and Hellené's happiness was only too rare to last, and the blissful dream of her life in those rosy days but made the horror of the awaking more terrible to endure.

Lyon had engaged in business "in order to be sure of an income," he laughingly told her, "now that he had someone to care for," and through the day she was left alone; but every comfort and elegance surrounded her, and in the joyful anticipation of his return the hours passed swiftly away. Lyon was still devoted, still unchanged, and so the happy months sped away, until one evening he informed Hellené that business obliged him to leave early in the morning for a distant city where he might be detained for two or three weeks. "By the way," he added, "I must go over to mother's house this evening to get a memorandum which I carelessly left there and have not needed until now. I will return directly, my love."

He had left her the next morning with tender words and caresses, regretting the necessity which compelled him to go, and at nightfall of the same day a note was handed her, in Lyon's handwriting, signed with his initials—a note so cold, so utterly heartless and cruel, that Hellené felt as though a fearful chasm had opened suddenly at her feet, to engulf her in desolation and ruin.

Hellené paused here, and her sympathetic listener waited patiently for her to proceed, when she had sufficiently overcome her deep emotion.

"I lost that note," she continued, "though it was of no consequence, I suppose, for in my extreme anguish I had crushed and crumpled it till it would readily be taken for waste paper. I think no one would ever take the trouble to unfold and read it. Beside, it bore only his initials. But oh, my kind friend, every cruel word is stamped indelibly upon my brain. I will repeat it, since I am telling you everything. It read:

"MISS DARREN—I think it now about time that you should understand your true position. I do not ask your forgiveness for a semblance of marriage, since I always have and still intend to provide liberally for you, or at least until you again obtain a situation. But I am weary of this farce, and wish to be free. I advise you to seek some other home immediately, and

let the past be as though it had not been. I take this method of informing you, to guard against a scene. You had best leave your address with my mother, who will remit you a sufficient allowance. But I warn you not to seek for me. Doubtless you will not care to, for with your beauty and talent for gaining friends, life will be pleasant anywhere. Once more, make no attempt to see or address me, as it will be useless.

L. D."

"And oh, Aunt Dorcas," moaned Hellené, with quivering lips and anguished face, "do you blame me for feeling utterly crushed and despairing? Aside from all my blighted love and wrecked happiness comes the terrible knowledge that the world at large will scorn me, though I am as innocent as this unfortunate little being, who can never bear an honorable name. Few will believe me, even though I wring my heart by declaring, again and again, how completely I was deceived. Even here the neighbors shun my presence, save as curiosity prompts them. I think there is not another family in this place who would have received me as you have done. I shall never forget it, nor cease to pray God to bless you all, wherever I may be. But my future looks dark; I cannot see one gleam now. Oh if Lyon Darrell had but died, leaving me an honorable name, how cheerfully I could work and care for his child—how happy I could be with only his memory, dearly as I loved him. But I have not told you of my interview with his mother, who, strangely enough, came to see me on the next day after I received the note, and really seemed moved to pity by the suffering I could not conceal," continued Hellené, with a weary sigh, as though she would complete her painful narrative.

"But thou hast told enough for to-day, my dear," said Aunt Dorcas, very gently. "Thou art much fatigued now, and disturbed by thy sad recollections; and I will hear the rest to-morrow, when I will give thee my judgment, if agreeable, for I think I have an impression regarding the young man, but do not feel at liberty to speak of it just now. But of one thing I must assure thee, Hellené, thy night of darkness has nearly passed."

"Oh, dear Aunt Dorcas, I know you would give me comfort; but what dawn can there be on earth for me?"

Aunt Dorcas smiled a sweet, encouraging smile, so full of faith and hope that Hellené wondered what idea could have come to her as she replied—

"I will tell thee to-morrow, when I have thought upon thy story. Now, dear, compose thyself, and attend to the sweet little one, who wants to be noticed, while I assist Sarah a few moments about the tea."

And as Aunt Dorcas proceeded down the stairs, Hellené murmured to herself—

"What impression can she have of him, save what any one would be obliged to have after hearing of my cruel treatment. But she is a saintly, blessed woman, unlike others, I do believe. She seems to find some good in every one. But oh, Lyon—Lyon Darrell, I ought never to breathe your name; but how can I forget? Father above, help me to forget him. Come, baby darling, I will try to live bravely, for you, sweet innocent; your lot will be hard enough at best, I fear, but if you live you will sometime be a man. I am thankful for that, since my lot can never be yours, and perhaps you can fight life's battle better than I have."

#### ALRASCHID'S WEDDING.

Where Tigris, like a silver-mailed knight,  
Leaped glittering through the Eastern moon's  
rich light,

And sang as 'mong the roses blooming near  
It flashed and kindled like a golden spear;

Where boundless gardens, smiling chaste delight,  
Sung o'er the plain a hymn to glowing night,  
And tower and palace arches, lightly sprung,  
Like snowy clouds of gracious incense hung—

There splendid Bagdad's mighty Caliph sat,  
Mid all his court in softest passions lapped,  
Within a long and wondrous marble hall,  
No dove's breast whiter than the gilded wall.

There airy groins and fretted arches bent,  
And bulb-bells sang in golden cymes pent;  
Far Yemen's odors, fainting, filled the air,  
And Aiden's lilies lent their beauty rare.

Slow winding through a silver-columned maze,  
A gorgeous pageant met the Caliph's gaze:  
Round-limbed Nubians, dancing, led the throng,  
And Hindoo maidens raised the dancers' song;

A troop of Greek girls, fair as Serbal's stars,  
And Persian girls struck gold from Lyones's bars,  
These in white silks and India's jewels decked  
(Each jewel the price of a city wrecked)

But led a long and marvel-giving train;  
From every clime of earth the scene did gain;  
And armed eunuchs, blazing o'er with gold,  
Awed timid stranger and constrained the bold.

These glories graced the Caliph's wedding eve;  
No glory could of grief the bride relieve:  
From Andalusian hills and husband torn,  
Her gentle soul knew now but how to mourn.

"When hills of Aiden kiss the rounded moon,  
When pearls of Oman show their lustrous bloom,  
No fairer than this fair bride, oh king!"  
Thus Bagdad's royal poets truly sung.

Faint as the night-flowers' breath at evening's close,  
Soft lute and tabor's mystic music rose,  
As borne in pomp, while strange legends eyes  
Shone,

The bride and cortege reached the Caliph's throne.  
"Oh King Alraschid! thou art called The Just;  
Then in my heart thy cruel dagger thrust,  
But lead me not to thy unholy bed!"

Thus flute-voiced Mona sadly pleading said.  
The Caliph, wrathful, fiercely looked around,  
And jealous, then on Mona lustful frowned.  
"Thy lilted bosom," low to her he said,  
"This night shall pillow, soft, Alraschid's head."

Swift, as he spoke, from out his blazing belt  
He plucked a dagger, and a blow she dealt  
That left the jewelled belt—a flaming light—  
Soft flashing from her own pure bosom's white.

A strange sweet smile illumed her shining face  
As she fell dying in that royal place.  
Her gentle life ran out, and crimson shone  
O'er all the snow-white steps of Bagdad's throne.

ELLEN POLK STANLEY.

REMUNERATION OF COAL MINERS.—The question as to how much a coal miner makes has had a good deal to do with people's opinion of the right or wrong of the existing strike in the coal regions. The operators say that the miners can make more than is possible for men of the same skill in other labor occupations. A correspondent writing to admit this fact, if they could obtain work during the entire year, but they claim that the frequent interruptions to work in the mines, such as temporary lack of cars, accidents to pumps, machinery, etc., reduce their pay to a comparatively small compensation when the nature of their employment is considered. A correspondent of the Philadelphia Ledger who has been examining into the subject says that the miners claim that in 1874, in the best regulated mines, they did not average more than 20 days' work for the year, and that the average amount of coal cut by each miner per day was 11 tons. For this he received 50 cents per ton, when coal was selling for \$5.50 a ton at New York, and 125 cents additional if coal reached to \$6, and a deduction at the same rate if the price fell below \$5.50. The average amount cut by each miner during the 20 days was 220 tons, which, at 50 cents per ton, produced him \$110.00. From this the miner had to pay the wages of a laborer, amounting to \$25, and also for powder, oil, cotton, tools, &c., to the amount of \$10.00, making a total of \$55.00, leaving as the average net earnings of the miner \$55.00, or about \$11 a week. It is for the maintenance of the wages of 1874 that the miners are contending.

## Spiritual Phenomena.

[From The Spiritualist, London, Eng., March 19th.]  
MRS. COLLIER'S MEDIUMSHIP—A SEANCE WITH CHILDREN—WHENCE CAME THE BON-BONS?

Sir—Will you kindly grant me space in your widely-circulated newspaper to draw the attention of its readers to the fact that in a few weeks we in Birmingham shall lose the services of one of our best mediums?

Those friends who have been privileged to sit with Mrs. John Collier will agree with me that the phenomena through her mediumship are far beyond suspicion, and are sometimes of a most startling character. Not unfrequently, tests of spirit identity are given to the circle. Mrs. Collier is not a professional medium, hence I can have no other object than to give "honor to her name." A large circle of sincere friends here feels great regret at the parting, as Mrs. Collier is a lady whose kindness of disposition and open-heartedness at once win over all who have the privilege of her acquaintance.

Some little time ago, when Mrs. Collier was on a visit at my house, she very kindly promised the children that she would sit for them, especially as they had not been admitted to our general circle; they were considered too young. They looked forward with anxiety to the time, as not one bit of fear of spirits disturbs them. They were arranged in a circle—four of them, myself, mamma, and Mrs. Collier, seven altogether. Presently, loud sonorous raps were heard, then the bell on the table commenced ringing, and several articles, including a large inkstand, books, &c., which were on the table, became animated and moved about. Our esteemed spirit friend, Mr. B. Hawkes, late of Birmingham, soon gave unmistakable proofs of his presence; he held a lively conversation by means of raps on the table. One of my daughters said, "Mr. Hawkes used to bring us something in his pocket when he came to see us, did he not?" "Yes," rapped out Mr. Hawkes. "Yes," said I. "Do you think he could bring us something now?" asked the same child. "Yes," thundered Mr. Hawkes on the table. I then put the question, "Mr. Hawkes, will you try to bring the children something to-night?" "Yes," came again in loud knocks. We waited about three minutes, when there came such a crash upon the table, and crowds of little lights of a most brilliant description; but so soon as the articles reached the table, all was darkness again; in another instant the same was repeated.

Mrs. Franklin, myself, and children saw the stream of light as it flashed from the corner of the ceiling. Thus came seven lots of bon-bons, of a superior description, of about one pound in weight altogether. As there were seven sitters, one lot came for each. When the gas was turned up, the children were in ecstasies at the sight presented, the table being literally covered with sweets. During the sitting, my youngest child, a little blue-eyed seven-year-old, said—"I feel some one touching my face and head; now they are patting my back." "Do you feel afraid?"

"Oh dear no; no; the hand feels so soft, and they touch me so gently and stroke my face so sweetly." "You might well be without fear, for it was the touch of her spirit-sister, 'Lucy,' who so frequently visits our circle, bringing flowers for her mamma, and 'laying her gentle hands in mine.' The children thought it was delightful to be so close to our spirit friends, and to feel them so close to us. I wish every family could be so blessed with the tangible presence of the loved ones gone before."

On another occasion, under strict test conditions and through Mrs. Collier's mediumship, half a sheet of note paper was held under the table, when, instantly, was written on it—"Dear Mrs. Collier, your loving little girl, Lucy." This was a note from our child who passed away from earth some fourteen years ago, at the age of four months. We then became deeply interested. One friend was anxious to learn what sort of a girl she was; another was equally anxious to know what she was doing. Another half-sheet of note paper was placed under the table and held as before, when the following was instantly written:—"I have learnt to sing, to play music, and to dance. Mamma and papa will be proud." These two direct spirit messages in direct spirit writing, Mrs. Franklin and myself highly prize, as we have sealed them up, so that they shall not sustain injury.

So I might go on, but I must draw the line, or else you will. In conclusion, I would say we have few good mediums in this country, while America can boast of quite an army of them; hence Mrs. Collier's Birmingham friends deeply regret the change she is about to make, and should she find the land across the water not congenial to her feelings or pursuits, she will meet with a most hearty welcome among friends here if she will return. A. A. FRANKLIN.

Rock-rose, Victoria-road, Aston-park, Birmingham, March 9th, 1875.

#### A CASE OF SPIRIT-RETURN.

It has been often said, by those who are not believers in the Spiritualists' theory of the possibility of the return of departed spirits, that if spirits can return we should get information of ships which have been lost, and of the crews who have perished; seeming to imply that such an occurrence would place beyond the possibility of doubt the truth of spiritual return.

I will now write the account of an incident which took place during my first investigations of this subject, which, to my mind, proved beyond doubt the fact that a spirit can return, and that it can communicate with those who are living in the human form.

In the year 1873 I was in command of the clipper ship Whistler, then loading in Glidden & Williams' line, and bound for San Francisco. The ship Wild Ranger was then on her way to the same port, having sailed two or three weeks previous to the time of which I write.

One day, having a leisure hour, I thought I would visit a medium, in order to see something of the then so-called delusion. I went to Miss Ellis, a young woman living with her mother on Hanover street. After sitting at the table for a few minutes, she took up a pencil and wrote upon a piece of paper, but right side up to me—the name of a person I did not know. I asked for particulars; she wrote that this man who was controlling her had been a seaman on board of the ship Wild Ranger, and had fallen overboard and was drowned.

When I arrived at San Francisco, the Wild Ranger had left; but I learned from the Custom House clerk who entered the Wild Ranger that a man had been lost from her during her passage to that port, thus corroborating the statement of the spirit made to me through the mediumship of Miss Ellis. (Know Mrs. Little.)

I have since seen the captain of the Wild Ranger, J. Henry Sears, Esq., of Boston, and he also confirmed the account of the loss of the seaman, also the time and circumstances of his death. I also asked Capt. Sears whether he spoke any homeward-bound vessel by which the news could have reached port, and his answer was most emphatic that there was no vessel spoken for.

The above is a plain statement of facts which can be proved by any one desirous of investigating the subject; and I would ask if there is anything in this incident that looks like fraud, or which can be explained by mind-reading, unconscious cerebration, or force or mesmerism?

Here was a woman wholly unknown to me, who in a little room on Hanover street gets a communication from a person unknown to either of us, of an occurrence which took place off the Atlantic Ocean, probably two or three thousand miles away, upon a single ship, which, solitary and alone, was plowing her way onward toward the equator.

To my own mind there is no greater proof of the fact that a telegraphic message can be received from Europe than there is in the fact that the way is open for spirits to communicate with mortals when the proper medium is furnished. It may be said that there is no reliability in the truth of the messages often received. Granted; but are you sure that you will always get reliable information from your friend across the water? If that friend is playing you false, will

not his message to you be a lie? Yet you do not for that reason doubt the fact of the message having been sent from him.

You say: If my dearest friends can communicate, why do they not come to me direct? Why must I go to a paid medium? As well might you ask: Why can I not send a telegraphic message on a clothes-line? I say to you who thus object that, in the first place you may be so constituted that the spiritual power is unable to control your magnetism, or your religious views may be such that you place your whole will-power against it, and thus produce an antagonism which is out of harmony. Do we not know how sensitive are the indicators of the telegraphic instruments to the electric fluid? Just so must it be in spiritual communications; and a stubborn or determined resistance to the controlling influence will prevent any manifestation being given.

Since the time this incident occurred I have received many remarkable manifestations of spiritual intelligence, but nothing in my experience so plain, so simple and conclusive as the one just narrated. Respectfully yours,

52 Kilby street, Boston. CHAS. H. BROWN.

#### NOTES BY THE WAY.

BY DR. E. C. DUNN.

We left our home at Rockford on the last of January to fill our engagements in the West. Our first stopping place was at Topeka, Kansas, at which point we found the time hard and money scarce, owing to the crop of the last season being a failure, from drought and ravages of the grasshoppers. The Spiritualists, however, are of good cheer, and are still hopeful. A good soil, a fine climate, willing hearts and ready hands, are sure to bring them prosperity. We spoke to the friends there for five Sundays; had large and intelligent audiences—some of the time crowding the hall to overflowing. Notwithstanding the hard times, I was supported well and with a liberal hand.

While the people of Kansas are warm-hearted and kindly, they have a scattering element of bigotry. We encountered one of this species of humanity in the person of an Episcopal clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Bakewell, who, just previous to our arrival, had preached a sermon against Spiritualism, and his parishioners requested him to publish it in pamphlet form for the benefit of the "heathen." Of course it was the old story, and the text was, "Thou shalt not consult familiar spirits." "The word of God!" Hence there was no such thing, because God forbade it. Forbade man doing what he knew could not be done!

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