BETWEEN TWO FORCES.

CHAPTER I.

IS DESCRIPTIVE OF A FASHIONABLE FUNERAL WHEREIN THE DEAD IS THE CHIEF ACTOR.

EVERY one talked about it—the death of Younod Rencliffe.

Scientists talked about it, because many of them had looked upon the deceased as one who, had he lived, would have increased their store of treasures by some new discovery, theory or invention.

The literati talked about it, for Younod Rencliffe had displayed a rare and peculiar genius—a most remarkable development of

intellectual ability at such an early age as to stamp with conviction not only the minds of those already inclined to the argument "The poet is born not made," but also those previously arrayed on the negative side

The local church talked about it, for there had been that in the worship of this reputed genius which suggested a majestic aspiration for the Holy of holies; a deep, mysterious soul-communion with the Host of hosts.

And, lastly, society talked about it, partly because of the prominence the Rencliffe family had assumed in its upper circles, but also owing to the peculiar regard in which the dead himself was held, because of his marked eccentricity of character, his personal beauty, and his love for solitude.

Thus it was every one talked about the death of Younod Rencliffe, who died Oct. 17th, 18—, aged twenty-five years and seven months.

The papers announced that the funeral

would take place from the residence at the third hour, services to be rendered according to the rites and ceremonies of the Holy Catholic Order and Faith, and to be conducted by the rector of the parish—Rev. Dr. Planton. Friends invited. Private funeral later.

As a consequence of every one's talking about his death, every one came to his funeral. People filled the large rooms of the Rencliffe residence, stood on the stairways, crowded the halls, waited on the porches, trampled on the flowers on the lawn, and waited in carriages outside.

In the large central room back of the entrance hall was the casket of purple velvet with embossed gold handles and ornaments. The upper part was slightly raised. The cover was removed, exposing the form its entire length.

Beautiful Younod! beautiful in life; beautiful in death! with his heart-shaped face and clear-cut features, chiseled like a cameo.

Although not yet dark, the blinds were all closed, and the semi-gloom was radiated by the peculiar glare of innumerable candles. Candelabra of delicately-wrought silver—of embossed gold—of antique brass—of gloomy bronze—of glistening glass—stood everywhere.

Some of their lights flared fitfully, now sinking into an insipid, pointed flame—anon rising into a bold, defiant blaze; some emitted a steady glare, and all blended into a peculiar, pellucid glow that glimmered over the curiously carved and ornamented walls—the richly covered floors—the assembled people and fell, too, with a softened, holy-like splendor, upon the solemn dead.

And just as the strange, steadfast glow from the candles diffused itself indefinitely, so the rare and intoxicating fragrance of the flowers crept here, there and everywhere.

Flowers above the coffin, beneath the coffin, within the coffin, around the dead. Flowers

creeping over the walls—twined around the pictures—clustered in the curtain-folds—grouped upon the tables. Flowers in designs of crosses, anchors, crowns, keys, pillows, wreaths, and garlands. All breathing out a perfume that steals upon the senses softly, slyly, insinuatingly, and sinks deeper and deeper until the mind is mesmerized and the whole scene seems a glimpse of some preternatural world.

Now rising and falling, seeming to stir the heavy, perfumed air and to scatter into scintillations the pellucid light, is heard the solemn dirge of the chorists. The priest is entering in his sacred robes of office. He stands above the dead, amid the fragrance-yielding flowers and the steady glow of light, and reads in measured tones the old, old words, ever new in significance :

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and who-

soever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

But, hold! What is it that causes those nearest the coffin to gaze with horror-stricken yet riveted eyes upon the corpse! To part the lips as if to cry and yet give out no sound, as if their tongues clove to the palate! To half-rise as if to recoil, and yet, fascinated, bend only nearer! Let us, too, look and satisfy our curiosity. Ha! do not the veins of the dead pulsate? do not his nostrils dilate? are not his eyes opening? Yes—yes—and now his lips slightly part. Horrors! he is rising—he moves a limb—he makes a visible muscular effort and, unaided, steps out of the coffin upon the floor—erect before the people.

Risen from the dead!

And what of the people assembled? Some rise and close round the risen dead; some with screams rush hysterically away from the spot, dashing blindly against those press-

ing forward to ascertain whence and why the commotion ; and some stand with suspended thought and action and look with uncomprehending gaze upon the scene. He —so lately risen from the dead—stands erect, unmoved by all around him. One hand grasps the side of the coffin—the wreath of smilax round the inside crushed between his fingers ; his face, with its unearthly pallor and marble-like cast, might still to all appearances be one of the dead, except for the restless roving of the lustrous eyes that are so deep, so dark, it seems as if the shadow of the grave still lay within them.

He speaks. "My theory is then come true. Aye—more than true, it has come to life an incarnate thing, for I, myself, am the living proof of the theory. My mission of infinite scope and magnitude is completed and there but remains the utopian enjoyment of its completion."

But friends now come forward and lead away this strange actor in a strange scene, dismiss the panic-stricken guests, and remove the reminders of the other world.

And thus ends the strange funeral of Younod Rencliffe.

But so curious and unwonted an event cannot die a natural death, and years afterward the return of the odor of those sense-stealing flowers recalls to many that were present the horrible yet fascinating remembrance of that scene, enacted amid the swirl and glare of a light bewildering in its brilliancy.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCES AN ORDINARY FAMILY WHICH POSSESSES AN EXTRAORDINARY MEMBER.

THE Honericks were German-Americans. They lived in an ordinary street in an ordinary city. They possessed the number of children ordinary in such families, which means, of course, an extraordinary number, ranging from the infant up to the married eldest, who has children of his own, with the various gradations between,—children in school, just out of school, and engaged to be married. All the sentiment, intellectuality or talent any of the Honericks might have, can be referred back to the paternal side, for the mother, poor woman, what with bearing

and rearing children has had all the romance and the intellectual vigor worked out of her. And yet she can always be sure of the clinging love of her children, for filial love and gratitude are very strong in Germans. Thus, in the instance of the Honericks, ordinary though they may appear to the ordinary observer, wide and distinct though the different pursuits, interests, and paths in life of the various members may be, still the ties of family, of blood, of affection, are strong among them. . . With the systematic and business-like methods and customs of their nationality, Father and Mother Honerick have reared each child with a view to his future adoption of some particular trade or pursuit, so that each in turn becomes self-supporting.

Now in this nice and discriminating process of designating avocations, one—Cecelia—slips, like the proverbially slippery eel, through the fingers of the designators.

Cecelia will not be classified. This lack of conformity to family custom on the part of Cecelia is not exactly owing to voluntary obstinacy. There is a vigorous inclination on her part towards the adoption of some regular pursuit. But as each work begun proves itself in time inadaptable to her, there is a gradual relinquishment of it which becomes final. So while one Honerick is a wood-carver, another a type-setter, another a carpenter, another a school-teacher, etc., we find Cecelia at the age of twenty-three unclassified. Now, odd as it may seem, Cecelia has the most ability of all, speaking from a psychologic or intellectual point of view. But perhaps it is this very mind-ability, with its diffusing tendency, which makes it hard for her to confine herself to some one mechanical avocation.

She has, through her father's supervision and the public schools, received an excellent education. Besides being well-versed in the

English branches, she speaks and reads the German language fluently and correctly. She also plays and sings well. In disposition Cecelia tends towards the abstract, reflective and speculatory, and against the practical and executive.

In appearance she is tall, and would be large but that the nervous intenseness of her nature has made her thin ; her face, an ivory white, is set off by dark hair, large, deep, gray eyes, long dark lashes and dark brows ; jaw a trifle heavy, chin square, with a dimple ; white, perfect teeth, and mouth red and interesting. Her expression is peculiar and puzzling ; sometimes it is one of pride, then again of cynicism, and still again of melancholy. The gray eyes have a slight upward cast, showing a little white beneath the dark, this makes her look melancholy ; her eyelids droop heavy and white, especially at the corners, this gives her an appearance of indifference and

hauteur, and, also, modesty; her upper lip is short and slightly curled, this makes her look worldly and cynical. Perhaps it is the result of the unclassified, unlabeled condition before referred to, or perhaps it is owing to the natural unrest of her disposition: however it is, Cecelia is discontented, in a state of gloomy indifference of feeling, reckless uncertainty of action and vacillating incredulity of belief. She argues with her friends and quarrels with herself. She questions the correctness of certain principles of conventionality, and discredits the existence of certain departments of sentiment. But this life of enervating skepticism, of purposeless drifting, is displeasing to her. So, while one moment she is coldly questioning the possibility of a life of positiveness and active principle; in the next, she is trying to collect and concentrate the scattering forces of her nature. But at last a change has come. All that uncertainty

of life, aimlessness and indifference were yesterday. To-day all is different. Or at least this is what she affirms.

Cecelia has entered a new engagement, is to begin a new career, to be introduced on a new stage of life, with a new list of *dramatis personæ*.

CHAPTER III.

GIVES A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE PECULIARITIES AND PERSONALITIES OF THE RENCLIFFE FAMILY.

THE Rencliffes were peculiar.

That is, if never doing anything by intent or accident that could possibly receive the opprobrious stamp ordinary, renders meet the term. And as this hypothesis is true, according to society in general and certain portions or cliques of society in particular, the statement is correct, and we re-affirm—the Rencliffes were peculiar. Now, since peculiar as advanced and proven in the Theorem, arise the problems—wherefor, and how peculiar. The solution of the first question we shall have

to waive as beyond our analytic skill, unless, indeed, we fall back upon the somewhat illogical but axiomatic explanation that they were so by nature.

To the solving of the second, we proceed by analytical deduction. Mr. Rencliffe was a man of whom, in a personal sense, but little was known, and, in a business sense, still less.

With regard to the contents of his worldly coffers, society echoed the sentiment of the lines——

> "The more they sought the amount of treasure,
> The more indefinite became its measure."

And the method of filling these same was as obscure to the fact-seekers as the amount of their contents. That reference to the abstract, but, to the initiated, significant, terms—"corners," "margin," "bulls and bears," might to these same initiated throw light on this seemingly abstruse point, is to us, the

unintiated, of no consequence whatever, hence we waive all allusion to them.

Mrs. Rencliffe was "a bright, particular star" in the social constellation, and therefore deserves a more personal account.

A certain trite expression, to wit : fair, fat and forty, with appendices, foot-notes and parentheses, will serve as an introduction.

Fair,—foot-note : white skin, oval face, classical features ; tapering, aristocratic hands.

Fat,—parentheses : not from a natural tendency, but from good-living, for whose origin she was never at any concern ; from an easy conscience, derived principally from an habitual observance of the covers of her prayer-book, and from a total disinclination to bodily activity.

Forty,—appendix : with a few odd years attached.

But, even with this expansion of the expression, the analysis is not complete. It re-

quires something of a rather more personal nature.

At the age of eighteen, Genevra Porte was a pale, stooped girl-student, whose brain was developed to an abnormal degree and gorged with erudition to an extent far beyond her age, and which was yet crying with the insatiableness of intellectual greed, More ! more ! In the next year came the break-down, the nervous and intellectual reaction to all this over-application.

Next to this, of course, came the edict, No books, no study, no thought. And then, to fill the vacuum created by the nerve-thought's collapse, society stepped in. And having once stepped in, well and firm, she never stepped out again.

So at forty-seven we find Mrs. Rencliffe, erst the student whose soul was lost amid the labyrinthine windings of celestial loftiness and purity, and around whose heart was woven the spell of wisdom's mysticism, a

woman whose soul is straying amid the pomp and vain-glories of a fashionable church, and whose heart is bound in the armory of society and fashion. . . .

Within late years, Mrs. Rencliffe, with her native tendency to strike out into new paths of diversion, as well as distinction, had calmly ignored the manifestoes which established respectively the Anglo-mania and the Parisian craze, and entered the individual by-lane of affecting the German in all things. Perhaps this departure had a natural cause, as she boasted a slight strain of German blood. But, be its cause natural or artificial, in pursuance of it, her tables and shelves were filled with the works of German authors and poets; she took a German socialistic paper and read it in the morning over her black coffee and coffee-kucken.

She invited to her house and entertained not only distinguished learneds of that na-

tionality, but also embryo geniuses. The latest conceit was to resurrect her study of the German authors. But to effect this—so long had been her imposed vacation, she required a linguistic assistant.

Among the other young men who on occasions frequented her socials of somewhat subdued gayety, small dinner-parties, etc., was a young German who interested her exceedingly. Not only because he came from a part of Germany in which she had sojourned and so could talk on subjects of kindred interest, but because his strong, impassioned character gave her an interesting object-lesson in the study of human biography. He was a mechanic, and plied his trade arduously and faithfully. But he also had another occupation. In his contributions to the socialistic paper which Mrs. Rencliffe took, he gave expression to sentiments of so bold, forcible, and defiant a character as to evidence the feverish seething of the emo-

tional element that gave them birth. In supplying the requirement of this new idea of hers, namely, the German companion, it was to this person, Gerhardt Leitz by name, that she turned. He bethought himself of a distant kinswoman to whom a situation of this kind would, he deemed, be appropriate and acceptable.

Father Honerick was the cousin of Gerhardt Leitz's father, and in the good old days of Faderland a true and fond friend as well. The late generations of the Honerick and Leitz lines had had no personal acquaintance, but a friendly correspondence had tended to foster and hand down the fathers' friendship. And this it was that persuaded Gerhardt to a certain degree in bringing about an engagement between Mrs. Rencliffe and his second cousin, Cecelia Honerick. Persuaded him *to a certain degree.*

But on the degree of persuasion a certain picture, forwarded with others of the family

under the considerations of kinship and friendship, of a face in which the sensual grace as displayed in the full, curling lip and square, dimpled chin harmonized with his fancy-bred ideal of beauty, and in which the psychical strength and aspiration betrayed in the bold, white forehead, the straight brows and dream-reflecting eyes, satisfied his intellectual exactions, we are not prepared to designate a limitation.

But, for the conclusion of the prime analysis. The other member of the Rencliffe family was Younod—only son and heir.

He did not in any particular give cause for a reversal of the general verdict—the Rencliffes were peculiar.

CHAPTER IV.

INTRODUCES CECELIA HONERICK ON A NEW STAGE OF LIFE.

As Cecelia stepped out of the car at the end of her journey she saw, amidst the crowd pushing this way and that, a handsome, fair-faced, young man, hurrying towards her. Lifting his hat, and thus exposing to the sunlight his bushy blond hair, he asked:

"Ist dieses nicht Fraeulein Honerick?"

Upon Cecelia's replying that she was the person named, he extended his unengaged hand and gave her gloved one a hearty, life-infusing grasp. Besides the general suggestion of physical strength and earnest-heartedness in the hand-grasp of Gerhardt Leitz,

there was to Cecelia an especial one of a magnetic or mesmeric power that not only sent the blood to her heart but to her head, giving her a strange, bewildering sensation. The spontaneous thought that before her was a man who impersonated a power that could control her actions and direct her thoughts against, or independent of, her resistance, passed through her mind. He introduced himself to her, and, as they walked through the crowded depot explained that he had been sent to welcome and conduct her to the house of the family who had engaged her services. He gave orders about her baggage, and was about to call a carriage when Cecelia suggested walking that they "might improve their cousinly acquaintance," as she laughingly said. The distance was too great for her to walk, he thought; but, as he was as eager to promote the acquaintance as she was, he proposed a stroll through the city before they took the

carriage. Cecelia acquiescing in this, they started out, his arm beneath hers giving her a firm, nervous support. That feature of Gerhardt Leitz's appearance that would first strike the observer would be his excellent physique. His vigorous, sinewy frame, his upright, military carriage, suggestive of the soldier's training, his fair face, handsome and expressive, his emphatic, rapid talk were all indices to strong, nervous temperament with great vital pressure. Although Cecelia had at first answered him in English, he continued to address her in German, and partly through politeness, but more submissiveness to this subtile feeling of power which she had at the first, with strange prescience, divined he would wield over her, she yielded her choice of language to his. With good reason did Gerhardt incline to this choice, for while in English his talk was correct enough, and forcible too perhaps, in his native tongue it was ready, smooth, eloquent and strong.

Long and absorbing was that first talk of theirs, and wide and comprehensive the range of subjects.

First came the exchange of facts regarding family health and prosperity, of personal circumstances and characteristics of the individuals of each family ; then the assurances of the love and esteem each father had felt for the other, as evidenced by the oft-repeated reminiscences to their children of events of " the old days "; then a review of their acquaintance as begun through the family correspondence—on down to confidences of self-inclinations and characteristics.

American-bred, as Cecelia was, her comprehension of the meaning of words was quicker and more direct when they were expressed in English : Gerhardt perceived this, so when he spoke on a subject of particular self-significance he changed to this language. That was why, when they had finished their stroll and entered the carriage, he said in

English : "And now, Cousine, you would no doubt like to know something of the family in which you are going to stay."

"Of course," replied Cecelia. "But first let me see whether I have not correctly guessed some of their characteristics. Of course they are well-off," and she paused for a confirmation of her surmise.

"Well, go on, I will give my verdict when you have finished."

"Wealthy, because otherwise they could not indulge their propensity for exclusiveness in having special help, especially when it is so well remunerated as in my case ; and aristocratic because of that propensity ; and—and —well—I suppose, cultured, since they devote attention to studies of so intellectual a class," and Cecelia glanced inquiringly sideways from under her lashes.

"Well, let us see how correct your surmises are," began her companion slowly at first and half-quizzingly. "Wealthy ? yes—

if wealth means a situation replete with every luxury that wantonness and vanity can suggest ; luxury so superfluous that the laborer in supplying it is not left the muscle or the time to prepare for his own necessities. Aristocratic ? correct, too, if you take as your basis the courting of idleness and the spurning of thrift."

"My dear cousin, are you not severe in your criticism ? " asked Cecelia with a deprecatory shrug of her shoulders and arch of her brows.

"In my opinion," replied Gerhardt, no longer speaking slowly, "no criticism can be too severe on the class which with unsoiled, well-shaped hands, but besmirched, shrunken judgment and conscience, recognizes with satisfaction the institutions of political economy which make it right for one class to toil, struggle and sorrow, while the other lolls back, pampered and waited upon : which contemplates with epicurean sneer the simple pleasures of the

working-man, his glass, his pipe, his brief hour of conviviality at the bar : which divides the world's fraternity and communism by erecting class-partitions."

"Well, there always have been, and probably always will be, two distinct classes. The one despises the other for his hard hands, and the latter hates the former for his soft ones. How would you have it different ? "

" How would I have it different ? I would have the conditions attendant upon this distinction all reversed. I would have the hard-handed the creditor, the soft-handed the debtor ; the toiler the autocrat, the idler the slave."

" You are an ultraist," said Cecelia.

"I am," emphatically. " My enthusiasm points even greater extremities of condition than these. In my heart is ever a hope, cherished and promoted by an inspired prescience of surety that a revolution will sweep

away this class when the reign of Universal Fraternity will efface these barriers they have erected."

Cecelia had been listening interestedly, but she now asked demurely: "Isn't an ultraist a crank?"

"We'll let the answer to that go till our next meeting, for yonder is your destination," pointing to a handsome city dwelling of pressed brick, ornamented with iron railings, "and I want to give you a parting word of advice."

"Of command you mean," said Cecelia mentally, glancing at Gerhardt's earnest, imperious countenance.

"Listen," he began, "you have entered into a bargain, so much labor—in this case brain-labor and nerve-labor—for so much money. Never for an instant regard your employers as your benefactors, for such is not the case. You perform your part of the bargain with conscientiousness and

punctuality ; further than that you owe them neither gratitude nor homage. Outside this bargain, and beyond your personal bearing towards each other, you and they occupy another relationship. They are representatives of a class that is opposite—yes, I will say, antagonistic to you and yours. Remember," looking critically at her handsome face, "that however pleasant for you they may make a temporary stay with them, a permanent union with any member of this class must inevitably end in misery and mockery. And now, farewell, dear cousin — moechten wir uns bald wiedersehen."

"Curious advice," pondered Cecelia, as she stood at the foot of the stone steps and watched the carriage roll off. "A permanent union ! Does he imagine Mrs. Rencliffe would wish to hire me for a lifetime ! "

But among Cecelia's characteristics obtuseness could not be reckoned, and she turned

away from the receding carriage with an amused smile and her characteristic shrug of the shoulders. She ascended the stone steps and rang the bell.

The door was opened by a servant, who, upon learning her identity, said she was to be conducted to Mrs. Rencliffe's room.

So Cecelia followed her guide up a flight of wide, low, soft stairs, lighted by the gentle glow of daylight reflected through stained glass. A low knock at a door, a "come in" from within, and then the servant opened the door and Cecelia entered.

She saw a low-ceilinged, square chamber, with dark, heavy wood-work, fantastically carved; floor, highly polished, covered with rugs; walls hung with tapestry, interspersed with mirrors and an occasional copy of a masterpiece; luxurious couches, chairs, foot-stools; straggling books everywhere; a Psyche here, a Venus there; a dresser in fantastic order and disorder, covered with

toilet appurtenances, ornaments, rose-jars which gave out their delicate, indistinct odor; a corner-table holding more books, some manuscript, a jeweled ink-stand, more rose-jars, quaint candelabra, a prayer-book turned page down, a beveled hand-glass with a mother-of-pearl back, and another with a silver frame, a crumpled perfumed handkerchief, a little ebony crucifix, a rosary, a pack of playing cards, a vinaigrette, and an oxidized silver miniature clock. Beside the table, in a chair luxuriously comfortable, sat the queen of the boudoir, Mrs. Rencliffe, with pen in hand and printed reception-cards before her.

When Cecelia entered she looked up, with pen suspended. "Ah, the new young Lehrer! Welcome to your new home," she said, with easy, pleasant cordiality. She held out her hand and made as if she were going to rise, but as Cecelia saw her whole person shrink from this violence to

her acquired propensity of non-activity, she stepped forward quickly to prevent the necessity

But what this modern female Epicurus lacked in bodily agility, she made up in nimbleness of tongue and lavishness of gesture. "Ah, thanks," she said, in response to Cecelia's promptness. "I must, I suppose, acknowledge to you immediately, lest you discover and pass judgment upon it, without the extenuation of self-confession, my crowning sin—laziness. You see, I carry it to such an extreme that, contrary to Mahomet's experience with the mountain, I bring the world to me instead of going to it." She finished her remark with a graceful wave of both hands, that comprehended in turn the telephone in the wall at her side, the mouth-tube beneath, which conveyed her orders to the lower regions of domesticity, the adjustable mirror which reflected from the window back of her the passers-by, the

opera-glass at hand to magnify this reflection, and the papers strewn around, including the weekly social organ, the daily political, and the German socialistic, before referred to. "Be seated," with another wave towards the chair, which the servant before going had wheeled up, "and tell me how you feel after your journey. Tired and disgusted, I don't doubt. Herr Leitz met you, I suppose, according to our agreement, and spared you, I hope, all annoyances usually attending one's arrival into a strange place. I thought, too, a friend's welcome would be more acceptable than a stranger's. Ah! that young man! I cannot help but admire him, although he is so wrong-idead. He is so earnest, so enthusiastic, so intense! A most terrible La Salleist you know. I do so love to hear him plead his favorite cause, he is so eloquent, especially in his own language, and then to watch the fire and enthusiasm of his countenance when he is on

the war-path. Ah me! I shudder when I think of what he would do with such as I had he the power," and she leaned back and laughed, a low, pleasant, rippling laugh, that bespoke inward amusement and thorough self-content.

Cecelia, too, leaned back in her chair and gazed with a speculatory interest upon this, to her, new phase of life. If Gerhardt Leitz amused and interested Mrs. Rencliffe, Mrs. Rencliffe in turn amused and interested Cecelia Honerick. And as she sat and listened, with but half a mind, to her companion's loquacious ramblings, made up of blended self-commentaries, both depreciative and boastful, and observations on others, both critical and laudatory—of blended conventionalities and naivetes—she allowed the other half of her mind to wander forth into abstractions and speculations regarding this life of idle, luxurious, self-indulged, self-contented inaneness. Just as Cecelia's specu-

lations had led her to a judgment of partly good-natured contempt, partly philosophical approval, the unbalanced *tete-a-tete* was interrupted by the ushering in of a fashionable caller. Whereupon Cecelia was handed over to the care of a servant, and Mrs. Rencliffe's attention was transferred from her to this other portion of that world, which, as she said, was unlike Mahomet's mountain and generously came to her.

CHAPTER V.

RECORDS A CONVERSATION IN WHICH THE IMPERSONATOR OF A PASSION HOLDS FORTH.

THE first evening of Cecelia's stay in her new abode Mrs. Rencliffe sent word to her to come down in the parlors, if not too tired, and make the acquaintance of a few of her friends who would be there to spend an informal evening.

"A little whist, a little music, a little talk, a little refreshment, and that kind of thing, you know," her message ended with.

The talk consisted of fragments and tidbits of gossip and nonsense, alternated with light draughts of flattery and repartee, with now and then a solid slice of common-sense

and good-sized bumper of philosophy thrown in to vary the general lightness and unsubstantialness of the intellectual refection.

It was still early in the evening, and so few were as yet present that some of the stray tid-bits and fragments referred to, incidentally came to Cecelia. She was leaning against the crumpled folds of a portiere pushed against the corner wall to admit of the merging into one the spaces of the window-recess and the parlor, while the participants of the conversation—three or four society girls—were in the window-recess. On Cecelia's face, on this first evening of her introduction into a new era, there was an expression half-listless, half-expectant, as of one expecting to be amused, but not intensely interested. As Cecelia's previous knowledge of society had been principally opened to her through the agency of books, and the consequently-entailed mechanism of fancy and imagination, it is hardly to be expected that

she would recognize the vast importance of its happenings so thoroughly as does the society born-and-bred person to whom the world revolves around the centripetal powers of ball-room lights, and "the musical harmony of the spheres" is but the reverberation of dancing music. To whom the flushes and the losses, the flashes and the allurements of the gala hours of life are the real radiations in comparison to which the contingent truths of fact and philosophy are but momentary, glinting scintillations. Then, too, this half indifference may be extenuated, as coming from one whose habit of life was to give recognition to the many and varying creations of an unrestrained ideation-world and to regard as unreal, or at least valueless, the limited, from-day-to-day, experiences of the external world. And again, a physiognomist's close examination of Cecelia's face would produce the opinion that although there was that in the soft, luring lips and gen-

eral expression of dreamy, sensuous indecisiveness that betokened a possible yielding to the realisms of passion's power, there was also in the curves and shades of feature and expression that which would indicate a mocking scornfulness of social frivolities. But to return to the conversation (which might serve to point the fact that there are exceptions to every rule, inasmuch as the eavesdropper—though an accidental one to be sure in this instance—heard nothing ill of herself):

"Girls, as I am the latest comer in the circles here, I shall expect to score the highest and carry off the prize."

"Prize? what prize? Oh yes, I see, Younod Rencliffe. Well, you are perfectly welcome to make the trial, as far as *my* competition is concerned. You can rest assured you will be retarded by no jealous cross-purposes on my part."

"Oh, ho! that's your stand, is it? Come,

Lucia, this looks suspicious. Be honest,—have you tried and failed?"

"Well, if 'my stand'—to use quotation-marks—looks suspicious, then so does the 'stand' of all the others. For I think I voice the sentiment of this crowd when I affirm that falling in love with Younod Rencliffe is as yet only a prospective event."

General chorus of assent.

"Well! this *is* queer. You rouse my curiosity. Have you some new Nineteenth Century wonder to present in this Younod Rencliffe? A little while ago you were all rapturously detailing his beauty, then his intellect, then his wealth, and now you come out flatly and declare that to fall in love with him is an impossibility. Come, unravel."

"Did you never go into ecstasies over, without falling in love with, a beautiful moonlight night with its calm, its paleness, its unrealness, its——"

"O, dear—I'm becoming quite affected. You are arousing not only my curiosity but my sentiment."

"Or did you never rhapsodize over, without loving, a vein-traced statue with—let's see what shall I say, girls, with——"

"With visionless eye and bloodless lip—eh? How does that do?"

"Girls, what title shall we confer upon this new-fashioned ascetic who does not take a pleasure in feasting, nor merry-making, nor loving, nor hating, 'and who neither marries nor is given in marriage'?"

"How would 'The Living Statue' do?"

"Too old—have heard that before—we must have something entirely new."

"'Dead among the living' for instance?"

"Or 'The Wandering Spirit'—meaning he has strayed here from some other planet which is inhabited by a different race from ours."

"There! I have it, girls, we'll call him 'The

Coming Man'—meaning he is the precursor of the new and coming race."

"By the by, Josie, if you have a superfluous amount of gush and sentiment that has to be worked off on some object of adoration or another, why not adopt for it that new fad of Mrs. Rencliffe's—Gerhardt Leitz—the young socialist who writes such daring, bravado speeches in the socialistic paper?"

General chorus: "Yes—yes—Gerhardt Leitz!" "So good-looking!" "Such a splendid physique!" "So glowingly eloquent!" "So stunningly earnest!" "I fell in love with his bushy-light hair the first thing." "I always did admire a man who goes clean-shaven." "Oh, his complexion—isn't it perfect!"

"Well—all right—I guess he'll do."

"But wait a moment—you haven't heard all."

"What—'the half has not been told'!"

Pshaw—if you heap any more perfection on him I shall begin to believe he is a mythical person."

"But this is the worse half. They say he carries around dynamite and nitro-glycerine in his pocket and may take it in his head any hour to do a little practicing on us, preparatory to the grand and final blow-up of system and law."

General laughter followed with chorus—"Horrible!" "Yes, it wouldn't be pleasant to have, perhaps, one of your most tender love-passages unseemingly interrupted by the spontaneous combustion of one of his pocket-bombs." "Well, on second thoughts, then, I tender my resignation to all claims in that direction." "And again go a-begging for the realization of your beau-ideal? Too bad."

A short time after the cessation of this biographically-inclined conversation the latter subject of it entered the parlors. As

Cecelia followed his entrance with her gaze she again experienced that wave of compelled attraction.

Since Gerhardt's whole being was pervaded with that intense capability for passion which only compounded Cecelia's nature by half, it was natural that this element in her should be dominated by that in him, since in all forces the greater controls the less. The difference between the force which Gerhardt personated and the force which was to draw and influence the other half of Cecilia's nature was as great as was that between these two very elements that were to gravitate to such opposite suns.

Cecelia's attention was soon diverted by the entrance of a new-comer, Younod Rencliffe.

She looked at him with the interest of curiosity, and admitted, as she looked, that Younod Rencliffe possessed the most wonderful beauty she had ever beheld. It was not that beauty which emanates from expression, for

there was no play of sentient response on the calm, clear-cut face.

His face was slightly heart-shaped, that is, large in proportion through the forehead; the veins could be traced on either side of his temple; his hair was dark and waved back from his brow; his eyes resembled more those of the higher species of the carnivorous class in their perfected shape and the spreading of the pupil; the line where his lips met was straight but the outer edges of their coloring were curved delicately, giving the impression that there was a slight smile on his face—though there was none, for he never smiled nor laughed. The most beautiful and at the same time curious features of his physical being were his eyes and his complexion. His eyes were wide at the inner angles and, as before suggested, the pupil seemed to have broken its limitations and spread over nearly the whole of the sclerotic coat, as in a seal's or dog's eye.

There were two expressions which these eyes habitually assumed. One was a very fixed and penetrating gaze, as though he were concentrating his perceptive faculty with intense will-power. The other was, too, a still never-shifting gaze, but not one of conscious perception—as though the visionary rays continued straight on, unintercepted by the material media through which they passed. His complexion was clear and diffused with a faint roseate hue, as if reflecting the radiance of some unseen halo. The effect was similar to that which would be produced by a light partly penetrating some semi-transparent porcelain or alabaster. He was very young-looking. To Cecelia's first observation he did not seem more than eighteen or nineteen. His figure—a little below the medium height—favored this impression. Altogether, the combined features of his physical being seemed to present the perfected type of a highly-developed, idealistic race

rather than a sample of the reigning one . . . . Sometimes the very reclusiveness with which persons or groups separate themselves from the general assembly seems to serve as an attracting agency to draw the interest of the excluded ones. At least so it seemed in this instance. Mrs. Rencliffe and Gerhardt Leitz had partly withdrawn themselves from the rest to enjoy the side pleasure of discussion. But their retirement was soon discovered, and a little circle of interested ones politely intruded themselves to witness the combative zeal with which the discussion was being carried on. This zeal was, to be sure, somewhat one-sided, but this seemed to answer the satisfaction of the conservative side quite as well as if it had been equal.

Mrs. Rencliffe was saying, "I don't exactly understand his claims and desires. I know the working-man assumes the general position of a much imposed-on being—panting for retaliation, et cetera. But—he is his own

master—he has the rights of ownership—the rights of compensation for labor—the rights of protection by the law—the rights of public education. Doesn't he? Now, on what grounds of philosophy does he base his grievances?"

"Let us begin with the first part of your query—'what are his claims and desires?' The answer to this will undoubtedly bring in a reply to your summary of his hypothetical rights. His desire is for a social revolution. His claim for this ambition is that all men are equal. The question, you naturally ask now, is, what can he expect to gain by this impolitic turning upside-down of things, by this rash destruction of the party to one side of the commercial bargain—the bargain between capital and labor—by the annihilation of that system or code which preserves his rights of the bargain, namely, that of passing his life in day-servitude for the remuneration of bread enough for existence and roof

wide enough for head-covering. If this turning upside-down of things were to be the spasmodic, flammatory outburst of malcontents panting for the privilege of retaliation and hoping to obtain it by the flare of an individual torch and the crack of a single bomb it would indeed be impolitic, foolish and, as suggested, futile. But this is not what the revolution implies. What it does imply is a permanent position of things. 'Unto him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not shall be taken away.' Interpret this parable correctly, and you have one of the principles of this socialistic theory. He who adds to the general store shall have the privileges and advantages of the condition, but he that brings nothing, by holding in reserve that which he had, shall get nothing."

"But I thought you did believe in the persuasive powers of gunpowder and dynamite?"

"I certainly do. But I believe in other forces too. There is the force of education. And the explanation of this branch of the argument touches upon some of the grievances which you wanted explained. Some people possess the fallacious theory that education means merely the training of the common-sense faculties sufficiently to enable a man to distinguish between this and that hand-indexed apparentness. But it is more than this; it is the evocation of forces and faculties which raise man above the animal creation. And its object does not end in their development, but in the enjoyment of exercising them afterwards. When is a man, who has to spend the most of his hours in labor and the remainder in required rest, not only going to get the time for this subsequent exercise of his mental powers, but even the time to secure this education? When is he even going to get the rudiments of it when his condition in life is such as to require the

attention of even his childhood for the maintenance of his existence?

"The theoretical cry is—Oh, yes, the masses must be educated! and how does the practical demonstration of this cry result? Of the thousands and thousands of children of poor and laboring parents who enter school-life a year here, a year there, a very large proportion of them are never enrolled on the school list again. What becomes of them? They help to support their parents, if they have them—if not, themselves—by entering factories, crying their wares on the street, collecting rags, cigar-stumps and other street *debris*, etc. Here is a large part of the mass whom the cry does not reach. Then, again, there are the sons of mechanics, who adopt a trade. The general age for a boy to begin to learn a trade is sixteen. What kind of an education does he acquire previous to that period? Is it of such a degree and of such scope as to open all the avenues of his per-

ceptive nature, that he may live in the higher enjoyments conferred by an appreciation and understanding of the arts, the sciences, and the beauties of the natural? Is it such as to admit of a coping with the social and political problems that cross the life of the humblest laborer as well as of the sotted sensualist of high life? Is it such as to enable every father's son to unravel for himself the mysteries of the law which binds him as a factor in the great social product, the human race? Is it such as to make him, in years of maturity, a strong, reliant self-leader, independent of the necessity of legal constrictions and restraints which should form the leading strings of minors and idiots? Is it, I repeat, all this *as it should be?* Or is it very often only the foundationless—the insufficient—empty process of a nominal education which enables him to distinguish as to whether the name on the campaign-ticket is Smith or Jones—which last is what sometimes consti-

tutes the basis of the deceiving, wheedling expression—'the free, unbiased vote of the working-man.' This superficial discrimination is no benefit, unless he can go further and judge between the abstract qualities—the just and the unjust, the possible and the impossible, the beneficial and the injurious, which these names, as belonging to men who are to stand for either of two distinct causes, represent.

"No, the education which is wanted as a force to push forward the vanguard of this social progress is not what we have at present. It must push deeper, and raise higher, and spread wider; it must fathom, it must elevate, it must expand the human mind preparatory to the great intellectual trial, when before the tribunal of man's judgment the plea for the equity of humanity shall be defended by reason, when the question—continued subjection or insurrection—shall have a final decision. Man is a social

being, too. He not only acquires and develops through contact and communication with his fellow-beings, but enjoys also. When is the laborer to enjoy this communion of sentiment and thought?"

"Then why don't you wait and begin here, at the foundation—the thorough and higher education of the masses—before you rouse prejudiced passion by inflammatory addresses and incitation to rebellion?"

"The answer to that brings in another of our forces. How many million workingmen exist to-day to whom never occurred the possibility of living a higher life—a life beyond serving, sleeping and eating; who have never had the fact pointed out to them of their natural co-inheritance, with the rich man, of everything created before man; who have never realized the truth of the paradox—were the work to be more equally distributed, the profits would be too; who have never grasped in their comprehension, simply

because they have never heard it, the principle of justice, that he who does not produce shall not profit. This is the force of agitation, and is one of the most potential in the aggregation of forces which shall ere long reach its culmination. As for *the philosophy of our grievances*, let me ask for the philosophy of the other side: the philosophy that requires men to toil, toil, toil the years of their life away—to toil, toil, toil the gifts of their genius away—that they may perhaps have the ownership of a house to die in, that their dead bodies may inherit their death-right to the earth-elements of which their living bodies had no *lawful* proprietorship. Where is the philosophy of the system which puts upon the free and natural sources of enjoyment the seal of monopoly; which selfishly limits the otherwise generous supply of labor's products; which secures to the few, to the exclusion of the many, the use and advantage of nature's gifts—land, air, water;

which forces upon the working-slave the inherited brand of ignorance and debility; which holds him to servitude so continuously as to stunt his physical being and blunt his mental powers! For the philosophy which says to the few—drink, revel, feast and idle away your lives, and to the many—work, with your tongues silent, or go forth to die with hunger and rot in dirt. Yes, we'll wait a little longer—we'll wait till the oppressor is lured by seeming slavishness into the final act of tyranny—and then, when from a million throats will thunder the signal-word for the onslaught, when the time has come for the use of our weapons, and the application of science and the potency of self-felt injury will over-balance the efficiency of experience on the other side—when the consciousness of right will add strength to our might, *then* we will *practically demonstrate* to you *the philosophy of our grievances!*"

CHAPTER VI.

RECORDS ANOTHER CONVERSATION IN WHICH A THEORY IS TOUCHED UPON.

DAY followed day in Cecelia's new life. At first the spell of Gerhardt's mesmeric potency enrapt her senses and engrossed her reflections. His earnestness—rather vehemence—arrested and held her mental perceptions; the strength and charm of his physical perfection attracted the sensual comprehension of her nature. This strong fascination was not exactly what sentimentalists would term love. It was not so much an affection of the intellectual, psychical part of her nature as of the sensate, emotional and passionate. And, while not so high as this ideal condition of sentimentality, was much stronger.

Of late, however, a new attraction, a new interest, was forcing itself upon her perception and commanding her attention. This new attraction and interest lay in Younod Rencliffe. But while the attraction in this instance was very strong, the repulsion was almost as great. While an occult power seemed impelling her on to the divination of the mystery of his undefined eccentricity, a sentiment of revulsion, equally occult and equally strong, caused her to shrink from the revelation.

He was still beautiful to her. But she felt that it was not the beauty that appealed to the responsive, sensuous emotions: so that while it could and did receive sensate recognition, it did not awaken sensuous admiration. It was as though perfection were attained in the molding and arranging of a material stuff—human flesh—without regard to sentiment or passion. Such a face as might float vaguely through one's reverie,

dreams—unimpassioned, non-sentient, sexless and soulless. She acknowledged to herself that she was constantly studying his actions, constantly striving to trace the motive of this or that odd manifestation of his inner-self, constantly striving to interpret his nature. Sometimes she would assign his eccentricity to one cause, sometimes to another. After listening to one of his conversations, held with some scientific or literary associate, in which she would get some glimpse of the marvelous, almost incredible, depth of his intellectual ability and resources, she would say he was a devotee to lore and science, and a follower of some philosophical school or another. But the feeling—not judgment—that forced itself upon her strongest, spite of her resistance, was that he was a preternatural being. One night she dreamt that he came before her with his beautiful, effeminate face, as natural as waking, wreathed in that gentle, reverie-

like smile, ever present—ever meaningless —and said, in calm, even tones, "I do not know what hope is, despair has no meaning for me; I never hate, I cannot love; sunshine and darkness do not exist to me. Would you know why? Because I have no soul."

These words sent such a chill creeping through her veins towards her heart that she woke, shuddering, with her hand on her throat. She fancied he never noticed her. One day she was surprised by his coming and sitting down by her. It was just after dinner; there had been company and they had been arguing some political economic questions of the day, and among others the revolutionary theories that Gerhardt espoused. Everybody was now gone, including even Mrs. Rencliffe, who had gone to some evening entertainment.

"And what do you think of this socialistic problem?" he asked her somewhat abruptly,

but still as a sort of continuation of the dinner-talk.

"I?" asked Cecelia surprised. "I—well—I agree with the socialists that our present condition of affairs is hardly right; but as to their *modus operandi* of bringing about the change, I have hardly studied it from a scientific point of view sufficiently to pass judgment upon it."

"You agree with them enough, though, to think that every individual should have his equal share of labor and equal share of profits, do you not?"

"Sometimes it seems unfair, since money —or capital, as it is called—is the Aladdin lamp to every success attained, every condition fulfilled, to every joy and to all contentment, as it seems to be in this era, that there is not some method of distributing the use of this lamp more generously and generally."

"And supposing this were the case, and all had the same opportunity for securing the

same pleasure and the same profit, do you think they would care to avail themselves of it? Can there be, with the disparity of human nature, a communistic measure for possession, for enjoyment, for gratification?"

"Oh, I suppose that is a question of education," returned Cecelia half-lightly, half-earnestly. "If this John-Stuart-Mill system—the utopian perfection of brotherhood—were in operation, all would have received equally the effects of æsthetic and intellectual education, and so would have the same desires for the gratification of its developed, high-toned cravings."

This abrupt discussion of a subject on which she had thought considerably, but about which she had little technical knowledge, and had arrived at no definite judgment, was a trifle embarrassing to Cecelia. But as the desire to pose before Younod as a philosophical blue-stocking was in the minimum compared with that of probing

his character in their talk, she gave her replies with a careless indifference as to their possibly reflected effect on her argumentative ability or political knowledge. He did not seem to have listened to her last remark.

"Well, let us take for an hypothesis the perfect realization of this creed of Universal Fraternity. We would doubtless be in a state of Protection and Contentment. Protection, because, according to the premise of common possession, the interests of 'the one' would be identical with the interests of 'the all,'—and the one therefore would not commit injury against the all, since the injury would reflect upon himself. Contentment, because, again according to the premise, there would be perfect equality, no superiority of the few over the many, or *vice versa*, and in this state of perfect equality they would move *en masse*, so to speak, towards the *summum bonum*. That is, there being no inequality there could be no antagonism, hence the ready

realization of the highest good! But what would—what could—this *summum bonum* be when it would have to be a state comprehending 'the all'? Why, the answer comes readily enough from the other side—a state of mediocrity. Now, what we want to do is to pause and inquire whether there is nothing higher to strive for than this universal state of mediocrity. Of whom shall we inquire? Again the answer comes readily, of one's inner self."

As Younod talked, his whole person, figure, face and expression, indicated the most thorough passiveness. There was not the slightest manifestation of enthusiasm, or even earnestness, by heightened color, raised voice or emphatic gesture. He seemed now, as always, not to know the meaning of haste, fervor, nervousness, or, on the contrary, languor, indifference, contempt. He sat leaning slightly forward, his fair hands passively folded, the same interesting smile

on his lips, that Cecelia knew had no significance in it. "It would be there when he lay in his coffin," she reflected absent-mindedly. His large, still eyes had wandered from her face, and the laxity of their gaze betokened vacany in their comprehension. And yet, spite of all this absence of the expression of force, spite of this appearance of perfect inertia, Cecelia was mesmerized.

Mesmerized in this way, she mentally shrank from hearing what he was going on to say, as if she had a prescience of what it was, and of what effect it might sometime have upon her; and yet she realized that she was listening for what was coming, with the eagerness and intensity of fascination.

"Let us," he continued, "get beyond this plane of mediocrity, bounded by the narrowing circles of equal profit and pleasure. There is a state of the 'highest good' that can only be reached by philosophy and genius. This state is not for the mass, it is only for

him who stands alone primarily, from his innate strength, and the knowledge of it. You know what this state is, the ever-unsatisfied longing of your mind has faintly suggested it, the disgust and contempt for realisms in contrast to the intense craving for idealisms suggest it, but, above all, the infinitesimally small spaces of time, when your mind soared from its physical confines, have told you what it is; the state where the mind has attained supremacy, and infinity is the measure of its strength, ubiquity the region of its abode. Tell me, have you not had glimpses of that state?"

Ah! had not the unsuccess of her whole previous life been due to the indulgence of this restless yearning for transcendentalism which she had never quite realized with perfection, even for the infinitesimal space of time he alluded to?

"I thought so," he said, in reply to her murmured assent. "I have been studying

you," she started with surprise, "and if my judgment of your character be correct, you are just the person to become the disciple of my theory, my philosophy, my terrible but grand philosophy."

Cecelia did more than start this time, she shuddered.

"Ever since the world rose from barbarism to civilization—aye, further back than that—ever since man was one degree ahead of the brute, and realized that he could *think*, people have been on the track of this theory, 'the superiority of mind over matter.' Later, within the bounds of civilization, enthusiasts, martyrs, visionaries, philosophers of all ages, have closely touched upon it. They are still on the track to-day. Christian scientists, spiritualists, Spencerians, all are reaching out to grasp it. But the proof, the sequel, which is the living actuality of it, is mine."

"What would becoming a disciple to this creed involve?" asked Cecelia.

During Younod's talk, the immobility of his feature and expression had not varied, the far-off gaze of his eyes had never shifted. Now he made an almost visible effort to control his perceptive presence, and directed the gaze of his eyes toward her. When she repeated her question, which he apparently had not heard, he replied—

'What would it involve? Why, it would involve years of devotion to study, the annihilation of every tie that binds us to the world of sensateness and passion, the giving up of every sensual gratification."

Cecelia thought, with a chill of horror and revulsion at this theory, of her affection for her family, her passion for her lover.

"But on the other hand," continued Younod, still directing his eyes towards her, but allowing their gaze to pass on through her, as if she were transparent. "Think of what you gain. Realized idealism—the power of your soul to roam at will, amid

infinitudes, to get beyond the insignificance and unsatisfaction of temporal life, to feel that what was far beyond the comprehension of the mind from the resistance of its physical environment hitherto, is not only to be grasped, but realized—lived out.

"If I have judged your character aright, you will hesitate before you decide to refuse this opportunity to enter a higher existence. But I must say no more till you have committed yourself to the sharing of this secret." And here the conversation ended as abruptly as it had opened.

Younod had judged her character aright. She did hesitate. A struggle ensued. A struggle between the carnate and the spiritual of her nature.

Now she no longer watched and studied Younod. She studied and revolved within herself this terrible, significant suggestion of his. Her nature had always tossed, restless and troubled, between the two ; but now

it had come before her, a living issue, the choice, the positive adoption of the one to the utter exclusion and annihilation of the other. She gazed backward upon the dull, homely monotony of her previous existence, only ruffled by the surging undercurrents of rebellion and of mutinous recoil from the joylessness of her fate. The idle vagaries that had filled her life, the unsatisfying dreams with which she had fed her craving heart, the futility of her higher hopes and ambitions rose up before her like ghosts of the past, to mock at her indecision. She admitted to herself she had never been happy in all the self-perturbed course of her previous life, nay, more, she had never even been contented. Then, if she firmly believed that Younod had the power to bring about the attainment which he had pointed out to her, which she did believe, why did she hesitate? Ah, the innate voluptuousness, brought out now by the new passion for her lover, protested strongly within her.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCERNS TWO BARGAINS IN WHICH RESPECTIVELY THE SERVICES OF TWO SPIES ARE ENGAGED.

As previously mentioned, Mrs. Rencliffe inclined to "hobbies." The first one—enthusiasm for which she had never outgrown—was the character of Younod Rencliffe, her young son. The last one—ardor over which had not yet had time to abate—was the character of Gerhardt Leitz, her young friend. On the one side she loved to dwell on Younod's wonderful precocity, his extraordinary acquirements, his astonishing ability, his peculiar personal charm, his eccentric character and his individual-stamped conduct. On the other, she enjoyed listening to Gerhardt's vehement, effusive discourse, watching the play of his earnest, quickly-

varying expression, and interpreting his yet unread character and motives.

It thus naturally happened that at this particular epoch, these two hobbies having come into juxtaposition, she made a sort of combine of them. She did it this way: She talked *with* Gerhardt *about* Younod. Many an evening, when wanton festivity in fantastic and fascinating varieties flashed its personations back and forth across the long vistas of the rich drawing-rooms; when lights burned brilliantly and music lured with voluptuous witchery; these two would sit apart, apparently mutually engrossed and entertained. And Gerhardt? Was not this seemingly profitless indulgence in frivolous festivity and fictitious friendship at variance with his earnestness and aim for practical utility? The answer to this is that it was not profitless. These panorama-like views of a world in strong antithesis to the ideal one as pictured by him in his character of dema-

gogue afforded thought-material for many of his social reformatory articles. And his talks with the effusive Mrs. Rencliffe contained, too, many a hint and suggestion for subject-matter for his writings and speeches. So for passport he yielded audience to his theme-rapt hostess, and supplemented his profits of the bargain by absorbing within his grasping comprehension stimulant for future intellectual action.

A certain supplement to her advantages of the bargain Mrs. Rencliffe would fain have added, but that her opponent would not admit its annexation. In the easy confidence which their mutual exchange had brought about, she had again and again insinuated—gone further and spoken—a desire that Gerhardt would attempt to fathom the hidden causes of Younod's eccentricity. That he would, by watching and studying his actions, trace to their fountain-head the controlling motives of his seemingly erratic conduct.

"Of course he was always peculiar," she would say, half-plaintively, half-boastfully, but with explanatory motive withal; "but I have noticed of late years an increase, or a deviation, I don't know which, in his eccentricity. He seems even more removed from—exalted, one might say—out of the surrounding world than he formerly was. He applies himself as assiduously as ever to his studies—even more, one might say, if an increase to his former extreme measure could be imagined possible. But as I watch him I see the pursuit is not of value or enjoyment *per se*. He evidently studies for a purpose. His application, if I might use an expression that is not expressive of my meaning, but will have to serve, his application might be said to be forced. I mean, that is, you know," with self-deprecatory shrug at her inability to express this nice and delicate shade of meaning, "it seems as though he even studied with a sort of calm, lofty disdain—

much, you know, in the way a Sullivan might knock down his trainer whom he is practicing on."

Gerhardt always manifested respectful attention and interest in these reposed confidences; but when it came to the point of engaging himself in such secret quest he drew back. "He would play the *spy* on no man."

"It is not so much his queerness of character, to which I am rather used, but his queerness of conduct that worries me," proceeds Mrs. Rencliffe. "Now of late, in fact I may say ever since we have lived in this house, Younod has taken spells of absenting himself from the family, for long periods of time. He gives no explanation of where he is going, or why he goes, or how long he will stay away. But suddenly he packs his things, locks his rooms, says good-bye, and that is the end of him until he returns in the same unwarned way in which

he went. If such things were not gone with the days in which they flourished, one might imagine he was on the track of some unknown El Dorado, in search of some modern Golden Fleece. If I had a confidential friend, one whose reserve I could perfectly trust, who would undertake to solve the mystery of these absences, who would trace their causes and destinations, we would in this solution, I think, discover the origin of his conduct and the nature of his purposes."

Considering his former obduracy on this point, imagine Mrs. Rencliffe's surprise one day, when, after evincing unusual attention and interest, Gerhardt proposed to undertake the task hinted at by her. With profuseness of thanks and suggestions, adroitly and delicately expressed, of future acknowledgment of his kindness, she eagerly accepted this proffered assistance.

The outcome of the talk that followed was to the effect that the next time

Younod left on one of his secret expeditions, Gerhardt should be immediately apprised of the fact, and be previously prepared to follow him up to its termination, and to ferret out its attendant issues.

Now, to interpret this sudden and seemingly whimsical deviation of intent and mind on Gerhardt's part, let us take a *sub rosa* view of the motive that prompted it.

Just previous to this acquiescence in Mrs. Rencliffe's wish, he had received a curious letter from an unknown correspondent. This is an extract from it:

"I write this letter of warning because, although I am not an active member of any of your fraternities, I am a brother of yours in sympathy and sentiment. My hopes are your hopes. My hates are your hates. I read your articles in ———— paper about the wage-slave and his tyrannical master, and my heart echoes, Bravo! My lips are sealed now. But when the clash comes that

follows every epoch of slavery and oppression, my voice will be among the loudest to ring the cry, *Vive la Commune!* Do not scorn these dumb and obscure workers. Their work is not the smallest. Their results not the least, as some suppose. Their life of silent hope! hope! hope! is accompanied with an unseen second, work! work! work! Our pockets are not filled with ammunition, but our hearts are filled with rebellion, and sometimes the one is as potent as the other. Our forces are not to be seen with the eye nor heard with the ear, but they are ones that are felt by the heart and perceived by the mind. Go on with your work and go on with your purposes. In the daylight convert clay into gold, that our enemy may traffic with it. For in this traffic, they are weaving round their commercial body a web whose strength is proportioned to its invisibility. The fibres of this web will twine around and around, till some day

they will be self-bound in baffling impotency.

"In the darkness prepare your weapons. But in your steadfastness do not forget to be wary.

"Our spies are on every hand. Their name is legion. We know them not. Complement application with circumspection, skill with cunning, sincerity of purpose with artfulness of execution."

The writer then reported in detail a conversation overheard between a detective official and one, Younod Rencliffe by name.

In summary, this report elicited the following facts: That the business of the official was to keep surveillance over certain places in the city, where socialists of liberal views and tendencies congregated to debate and plan and also to shadow certain ones of these who were looked upon as violent and

dangerous agitators and conspirators. That this Rencliffe happened to have the *entree* of one of the favorite resorts of this class of people. That the latter had offered to aid the law by reporting to its representative, the official, any minutiæ he might glean in his incidental attendance there, which bore a significant relation to the subject in hand. That he had further offered if he obtained any evidence of a condemnatory nature against one Gerhardt Leitz, a member of this class, whom the athorities had had under suspicion, but against whom no positive accusation could be brought, owing to lack of evidence, to note and report it also; stating that he had certain means for obtaining evidence which would establish the positiveness of either the innocence or the guilt of Gerhardt Leitz, or any other attendant of this particular place. The singular epistle ended thus:—

"As you read this letter, do not let the passiveness of forced incredulity baffle the activity of natural alarm. Do not ignore the danger pointed in these lines, because the writer's name is a fictitious one. I dare not sign my own name to the significant facts which I communicate, because, situated as I am, discovery of my sympathies and the act of sending this would imply for me immediate dismissal. But my singleness of purpose must be demonstrated to you by the fact of my writing this at all. And, allow me to repeat before closing, that I report this knowledge, which I obtained in an accidental way, because my sentiments are in harmony with your aspirations."

CHAPTER VIII.

RELATES THE EXPERIENCE OF THE FIRST SPY AND RESULTS THEREFROM AS REPORTED AT HEADQUARTERS.

"YOUNOD left at 4.20 this afternoon; said he would be gone for an indefinite length of time. Took with him small valise which he packed himself. I had a boy follow him. According to boy he stopped only at two places: a small bake-shop on —— Street—sign read Tuebbeseiner or something similar to that—and a sort of saloon or German reading-room, which the boy says is called Crook's Nook,—it is on High Street. At the last place, stupid imp of boy either lost trace of him or got tired waiting for him to come

out. Boy returned to me at six, with these facts.

"In haste,

"MRS. R——."

It was shortly after working-hours had closed that Gerhardt received this message written in hasty German. He was, with the devotion of a true mechanic, doing some after-tinkering in the back part of his shop when it reached him. On the instant after its perusal he donned his out-door gear, blew out the candle and started out on his expedition. His first destination was the Crook's Nook referred to in the note. High Street was an unimportant side street, the straggling habitations which lined it being occupied by the poorer foreign classes. Crook's Nook was formerly a common, ordinary saloon. But, under the present proprietor—an intelligent, educated German—while its ostensible business was the retailing of spirits

and other material of a refective nature, the ulterior and *sub rosa* purpose of its existence was as headquarters and rallying point for the more educated, radical agitators of the day. It was one of those places where the sinews of anarchy and socialism are recuperated and stimulated, and where their offspring, rebellion and agitation, are conceived; where their grievances and rebuffs are detailed and condoled; where their triumphs and prospects are recounted and conjectured, and their future schemes and lines of action are projected. Such was Crook's Nook at the time Gerhardt wended his way to it.

It was not so much under the suspicion and surveillance of the legal authorities at this time as it became very shortly after. With the secret purposes and workings of this place Gerhardt was as familiar as the proprietor himself. With the latter he was on a footing of fraternity based not only on mutual views and inclinations, but also on

genuine friendship. He entered and found the saloon crowded, as it usually was at this hour, with men just returned from work. No women were present. A few hours later the place would present a curious, interesting spectacle to the student of sociology.

Men and women—of language, nationality, occupation and nature distinct—in the one sentiment of fraternity and communism, merged, mingled together in conviviality, colloquial intercourse and scheming in all its various stages—conceiving, developing, maturing and perfecting.

Gerhardt indicated to the proprietor his desire for a moment's private talk. The latter led the way to what the habitues of the place called the "strong-room" or "castle." It was so called from its fortified condition, and was simply a portion of the general room walled off by a strong partition and entered by a narrow, well-barred door. Owing to the purposes

which this room served—privacy and seclusion—it was seldom occupied by any but the initiated, but general admittance to it was not prohibited. A moment's occupation of it would indicate how well it served these purposes.

The partition was of such a nature as to preclude the penetration of exterior noises and confine interior ones. Its walls were strong and unyielding. But one window let in a glimpse of the outer world, and that was a small square one far up next to the ceiling, and covered with iron bars. The room's only means of egress or entrance was the narrow door in the partition. This fact was in one particular—that of entrance—agreeable to the persons which the characteristics, privacy and seclusion, before referred to, subserved. In that of egress it was not so convenient. Gerhardt had often pointed out to the proprietor its deficiency in this particular—in the event, for instance, of a besiegement from the enemy—and made suggestions as to its

remedy. But the owner had as yet not acted on these suggestions. Waiving his friend's invitation to be seated, Gerhardt immediately plunged into his business.

"That young American, Younod Rencliffe, who frequently comes here, has he been here to-day?" he asked in German.

"Yes, he came in just as I was going to supper; called for a glass of something—took a paper and went and sat in here."

"When did he go away?" asked Gerhardt.

"I couldn't say just when. Jack took my place when I went to supper, and when I got back he was gone."

"Is Jack out there now?" asked Gerhardt, and was about to step out and call him when the proprietor stopped him by saying:

"No, he has gone to supper."

Gerhardt would not take the time to wait for him.

"Did you notice anything peculiar about the manner of this Rencliffe?"

"No, he acted just as he generally does. He was reticent and absent-minded as usual. He most always sits in here when he comes, says he prefers the seclusion and the quiet."

"What did he have with him?"

"A small valise."

These being apparently all the facts to be gleaned in this quarter for the present, Gerhardt thanked his friend, and with a promise for future explanation of the cross-examination, hastily left.

He next went to the bake-shop. It was an insignificant affair common in side streets, with a counter of cigars on one side and one of bake-stuff and confections on the other. Gerhardt went in and bought a cigar. He lit it, and then, watching the girl's face carefully as she replied to his questions, he asked:

"Did a young American with a valise come in here about an hour or so ago?"

The girl, having been struck at the time

with Younod's peculiar beauty, immediately recalled him.

"A boy with curly hair and nice complexion?"

She was not the only person who at first sight had mistaken Younod with his fair, smooth face for a "boy." Gerhardt assented.

"Yes, he came in to get a loaf of bread," and then she grinned. The ludicrous irony of a handsome, white-handed, well-dressed young man purchasing a loaf of brown bread penetrated even her Teutonic stolidness. This purchase of a thing apparently so unnecessary puzzled Gerhardt.

"Did he do nothing else?" he asked, conjecturing within himself.

"Yes, he put the loaf in his valise," said the girl grinning wider, for the remembrance of this still more inappropriate act increased the ludicrousness to her.

Gerhardt now sought the Rencliffe house. He walked rapidly along with his head bent

forward, pondering to himself the evidence he had elicited so far, and the course of action he should pursue, or whether it was right or worth the time to pursue any at all in the matter. His suspicion inclined him to associate Younod's strange absences with his new role of detective in relation to himself and his fraternity. But neither evidence nor reasoning could substantiate this association. His appearance of indifference and non-observation, remarked by the proprietor of Crook's Nook might of course be assumed as a "blind." But again, why should he, if desiring to spy, retire in solitude where he would hear and see nothing? If he did not leave the city at all, as Gerhardt strongly suspected, what was his object in going away for indefinite periods, from his home? He could easily play the detective and remain at home too. His thoughts revolved like a kaleidoscope presenting first one phase of the situation, which appeared only to dissolve into another.

As he neared the Rencliffe residence, which was on the corner, he raised his eyes involuntarily to a window in the side and rear of the house. This was the window to Younod's study, and he was somewhat surprised just now to perceive a dim light shining from the half-closed slats of the inside blinds. Of course this light might be easily accounted for in many different ways, and hence, on reflection, was not a very startling discovery after all. But he nevertheless made a mental note of it. Mrs. Rencliffe was impatiently waiting for him in her boudoir, whither the servant conducted him. She gave in detail the few facts she had abbreviated in her note. When she had finished Gerhardt said: "You say he carried off with him a small brown valise, do you know what he took in it?"

"I don't know, but I supposed it was a change of clothes."

"You say it was before dark when he left?"

"I noticed the exact time of his leaving, 4.25. Of course you know at that time it isn't dark."

"Have you been in his room since?"

"I could hardly do that, since he always locks his room and takes the key with him."

Gerhardt stopped to consider. He had not needed a light when he left, the room had been locked since his departure. Now how was the light which he could swear he had perceived through the half-closed blinds, to be accounted for? In only two ways—answered Gerhardt's thoughts.

"Excuse me, madam, but you see I am getting very much in earnest over my detective work, and in the pursuance of it will have to ask some questions that will seem rude to you. Have I your permission?"

Mrs. Rencliffe assented with a gesture which was quite airy, for she was becoming amused with Gerhardt's assumption of detec-

tive sharpness and ardor. "So earnest and real, like everything else he turned his mind to," she inwardly commented.

"'Ahem—are your servants honest ones?"

Mrs. Rencliffe leaned back and laughed. "A regular orthodox, detective question," she said. "A genuine chestnut, you know. Of course they always ask that—at least they do in all the story-books of the Wilkie Collins stripe, and I suppose they're true to life. Well, well, although I don't see the slightest connection between Younod's disappearances and my servants' honesty, I suppose I shall have to answer it, 'Sergeant Cuff.' The only house-servants I have are Rachel, the cook, who has been in my employ ten years, John, the butler, and Nettie, the chamber-maid. The latter has been out all the afternoon; and for the honesty of both John and Rachel I would vouch on this," taking up an ivory cross lying on the table and dangling its chain through her long white fingers.

"Well, then, madam, since you answer for your servants' honesty, and thus destroy my first supposition, I am bound to fall back upon my second one, which brings us face to face with the conclusion that my services as your private detective are at an end."

"Why, what do you mean?" gasped Mrs. Rencliffe in surprise and consternation. She did not understand his enigmatical remarks, and supposed she had offended him by an unacceptable manifestation of amusement. But Gerhardt soon explained.

"I mean, madam, that you desired me to trace your son since his departure from the house to his present whereabouts. I have done this, and so am no longer needed."

"Done this! Well, then, where is he?"

"He is in his room."

"In his room!" exclaimed Mrs. Rencliffe with astonishment and incredulity. "Impossible! Why, my dear friend, do you sup-

pose he could have passed my door without my knowing it, for I haven't left my room since he left, and he would have had to pass my door to reach his room. I have sat here steadily watching the front of the house, first for the return of the boy, whom I sent to follow him, and since for you. So you see, with my view," with a wave towards the window, "I could not possibly have missed seeing any one approach the house, much less enter it."

Again Gerhardt was nonplussed and again he pondered. "Will you give me liberty to examine his room?" he asked, looking up after he had stood silently for some little time with his head bent.

"Certainly, I grant you liberty. But," with a shrug of her shoulders and outward wave of her hands, "my power of permission does not overcome the power of bolts and bars. You forget Younod took the key with him."

"Well, I'll answer for the overcoming of the last power," said Gerhardt, displaying a bunch of skeleton keys.

After receiving directions how to reach the room he left her on his search.

He found the door, and by the aid of one of his keys it was promptly opened, and Gerhardt stood on the threshold of Younod's room.

His rapid, eager glance instantly proved that he had not been mistaken in one thing. A light—dim and uncertain, but still a light—was burning on the table. And what made it more curious, this light emanated from a lantern, somewhat rusty and dilapidated, and out of all keeping with the general character of the room. The nonplussed amateur detective advanced and peered around. Not a sign of human occupancy. He took the lantern and with the aid of its light, examined the place. In the bath-room, the clothes-room, the recess containing the bed and all around he looked, but

still no trace. Just as he was about to give up the search, with the decision that his surmise had been not only an untrue, but a foolish and rash one, he made a curious and rather startling discovery. In a wardrobe he found a *small brown valise* which appeared to have been hastily thrown in. It was unclasped, and inside were crumbs of brown-bread rolling round. This valise must be the one which Younod had carried away with him, when he pretended to start on his journey, for it answered in every particular to Mrs. Rencliffe's description of that. And, besides, there were the crumbs of the loaf of brown bread which the girl had said he put in his valise.

This fact, then, proved, beyond a living doubt that Younod had been in the room since he had ostensibly left it that afternoon, to be gone some time. But if such were the case, how was his entrance to it, unobserved by Mrs. Rencliffe, to be explained and, what was

more mysterious and important, how was his present absence to be accounted for?

There was only one other object in the room, beside the lantern and valise, to which Gerhardt attached any importance. It was a scrap of paper, filled with writing, left out on the escritoire. After a moment's hesitation he took possession of the scrap. Then, having readjusted all that he had displaced in his search, returned the valise to its hiding-place and blown out the light of the incongruous lantern, he left the room, taking care to lock the door behind him.

Of course the sole motive that guided Gerhardt in this process of tracking Younod was, not the surface one of doing a favor for Mrs. Rencliffe, as she innocently supposed, but the ulterior one of beholding through Younod's actions, how far his own were tracked and discovered. Since he thought that discovery of Younod's present whereabouts and his present proceedings would but reflect an ex-

posure of his own secret workings, he deemed it best to reserve to himself all minor preliminary clues which might lead to the total exposition. So when he returned to Mrs. Rencliffe he told her nothing of the finding of the valise and lantern, but said his surmise concerning Younod's being in his room was a mistake. But he also said that he did not yet give up the search and would think about it to-morrow at his work and tell her what decision he would have come to by that time as to future proceedings in the affair. That night he read in his room, by the aid of his candle, the writing that he had found in Younod's apartment. It ran thus, with neither heading, beginning, end, nor date :

"To seek to unravel that which is surrounded by the obscurities of cabalisticism is my effort. To trace a mystery secured by the profoundness of its workings ; a mystery sunk in the terrors of darkness and perhaps of death. In awful darkness, in somber

silence—in unaided solitariness, I pursue my search.

"But charged with invincible courage and infallible perseverance all obstacles are surmountable—all objects attainable.

"Though my search and work lie in a narrow and dark passage, the thought of Discovery illumines it. Though this passage be sullied with earth impurities and rankness, yet success lies at the end of it. Though my work and search involve terrible strain and endurance, the hope of Reward abates them. But a little more search—a little more strain—a little more endurance and the discovery is mine. Discovery means Success—Success means Reward—Reward, means Power. Then for the annihilation of all that transgress Law, that dissipate Harmony and diffuse Anarchy.

"Triumph is soon attained. And behind Triumph looms, gigantic in proportion and indefinite in scope, Power. Power to create

—to destroy—to rule! Oh, that I might trammel in chains of iron strength and strangle into passiveness the slavish, hindering, clamorous element that obtrudes upon elevated Ambition.

"Oh, to trample, with the strength of defiance and contempt, upon its degraded pursuits; to have no share in its petty, insignificant ambitions; to utterly ignore and spurn its demands; to destroy its privileges—nay, its very existence!"

As Gerhardt perused these lines by the light of his single candle, in his humbly-furnished room, amidst far-off street-sounds of brawling and carousing, the blood crept with slow, steady, sure and subtle march—on, on through his veins to his heart,—on, on through his veins to his head. And there, like a spark that steals from fiber to fiber, a thread of fire waiting till it reaches some combustible substance to break into a flame, it culminated in terrible strength and heat.

"So you would destroy us—enchain and enslave us, would you? You would trample upon our privileges and spit upon our ambitions, would you? Know, fine gentleman, with your aristocratic tastes and elevated ambitions—that the day may come when our ambitions, perfected and attained, will not be *petty and insignificant* in their effect upon *you*. You would deprive us not only of the scanty, occasional pleasures which gratify our senses without satiating them, as your concentrated luxuries do, but you would absorb away from us into your own heart—narrowed and degraded itself by selfishness—all the pleasures of wisdom and knowledge-getting! Our pursuits—the results of which satisfy your demands for comfort and pleasure—the results of which satisfy your very demands for existence—they are degraded, are they? You would track and spy upon the mysteries and cabala of our fraternity! that you might expose and subjugate and

punish us! Here, I will commit the special words of this writing to memory, just as I have for years kept in mind its general sentiment, so that when opportunity comes and whispers 'strike and vengeance adds its complement 'strike to destroy!' the remembrance of them will nerve my arm with strength, my heart with courage and my head with fire!"

* * * * *

The next evening, after working hours, which means in winter after dark, Gerhardt called on Mrs. Rencliffe for the primary purpose of inquiring whether Younod had returned or whether Mrs. Rencliffe had heard anything from him.

She said "no" to both queries and supplemented the latter "no" with the remark that she had never received any news from him in these absences and so did not expect any this time.

Then the ulterior purpose of Gerhardt's

call came out. Was there not some apartment in connection with Younod's rooms, entrance to which was not apparent to the casual observer. The existence of such a room was suggested to him by the otherwise unexplainable presence of the lantern and valise, and also by the obscure suggestions of that paper. Mrs. Rencliffe, with somewhat of surprise at Gerhardt's divination of this fact, generally unknown, admitted that there was. It came about this way, she explained: when the outline of the house was being projected Younod had requested the privilege of having built a "blind" room adjoining his own, which should be kept from the general knowledge of others. The object of the room was to serve as a laboratory and study, in which he could pursue his studies and experiments in science undisturbed. She further explained that she had never been in this room, but had satisfied what little curiosity she might have concerning it by a cursory

glance into it from the door ; for the reason that Younod had always disliked to have any one enter it for fear of attendant disarrangement of his scientific apparatuses and his papers.

"I have kept the knowledge of this room a secret through acquiescence in Younod's wishes, but—" and here she hesitated, reflecting a few moments, "of course I had always done so under the impression that he desired uninterrupted silence and solitude in the pursuit of his studies and researches. Now, if you are imbued with a real earnestness in this search, and think that the explanation of his queer conduct and mysterious absences can be helped by an examination of that room, since it was I who instigated the search, I don't see that I can do otherwise than give you permission to do so."

A little more conversation followed, in which Mrs. Rencliffe explained how he could gain access to the room by means of a paneled

door concealed amidst the rest of the paneling of the side of the wall. It was opened—unless it was locked as the other had been—by pressure on a spring concealed under the carpet.

Gerhardt with her directions readily found the door and the spring. It was a simply but very ingeniously arranged thing, and while answering the purpose of concealment it was of little more complex build than an ordinary, modern sliding door. It did not at first respond to the working of the spring. This, however, he was expectant of, and examining the apparent wall carefully he found the keyhole concealed beneath some wall ornament. After a moment of trial with his skeleton keys the door flew open.

The apartment into which Gerhardt peered was indeed a curious one. It answered well by its construction the requirement of exclusion and retirement necessary to a devotee to science and research. Its contents and

appurtenances, too, suggested its character. Shelf after shelf filled with the requisites attendant upon chemical, physical, astronomical, geological and mathematical experiment and study. Row upon row of books—books whose subject-matter was of so comprehensive a range and so profound a character as to imply a far more than ordinary erudition on the part of the possessor. Evidence on evidence of deep search into the laws and phenomena of natural and psychical workings and of untiring demonstrations of their principles by him who was wont to occupy the room.

But all this Gerhardt did not at first perceive—for one thing, owing to the build of the room, but little light came in to manifest these facts and conditions. He returned and lit the lantern still on the table where he had left it himself the other day. After his first hurried glance around, he felt satisfied that the room was unoccupied for the present.

But just as he had assured himself of this fact his eyes fell upon an open passage-way before which a curtain was slowly sucked in and out by the passing draught. With eagerness and anticipation he advanced, and raising the lantern peered down the narrow, crudely-built stairway that proceeded from the little open door. With precipitancy born of the self-assured dawning of success and discovery, Gerhardt descended the stairs without pausing to look further round the room. They were so narrow he had to turn his large, muscular figure sideways to proceed. The stairs ended in a dark, obscure underground passage-way, narrow and low, but of such length that with all his peering he could not fathom its extension. Its height was not sufficient for Gerhardt to stand upright; its walls were brick-lined and oval-shaped. Except for the natural, earthy slime and mould clinging to its sides, it was void of any foul matter; its air, while slightly dank and

musty, suggestive of its subterraneous situation, was not poisonous nor offensive.

So possessed had Gerhardt been from the first with the idea that this under-ground place was associated somehow or another with Younod's course of conduct, that it was a personal possession, constructed for purposes abstruse and under-lying, but connected with his spying work, that he had traversed a goodly portion of its far-extending length before its actual character dawned upon him. A sewerage canal—that was what it was. An unused one plainly as was evidenced by its comparatively clean and empty condition. The wholesomeness (again comparatively speaking) of its atmosphere was explained when Gerhardt perceived, placed at irregular intervals, small air-holes or passages extending up into the surface; but that their outlets were under cover, he divined from the fact of their admitting no light. He could hear at times, blurred in its distinctness, the

rumble of a carriage rolling overhead and murmurs of other city sounds. Once the passage branched in another direction. He had become confused as to the cardinal points, and could not tell which direction he was proceeding.

When the first realization of the nature of the passage came over him like a shock, it was such a sudden overturning of his first firmly-established surmise, that the whole frame-work he had projected in his mind, concerning Younod's treachery to himself, tottered and threatened dissolution. He was conjecturing within himself as to whether he had not constructed an entirely false suspicion on the scanty premises he had to go on, when his thoughts as well as bodily procedure were brought to a sudden stop by the seeming termination of the passage. Tired out from crouching forward in his tedious walk and disgusted with what he was strongly inclined to believe was the futile

rashness of his undertaking, he placed the lantern on the floor of the passage and leaned back to rest and cogitate. If his suspicions of Younod were groundless, how next proceed? Resign his voluntarily-assumed position of private detective, of course; but apropos, how explain his sudden withdrawal to Mrs. Rencliffe?

While agitating these and other embarrassing problems, issues of his disagreeable and dubious situation, he was startled by hearing voices. This sound did not come to him blurred and muffled as the other noises had, but clearly and concisely. Every word of the conversation was audible to him. Filled with mystified wonder he listened. The conversation was carried on in German, and was evidently between two persons who were in some saloon or resort and were treating each other in the reciprocal-complimentary fashion prevalent among the hail-fellow-well-met fraternity.

At first the talk was on generalities, but later turned to subjects of a more specific character. The constantly-recurring references to and remarks concerning certain particulars which bore a very especial relation to and interest for Gerhardt impressed him. And before long this impression which first served as premonition led the way to certainty, the certainty that he was immediately beneath the floor, and hence in direct communication with the "*Castle*" *of Crook's Nook.*

What a train of mental combustibles did that little flash of knowledge ignite! And in the glare of the conflagration that ensued the framework of his suspicion of Younod, but erst annihilated, now reconstructed in new and terrible strength, stood out plain and distinct in all its component parts.

Well might the momentous import of that knowledge fire his brain with dire and sweeping passion-flames, for voluntary com-

munication with this secret room by a non-initiated (especially an alien) signified nothing less than an *expose* of the secret communion of himself and his fraternity.

But at last the inward fire had spent itself, and the flames fell back, their strength and intensity having availed nought in the imposed self-bound scope. But out of their defeated ashes sprang the Phœnix of a new determination. The trap the enemy had set for his capture he would resolve into a means of escape.

He raised the lantern and cast its light overhead. As he had suspected the roof of the passage was torn away—in fact, it was the accumulation of this cast-out material that had blocked his way. The intervening crust of earth had also been scraped, or dug away, and in the small space thus cleared the beams that supported the floor of the "Castle" were exposed. The explanation of Younod's secret return to his room, after his open

departure from the house, as proven by the silent testimony of the valise and burning lantern, must, he reasoned, lie in the existence of the passage, which communicated with his room. Consequently, he reasoned further, there must be a mode of egress and ingress between it and the room above. This supposition was strengthened by the discovery of an adjacent step-ladder. When the late convivial occupants of the room had withdrawn, Gerhardt mounted the steps of the ladder. By standing near the top of it, which reached to the roof of the passage, he could reach with his upstretched hands the exposed boards, while his upright figure filled the intervening gap between the passage and the floor.

His test of the boards now further confirmed his supposition. The boards of the floor of the "Castle" were narrow ones, and fitted into each other in their lateral junctions by the customary tongue-and-groove method.

Eight of these were half-lengths and extended over the hole in question. They were firmly fastened to each other, but, while appearing to be joined to the adjoining ones on either side, by fitting into them in the natural way, were in reality detached. They were an almost non-apparent trifle narrower than the space which they were intended to fill. The only observable outcome of this last condition was an appearance of looseness in the boards of the floor.

But by means of it a slight tug or push to one side would cause the attached boards to separate from the others, the width of a crack. They could then be pulled or pushed up (according to which side the agent was on), thus leaving clear a passage-way between the room and under-ground canal. A small strap was nailed to the inner side, so that a person standing in Gerhardt's position could pull them back into place, shift them sideways till the alternating tongues and grooves

fitted, and then to all appearances there was no trap-door there.

Of all this Gerhardt rapidly apprised himself by testing, and then, satisfied he had obtained all the knowledge bearing on his mission which the passage afforded, he retraced his way. When he reached the room which communicated with the stairway, his eye fell upon something which his previous precipitancy in leaving it had caused him to overlook. Some thin curtains separated a shallow recess from the openness of the rest of the room. By the side of the curtains stood a small stand—on it had been placed a jar of water, a loaf of brown bread, a candle and matches. Gerhardt advanced and drew back the curtains. Stretched on the crude, simple cot in the recess lay he whom Gerhardt Leitz regarded as his bitter foe—Younod Rencliffe!

He lay with his fair, unnatural beauty turned from the crude light of the realistic

world. There is neither suggestion of slumber's insensate passiveness nor reflection of dream's bewildering phantasies in the awesome immobility of that face. Can this be a natural sleep that envelops his presence with such austere rigidity? Or is it a deep, significant calm, in which "midnight waking, twilight weeping, heavy noontide" can never have a part?

What spell is it that holds the gazer enthralled? Is it the minute's contact of a majestic spirit-strength that surges past him on its passage to the uncited realms of infinitude?

* * * * *

Very shortly after the happening of these events Mrs. Rencliffe received the following note:

"MRS. RENCLIFFE,—Dear Madam: I have to the best of my ability executed the undertaking you committed to me. My experience

in the investigation of the causes of your son's curious and unexplained absences leads me to this conclusion. He is a spy on the workings of a certain secret association whose opinions and ideas do not run parallel with the established conventionalities of the reigning code of law. His services as rendered in this character are gratuitously performed for the benefit of those persons and authorities whose business it is to uphold and protect these same mentioned principles and establishments, the existence of which he does approve, and whose further existence he, by his aid, wishes to insure. These services you will yourself perceive without further explanation must according to their significant nature be performed in secrecy. Let me assure you of my personal conviction that this conclusion thoroughly explains his absences. As to whether it further explains his general 'eccentricity' of character and conduct, you will have to judge yourself. With

the hope that my conclusion may be adopted as yours, with thorough satisfaction, I will, with your permission, discontinue further investigation.

"Respectfully,

"G. L."

CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNS A TALK IN WHICH ANARCHY AND LOVE ARE BLENDED.

CECELIA had been with the Rencliffes about a month, and had seen much of her cousin in this time. Sometimes they had met accidentally on the street, when they would stop and exchange the courtesies of the day, and he would inquire the latest tidings of the Honerick family. Occasionally they had met at some of the Rencliffe evenings, and sometimes he had called on her. So, what with these meetings, their tie of relationship, and mutual liking for each other, they were on a familiar footing.

But these quondam meetings had been of

the past for still another month when this note was left for Cecelia by a messenger:

"FRAEULEIN CECELIA — Liebe Cousine: Willst Du die Angenehmheit Deines neuen Heimes fuer einen Abend verlassen, um mit mir spazieren zu gehen? Es ist lange her seitdem wir ein freundliches Gespraech zusammen hatten.

"Ich werde nach dem Dunkelwerden bei Dir vorsprechen. Bitte enttaeusche mich nicht, denn Du kannst sicherlich Deinem Cousin vertrauen. G. L."

"Certainly a queer note," reflected Cecelia on its perusal. "'Will you leave the pleasures of your new home for one evening, to walk with me?' As if they were of such a dazzling nature I couldn't tear myself away from them. 'It has been long since we have had a friendly talk;' he seems to blame *me* for that. 'Please do not disappoint me, as surely you can trust your cousin.' Do I then pose as

such a Pyrrhonist in his eyes? But if the note is queer, its author is queerer. If I had never met Younod Rencliffe I should certainly say Gerhardt was the most eccentric person I ever knew. By the way," rambled on Cecelia's reflections, "how many queer people there are in this world; really, amid so much queerness one begins to wonder if there are any ordinary ones after all. I wonder whether I'm one, I think I would really like to know. I'll ask Gerhardt to-night; he'll be sure to say just what he thinks about it, too."

"What made you write such a strange note?" asked Cecelia that night, as, with her arm tucked under her cousin's, they walked a somewhat lonely, side street beneath the gaunt, swinging shadows of the electric lights.

"Was it strange?" asked Gerhardt with a smile. "I didn't notice that it was. I just wrote it off hurriedly and sent it. I was

afraid you might not get it in time to accept. I hardly remember now what I said."

"Then my surmise was correct, and I can just refer its queerness on general principles to the queerness of the sender," laughed Cecelia.

"But if I cannot explain the origin of its queerness, as you call it, I can that of its request. I asked for this walk that we might see and know something of each other. Here we are, both strangers, amid people that care no more for us than if we were two insects buzzing our lives out around their lights of vanities, and follies and 'favorite phantoms.' Both young and ambitious, both misunderstood by this same indifferent world, of which perforce we must at times be a part —a world of deliberators, schemers, self-toilers, proud, cold, smiling and polite as they are—both, I repeat, so similarly conditioned —is it strange that I should ask for an opportunity of understanding each other, of

strengthening our ties of blood and stronger ties of interest and—and—of friendship? So now, dear Cousine, let us for a while forget, if we can, this world, and talk of ourselves, of our lives, our hopes, our ambitions. Tell us of yourself, first, Cecelia."

"Of myself?" said Cecelia slowly, startled by the sudden exposition of Gerhardt's feelings regarding herself. "There is so little, or rather there is simply nothing to tell. It has all been so uninteresting, so ordinary—my life has—I cannot bear to reflect upon it. You speak of ambition. Alas, I fear sometimes I have none. I suppose I am phlegmatic—people say I am. Perhaps force of circumstances is to blame for it. But my mind, my opinions, my career, are all so wavering, so uncertain, my nature so cold and repellant—I think sometimes——"

"Wait a moment, your version is not altogether correct. It is not callousness, it is negativeness that forms this barrier against

ambition, against effort towards a certain attainment. When you said just now I was queer, I had it on my tongue to say you were, too, queer in this way. There is in your nature a strange blending of positive and negative forces. Circumstances, as you said just now, may be to blame for the present predominance of the negative. In your present state you repel friendship, sympathy, happiness. But stir up the positiveness that I know is in your nature, exert your energy, concentrate your effort, join issues with me and help to further my great ambition that draws toward itself, with centripetal force all minor hopes and plans."

"And this ambition? what is it? give it a name."

"This ambition of my life," returned Gerhardt with fervor, which, as he continued, heightened into excitement. "This ambition which fills my day-hours, and intrudes upon my night-hours, it is that of freeing

my race from oppression. When I say race, I do not mean race through right of country, of blood, of religion, of belief. I claim race-ship, kinship, fellowship with no creature—no matter where his birth-place may be, what his station of life is, what his views of the now and hereafter are—who grinds the heel of oppression, applies the whip of contumely, or points the finger of scorn! Between such as these and the race with whom I claim brotherhood, there is no bond or relationship unless it be that of Cain to Abel! My ambition is to raise the members of this race, this brotherhood, from the hellish hole of degradation and day-slavery into which those who call themselves their superiors are thrusting them, to shield them not only from the contumely, the hatred, the scorn which is heaped upon them, but also to shield them against indiscriminate assassination; my ambition is to join the interests and the hearts of every workingman of every nation,

into a brotherhood of such superhuman strength and magnitude as to be able to stand against the union of every aristocrat, monopolist, and moneyed-king who are the tyrants of this era. Aye, let me tell you more—this mission of mine and my fellow-workers is one not made up alone of brotherly love and sympathy. We shout other watch-words than Reform and Justice. In every brother's heart there is ever knelling a solemn tone that reverberates in measure and meaning to the cry, *Vengeance!* The time is coming when we shall *act* the principle of justness, 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life,' and crush them into everlasting nothingness!"

"Cousin—cousin—stop! this is awful; you work upon your feelings, and rouse hatred and desires for revenge that I *know* are not natural to you. Reflect a moment, name just one thing, that this 'class of oppressors' has done to you. One concession you must

surely make, that they give you employment and hence a living."

"Yes, I see what you want," returned Gerhardt bitterly, "you would not be satisfied, were I to recount instance after instance that covers the pages of history, and fills the columns of our daily papers, that clearly reflect the insulting contempt and indifference in which we are held, and with which we are treated. You do not want these, your challenge is for some special instance, affecting me personally and you shall have it."

At this moment they passed beneath the reflection of a light, and Cecelia plainly saw the pale tenseness of her companion's face and the drops of perspiration on his forehead and around his lips, evincing the internal fire of both his body and his emotion. And as in the loneliness of the street and desolation of the surroundings, he had placed his arm beneath hers to afford her protection and support, she could feel the heavy thud-

like pulsations of his heart as they seemed to measure out his passion.

"You may or may not have noticed my absence of late from places I have hitherto frequented, your own home for instance, that is, if you call it your home. Do you know that I am hounded by the law in general and one in particular, who has doubtless often taken your hand in seeming friendship,—by one who would see not only my employment taken from me with indifference, but my liberty, or my life without a tremor of his heart or a quiver of his conscience?"

"You mean Younod Rencliffe," said Cecelia, "but what can he want with, or of you? What have you done, Gerhardt, that you are thus sought for by the law; oh, tell me, cousin, that you are not a criminal, that you have not been rashly carrying out your extreme principles."

But, though she shuddered instinctively at the possible issue of his hot temperament,

this very violence and intensity of his nature, that seemed in such strong contradiction to her apparently frigid one, was the magnet that was drawing closer and absorbing into his, her life and soul.

"No, I cannot tell you what it is, for the secret is not mine alone. But how have we wandered from our original theme! It was to be of ourselves, our talk, was it not? Tell me, Cousine, that, branded as I may be some day by the law, or that whatever the probability may be of my being expelled beyond the limits of the civil or at the least conventional world, now—and we live only in the present, do we not?—that now you do not look with the same skepticism and derision upon me, the defender of these contemned principles and theories as you do upon them? Is the feeling all on my side that we are to each other more than cousins? Surely, Cecelia, you guessed somewhat of the purport of that 'queer note?'"

"No—no," exclaimed Cecelia with nervous trepidation. "I declare—I never once guessed——"

"Well then," went on Gerhardt with imperturbation in contrast to Cecelia's agitation evidencing an exchange for the moment in their individual temperaments. "Will you not let me explain it to you now? The reason why, to me, you are not my Cousine but my Liebste? Will you not let me say how I love you, not with a cousin's calm affection, but a lover's fervid passion?"

"No—no—no! oh no—not now, anyway," cried Cecelia, covering her face with her hands and bursting into tears, "I—I—I'm afraid——"

"Afraid? of what? of me? Nonsense, I don't believe it. See, I will prove that you are not," and he withdrew the arm that supported hers and placed it around her shoulders and with his other hand under her chin, drew her cold white face towards him and

pressed her lips with a kiss as hot and passionate as the love of his fiery being.

Love ! Cecelia had always scoffed at the possibility of such a sentiment and especially since she had come in contact with Younod Rencliffe, and had some glimpse of his seemingly exalted and unnatural character had she tried to spurn the thoughts of worldly, temporary sentiments. But if the passion that now welled through her heart and veins and set her brain burning—that bounded with redoubled vigor as she felt her lover's warm breath on her face and the pressure of his moist lips against hers—if this were indeed love—how mistaken had she been when she called it weak and insignificant. But subordinated as Cecelia was becoming in spirit by the superior strength and mesmeric power of Gerhardt, and although she no more had the physical power to shrink from his caress than she had the psychical strength to resist the wild pleasure of his love—never-

theless her innate strength of modesty and self-pride summoned to her aid sufficient strength to demur against his bold address and commanding claims. "You say you love me and yet you write and ask me in the name of friendship and cousin to see you alone and when you have me in your power take advantage of my lonely situation and inferior strength to insult me!"

"Stop, Cecelia!" exclaimed Gerhardt imperatively. "Insult you! Will the skeptical cynicism of your nature ever dominate over the warmth and sweetness which I know is there? While the light falls on my face look in my eyes and say if you can doubt me when I declare to you that the earnestness and ardor with which you have seen me defend the principles of my belief—far dearer to me than my liberty or my life—are not more real than this love you doubt, and I also swear to you that strong and intense as this passion is, its strength and intensity are

equaled by its purity! Do you still doubt me?—but of course you do not—cannot;" and in the shadow intervening between the lights he drew her yielding form so close to him his warm breath mingled with the scent of the tuberoses at her throat, and, fanning her face, increased the sweet intoxication of the moment.

While they had been holding their absorbing conversation they had been walking in the narrow side street with no danger from disturbance except by the piteous howl of some poor houseless dog, beneath lights so far apart the long, alternating streamers of black and red became fused into a general dreary darkness before met by another light. But at this point Cecelia was startled by seeing a sickly stream of yellowish light lying across the pavement vertical to it. She looked up and discovered that the light came from an amber-colored globe affixed to a large, gloomy building. Around the globe in the

shape of a crook or curve were placed letters of transparency forming the words, Crook's Nook.

"You are nervous and excited, Cecelia. We will go in here—in this reading-room—and find some secluded corner to rest—and continue our talk, if you are willing. Do not be afraid, my dear," he said reassuringly, as he saw her shrink from the publicity of the light. "I know the place well; it is one of my favorite haunts,—all its managers are my friends; and if danger should come to us I promise you all security from it. Besides there is no one in here who would know you from any stranger."

Perhaps Cecelia could not have resisted his command any more than she could, a moment ago, have repelled his caress, perhaps she did not want to,—at any rate she uttered no protest now, as with woman-like hands he re-arranged her hat, secured the tuberoses to the fastenings from which they

were breaking and straightened the fur collar round her neck preparatory to entering.

"You will feel better, my dear, after a little rest and some warm refreshment—you are looking tired and nervous."

It was still early—early, at least, for the class that frequented the place—and so there were but few occupants as yet when they entered. Some of these were women—neatly and plainly dressed—and the rest, artisans of the better class, standing at the bar, or smoking and chatting—for the most part in foreign languages—or reading at the small tables. For, on the last, scattered in profusion, were daily, weekly and monthly publications, chiefly German of course, though other nationalities were represented among them.

As Gerhardt led Cecelia across the long, wide room towards the small room beyond the partition, a few looked around carelessly at them but the most of them kept on with

their talk only looking up to give Gerhardt a friendly salute as he passed them. And if some of the muscular, military-bearing young men gave a second glance at Cecelia's pretty, white face,—her drooping eyelids or her pretty, sensual mouth it was done in a gentlemanly, respectful way.

The small room or "Castle" was now empty and the fire in the open stove, the comfortable chairs at the little table, and the glow from the crimson-globed lamp, gave it an inviting, cosy look, despite its hard, bare walls and floor, and, to Cecelia, uncertain surroundings. But the questionableness of the situation was no longer troubling her. The last, lingering sentiment of constraint and unbelief was being swept away in the sweet intoxication of the hour, and she gave herself up to it with abandon. She no longer doubted the nature of Gerhardt's regard for her, and no longer tried to restrain the reciprocation of it in herself.

Over the glasses that Gerhardt ordered they continued their talk. Cecelia sat facing the table, her arm resting on it, while with her hand she shaded her white face from the light. Gerhardt's chair was facing the side of hers and he sat leaning towards her, with one arm resting on the back of her chair and the other resting on the table near hers.

"I cannot speak to you of marriage, as I should do, Cecelia, for I could not ask you to share the condition of my present life—neither can I speak of it for the future, for destiny to such as I is as uncertain and unpromising as the present. The aims for which I am working, which are controlling and directing my present life, are not those which lead to future self-aggrandizement. But this prescience of a future state of unrest and unreward is no reason why we should attempt to repress the natural sway of our affections. Though we may possibly never change our position towards each other

as lovers for that of husband and wife, our relation is just as binding and sacred as could be any ratified by some formality of civil law. Our love is just as much a reality and positiveness as the love of lovers as it would be were it that of husband and wife. Our faithfulness to this love is the covenant that binds us, and were this faithfulness broken upon no power of civil law on earth could make us bound or married to each other. So I pray and beseech you, Cecelia, not to break upon this covenant however separated our lives may be now or in the future. Be faithful to the love which is to us a marriage contract."

Although the instincts of Cecelia's birth and education were against this theory of "free love" which her lover espoused, yet under the spell of his magnetizing influence she could make no refutation of it. The moment of silence which followed Gerhardt's earnest appeal was broken upon suddenly

and rudely by a hurried rapping at the narrow door.

Both started to their feet with a sudden presciènce of evil. But, added to presentiment, was the certain knowledge to Gerhardt of his precarious situation, so it was with set face and an expression of mingled defiance and hatred, that he opened the door to admit the bearer of the warning of danger.

The proprietor entered and closed the door after him. What he said to Gerhardt was in a language unintelligible to Cecelia —a sort of jargon blended of the tongues of the Teutonic and Sclavonic races, but his manner, gesticulation and tone were all sufficient proofs to her that her presentiment was correct. Once they spoke of her, she knew, for the man glanced at her, and nodded acquiescence to what Gerhardt was saying. When the man left Gerhardt returned to Cecelia, and, in answer to her anxious look of inquiry, said :

"Yes, brought to bay at last, as I presaged. This man, who is the proprietor of the place, and who was by agreement to give me warning, was here just now to tell me that two officers of the law are in the saloon, with warrants to search the place, and to arrest me if they find me. They know I am in here, for one of them, he has discovered, is a spy who was set to watch the place to see if I came here. But I have not forgotten my promise to secure your safety in case of danger. This man, the proprietor, is my friend, and will see you to your home safely. So come, make haste, my dear, I would not have your presence implicate you in my trouble."

"Do you think I can think of nothing but my own safety," returned Cecelia with hasty, scornful reproach. "Can you not possibly devise some means for your own escape? Can't I help you in any way? Oh! do, Gerhardt, for my sake, if nothing

more, try to think of something!" And she glanced with nervous excitement around as if expecting to become imbued with some sudden inspiration from the high, unbroken, impenetrable wall, the narrow, barred, inaccessible window and the scanty, non-protecting furniture.

But, so far from being inspired with strategic usefulness she was too excited to help herself, and it was her lover's deft, calm hands that buttoned her jacket for her, pressed into her hands, hanging limp and nerveless by her side, her gloves and handkerchief, and fastened with tender, lingering touch her fur collar.

"Will you at least not trust me so much as to give me some idea of what the extent or degree of your legal punishment is liable to be?"

A smile of the bitterest irony crossed Gerhardt's features.

"My dear, have you not yet learned that

trial by law is a passage-way with many different terminations, and as many exits, so that while one transgressor may enter the passage only to traverse and issue from it, another equal in commission or omission, of some legal form of emptiness enters it to be forced blindfolded and will-less through the entrance that opens to civil and conventional damnation?"

"And you will tell me nothing to prove your trust in me?" said Cecelia, with sad reproachfulness.

"Yes, I will tell you this much," said Gerhardt, talking rapidly. "You may refer this interruption and interference of legal authority to the active treachery of Younod Rencliffe. I have no time for further explanation. You must go." Then suddenly, as she was about to turn away in a bewildered, sad way, he caught her lithe form in his arms and strained her with passionate, almost fierce force to his

heaving bosom. "My darling! my love! my own! my own, own sweetheart! I prayed you but now to be faithful—I no longer pray and beseech—I command! You are mine—mine—mine! I swear it. I say you *will* be true, because I say you *shall!* Whether or not I am thrust into the prison's cell of ignominy to expiate the principles which are part of my soul's inspiration and heart's life, never cease to love me! And now, farewell." He kissed her lips again and again, released his hold of her and seized her hand, pressed it in turn to his burning lips, feverish cheeks and throbbing heart, and then, with a gesture full of the rude eloquence of love, authority, and despair motioned her to go.

When Cecelia opened the door which led into the general room she was met by the proprietor, who had quickly come forward, and, in a quiet, unostentatious way, he led her through the room.

As they walked the length of it, a man standing talking at the bar cast a rapid glance of keen scrutiny at them. But he seemed convinced that all was well, so far, for he made no effort to detain them. He was one of the officials.

At the outside door was the other ; but he, also, with a sharp survey let them pass. It was plainly neither the conspirator's friend nor his sweetheart the law was after, but the man himself.

After a short space of waiting, in the hopes that he would see the futility of resistance and impossibility of escape, and so come out and give himself up, the two officials consulted on the advisability of making the advance. While the situation had its advantages for the attacking party, it also afforded some to the defender.

And so, although the representatives of the law were confident of the ultimate

capture of the latter, owing to the security which the high-ceilinged, impenetrable "Castle" afforded against escape, yet, with their estimation of the character with which they had to deal, taken into consideration—this very impenetrability was a cause of some wavering on their part, and though, as they advanced, they felt for their pistols, they both realized that they were not a match against a possible dynamite cartridge.

The superior advanced, pushed open the narrow door and entered cautiously. All was silent and the light burned low.

The silence agitated his suspicion; although he advanced further followed by his companion, it was with more caution, and more trepidation. He peered forward with a hand in his coat pocket, and began, "I have here a warrant to arrest one——" he stopped. The room was empty!

The coals fell slowly apart in the little

stove: the dim, crimson glow of the lamp diffused itself generally, but little intercepted by the scant furniture; the chairs stood closely together, suggestive of the late *tete-a-tete*. Everything, from high, grim wall, still, impenetrable, to meager, spindling shadows on the floor, seemed to the baffled and bewildered officers to bespeak a defiance to the law in general and to them in particular.

Ha! Something has at last caught their eye.

A slip of paper on the table. Very meager comfort, to be sure, but still something more substantial and satisfactory than utter silence and vacancy. They eagerly read:

"If the use of means that further the interests of spying and treachery can be deemed honorable—the further use of the same means to protect one's person ought, by logical inference, to be deemed equally honorable.

"You, gentlemen, as representatives of

that institution which recognizes only truths that are deduced from *reductio ad absurdums* will probably have no difficulty in perceiving the truth of this absurdity and hence be ready to excuse the outcome of it —my absence."

CHAPTER X.

RECORDS A CURIOUS DELIVERANCE AND A MORE CURIOUS PROMISE.

DURING the walk home Cecelia and her newly-appointed protector were for the most part silent. Only occasionally the latter would make some quiet, formal comment. Cecelia was too excited and bewildered by the strange incidents crowded into the last hour to think of talk, and too intent, too, upon revolving in her mind the contingencies of the cause to which these incidents were the effect.

"The active treachery of *Younod Rencliffe.*"

These words, which she repeated to herself,

were the key-note to an inspired hope of securing the release of her lover.

And after a hurried, formal leave-taking of her companion at the hall-door she hastened, without a thought of the lateness of the hour, to Younod's study.

She knocked; no answer. A ray of light came from the key-hole.

Remembering what she had heard of his habit of abstractedness she knocked again louder. Still no reply. Too intent on her project to be thus early baffled, she opened the door and entered. Younod sat at his desk with some pages of manuscript before him and a pen in his hand. Instead of the general laxity which was observable in his air, there was at present an intensity and concentration of voluntary attention which seemed to such a degree strained as to appear painful. When Cecelia entered he did not turn toward her nor look up—in fact, he did not know she was there. She came

forward and forced the knowledge of her presence upon him.

"What is it?" he asked with much the same manner a really deaf person, who knows that something has been said but did not catch the exact words, would ask for a louder repetition of the statement. "Something has happened? You want my help?"

"Yes," replied Cecelia with eagerness but quiet restraint. "Gerhardt Leitz has been arrested at your instigation. I want to know—does the testimony you have gained substantiate his guilt as a criminal, or is it only sufficient to cause him to be suspected?"

"Oh, the evidence is, as it most generally is in such cases, only circumstantial so far."

"And should the law find this circumstantial evidence sufficient to convict him, what would the punishment be?"

"Well, I could hardly tell exactly as to that. The law may find him a criminal

agitator, or it may find him only a blind enthusiast; if the former, perhaps a penitentiary punishment, if the latter, only a fine,—or it may release him altogether."

"This evidence you possess, is it known only to yourself or generally throughout the official force?"

"The latter only suspected because of the bold and defiant way in which he has declared his tenets and beliefs to the public through the paper and by mouth, but I only as yet possess sufficient evidence to condemn him before the law."

"Ah!" a long-drawn sigh from Cecelia of relief, exhaustion, satisfaction, she hardly knew what. The next question that trembled on her lips was: "How far would your power go in securing his present release or future acquittal?" But of course she would not ask it, not yet, it would be impolitic, she decided mentally.

"Why did you assume the role of detec-

tive to betray him? I do not believe it is because you condemn his tenets, I have even heard you express admiration for his enthusiasm, rash as it is."

"Well, I can hardly tell you," replied Younod significantly, and he added the phrase "just yet," with even more meaning. "All the actions which make up my life as lived among you go to the indulgence of my philosophy. All bear directly or indirectly upon it. An act which has for its motive the removal of an obstacle appears to an outsider to be a divergence from the direct path to the summit. But no height could be reached without these occasional by-paths."

As he spoke he rose and led the way to the little secret room which Gerhardt had once explored.

"Here," he said as the door swung back, "are some of the means which bear directly on the promotion of my life's purpose."

Of course, like the rest, Cecelia had never had any knowledge either of the existence of such a room or its purposes. And so it was with surprise that she followed and looked around upon its strange appurtenances. But as she investigated further, and listened more, her feelings changed to a speculatory wonder, deeper and stronger than surprised curiosity. She was seized and carried out of herself by a sort of wild fascination. In this sudden, sharp and intense envy and admiration of the life of a student and philosopher, her mission, her passion, Gerhardt himself was forgotten.

The laboratory and table for chemical operations and experiments, the library, with its secret MSS., containing lore and magic, which was intended some day to startle the world from its conventional rut; the shelves and tables holding their books of reference on science and magic; their modern crucibles and alembics; their charts and

maps of the infinite system of worlds within worlds; their telescopes, their magnifiers, and spectroscopes. All of these would have had for the aspirant a charm of their own. But there was something stronger than these lifeless indices of the higher life of science and philosophy that was working its influence upon her. Did it lie in some mesmeric sway which Younod had the power of exercising? No; for, so far from exhibiting the exercise of any intentional influence over her, there was in the calm and unconsciousness of his face evidenced an almost non-perception of her presence. And yet, it had been, and was still, the desire of Younod that she enter this field under his direction and instruction. Could, then, this influence be explained by recognizing the psychical sway which a strong and superior mind might exercise involuntarily upon a mind expansive and receptive? Not the animal magnetism exerted by nervous force upon the emotions

through the medium of matter, but the mesmerism of mind-force over mind in an occult and purely psychical sense. Whatever the cause, this thought of the possibility of leaving behind the wild utopias of a boundless, dreaming fancy and irregular pulsations of emotion-bred passion for a field bounded by the actuality of philosophy and exactness of science was suddenly become very attractive to her.

Some of this she suggested to him.

He smiled. "The studies, the pursuit of which these evidence—" he waved his hand towards the contents of the laboratories and shelves — "physics, medicine, chemistry, geology, botany, astronomy, are all mere preliminaries to the great all-comprehending study of man—the Mind-Self. You see I differ from the ancient alchemists or wisdom-seekers, whose motto was, first, 'know thyself.' I say, the study of that is the climax, because in man is found the concen-

tration of the symbols of all nature. Then, to recognize and comprehend the symbols we must first study the *natural.* But that is not the only reason that self-study comes last. Not only is there found in the microcosm, man, the concentration of the symbolized factors of nature (as presented in the natural objects of the sublunary world—the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal), but also the symbols, or images rather, of perfected life. They say themselves, 'The universal orb of the world contains not so great mysteries and excellencies as a little man formed by God to His own image.' So, in the pursuit of wisdom, after straining the sensate eye as far as it will pierce, and straining the sensate comprehension as far as it will extend, do you turn the eye and the comprehension inwards, and add to natural lore and knowledge that of the supernatural, and when this last study is completed and perfected, can you unseal the hermetic phi-

losophy which embodies the *summum bonum*, the climactic and divine purpose of existence, the knowledge of which I have before hinted. But, enough of that till you have come to your decision regarding my proposal."

"Ah, then the offer is still held out to me?" said Cecilia, with a newly-born ardor.

But he either did not hear or did not heed her question, for he began showing her the apparatus of his studies, in the meantime talking on impersonal subjects.

Cecelia, inspired by the ether-like atmosphere of student surroundings, was listening to his words with countenance wrapt by enthusiasm and interest—her own personality lost sight of—Younod's presence itself separated by the mists of abstractedness. Younod was saying, "Though differing widely in degree, there is a certain correspondence in character between the plane of science and the plane of the emotions. The love of a student for philosophy is as wrapt

and intense as the love of the most passionate lover for his mistress."

The last words had just left his lips when —Crash! Bang! The secret door that led downwards to the underground sewer-passage was burst open and, framed by the doorway, there stood before them the panting incarnation of hate and jealousy! Gerhardt Leitz had escaped the vigilance of his enemy's pursuers to plunge, as he supposed, upon even worse treachery—the seduction of his sweetheart.

With a rapid divination Cecelia grasped his present thought, and with it came like a flash the revelation of that strange outburst of wrath and vengeance she had listened to in their walk that evening, and the origin, too, of the insinuations in the "queer note."

Her self-command was not equal to the occasion, and she stood silent. She essayed to step forward and explain, but could not.

Younod, with a resumption of his usual expression of disinterest, stepped back and gazed at the interloper silently for a few moments, and then, "Spy," he murmured, with unraised voice.

"Betrayer!" hissed Gerhardt in hoarse, wavering tones. A moment's pause again, and then from the infuriated man in whose mind anarchy, for the moment, reigned, under which frantic fancy wrenched from its civic seat reason, came the words: "But a betrayer may be betrayed!" He looked only at Younod; but to Cecelia, contrite and remorseful for her last hour's oblivion of him, the words seemed to strike her. He thrust his hand into the inner pocket of his coat as he continued: "While you, with your treachery, sought not only my imprisonment, but the wiling away of my heart's affection, I," and drawing his hand out he held its contents over the gas-jet's flame towards which he advanced. "I, with

my vengeance, seek not only your life, but the annihilation of all your garnered wisdom."

Cecelia divined, rather than saw, what was in his hand, so close to the fatal flame. The spell was broken. She sprang forward and grasped not only the hand that contained the terrible instrument of destruction, but the other also, and holding them with the intensity of impassioned strength she exclaimed: "Listen! You are wrong, wrong in all that you have been conjecturing. All I have to confess to is a moment's forgetfulness of you. For my sole purpose in coming here was to bargain for your release. To bargain, I say, because while to you I had yielded my heart, to him I was going to barter my intellect for your release. Further, can you not understand that he whom you suppose your rival has no more regard for, nor desire of winning my affection than you have of gaining his friendship?

And now, before you doom us all to a horrible, instant death, listen to the proposal I am about to make."

She stopped talking for a moment and dropped his hands. He no longer grasped the contents of his right hand tightly and fiercely. And in the glow of ferocious doubt and unbelief that had illumined his countenance, there was breaking the redawning of the deep, earnest love for his sweetheart. Spite of the disadvantages of his present condition : draggled and torn, covered with molded clay and damp with earthy moisture, haunted and worn-out, as he was, to Cecelia, he had never seemed so strong in his strength, fascination and beauty. She looked at his pale, damp lips firmly fixed, and recalled the soft, burning sensation the pressure of them—then red and yielding—had left upon her own ; she looked at his arms limp and nerveless by his side, and remembered how great and resistless had been their strength, when he

pressed her to his bosom ; she looked at his hair—wet, wild and disordered—and recalled how its tendrils had brushed her face when he bent so near his breath mingled with the breath of her tuberoses ; she looked at his handsome, blond face, at his stalwart figure, typical of perfected manhood ; and as she admitted to her perception and remembrance all this, she vaguely conjectured within herself whether a passing passion prompted and promoted by the mesmeric sway of his physical strength and perfection had taken possession of her heart and senses, just as the subtle charm of study and philosophy had anon woven itself around her mind. Whether neither the one nor the other were the real, the stable, the actual, to choose and to cling to and to support ; but either and both but transient, impalpable spells that held her fancy-bound one moment and the next were gone. And on her face appeared the old expression of peculiarly

blended yearning, skepticism and melancholy. She longed to be assured of the existence of the real and the right—to see it—to know it, and to believe it; and yet she did not believe in its possibility, and was sad that she could not. "After all, we live only in the present." Were these words the key to the locked door of the mystery of life?

The remembrance of these words of Gerhardt, caught in the meshes of her wandering thoughts, recalled her by association of ideas to the situation.

"This proposition I am about to make, I will base upon that creed of yours, Gerhardt, that 'we live only in the present.' Mr. Rencliffe has said that your conviction might imply imprisonment. This I know would be the greatest punishment you could suffer. It is in his power to call in an officer and have you immediately turned over into the hands of the law, to use with all his force, in the most damaging way he can in the prosecu-

tion, the evidence he has against you—in short, it almost lies in his power to convict you. Or—he can let you go out of this house secretly and unmolested when you can, trusting to your wit and tact and the limited possession of this evidence by others, readily escape prosecution of the law. In short, gain your liberty, for the present at least. Now the latter case is to be one side of my bargain or proposition. The other side is that I bind myself with a solemn promise to become the disciple of Mr. Rencliffe's philosophy —to use all my intellectual power and energy to acquire knowledge of it, and to then carry it out by practice or theory, or whatever way he designates; on the understanding, of course, that this philosophy of his is purely an intellectual one, not in any sense damaging to my health or honor or character."

"I vouch for the latter, and accede to the bargain," said Younod, quietly but promptly. But Gerhardt did not speak. In his mind

distrust no longer contended with faith and reason, but a new element had sprung into a struggling existence and was hotly contending its way. Was it protest against this creed for the supremacy of the present?

Cecelia turned to him with a smile, half-sad, half-mocking.

"Now you see, Gerhardt, why this proposition in meeting the demands of the present carries into practice your creed. For, under it, for its strain upon the future, I have no care, and it leaves me for the present where I was. It gives Younod satisfaction for his part of the bargain, and it gives you what you most need and wish for, for the present, —your liberty."

"Have I no other wish or claim for the present—even if we should leave out of consideration my claim for the future?" he asked in hoarse tones of pent-up emotion.

Who could resist the passionate agony of appeal in those haggard, haunting eyes?

Surely not the girl upon whom the love which gave rise to it was concentrated.

"Yes, yes," she exclaimed excitedly, giving way to the surging flood of emotion overwhelming her, "I will be just, Gerhardt, and answer your other claim. Although I have thus chosen—although the demands of that promise may call me into a new and far field, —to you, I say, is given all my heart's devotion; it is yours, past recall, past changing, for now, the future, eternity! And now," with that smile again, part sad—part mocking, "as to all the rest, the separation and that—it is as it was—for you know you said yourself you could not speak of marriage for the future."

She held out her hands to him to say goodbye, and he came forward and taking them said, in still low and hoarse tones, "I, too, accept the bargain."

But, instead of giving her a lover's final

farewell he only bent closely over her and whispered,

"You have indeed proven your faithfulness. But that creed you accuse me of supporting is false. The future will not only explain this assertion but prove it. My love, Auf Wiedersehen!"

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH YOUNOD RENCLIFFE DELIVERS A WRITTEN STATEMENT DETAILING THE REAL CAUSE OF HIS ECCENTRICITY TO CECELIA HONERICK.

A FEW days after the events which ended in Cecelia's hasty construction of a treaty of peace between the alien forces, she was summoned home by a telegram announcing the sickness of her mother.

Affairs at this period regarding the relative position and course of conduct of Younod, Gerhardt, and Cecelia were in an equivocal state. Cecelia recognized the fact that this extemporaneous covenant had included no future conditions of constraint or obligation upon any of the parties con-

cerned except herself. Also that by her own premised admission it was built upon the assumption of the supremacy of the present. The consideration of a future was not admitted into its constituency, except so far as her own promise was concerned.

With these two considerations in mind the question arose within her—did her obligation of the treaty, which implied complete, entire allegiance to Younod's cause, imply equally complete, entire alienation from Gerhardt's? In other words, did the future adoption of Younod's creed signify a renunciation of the possibilities of loving Gerhardt and being loved by him? When she had spoken to Gerhardt that night about "separation," etc., she had thought it did; but after-reflection had pointed out these two mentioned considerations with their consequently involved indecisiveness.

In Gerhardt's parting words, too, she

thought she had divined an intimation, obscure and imperfect, true, but still an intimation, that the future would evolve a state of affairs wherein the proviso of that treaty would have proven itself but a vagary, an airy nothing.

(The question with *us* is a different one from Cecelia's. It is, which did her innate desire incline her to believe? Did she wish to be free from the restraining and forceful influence of Gerhardt's love that she might the more easily mount the far-reaching heights of sublimity and ideality implied in Younod's creed? Or did she, within the secrecy of self, sigh for the softened links that chained her in bonded blissfulness?)

* * * * *

One day after the household had been apprised of the fact that Cecelia must leave, Younod came to her and gave her a package.

"In this," he said, with a forced smile that rarely appeared upon his serene, abstruse countenance, "you will find the explanation of my alleged eccentricity. Of course," he continued, in answer to Cecelia's unspoken but glanced appeal for explanation, "I have long been aware of the sentiment of curiosity directed towards me by the outside world. Not the least amusing of its results was the once announced affirmation that I am an opium or hasheesh absorber; and another that I am a second edition of Irving's 'Little Man in Black,' the descendant of the illustrious, but nevertheless mysterious, Linkum Fidelius, and am equally steeped in the unpropitious lore of the black art. But, to speak to the point: this manuscript is the history of the evolution of my philosophy. Take it with you and read it at a time when you are certain you can give it sure and uninterrupted

consideration. Postpone the reading of it for some time, if you think by so doing you can invest its perusal with the more steadfastness and firmness of attention. In it I have not explicitly defined the attainment of the particular effect of carrying out this belief, because that is a secret too profound and important to be recklessly divulged. I will impart it to you after you have proven your adherency by devotion and application. In the meantime, to guard against the contingencies of time and circumstances, I have written out in full the particulars and directions concerning it, and put them away in a carefully selected place, the location of which I have taken means to have signified to you in the event of anything happening. Now, I have made this arrangement for the future concerning our agreement. Next Fall I understand you return to fulfill the contract of a year's assist-

ance to mother. We will then begin—if you still remain constant to your avowed purposes concerning this philosophy—the course of study which is the preliminary of its adoption. During the years involved in this preparation, and in the time succeeding it, I will make provisions of a monetary nature necessary for the uninterrupted pursuit and attainment of the creed. If at first thought your pride is not satisfied with this latter arrangement, your perusal later of this," signifying the manuscript, "will demonstrate to you the side significance of worldly considerations of this kind."

As usual, the mysterious import of Younod's presence affected Cecelia, and it was with almost reverential deference, and somewhat of awe, that she received from him this important manuscript. Already in its prospective perusal she was beginning to feel her being vibrate in harmonical

unison with the lofty strain of revelated truth.

"Will you not explain to me one point that I have never been able to decide satisfactorily for myself? Why did you select me to confide your high ideas to?"

An expectation of eliciting flattery from Younod Rencliffe would be as absurd as would be that of extracting honey-dew from some lofty forest tree. Of course Cecelia knew this perfectly well. Her sole motive in asking the question was to have her curiosity satisfied. Younod listened as she spoke with that earnestness of attention peculiar to him, and then, as he stood before her, his lustrous eyes fixed steadfastly on some distant spot, he replied:

"You have probably inferred from some of my previous talks and occasional remarks that I do not believe in the universality of the equality of mankind. All men are

not born equal. I do not refer to the social or civil or even hereditary caste-endowments or distinctions. It is the aristocracy of empyreal genius I believe in. This inequality is referable to innate superiority rather than the advantages of acquirement. The different ranks of man are according to the degree of psychical development. But development has limitations and laws. The dog has undoubtedly made much progress from its primitive state of the wolf to its present condition, but it is, nevertheless, still, and ever will be, a dog. So with these different grades of mankind. I say the hod-carrier is not necessarily and irrevocably a hod-carrier, but the dunce—the genuine dunce—is immutably ever a dunce, because the nature of this ranking is not in avocation or pursuit, which is external and apart, but in capability, which is inner and elementary. Of course education means much and is mighty, but after all it is only *development*, not *acquisi-*

tion ; and so, what is not there in germ cannot be produced by 'artificial cultivation.' So, to return to the statement, there is an innate aristocracy of genius or ability. To none outside this narrow and select circle of aristocracy or of 'election,' so to speak, is permissible or possible the revelation of this abstruse arcane—this majestic and marvelous yet hermetic mysticism. In estimating your character I adjudged that it could be classified among this grade of mankind. Now, perhaps, you want to know why I so judged. You are by nature incredulous and skeptical where the spurious and the superficial and the petty are concerned. But you are also by nature strong and tenacious where the real, the sourceful and the potent are concerned. While on the surface of your character there is a layer of coldness and indifference and skepticism, which serves to protect you from the gnawings and peckings of the trifling and the insignificant,

underneath there is a pith of warmth, of intensity, of devotional faith and belief which is penetrable only by the powerful and the suasive.

"But let me add a sequel to this preamble —a warning to my diagnosis. Your character has another phase. And in this phase of it you fairly represent mankind in general, independent of ranking of any kind, inasmuch as there is in you an ever-varying inclination towards two forces. In the world of the metaphysical there are two centers of gravity. One center is the carnal—the other the empyreal; the one the earthly, the other the sublime; the one the temporal, the other the eternal; the one the finite, the other the infinite.

"Beware, O would-be disciple, that you do not lean too far towards the one that the force of the other is overcome, for you cannot ultimately gravitate to both. Your aspiration—vague, unnamed and un-understood, for

the sublime and the arcane, is antithesized by a proneness for the carnal and the knowable.

"You have a lover. Be careful lest the force of the sensate and emotionate penetrate through your outer character to your inner one and there absorb its warmth, its intensity and its devotion." . . . .

Cecelia followed, literally, Younod's injunctions about the reading of his manuscript. Many weeks intervened between her return home and its perusal. At first she would permit nothing of an absorbing nature to encroach upon her attention, lest it should distract it from its present intent in the care and nursing of her mother. Then, when her mother was entirely recovered, a few more weeks followed, filled with small anxieties and worries and workings. But at last she was ready to turn to it with concentrated attention, undistracted intent and eager anticipation.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCERNS THE READING OF A STRANGE MANUSCRIPT.

EVERY man's life is or should be the living demonstration of his philosophy.

Younod gave this sentiment as his text, in extenuation for laying before Cecelia an epitome of his life for an exposition of his philosophy.

The introduction he entitled:

A STUDENT'S LIFE.

In the references to his systematic application, the precocity of his youth was evidenced. He studied not for ambitious results, not as a pleasure or passion, not even for the at-

tainment of knowledge. Study was with him a second-nature, and, as a child eats without the expressed philosophy that he is doing it to nourish his system, but simply with the instinct of satisfying the cravings of nature, so Younod absorbed and digested mentally. It was with him an instinct.

He had no specialties. They denote one-sided development. The normal mind must embrace the principles of every subject to develop perfectly.

THE THEORY.

Was the next theme of his statement.

Study of history and psychology laid before him, as before all students, the fact of man's bi-fold existence, the material and the immaterial.

The athlete develops the body to the neglect of the mind ; the ascetic fosters the mind at the sacrifice of the physique. Would not

the development of both simultaneously in the one being generate the highest type of the highest earthly existence?

Not because the material is the equal of the immaterial, but because the one is a stepping-stone, an aid, to the other. He resolved to illustrate this view in himself.

For the attainment of the first, perfect health, a system of exercise, diet, and rest was mapped out and carried into practice.

For the attainment of the latter—inner development—he began to meditate a system.

This system, he decreed, should embrace the means by which the mind of man be led up to the highest pinnacle of mind-loftitude. There should be no half-way heights in his soul's aspiration.

Inward culture he decided was the great law on which this system should gyrate.

But in every effort there are two points to be considered: the means of procedure and the obstacles to be overcome. An eagle—

however fleet its wing, however tireless its flight—cannot reach excelsior heights when corded to the earth. The cord must be severed. Inward culture is the means of the procedure; the physical environment of the soul is the obstacle to be overcome. The soul works and struggles in its flights upward—it strains its pinions for the crags of higher life, but always interfered with by that backward force of the physical environment in the shape of sensations, optical obtrusions, disturbing noises, heart-vexations, fear, hope, anger.

Inward culture is not sufficient. The mind must be freed from those involuntary restrictions upon its free and full action. The eagle is endowed with fleetness and strength for the trial; the cord must be severed.

At the base of the brain is a nervous organization known as the sensorium. Its office is to serve as a seat for those nervous conditions commonly called sentiments, amative-

ness, fear, hatred, jealousy, and as a medium to convey sense-impressions from the outside world to the brain. Its action is reflex or involuntary. If the action of this organization were overcome, these nerve conditions would be eliminated and sense-impressions would be conveyed from the outside world to the brain without mediation. The brain is the seat of the will. Impressions could there be barred or received at will.

The mind could complete its full measure of lofty action and inward meditation, and return to those restricted guests of an alien world at pleasure.

Younod's meditation then evolved this system, for the highest development of internal existence: inward culture, supplemented with the power to absorb the reflex, involuntary action of the sensorium within the jurisprudence of the will.

Could the latter be attained? Could the cord be severed?

To use his words. "I investigated, I experimented, I discovered."

SUCCESS.

Under this heading Younod pointed out to his would-be disciple the psycho-physiological effects of his system as perfected and carried into practice.

And as he thus pointed out Cecelia beheld in the retrospect of Younod's seemingly strange life and manners the living parallel of this strange record.

Referring to the first principle, inward culture,—

"Hence there followed a deeper and more comprehending pursuit of knowledge, and a more concentrated activity of the higher faculties than even my inherent love of study had hitherto prompted."

And again: "To give tone and elevation to the mind, there also followed much medi-

tation over abstruse, intricate principles and truths of the natural life,—reproduction, development, selection,—manifestations of which must serve first as the conducting agency of the comprehension downwards to their fundamental, unphenomenal existences of law and force.

"Also the same of the preternatural — mind-influence, mental-creation, intuitive conception, free will, — straying manifestations from the ghost-world of infinite truth and comprehension."

The following extracts bear upon the second principle, the overcoming of the action of the sensorium :

"Since the reception or non-reception of external impressions now lies in the power of the will, the labyrinthical involvements of mental activity are no longer obstructed by counter-passages whose source is blind instinct and sensuous slavery."

"A soul-existence, independent of sense-

dictation, has emanated ; this self-emanation no longer acquires knowledge through the mediation of words and object-lessons, but it creates knowledge ; effects and impressions are not brought about by the agency of external cause, but the effects and impressions are self-created independent of objective origin."

"This much-involved, intense mental activity being united with simultaneous bodily passiveness, the external effect of the practice of my system or philosophy thus much resembles a trance or deep sleep."

"The restraining emotional elements that relate man to the lower animal are absorbed with reflex action, and no longer fret and foil the pure, psychical effort."

THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

"The philosophies of all times from their conception to their promulgation are under

two great pressures : the necessity of secrecy and the necessity of divulgence.

"Secrecy for the complete evolution of the philosophy by its founder; secrecy for its protection against interruption, ridicule, persecution and destruction by the ignorant and incredulous; secrecy to guard the ignorant in their reckless use of its applications and processes; and secrecy to secure its practice without interference from the outside world. Especially is the last cause of secrecy imperative in this instance, for in this willed yielding-up of sense-communication with the temporal world there is ever the attendant danger of the dissector's knife and the grave's suffocation."

The next sentence Cecelia accepted with its intended personal application: "Even with aspirants is secrecy necessary. Let the trial precede the initiation, after which withdrawal is impossible. This demand then explains the guardedness with which I have

conceived, evolved, perfected and practiced my philosophy."

He then detailed the building of the blind-room; the use of the accidentally-placed under-ground passage-way to further his privacy and his pretended journeys by which he returned thus secretly to the room which contained all his conveniences for work.

About the necessity of divulgence he wrote: "All great philosophies are inspirations of Divine origin to be promulgated by human agency. After the perfect evolution of my conception the great problem was the means of communicating it to my fellow wisdom-seekers.

"You, Cecelia Honerick, had enthusiasm —you had aspiration—you had devotion. True, you had, too, passion. But has not all mankind?

"I had but to remove the flame that fired this passion and enthusiasm, aspira-

tion and devotion were ready for my altars.

"Behold, Cecelia Honerick, you are chosen priestess to proclaim the oracle."

Was the reference to the removal of the flame "that fired this passion" a figurative interpretation of Younod's intended agency in exposing Gerhardt Leitz to the retribution of the law? Since this exposure would have led to Gerhardt's arrest and removal from future influence on herself, Cecelia decided that it was.

THE APPENDIX.

"The highest good! The state of sublimation!

"How define its effect, its process, its conception, when they who invented words knew nothing of its existence, its possibility? It is a something apart, outside, beyond and above all things which words

of present invention clothe in appropriate, suggestive meaning.

"But what matters the wording at all, since to the initiated it is a conceived reality within his inspired knowledge? And as for the novice who is pursuing its revelation, it is sufficient for his thirsting knowledge and reliant faith to be assured that it is the art of arts—the mystery of mysteries—the discovery than which no deeper, no higher, no more valuable, no more comprehending, has ever been, or ever will be made by man. To him who pursues with the true, not the forced enthusiasm—with the empyreal, not the artificial genius, with the real not the made faith, this wordedness will be all significant; for he will read between the lines the presentation of a creation above words spoken, or written.

"A word of advice, student.

"Do not let your ardor be transformed

into impatience. Remember, the revelation is preceded by the travail and the trial. So first prepare yourself. Enthusiasm comes first. Enthusiasm and ability for intense devotion are the innate requirements.

"For enthusiasm elevates, devotion fixes. Enthusiasm lifts the mind to the quivering hooks of stars' scintillations, and then devotion secures it there.

"Study comes next. Study the natural and then acquire knowledge of the immaterial force that underlies the external index. Study with the perception till the conception is developed, and ideas voluntarily arrange themselves in logical consecutiveness and you pursue your search with eyes closed and comprehension ranging through the far-reaching vistas of a metaphysical microcosm.

"Let us illustrate the fact in the figure.

"You are a scholar; you are traversing

the woods in search of object-lessons. The subject you adopt for analysis, by reason of its frequent occurrence, is a leaf. You know your lesson well, for you have conned it many times in the study-room. You trace along its veined ramifications backwards to the stem, thence backward still to twig, from twig to branch, from branch to trunk, from trunk to roots, from roots to soil.

"But hold one moment your galloping mind. For while the steed's strides have covered much ground of information, the unchecked pace has caused it to leap over deep—deep—unfathomable abysses of thought. While your mind passed from stem to soil with the glibness of memorized technicalities it left unexamined the principle of that invisible agency that binds these varied parts into a unity as harmonious as mystical.

"You exclaim in refutation you have

traced backwards the evolution of the tree to its begining the seed. Yes: you have gone back to the beginning; but your learning has not led you back to the beginning of the beginning. You have not expounded that life germ, infinitesimally small as the measures of matter go, infinitely great as the value of meaning is.

"Again, behold the fact in the figure:

"It is night, and you search this time the forest of constellations for your natural lesson.

"With the aid of telescope your gaze roves from star to star, along the trailing galaxy; and accompanying your vision go the promptings of your memorized knowledge, which simultaneously present the natural facts that are related to each.

"But strain as you will your vision, the vista grows dim and dimmer, and finally fades away.

"Your sight has gone far and searched

extensive areas comprehended in a many numbered series of solar systems. But it has not reached *outside* the limit, and pierced the on—on—ever-on extension of unending space.

"And, as your mind but formerly made egotistical with much information falls back repeatedly baffled, by the depth and complexity of principles of naturalism and philosophy, it cries out in humility, 'I am, then, but an animal whose instincts of knowledge are confined to a mechanical body and a temporal life!'

"Know you not impatient student, that you are now on the first rung of the ladder that shall lead you up to the empyrean of knowledge? By the mental admission of the existences of these principles you are giving identity to your higher nature. So proceed with your effort.

"Knowledge is of importance, inasmuch as it is the beginning. But the momentous

epoch of the effort is marked by the struggle of the innate wisdom. The struggles which indicate not only the existence of this higher comprehension, but also its demands for release and its assurances of a power individual and apart from the human possibilities commonly recognized.

"Leap follows leap. Strain succeeds strain. Trial supplements trial.

"And then is the aspirant ready for the revelation, and thus will he apostrophize it:—

"O life of deep and complex nature—of wide and varied experience—of immensurate and incomprehensible strength!

"O life of lofty fancy—of utopian idealism—of sublime wisdom!

"O life of infinite creation—of shapeless existence—of unmeasured power!

"I hasten to you—you hasten to me.

"We meet in ineffable rapture—we embrace with a warmth of voluptuous rhapsody of which lovers never dream.

"I roam—I examine—I study !

"I rule—I will—I create !

"Mine be the power to wander through vaultless areas of space. To touch upon planets whose minera, flora, fauna and progenies are elements of existence unrevealed to ordinary human ken.

"To gaze with sense, not visioned, upon scintillating spark and hue merging into hue from firelit globe.

"To comprehend its brilliancy, and yet not be dazzled by it.

"To cross the streaming track of straying, unlawed meteor, and while estimating its heat feel it not. To trace the paths of worlds, the measure of whose orbits is in the same proportion to earth's as the memory of the human race is to that of the man.

"To compute with supernatural logic the limitations dissolving into succeeding limitations in the infinite series that constitute space.

"The discovery is made. Treasure of light and hope and passion and life! Treasure unsoiled by the rust and corruptibleness of the casket that holds it!

"There is no doubt—no impediment—to blotch the transcendent radiance of the glory of the New Life!"

CHAPTER XIII.

SHOWS WHICH FORCE CONQUERS AND WHEREIN LAY ITS STRENGTH.

THE last word of the writing was taken in by the rapid, quickened comprehension.

Was what she had just absorbed into her brain the frenzied inspiration of a madman, —visionist,—enthusiast? Or was it the revelation of a Thought terrible in strength and immeasurable in meaning? she asked herself.

Cecelia laid the last page of the manuscript back in its place of security along with the others and then hastily prepared to leave the house that she might in solitude experience the effects of the strange and startling suggestion contained in Younod's paper.

Who can transcribe into words of system

and precision the chaos of thought and emotion?

A bewildering, sweeping complexity of thought ravished her brain. Emotion surged backward and forward with gigantic wave-sweeps on the storming sea of her mentality.

Two terrific forces met in the climacteric clash of contest for supremacy and power.

Awful and stupendous is the conflict between life and death—between right and wrong—between desire and resistance—between the innate and the acquired. Commingled of the strength and bitterness and terror of all of these warrings was the tearing conflict of Cecelia's soul. She had taken an oath—a solemn, binding one—to receive upon her shoulders and wear this mantle of light or of darkness — of actuality or of ideality, whichever it was. And now nothing could exempt her from accepting and wearing it but the dissolution of her vow, sacred by right of strength and intent.

Did she wish to reject it?

Ah—again and again, the throes of conflict racked her convulsed and quivering being.

If what she had just read were true, it was an awsome and overwhelming possibility that lay before her. But again—another thought: was not the awsome exaltation, the overwhelming superiority, the revolting perfection of this possibility the very magnet that drew her resisting being towards its realization? For was not that a fitting and acceptable culmination of power that could absorb away her discontent with her life, her disgust at the trifling conventionalities that daily crossed her, her cynicism at the condition of mankind, her unbelief in the 'poetical justice' of events, the non-success of her career, the impossibility of her ambitions, the non-fulfillment of her desires, the mystic, unnamed longing for grand, comprehending positivism and realisticism!

And yet, and yet—

Did she not once, through long, long, backward vistas of memories and experiences, but not of years, have a glimpse of ravishing realism?—A sort of dream-experience, when strong, caressing arms and soft, touching lips personated all-satisfying, all-supporting love? Which is the real and the positive—This or That? Which is the true Force?

O, that some external power of dictation and direction would diffuse the crushing—overwhelming inner responsibility of decision.

It seemed an answer to this unexpressed prayer that, when she returned, hours afterward, to the house, she was told that Gerhardt Leitz had arrived in town, had called, and was waiting in the parlor to see her. Should she spurn this sudden acquisition of alien help in the shape of the force of circumstances by not seeing him?—thus allowing the battle to wage to its bitter end, and leaving it

to be decided by the tried strengths of the opposing Forces? But another thought: might not this *seemingly* accidental arrival of help to one side be a signal warning of the victory already decided by the preordination of Fate?

A few moments later she stood in the presence of her lover. He was standing when she entered, too eager to remain passively sitting. He did not shake hands nor inquire about her health and welfare in the conventional way. His quick, penetrating gaze took in immediately her wild and haggard look, suggestive of the significant ordeal she had just gone through. He took both her limp, nerveless hands in his firm ones, and holding them led her to a chair. He seated her and drew his own to face the side of hers so he could lean towards her. His near presence, suggestive of vital force and suasive strength, seemed to envelop her. Her last surmise was right. The advent of the sup-

plemented force *was* the signal of victory at hand. The battle was over. The force that Gerhardt Leitz personated was victorious. The force that Younod Rencliffe personated was routed. Ah, Cecelia, your oath! Your solemn, sacred vow to Younod—what has become of it?

Cecelia leaned back in the restful chair. Her white face touched the colored back. Her black, clustering hair was brushed indifferently back from the vein-traced forehead. In the gray eyes, that always seemed to be looking upwards; in the full, expressive lips, that drooped now; in the passive, listless hands there was an expression of utter weariness. But there was, also, another expression in all these. It was one of restfulness, resignation. Perhaps she was experiencing the old feeling of negativeness and indifference. At any rate there was no longer any conflict or indecision expressed.

"What is the matter? You look as though you had passed through a terrible illness. Have you been ill?" demanded Gerhardt, in dictatorial, yet solicitous tones.

She turned her wandering eyes towards him. She was not thinking of him as a person. She was thinking of him rather as an impression, an influence, a force. She was not wondering why he was here, what he came for, what she must say to welcome him with appropriate hospitality. She was at present revelling in the dreamy pleasure the analyzation of his influence over her gave her. It was pleasant to have him sitting so near that she could touch him if she leaned sideways. There was suggestion of future protection and support in that firm grasp of his hands as he led her to a seat. His authoritative way, and even his dictatorial tones were suggestive of assumption of and solicitousness in her troubles.

"No, not ill," she answered, as her eyes

met his earnest gaze, "Only worrying," and her thin figure slightly shuddered.

"Worrying—yes, I see," he said, as if his stern gaze had divined her thoughts, "about that agreement you made with Younod Rencliffe. Well," he continued, with a frown full of emphatic disapprobation, "if my machinations have any effect you will not be worrying about it for any future length of time."

"Why, what will you do? Why do you disapprove of the agreement? You know nothing of what it is."

It amused her in a sort of dreamy, absent way to entice him on thus to argue with her—to attempt to induce her, when she knew all the time a grasp of that firm hand, a command in those authoritative tones would *impel* her. She was conscious, perfectly, that he was leading her through influence rather than reason. But how could Gerhardt know this? Besides, perhaps, he

would not have used his power if he had known it. And so he tried to convince her.

"Why do I disapprove of it! Can you ask me that question—the answer to which is apparent on the face of it. Ask me, rather, why youth, life, vigor, hope, should not be encoffined in the cold and slimy walls of a vault. You say I know nothing of what he advocates or demands of you. Do I need to know, having once been cognizant of his cold and bloodless life."

"But what he suggests to me is something higher than earthly hope, more strengthful than bodily vigor or vitality," intercepted Cecelia, as she turned sideways in her chair that she might the more easily see his handsome, flushed face, crowned with the bushy, blond-red hair.

"Nonsense!" he returned, with the impatience born of earnestness. "You want nothing higher nor more strengthful than the leaping pulsations of natural hope and

life. Have you not felt your pulses thrill and vibrate under the forceful impetus of the emotionate and the passionate? And does not Younod Rencliffe discard as worthless all that? Ask your soul if it is right and needful to turn away from the natural promptings and inclination of self-creation."

Alas! had not Cecelia applied again and again to that darkened and muffled oracle, and all in vain.

"Let me ask one thing," he continued, his earnestness deepening as it narrowed from the expanse of generality into the channel of personality. "And the answer to this question—whether given to me or reserved within yourself—will decide whether I am here as an intruder and an alien, or otherwise. If my guess is right, this calm and pulseless philosophy of Younod Rencliffe's either ignores as unworthy, or discards as meaningless, the passion of *love*. Which, Cousine, do the innate promptings of your heart de-

cide? That this is a false or a correct stand? Is this call out of my inmost being unto yours, a base, degraded creation, or otherwise—an empty, meaningless delusion? *or*, is it an uncorrupted, real existence, potent and lasting in proportion as it is vital, throbbing, vibrating, thrilling?"

"You know, Gerhardt, that I once before admitted my belief in the reality and honesty of this sentiment you say you entertain towards me. I still do so. But—but—" she spoke slowly and hesitatingly, for she was a little afraid of Gerhardt in these vehement moods of his, "is it no more real in the present than it will be lasting in the future? You know what I mean—is it not rather a passion, as you yourself called it, than a sentiment?"

Cecelia was right when she hesitated. Gerhardt's nature was not one to be experimented with. His countenance was no longer flushed and varying in expression, it

was pale and firmly set ; his eyes no longer shot out rays of quivering light, but bent a steady, penetrating gaze upon her.

"Enough of this trifling," he said, "I am not here to bandy about the correctness of applied expressions, but for the purpose of re-avowing the relation of my feelings towards you. Independent of the consideration of this or that word, this or that belief, you know whether your heart reciprocates this feeling, reciprocates it, not in equal strength and degree, perhaps, as yet ; I hardly ask or look for that, but whether it does in character or not. I say you know whether or not your heart reflects, or at any rate accepts, my love. Whether it be passion or sentiment, earth-born or spiritual, you know it exists to me strong and absorbing, and unrestrainful. Whether you accept it or not is the question which I say you can answer, and which I say you must !"

He made a movement forward in his vehement ardor, as though he would take her hands and thus add force to force, but controlled himself with an effort and clinched the arm of her chair that he might the more restrain himself.

Cecelia did not resent his imperiousness. She felt humbly grateful to him that in presenting his love and pressing his suit he made it appeal to the warmth and intenseness of her inner-self, the existence of which under her cold, indifferent exterior but few would have divined. Her deep eyes, full of the expression of mute appeal and unspoken feeling, as they met and crossed his clear, unswerving glance, betrayed the tossed and troubled condition of her inward nature. She bent her head, and shading her face with one of her hands exclaimed in an agony of self-condemnation:

"You are right, Gerhardt, in thus commanding rather than appealing. You un-

derstand better than myself the vacillation and uncertainty of my being."

"Did I command? my darling, forgive me, you know it is the strength of my passion that makes me vehement."

"No. I say you were right. I suppose no one can have any idea of the utter loathing and disgust I have for the lack of trust, of enthusiasm, of faith, that is in me. If we only lived in the Golden Land of the Golden Age, which is creatable in the unreal realms of Fancy, then perhaps it would not be so hard to choose the right and the real, to choose them and cling to them with holy ardor and devotional strength. But as it is, we can turn to nothing, for, alas, to us nothing is stable. The beautiful web which emotionate passion weaves for us in the scintillating moments of excitement, may in the pale moments of calmness seem a flimsy, tattered fabric. One day we kindle the blaze of ardor

and enthusiasm on the sacrificial altar, and the next we come to offer up the sacrifice and the blaze is gone. The fire has burnt itself out, and nothing but ashes, gray and sullen, are left. And we cannot rekindle the flame, for the ashes are in our heart, and are smothering the smouldering brands of hope and ardor. Oh, it is a terrible pity that such as I exist; we are a misery to those who care for us and a torture to ourselves. For such, poesy and passion are unreal, and practicality and prose disgusting. So what can I choose to satisfy and fill my days and life."

"Why look inward at all, or backward? Turn to what your judgment, not your fancy, dictates to you is stable and steadfast, and then annul self in your support of it." ("How strangely alike their arguments for such opposite causes," thought Cecelia with sad bewilderment.)

"I would not seem to make self-eulogies

and boastful predictions, but surely, Cousine, you *must* believe that my assurances of deep love are earnest; that in asking for a binding future tie—for I have sought you to speak of marriage as well as love—I say that in asking for this close relationship of husband and wife I long to prove to your unbelieving nature, the endurement of it as well. Look up, Cecelia, and tell me whether you think I am one to entertain sentiments and passions that are vacillating and superficial."

"Yes, yes, Gerhardt, I believe in *you*. It is not you I distrust so much as myself."

The influence that Gerhardt would not make use of to coerce, he now used to assure and reassure. He leaned over and took her hands in his strong, steady grasp, he drew her towards him and made her look in his face that his unyielding strength and earnest expression might imbue her with his singleness of purpose and his sincerity.

"You asked for something to fill your days and life, and you say but now, you believe in my love, yield to it then, accept it, rely upon it, lean upon it, trust it, and have faith that the future will as surely prove its durability as the present does its strength."

CHAPTER XIV.

TO THE RESCUE! THE SECOND STRANGE DELIVERANCE IN WHICH THE CREDITOR'S AND DEBTOR'S POSITIONS ARE REVERSED. ALIVE AMONG THE DEAD!

THAT night, in the seclusion of her bedchamber, Cecelia mapped out her future course of life. She would accept Gerhardt's offer of marriage and love. In the attention to and attendance upon the new exigencies and obligations which the state of marriage would involve she would try to leave behind in oblivion the turbulent, intemperate aspirations that had crossed and recrossed the psychical path of her virgin existence. In the strong sway of Gerhardt's teachings and precepts of natural love and natural duty she would learn to close the entrances of her

mental life to the visitations of those wandering ghouls from a world beyond present comprehension and present attainment. The complement of this duty of love and enlightenment would lie, on her side, she mused, in attempting to lead Gerhardt's Hotspur judgment back to the confines of established law and conventionality.

One thing was yet to be done. She must get Younod to absolve her from her obligation to him. To do this would not entail difficulty, she thought. That he would drag an unwilling victim to the sacrificial altar never occurred to her.

* * * * *

The next morning she received this letter, signed by one whom she knew to be the Rencliffe's family lawyer :

"May —, 18——.

"MISS CECELIA HONERICK :—Younod Rencliffe died at the residence of his father on the —— instant of this month, and was buried

on the —— inst. of the same month, in the Rencliffe family vault. His death was somewhat peculiar. He had lain several days previous to the Doctor's formal and decisive announcement of death in a trance-like state, but as his body had become rigid and respiration had ceased he was pronounced dead. Although previous to his decease he manifested the possession of his ordinary state of health, I do not think his death was entirely unapprehended by himself, in as much as he made his will and arranged other legal considerations under me against the contingency of premature or sudden death. In his will—drawn up by me—you are mentioned as one of his heirs. Be kind enough to make arrangements to be present at the reading of the same, to take place on the —— inst.

"Respectfully, etc."

The first and instantaneous thought suggested to Cecelia by the contents of this

momentous letter was the impossibility of securing absolution from her promise.

Younod dead! Then was she bound by the unyielding bonds of conscience to perform the implied functions of her oath.

But another thought now vibrated her being like a shock, and the thought which began in the negativeness of fear ended in the positiveness of certainty. Younod's fear had become realized,—one of his death-sembling trances had been taken for actual death and—*he was buried alive!*

No wonder the thought unhinged with a throb each mental faculty just as a powerful electric shock seems to wrench apart each joint. What was to be done? There could be but one answer to this question. Rescue him from the ghastly fate otherwise in reserve for him.

Two expedients suggested themselves for the accomplishment of this task. One—of communicating her fear, with the accompany-

ing suggestions for its remedy, to Younod's friends. But this way embraced the risk of delay and the possibility of having her fear misunderstood (for there was no time for explanation and reasons) and scouted as an extravagant, morbid phantasy of the mind.

Or—she could undertake alone, except for the aid of the sexton, and in secrecy, the mission of determining the right or the wrong of her portentous conception. By choosing the latter she would have to anticipate her intended visit by a day or so, and the task would, indeed, involve a prodigious call for nervous strength and reaction. But, on the other hand, how terribly fatal might be the consequences of delay through misunderstanding or mistake. And, again, if her foreboding should prove untrue the wounds of grief and mourning would not be torn anew with the rude, ghastly thrust of deluding hope. She chose the latter way.

* * * * *

The night was calm and inexpressive. No stars were out with uncertain scintillations, but the pale of a crescent moon diffused itself upon all the features of earth's face. No wind rippled the fixity of its expression.

Upon it was the stamp of physical passiveness, as though the Universe had fallen in with Younod's creed and absorbed the tempestuous whirlwinds of the material earth into the solemn calm of the ghost-world. Cecelia grasped with cold and stiff fingers the colder and stiffer bars of the grated door of the vault. She leaned her throbbing forehead against the marble wall and tried to pierce with the strain of senseless vision its impenetrability.

O, for direction and knowledge in this hour of uncertainty and suspense. If she could only divine the problem whether she had come on a fool's rash errand or upon a mission of merciful rescue. The knowledge,

as to whether a human life was being strangled within the confines of this vault, or whether death reigned supreme within and laid its tyrannical seal of silence and proclaimed its edict of non-resurrection upon all its passive subjects—this was what she longed. But at last the decision was made —the shrinking of her courage overcome. The sexton was summoned—her fear and mission explained—his objections and scruples argued away ;—the bolts and bars of the door yielded to the matter-of-fact magic of his key, and the would-be revolutionist of Death's reign invaded his domain. . . .

No flickering lights of earth dance on those somber walls—no sounds of natural joy and mirth are echoed back. The gloom of the grave-world pervades the rayless space—the unsonged symphonies of slaved and silenced souls reverberate only to the tense and listening sympathy of those that hear with immortal ears.

The unshaped spirits of blighted hopes and by-gone dreams traverse the place and keep the ever-midnight, the never-breaking vigil. And in the hour-glass which marks the period of the reign of Death and the slavery of souls, the sands measure the hours of Eternity.

The sexton located the cell which contained Younod's casket, unlocked it, and with Cecelia's help transferred the casket to the floor of the vault. Cecelia knelt with weakening intenseness of anxiety beside it, as with unperturbed deliberation he unscrewed the fastenings of the lid. At last he had finished and the lid was laid back; then, at Cecelia's request, he waited outside for her. With riveted gaze, but faltering hope, Cecelia looked upon the image within. How terrible and yet how transcendent the unearthly beauty and tranquillity of that face! As though this intrusion upon Death's reign were to be marked by a gen-

eral retroversion of its law and order, the grave-like murkiness was suddenly dispelled by the penetrating presence of the moonlight. Solemnly and grandly it pushed its way till it reached the open coffin, and there it placed a crown of pale but irradiate flame upon the head of the resurrected youth. As the glow of this light reflected on his face Cecelia scanned it eagerly. *His eyes were open!* Thank God, her prescient fears had ordered this fateful errand of deliverance! And, thank God again, she had obeyed the mandates of these fears not too late! With arms none the less tender for their forced, unnatural strength, she raised the weakened and now shuddering form out of its unearthly bed. And then Younod, a second time delivered from the bondage of death, stood before the still kneeling girl. But as she gazed upon the fair countenance still quivering from the late infusion of vitality into the fleshly vessel brought about by the

potent agency of the returned intellect, she crushed her unbreathed prayer of thanksgiving back into her trembling heart. Had she not indeed come too late!

"I understand it all," he said, in slow and weakened accents. "You read my fears in the report I gave you and have come to save me from what no one else could have conceived with their non-knowledge of my life and experience—a living grave. But your rescue is too late. All is over, the separation has been too long enforced."

"O do not say so," exclaimed Cecelia, "transfuse in your inert physical being all the strength of your mental. Make an effort!"

"Impossible," returned Younod weakly and wearily. "The hinges of the temple are rusted with disuse; they will not bend to admit the spirit." A physical shudder shook his form and he would have fallen had not Cecelia caught his wavering hand

and thus sustained him. He controlled the wandering of his mental presence with a mighty will force. "But my spirit's secret, it must not die with the body. I imparted it to one—to you, I remember—to you, Cecelia Honerick. And see to it, trusted warden, that you hold not the key too long lest it rust in your disuse and the treasure never be revealed."

"Oh, no, no, no!" cried Cecelia, in wild, vehement supplication. "Do not deliver the keeping of this terrible secret to me. The responsibility is too great. My strength is too slight, my nature too mortal. It is too superhuman a task for me. I have come not only to rescue you from the grave but to pray and beseech your release from my promise. The obligation implies infinitely more than what I could ever have imagined when I first assumed it in my ignorance. I beg you here on my knees, Younod Rencliffe, release me! I cannot, I

cannot perform your awful purpose. I would sink beneath it. Have mercy!"

"And thus doom to an eternal grave my art? To place the unalterable seal upon the discovery which enables man to communicate direct with the majesty of nature? To cast into the furnace of oblivion the drugs of all mighty wisdom compounded of the unknown forces of man's internal treasure-store? Never! You know not for what you ask when you beg to be released from the revelation of this divine, omnipotent medica. Never! Never! In this form of emaciated flesh which stands before you, there is no vigor, in these hands I place upon you the strength is evaporated; in the waning, wavering vitality which pushes the blood sluggishly through my veins and makes the heart beat slowly and yet more slowly there is no value. It is not by the strength of these I hold you to your promise. You stand in the presence of a force, un-

named because unknown, invincible because incombatible; incombatible, because supernatural. By the strength of this unwavering, unwaning force I hold you to your promise and charge you—beware of the blasting power of its curse for the nonfulfillment of that promise!"

One moment Cecelia covered her face with her hands in a paroxysm of concentrated fear and horror, the next she was holding out her arms to catch the fallen, shuddering form. And, then, all was over.

The murky darkness, with a swirl and noiseless whirl, swept the yielding moonlight from the place, environed the vanquished invader and snatched the pale but flaming crown of evanescent glory from the fallen youth.

Once more death reigned and triumphed, and slashed to slavish silence the unvoiced murmurings of the bonded souls.

CHAPTER XV.

GIVES IN SUMMARY THE CONCLUSION OF THE RECORD WITH AN EPILOGUE CONCERNING THE TWO FORCES.

WHEN Cecelia issued forth from the solemn, unearthly precincts of that vault, with the influence of Younod's unnatural vehemence upon her, she had no other thought than that of yielding up her choice to keep faith with the solemn covenant that held her bound so tenaciously. Her passion must be left behind her within the marble walls that held all else that was dead and powerless. She should never look on the face of her lover again. She would carry out the mandates to which her vow held her if the doing of it macerated every natural inclination, every

mortal affection, every passion instinct. She would do this, not through any newly-acquired desire or promptings—oh, no, no, no, far from that, for her inclinations were still under the passion-sway of Gerhardt. But because she felt bound to do so under the moral constraint of her promise.

This was what she told herself she must and should do. But——

The manuscript that disclosed the initiative process into the possession of his deep and mystic knowledge was in Younod's study.

The directions concerning the course that should preface this initiation were there. The books—the paraphernalia with all dictations concerning their relative perusal and use were there.

Cecelia, released from her engagement to Mrs. Rencliffe, was wondering how first to set to work to carry into effect the practical sequences of her future intent, when one morning, just at dawn, the people living in

the neighborhood of the Rencliffe residence were startled and horrified by an explosive shock whose echoes reverberated through the air and set into quivering pulsations the near earth. Investigation followed. It proved that the quarter of the house in which Younod's study was known to be located was blown up, and the entire contents of both that room and the secret one, as well as the walls and floors of the same, were completely shattered and demolished beyond redemption. The family had just left for a long sojourn abroad, so no vital loss ensued. At first, conditions indicated intentional crime in which dynamite had played its part. But lack of circumstantial evidence, in connection with the ascertained fact that the secret room had been used as a laboratory where chemical materials had been stored and experimented with, led to the announced and established conviction that the explosion had resulted from the spontaneous combustion of this

chemical matter being communicated to other matter of an explosive nature.

And thus it came about by the natural or the accidental or the ordained order of circumstances, whichever it was, that Cecelia was released from her future life's obligation. For, by the destruction of the guide to and revelation of the Great Secret, she was constrained to relinquish its adoption. In the will Younod left, the entire contents of his study and laboratory were bequeathed to her, as well as a considerable sum, the annual interest of which would support her during the remainder of her life. Both these bequests were left her unconditionally, the testator having evidently relied on the constancy of her intent. But now the constancy and fidelity which Cecelia had sworn to herself after that scene in the vault should be unfailing, though their infallibility consume the very vitals of her mortal nature, were as naught under the force of circumstances.

Under this new event which entailed the inevitable surrender of Younod's purpose she transferred to Mrs. Rencliffe the sum which he had willed her for its accomplishment.

And then, she was free. And then, well, and then, her lover came to claim her.

* * * * *

In the intimacy which after years generated, when Cecelia confessed to Gerhardt the self-origin of that anonymous, warning letter concerning Younod's spying, Gerhardt reciprocated the confidence and acknowledged to her his agency in the fateful destruction of the contents of Younod's two rooms. He gave three considerations which in his judgment palliated the offence. The first was that he managed it so that there should be no loss of life. The second, the reversion to the Rencliffe family of the sum bequeathed to Cecelia by Younod, which he knew would follow, would cover the loss to them of the partial wrecking of their property. The

third one was, that it was the only way of securing to his possession Cecelia and her love.

"That night in Younod's room when you based your promise to become his student and follower on the theory of the supremacy of the present I cursed myself for a fool that I could have advocated such a theory in regard to our love and relation. When I heard you promise that which would separate you from me in the future, because we should have no concern for the events of that unreal period, I saw the fallacy of my belief. The future *was* to me a concern, and real enough when I beheld in its prospective vista the dissolution of our relation towards one another. I made an internal vow parallel with your spoken one, 'As the present attests our relation as lover and sweetheart, so shall the future, our closer bond of husband and wife.' To keep *my* oath I was obliged to intercept the performance of yours. That was what I meant when I said the future would prove

the falseness of that creed, as well as explain why I asserted its falseness. If Younod had not died I simply intended that to carry out the intent of my oath I would induce you to secure from him release from your bond. His death, which barred the possibility of your release through him, increased the difficulty of my purpose. It compelled me to resort to the extreme measure I did. That of eradicating from existence the means which, so long as they did exist, compelled you to keep your faith with Younod Rencliffe."

* * * * *

Thus the record of a Theory and a Passion, —both significant and comprehensive, both symbolic of the two antithesized ruling-passions of man-nature. Shall we condemn or defend Cecelia's choice?

Given to man—born of the intercourse of two tremendous forces, Thought and Matter, the power to decide the conflict that tears and

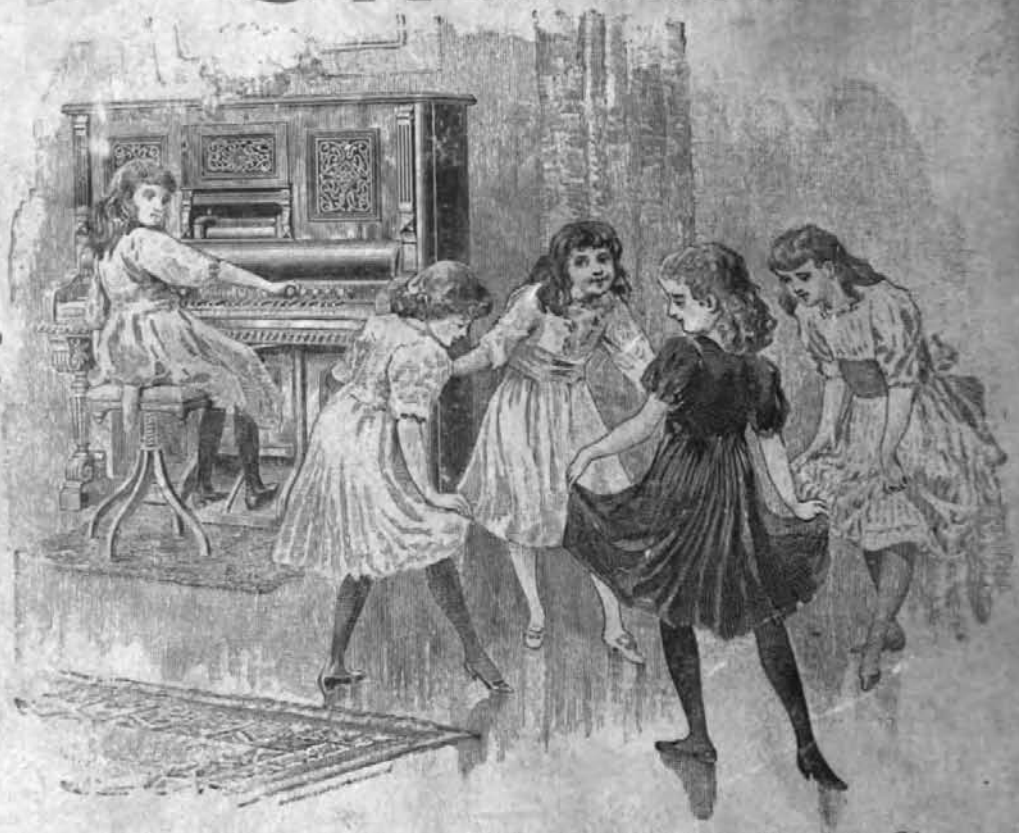
wages in his soul;—to pronounce the sentence that should refer himself to the sway of the finite, the sensate, the passionate of the higher animal-nature, or to the rule of the sublime, the majestic, the potent of the God-like,—in other words, given man Cecelia's power of choosing, which of the two sundered Forces would he cling to and support?

Shall we have to wait for the rendering of that decision till the coming of the Golden Reign of the Golden Age of Cecelia's fancy?

In the mean time let us waive judgment on Cecelia's choice, and only record it.

THE END

THE "SYMPHONY."



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