

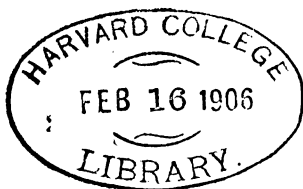
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AN EPISODE
IN THE
DOINGS OF THE DUALIZED.



“The truth is, a great mind must be androgynous.”
—COLERIDGE.

BY EVELEEN LAURA MASON,
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Prof. G. E. Morton.

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PREFACE.

THIS little volume put out at Eastertide is, as its title claims, but for the telling of one episode in the doings of the dualized, who spiritually dwell in the eternal springtime, when into their souls the Lord comes and the lilies grow and thrive.

The beings of Daniel and daughter will be not unfamiliar to readers of a composite puzzle book sent out a decade ago, to show that LIBERTY is the gift of the sons of God who now rejoice together o'er a new creation's birth; and that America's attempt to practicalize its principles will be successful when "the unknown quantity of the problem" of life is seen to be that "eternal-womanly" whose power, when put into the scales of justice, will bring those long-tilted balances into equilibrium.

Then all nations will be touched, quickened by the Lord of the garden, and the fadeless lily of a perennial Easter will bloom again, a *resurrected humanity*.

CHAPTER I.

THIS was the way it happened. Like all beginnings of things, the roots were in the dark. Ethelbert Daksha came of a family in which girls counted for a big half of all that was bright and interesting.

The Dakshas were a delightful family every way, except, perhaps, in the matter of money-wealth. That seemed constitutionally lacking, because you will see yourself that people who take great interest in devising ways of spending money, and very little in devising ways of getting it to spend, in the constitution of things are lacking in money-wealth. But they had everything else except money, and their chief thought in regard to that lack was an amiable perplexity that it seemed to be such a desideratum in affairs of society. There was a big but exhausted English property on the mother's side; and this strain of high English blood was mixed with a dash of hard-headed German culture and a few drops from the veins of a Spanish dame, lady-mother of the Hidalgos. So, you see, when, ninety years before, a discontent with something in the Old World society had set the elder Daksha down on American soil, various European nationalities were transplanted to root as best might be in American civilization. In addition to all this, as faith in all things high, bounded brightly in the Daniel O'Connell blood which coursed through Daniel Daksha's veins, it was very natural that his daughter Ethelbert, considering as she did that all nationalities were equally admirable for different virtues, should be greatly astonished that there should be quarrels between those of different countries, when the blood of four nations coursed so amicably in her own veins. If ever there were a girl who, in the nature of things was a typical American, it was Ethelbert Daksha, with the race-

drift of Europe, Asia and Africa in her individual veins, as our nation carries it in its aggregated citizenship.

Mr. Daksha recognized all this. He was one of the dreamers who work, at whose feet life lays its crown of success; although so far his many admirable schemes for regenerating society had made him at once the most serviceable and the most impecunious of mortals. He had abundant means, but little money; and while it might be stretching a point to say the Dakshas cultivated a life of beauty on a little oatmeal, yet it would give a hint at the way in which beauty was cultivated in that simple home, where oatmeal was the chief of their diet; that is, if you leave out of the reckoning the best periodicals and old writings of all climes and ages. These things were really the chief of their diet, and had much to do with the fact that they, like the old lady who lived on the hill, were scarce ever quiet concerning the topic of the ideal order of society which is soon coming to our nation, and through us to the world.

Life among the Dakshas was like a bit of Greek art transplanted to the robust civilization of this country, which is trying so hard to assimilate its many diverse elements. The theory of the elegant Greeks was: "What the spirit wills, the body must." This theory had been practicalized more or less fully by O'Connell, who knew no law stronger than that of the *necessities*, which he deemed were laid on him as liberator of his people. The same theory had been the impelling power of the Spanish proverb which, translated, reads: "In his own soul, and not in that of another, must the principle of one's actions be established." While the German element, which fills the veins of England's crowned family, in quick response to the same idea, cried out: "Let every man hear for himself, and hearing, then speak."

So as you may well suppose, the theory that spirit is master and body is only the good servant to do the spirit's bidding, met some rebuffs as the Dakshas lived it out midst that portion of the newly rich who devote their energies to saving—not MAN, but money. And so much were the

Dakshas in love with their beautiful ideals that but for their good common sense they would have become domineering dogmatists; and thus, properly, would have made themselves greatly disliked, and therefore, incapacitated for service.

About forty odd years before this episode the heads of the Daksha family had settled themselves to the recognition that the inordinate frenzy for money-making which was deluging its possessors, would insure many low tragedies in high (?) life; and to the recognition that society was becoming but like a witch's caldron with its seethe and bubble of toil and trouble, and with its inodorous stench of poison things, flung into it by the witches and wizards, as they carry out their passion-dance on the old Harry's pavilion.

Of course the Dakshas had their opinion of this besotted high (?) life, with its stimulation of that excitement which wrecks nerve and brain. But they did not presume to force the virtues of self-culture on persons whose highest dream of success was TO INCREASE THEIR CHANCES FOR THIS INDULGENCE IN HIGH OLD TIMES, and who were more than willing to pay for them, with the after years of that disease, remorse and reek of ill-fame in which "the name of the wicked rots."

Whatever they might choose to *do* with their knowledge, the fact remained that the younger Dakshas *knew* that they, by inheritance, were rooted in different purposes and back-history than such as this, which reveals itself in these forms of faith-breaking, love-outraging, humanity-destroying bewilderments. So when this other kind of girls and boys, with their mothers and fathers flying around in society's whirligig, flitted about them, the Dakshas thought steadily on the truth as they knew it; and "hearing for themselves, then spoke," thus giving their companions a chance to catch on at any point of spiritual contact which they found available.

So the roots of Ethelbert Daksha's life had gathered force and fibre in wisdom religions known in ancient America, Europe, Asia and Africa; and the might of this force was now annealed in her nature,

and was forming into a unified strength of character, which to the ignorant seemed like a thing of very different quality.

Reginald Grove altogether misunderstood Ethel when first they met; for he did not so much as know that there were girls in the world with character-roots so deep and far-reaching. There were two things he recognized at sight, but character was not one. He knew money when he saw it, and he thought he knew poverty, too. His father belonged to the class of people who laugh at "blood," and worship money. His blood was made up of such things as a man who lays the reins on the neck of his impulses can get into his veins, if in his early days his father strikes a "money lead" and he "a society life"; but then he had a mother, too, and there came in the difference.

Since he was seventeen years old Reginald had bought all the high-priced things that our fast civilization has to offer in exchange for "soul," and now the ashes of that past were beginning to grit between his teeth; for he had a sweet memory of peace, purity and of an harmonious-purpose which glinted across his mind angelically as the remains of what had been his baby guesses at real manhood. But this dream, and the sainted mother who had inspired it, had both been devastated by the ignorant animalism of the elder Grove. So when the mother-spirit was released from earth's control, little Regie's waiting eyes turned to his father; and watching, he perceived that his father's shrewd bargaining instincts resulted in increased wealth, which made it possible for him to sow a big crop of gilded misery, and still to pay his son's bills, while he did likewise; and that doing all this he was yet flattered as a millionaire. So you see, beloved as was his mother's memory and distinct as had been her teachings to his baby mind, they became but "woman's notions" when contradicted by his father's practices, and by the licensing laws of paternal government which assure young men they may sin freely, and yet be wealthy and wise; and healthy, too, if nostrums will make them so.

For a time Reginald believed this, seeing the nation's fathers had by

license laws practically declared it. And as the wisdom of the nation's mothers had been placed under silence as deep as the grave, "no cause or impediment being shown to forbid the banns" between his soul and corruption, he rushed on in the paths prepared for feet like his. But lately he did not feel very healthy; and as for his wealth, he feared that was getting a bit rickety, and his wisdom was hardly at par.

So these were Reginald's character "roots." But it was the one little radical, or true-life fibre, which vibrated with a thrill when he first met Ethelbert Daksha. At the instant, it seemed to him as though the mirage which ever floated up from the fens of his unrecorded life, was swept away by a breath from over the jasper walls of the eternal city. That curious look out of Ethelbert's eyes, so all-comprehending, pitiful and yet unmoved, held him, as his mother's eyes had always done in the past; and he had not a word to say. He felt as such men feel when conscious of the moral distance between their private lives and the lives of sweet girl acquaintances.

As usual he waited for Ethelbert to speak; but-as is not usual she, recognizing his moral state, did not come down and hunt round for something to say on its level. "The great gulf fixed," was fixed. She did not try to cross it; so she escaped falling and floundering therein, for her pains. Ethelbert believed not in self-abnegation, but in self-expression. She believed it right to stand squarely on her own fair heights; that from there, with the hand next her heart placed in Jehovah's, she could give her *brain*-inspired right hand to brother man and then lift!

"An Englishman dares be silent," they say, and Ethelbert's English quality was in the ascendant, when Reginald looked at her, wishing to know if those mother-eyes were backed by a brain filled with mother wit and wisdom. He met silence, and went away from that party with an unsatisfied hunger in his soul, which proved that that abused thing was not dead yet.

After that they met casually often; and Ethelbert, who "pondered

all these things in her heart," which are brought by "ministering spirits to those who are *heirs* of salvation," knew Reginald better than as if they for years had talked much self-disguising trash together.

One summer afternoon when she was sitting on the balcony of the Daksha home he passed and raised his hat, and she bowed in return, with the thought in mind and eyes, "that man is inherently a good man." And he saw it, and halted, and then with direct purpose, crossed the street and seated himself on the step, asking no permission.

"Miss Ethelbert, you always make me wish I were a boy five years old," he said.

"I wish you were," said Ethelbert.

This was sudden for Reginald; for though he was willing to recognize the failure he had made of manhood, Ethelbert's businesslike way of accepting the idea was not flattering, and he was used to flattery.

"Why do you wish it?" he said after knocking his teeth, not agreeably, with the head of his cane and gazing at her combatively.

"So that you could cleave to the right. You are so old in your habits now, so undeveloped in the practice of judgment, and—oh, there is Bertha! Come right up here, Bertha. I was sitting here looking for you. Yes, you can have the newly cut lawn grass for your rabbits; but I want to see you first. I have saved the papers for you. Now, Mr. Grove, this is one of my friends, Bertha Gemacht; and Bertha, this is one of my friends, Reginald Grove."

Reginald had risen to his feet under this speech, the words of which are only recorded. The cool, helpful look which she turned on him in view of his moral mismanagement, and which was not in the least altered as she looked from him to Bertha, and from Bertha to him again, was as new to him as it was irritating and fascinating. For Bertha was to him a hard-looking woman as she laid her sack for holding the grass, down, and turned on him a look cowed, yet angry, and with another mixed expression indescribable.

There was a little odor of whiskey about Bertha, and so there was

about Reginald; and Ethelbert's senses were as keen in one case as they were in the other; but she noticed that while Bertha seemed not in the least surprised that such a man as Reginald was found in a nice lady's company, he was plainly indignant at seeing Bertha there; and that he watched them with disapprobation while they leaned over an illustrated paper together.

"Now I would like you to read an account of the two women who took a homestead of one hundred and sixty acres; and for seven years worked it so well and wisely that they now have a delightful, valuable home, and have since added three other women to the household: women who had lost hope of happiness and honor, but are now becoming healthy and self-sustained by work,—honest, skillful work. Of course one has to have health in order to have nice clear brains."

"O Bertha, did you read and understand the health journal I loaned you? And did you think, after all the facts I told you, that you would better still sometimes use whiskey and—"

"Indeed, Miss Daksha, I have not taken more than—"

"Bertha," Ethelbert interrupted. "Of course you will drink whiskey all you choose. I was only wishing you would choose not to drink it at all. Do you think rum drinking makes people healthy, wealthy and wise?"

Bertha's face had lighted up under the idea which had lately been brought to her by this friend, whose unvarying recognition of Bertha's individuality, and of the fact that she could make of herself just such a woman as she chose to make, had opened a world of dignified possibilities before her. Her large eyes, which often had the look of an angry animal brought to bay, had now in them a puzzled, wondering look, full of startled expectancy.

"Do you think I am healthier than you are?" said Ethelbert. Bertha nodded eagerly. "Would you wish to be like me?"

"O Gott in Himmel! Would I not!" said Bertha, and she threw her old apron over her head; and the wild conflict within broke forth in a tempest of sobs.

Reginald sat down on the steps with his back to them both, and looked out on the evening clouds; and Ethelbert, in that sharp fellowship with suffering which is part of the price paid by those whose soul-sight gives them redemptive power with the tempted and fallen, steadied herself under the pangs of the sudden remorse that had struck the heart of the man and of the woman anear.

"There Bertha, now listen," said she presently. "Let us, you and I, not do anything which will in the least harm the pure river of life, which, flowing through our veins, comes first from Jehovah, the fount of all life. See, Bertha!"

The girl uncovered her eyes, and awe-struck, looked at Ethelbert as she bared her arm and showed the blue tracery there, and on her hand, adding: "See, the beautiful stream in the little river-beds here, flows on, and up through this big artery in my throat, over my brain. And Bertha," she paused, and with a dramatic but perfectly unaffected gesture full of regnant poise, and with a light in her eyes never seen on sea or land, she said again, slowly: "And, Bertha, brain rules here! What the spirit wills, this body must. So my brain has commanded that nothing shall be put into my blood which shall send poisonous elements maddeningly up to the throne of reason. But Bertha, if you think it is wise to do as you do, you may have some good cause for it, that I know nothing about. Tell me, am I mistaken in my ideas? Shall I go with you where you went this afternoon, and put into my veins all that you did into yours?"

"Gott bewahr! Oh, don't say, don't think of such things of your veins!" cried Bertha, almost throwing her arms round Ethelbert.

Reginald sprang to his feet and looked at poor Bertha with a loathful vindictiveness hard to describe.

"Is it too bad for me? Oh, then, it must be too bad for you," said Ethelbert, with a pain intense in her tone. "You cut me to the heart just so when you violate your blood with things of horror. It is good German blood, and part of it flows in my veins, and all of it came from

the great Fountain of Life who 'made of one blood all nations of the earth,' and who, in this, our beloved country, is gathering up all the nations of the earth into the life of this Republic's inheritance. It is for women to secure to our nation a heritage better than golden crowns."

Ethelbert's grey eyes were fixed on a floating cloud, and, absorbing into herself the doings of the beautiful world above, she broke up her reverie; and turning, looked at Bertha, saying explainingly: "You see yourself, Bertha, I mean that my parents and grandparents might have forgotten that I was coming to inherit their blood and their brains, and might have carelessly filled the fountain of their life with poison-loving elements. Now, if they had done so, what do you suppose I would now do about it myself?"

"I'll tell you what you would do about it," interrupted Reginald. "You would have thought it the best blood in the land, madame, and would have scorned that girl as much as you scorn me, to whom you are reading this lesson over her shoulders. She don't understand a word you've said; but do you think I am a fool?"

"No," said Ethelbert simply.

Bertha looked after him as he walked off a few steps.

"Is that man your friend?" she said sharply. "I understand not all your speaking words, but full well I know your wisdom in the thought of it, and well I know that the body is as a beast if the spirit shall not command what it will do. He thinks me a fool—too much fool to talk your wisdom-words. I are not fool. I choose this day. This head shall say, 'No more of beer and oder tings to my body. It has said so before this time, many days, but now, *the body must!*' Now then, I, Bertha, ask you: Do you think I am a fool?"

"No," said Ethelbert.

"Well, I shall be a fool if I steals away my brains some more."

"I think you will never do that any more. Brain force can be lost and wasted; or it can be treasured up, englobed delightfully. Now,

Bertha, take this rosebud and try to live as healthfully and sweet as roses do. Bertha, gather up your grass for the rabbits, and make the little things clean and happy, and then you can read your papers tonight, and come and get some more. Here is a pencil, so you can mark any little place you don't quite understand, and I will tell you about it. Good-night."

"Good-night, Miss Daksha," said Bertha, looking back enviously at Reginald, who stood striking the rosebush with his cane, and not yet dismissed.

"You can't put that rose together again," said Ethelbert.

"Who cares?" said he roughly. For, as Ethelbert would not flatter him, he unconsciously proposed not to flatter her. You see he had felt full of the ashes of the past; and those ashes, like a volatile alkali, needed only an acid admixture to ensure a sudden fermentation of soul. The truths which had seemed so sweet to Bertha had been acid to him, and a foam of wrath was choking him as he sputtered: "Who cares?"

"That is the question," said Ethelbert, gathering up the shattered rose: "Who cares?"

He gave the bush another cut with his cane; for the fermentation of ideas within was quite unendurable. He had always supposed that women were made on purpose to flatter men, and he had always had so much of it that he was sick of it; but now when he cared a good deal to be thought well of, he felt it was a bit hard to be made to think of himself as he had been made to think all that morning. He had until now thought Ethelbert particularly attractive, because she was so bright; but now he thought her brightness was so overmuch of a good thing as to be perfectly detestable. The same hand that in wanton cruelty was whacking to pieces those exquisite moss rosebuds, would willingly have whacked out of existence all the high human tests of character which had stripped his soul bare before his gaze. Something of this, but not very clearly defined, made him hit the bush again as he looked at Ethelbert, who, free from a suggestion of reproof or sentiment of any kind, repeated: "Who cares?"

"I don't," said Reginald; and after a pause: "Do you?"

"Do I care that I can't put the rose together again? I don't aspire to do that; yet I do very much care to have all the power I can possibly obtain with which to arrest the destruction of beautiful life and orderly happiness."

"Oh, yes, much you care to make a fellow happy," said Reginald sullenly. "Look at the cold-blooded way you sat there and talked to that miserable thing about me." And after waiting again, he said with the combativeness of a man opposed by silence, when instead he longed for a quarrel: "Now this is all very well, Miss Daksha, but you know that if you noticed—noticed—well, as you might say—if you smelt whiskey on her (now you've got it), if you smelt whiskey on her, you could—you are sharp enough to notice—anything, in fact," said he, stumbling on under her steady uplifted eyes, "Aren't you?"

"I notice many things," said Ethelbert, like a little truthful child.

He hit the rosebush again. "You are a queer girl," he said. "You have no respect for a man's feelings."

"What are those things?"

"What things?"

"A man's feelings, I believe you called them," said Ethelbert.

He came near her, with red passion-flushes patching his face like Satan's finger-prints; and stood angrily looking at her. And then he slashed the air close to her with his cane; but he might as well have shot glances of rage at a lily-cup, in the hope of arresting the sweet aura it exhaled. He turned angrily away "Well, I can just believe you," he said. "You neither know nor care what feelings are. You care more about that old rose."

"That depends," said Ethelbert. "I care for the rose because it is sweet, orderly life. If a man's feelings are the same, I care just as much for them. But character is not a question of feeling. It is a question of wise action."

He muttered a passionate oath, and hit the bush again. For the

devils were "rending him," and "that kind goeth not out, except by prayer and fasting." He was not much of a praying man; and as for fasting, his habitual diet and incessant brandy quaffing did not come under that head, nor produce those calming results. Added to this, three months had passed since Ethelbert Daksha had seemed to him as no woman had ever seemed to him before; and in those three months he had been afraid to approach acquaintanceship, because of the infinite distance between them. This distance he, with all his unpublished record of demoralization, had decency enough to recognize. And now he had a feeling akin to hatred toward Ethelbert, that she should have the impudence to know anything of him except what his "good clothes," not bad-featured face, and his hitherto very silent tongue might have told.

He forgot that he was living in this new age in which something like occult powers are given to the "pure in heart," who, seeing God, who is All, and in all, necessarily must see the truth as to the conditions which fill society. His spiritual and intuitional faculties were not dead, but sealed up, and enswathed in cerements of flesh. And so, as he now himself realized, he had nothing but a man's feelings, hot, blind and passionate, to oppose to the percipient intelligence, that, cool and pure, looked steadily into the seething caldron of his heart.

"If a man's feelings are orderly, beautiful life, I care just as much for them," she said again slowly. And as he stood before the Virgin Mother grace in her, an ineffable longing for purity and new creation took possession of him. He covered his eyes and sat down on the steps.

"Mine were beautiful when I was three years old," he said, "orderly, beautiful life. O good God, yes, they were!" It was a cry of remorse to his Creator, and Ethelbert understood it so.

"I believe that readily, Reginald," she said, simply; "and I have limitless reverence for them; they were as sweet as this bud." He took from her hand the exquisite moss-covered wonder, and sat looking at it,

while Ethelbert laid the mutilated rose, with its upgathered petals, on a book in her lap.

"You mean that is about what my life is worth now," said he, pointing at the leaves and torn blossom.

"You choose to do it yourself," said Ethelbert.

"Who cares?" was the angry response, for he had often sentimentalized with girls over his ruined hopes, and had so led up to sweet flirtations; but Ethelbert's remark and the level look of her eyes, nipped that sort of a thing in the bud; and his "ugly" was rising at about the rate of ten degrees a second, when she said: "I do."

"On your honor, do you?" he asked huskily.

"On honor, yes, I care," she said. He looked white and kept the bud in his hand. She wished to help him, but she did not wish to preach nor sentimentalize.

"You have abused this rosebud fearfully," rising and examining one on the bush. "You have shattered the rose and the leaves. Here is a bud which you have marred, but—" she stooped to examine it more closely; "but I see it is not beyond the power of performing good uses still and of opening to mature life."

These kind of analogies were not exactly in his line of thought, but somehow as with her he looked at this bud, with one side of the moss stripped off and the wound on the outer leaf, he became very sorry for the little Reginald Grove who buried his mother, and afterwards so badly mismanaged himself. For the moment he felt that all he had ever possessed which was worth caring about, was what he had had when, environed by mother-love, he grew up in her smiles. It was a presence about Ethelbert which made that time seem so valuable. He looked up at the simple house, and then at Ethelbert's dainty but inexpensive dress. The fragrance of the rose seemed intoxicating with its story of possible redemption. Yet every instinct of his better nature told him it was impossible that his life could ever blend with Ethelbert's, while also his best instincts, with an exigency of strong desire, demanded just that

union. He was in a torture of soul, comparable with nothing he had ever before experienced. Suddenly he remembered his wealth, but it seemed only an abject thing. Yet presently, for some reason, he said: "Do you care for wealth?"

"Immensely," said Ethelbert.

He looked up at her as though he could not believe his ears; but in his heart there was a hope, broken by doubt and darkened by disappointment; a hope that all-conquering wealth could win even her, but a disappointment in her if this could so be. After a moment he stumbled on, saying: "I — I somehow don't see much good in it. After you have eaten all you can, and have drunken more than — than you ought, and made a fashion-block of yourself, and so on; in fact, you know money can't give you back whatever there was in those old days," said Reginald, motioning toward the rose; "it can't make the now impossible possible."

"That depends," said Ethelbert. "Money could make the now impossible possible to many people."

He looked at her with that same compound expression on his countenance; for you know this man, who had never grown to real manhood, being much bigger outside than he was in,—this man had for years stood on guard against the many girls whom he fancied wished to marry his money. So he said, with a dash of the Grove suspicious shrewdness: "Is there anything now impossible to you that it could make possible?"

"Yes."

He looked at her with lowering lights in his eyes.

"Do you want that thing very much?"

"I have set myself to obtain it."

"How much would you give?" said he, his heart beating thickly, and yet he could not look at her because of the mingled sense of victory and disappointment.

"I shall give my life for it," she said quietly. "I have settled that."

And while he was looking at her, utterly dazed as to her meaning, Judge Elkhorn threw himself from his horse and eagerly came up to Ethelbert, who received him with more alacrity than her still manner usually exhibited.

Now Judge Elkhorn was a man head and shoulders above his fellows in much that makes average manhood. He was very wealthy, too; and Reginald thought of both these facts as he watched Ethelbert and the judge; and forty thousand fiends took hold of him within.

The judge, intent on the object of his visit, had at first given that casual bow and glance with which one habitually recognizes the presence of a fellow-being; but the look on Reginald's countenance arrested his notice, so that the two men for a moment faced each other with a well-defined stare; and during this moment Reginald's countenance perceptibly grew more red, lowering, and akin to the bulldog character of expression, and Judge Elkhorn's more self-poised.

The next moment Reginald arose with an impulse to get away; but as Ethelbert had at the very same moment set forward two cane chairs, he seated himself composedly with a set to his jaw that was not lost to the notice of his hostess.

The judge preserved silence with the air of a man who recognizes the fact that it was perfectly in order that the first visitor should take his departure; and an air that reminded one that he was suppressing all knowledge of the fact that this man's presence was a very questionable advantage to the lady favored with it.

Ethelbert, instead of running to the rescue and disguising these men's characters from one another and herself by a flood of small talk, sat thinking faithfully on Reginald's very best qualities, and looking at the moss rosebud which he held by the stem in such a way as to conceal from the eye the flower which was under his half-closed hand. And when she seated herself a trifle nearer him than to the judge, Reginald recognized the gentle influence, and with an impulse of some kind, pinned the bud on his coat lapel.

The judge seemed absolutely entranced with the sunset clouds opposite him. His gaze was extremely abstracted, and when he turned it toward Ethelbert, Reginald really felt that his presence was honestly forgotten, as the judge, evidently taking up his last conversation with Ethelbert, said: "Miss Daksha, you are supported in your ingenious theory by Augustin, as well as others. Augustin says: 'A knowledge of the truth is equal to the task both of discerning and confuting all false assertions and erroneous arguments, though never before met with, if only they may be freely brought forward.' I have reconsidered my attempt to dissuade you from the (as I thought) quixotic undertaking on which you have set your heart. I was astonished at the self-confidence with which you virtually promise to give help to the struggling, counsel to the doubtful, light to the blind, hope to the despondent, and refreshment to the weary. But I perceive you propose to do this, not by dictating to others, but by simply setting forth the law of your own mind, and leaving it to the reasonableness or lack of reasonableness of those about you to act upon it for themselves. There! Have I stated this as you explained your plan to me in our delightful conversation?" said the judge, turning his eyes, with their hard will-power, upon Ethelbert.

"Admirably," said Ethelbert.

"Do you read Petrarch?"

"Why, really, no, I do not," said Ethelbert in surprise at herself. "I suppose I have not yet gotten to it."

"I wondered whether it was your memory of that great author, or whether it were the wonderful reception of profoundest truth which blesses pure souls in all ages, bringing ever to the intelligent worker those few *fundamentals* which relate to our moral natures. See, I copied this for you, that you might perceive not only that I was wrong in being against you, but that you have Petrarch on your side."

And he passed her a bit copied from "De Vita Solitaria," which is substantially as quoted from Ethelbert's own expression.

"You remember," said the judge, "you had said it was your own purpose to accumulate wisdom and employ all your acquirements and understanding in just the manner which would best ensure benefit to the people of this now nearly twenty-first century, and would help to solve the especial problems of our conglomerate American society. Petrarch substantially says the same of his efforts for his people in his epoch."

Reginald was turning over in his mind something which echoed down from babydom. He remembered a little book among his mother's choice few, with letters on the back. Did he not in childhood spell out the letters there P-E-T-R-A-R-C-H? And what else was it he "knew about the old fellow"? Oh, he had an idea now. He dimly remembered many talks with his mother; but he thought he would let these people talk on with their high themes, while he sat pulling out his mustache and getting a word or two together in such good form as would show this snob whom he was.

"All I have to say then, is," commenced the little Captain Grove coolly, "Petrarch is rather coming up in reputation when he finds himself able to keep up with the thoughts of Miss Daksha. I knew old Pete; he was one of my mother's favorites. You know he was mashed on a girl called 'Laura.'"

A merry peal from Ethelbert quite cleared the atmosphere; but, in the sharp, bright handling of the subject that followed, Reginald felt himself completely stranded again. So he had shrewdness enough to retire on his laurels, and to take his departure at a moment when a pretty little sentiment as to his arrested development along very nice lines of life, had quite taken possession of Mrs. Daksha, as well as of the rest.

He walked direct from this visit to a bookstore and inquired for Petrarch's works, much to the amazement of the man who had hitherto supplied him with another style of literature. And then in his room in his hotel he recommenced an acquaintance with that author, or his

mother, or with the moss rosebud which he had placed at his elbow, in a vase, or with Miss Ethelbert, or with himself. With which, or with how many of these he recommenced an acquaintance that evening, it would have been hard for him to say. But when he arose from the long half-reverie he was in a new frame of mind; and, too, he fancied he had stolen a march on Miss Daksha in regard to at least one book.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER dinner Reginald seated himself in the office of his hotel. There were the usual number of men about the place, talking and smoking, and watching the women who passed through the office now and then. Hotel life, with its ordinary distractions of seeing and being seen, and newsmongering and time-killing, was rather a bore to Reginald. But he had had little idea of anything else, unless it were a big house on something of the same plan of social divertisement and high hilarity. He had had spells of the blues, of course, in which he longed for something indefinable; and now that his nerves and health were breaking down pretty fast, he had these blues more often than ever. His regular cure for these attacks was a visit to the bar, and then a couple of cigars after it, then more blues, and then more cigars; so, of course, a permanent removal of the cause and the effect did not seem very likely to be secured.

There were one or two women at his hotel, acquaintances of his, who had led the life of dressing, dining, party-going and evening dancing or riding, for an indefinite number of years; women who had tried every popular watering-place in the summer and many southern resorts in the winter, and who were getting stout and flashy, both as to diamonds and general effect: women who had money enough not to need to marry, and knowledge enough of the general quality of some of the men about them, not to care to marry; and such a general sense of loneliness and dissatisfaction with the dullness, staleness, flatness and unprofitableness of life, as made them not to care to live, and quite too keen a certainty of a life to come, to at all desire to risk embarking on that unknown sea on which diamonds and dinners, whist and mature old flirtations, could not be taken as cargo.

Reginald had often wondered as he sat and talked nothing by the hour to these women, whether he or they were the most utter failures and bores. When this problem got too deep for him, he usually went to the bar; in fact, the bar was his grand resort, most of the time. But when these same questions presented themselves to these women, very few of them went to the bar or had the bar brought to them. They usually set to thinking, and then sometimes cried themselves so sick that their suppers were sent up to their rooms and eaten with the salt of tears.

Now the difference in these cases of inanity was, that while the first useless mortal drowned himself in liquor and the second in tears, the result was the inebriation and steady animalization of the faculties of the one, while the other certainly escaped being classed with those who never ate bread in sorrow, and knows not the unseen powers.

The boarders said that there had been what they called "tender passages" in history, between Mrs. Mancredo and Reginald. She had soft Italian eyes, which had cried many passionate hours, but they were always cooled off and black-leaded up; and then with a little pink to make the tear-stain pinker still, Mrs. Mancredo never looked much the worse for the honest but baffled scrutiny which she had made of life in general and her own in particular. But on the reverse, she looked just so much the better, as she was for the time less hard and world encrusted.

At these times, if Reginald had not been too recently to his throne of consolation, the bar, he felt quite impressed by the element of womanliness which was visible in her tear-brightened eyes.

On the evening after he had ventured on Ethelbert's fuller acquaintance, and had had that ethical and æsthetic conversation, and the interesting *tête-a-tête* with the rosebud, Petrarch and himself, Mrs. Mancredo had had a good long cry, so called.

For a young bride had arrived at the hotel, wife of an invalid person; and in the good gossip after dinner, Mrs. Mancredo had chatted about

herself (apparently) to this young bride, until she knew all the past history of the girl, and had a pretty clear forecast of her future history as well. Then she commenced with being very sorry for the pretty, ingenuous young thing, and more sorry for herself because of the years in which she was an unenviable wife, and still more sorry for herself in her present mature womanhood. So when she came down to supper she had her pretty round chin well up in the air, while her heavily leaded eyelashes drooped under the languor of her hard weeping. She had that strange sort of expectancy of something better, new, and more satisfactory at last, which sometimes follows on a new discovery of the great disproportion between human aspirations and the ordinary objects, which are palmed off upon them as satisfactory food.

She glanced toward Reginald as she passed his table, and inwardly ejaculated "Horrid thing! Eternally eating, whenever he stops wine-bibbing and smoking long enough." And then with a flutter and flow of drapery, she permitted the waiter to adjust the paraphernalia of the occasion, as with a flashing of finger-rings and twittering of the pendants in her ears, and heaving of the laces under the diamonds at her breast, she proceeded to practically assert the always conceded fact that she was a splendid-looking woman. Three or four newcomers recognized the fact, and the old habitués were as loyal as ever. She saw all that, while she read and reread the bill of fare, and while the patient John brushed off imaginary crumbs, and did many useless things to remind her he still lived, and lived but to serve. Then — "Oh, anything," was her order. He had expected that would be all, but he was obliged to wait just the same for its utterance.

Mrs. Mancredo meanwhile had not for a moment lost sight of the fact that Reginald had not once glanced toward her; and also that, though he had not changed his dress otherwise, the moss rosebud which he had worn before was gone now. She began to get up a theory about that rosebud. She had before never seen him with a buttonhole bouquet. Once when he had asked her for a flower he had only held it for

a while; he hadn't worn it. In a polite sort of a way, one time with another, she had snubbed Reginald often; but all the same, if he was going to wear rosebuds, she was going to know why and whence. So she watched him. He was not even reading his paper; he was eating, not without interest in the good things before him: he was not enough far gone in his new love for that. But he was so abstracted that he—oh, horrors!—he had deliberately, firmly, kept his clutch on his knife and fork, and, having struck the butt of the handle of each squarely down on the table, he held them points upwards in the air, while he industriously masticated his food and glared, unconscious, into the abysmal beyond.

"There's his lineage well defined," said she to herself, determinedly watching him; till he with a start looked directly at her, and she holding his eye, with a quick gesture imitated his attitude, stare and all; and then sinking back in her chair, fanned herself in a pantomimic swoon.

He shook his head across the dining-hall, signifying that he had an account to settle, for that manœuvre. And when he had picked at a grape or two for dessert, she significantly moved back the empty chair at her empty table, and he came over and sat down with her.

She sniffed the air as he approached.

"I smell a moss rosebud," said she, raising her fibbingly black eyelashes and fibbing lips towards him.

Reginald had been getting quite bright that afternoon, and he answered to her direct gaze: "You have a perfect nose." And just as she took in the compliment he went on, explanatorily, "a double-barrelled, back-action nose; a burglarious, lock-picking nose, that can shoot round three spiral staircases, down a back hall and unlock a door, all for the purpose of getting at a moss rosebud that you saw pinned on my lapel two hours ago, and which you don't see there now! Do you know why you don't see it there now? I'll tell you. It is because it is in a little vase beside a copy of Petrarch's works up in my room."

Now she dropped her eyes and pushed her chair back.

"All right, my poetical friend. I believed all your parables till you came to a 'copy of Petrarch'; but there are limits," said she, and she looked at him in a way which, with the accompanying words and intonation, would have meant in a man's mouth, "You are lying, and I know it and you know it."

Reginald had always taken a good deal of this sort of thing from the sort of women produced by society (?), some of whom think it persiflage, and some of whom habitually talk that way because of the habitual state of unfaith in men, which, with or without cause, fills their minds and hearts.

Reginald had never at any time in his life liked this; for with all his arrest of high manhood, no man could truly accuse him of lying, or of dishonor along that line toward males. And as a boy he never did lie to his mother, and as a son he had never lied to his father; and when these jocular accusations first began to meet him from pretty girls' lips, he disliked them much. But when he saw all the fellows had to take it, he began to think that was "high style," and that, after all, may be, if women took it for granted that the fellows lied and were bad, and yet still petted them and invited them to their homes, badness might, after all, not be badness, nor lying be lying; and that, may be, one thing was as good as another, all through the catalogue. At any rate, that women seemed to think so and that no one fellow could stand against this tide, even if he wanted to do so. But he always disliked this thing just the same, and never saw the wit of it.

The word "parables," somehow, too, this evening, struck him worse than it would if she had said "lies"; for "parables," as they were taught him at his mother's knee, were "beautiful words of life"; and besides, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," was getting to be a fact which he was illustrating in himself.

While he thought of these things he looked so glowering that Mrs. Mancredo said, lightly, "Now what ails you?"

“How many times in a week, on the average, do you suppose you tell us fellows that we lie?”

“Well, the times I tell you so, compared with the times you do it, are so infinitesimally small that a body could not be to the trouble of reckoning them,” said she lazily.

He looked at her seriously. “Do you think men lie?” he said.

She answered him in blank amazement: “Why, of course, child!”

“All men?”

“Might except a deaf mute or two, if you like.”

“Will you except me?”

“Did you say except or accept?”

“I certainly said except. At this point in our conversation I could not ask you to accept me, for I can't imagine what a woman would ever want of a liar.”

She shrugged her shoulders and ejaculated: “Hobson's choice as for that!”

She looked as pretty as though she were being real good; in fact, she looked a great deal prettier. There was an impishness about her with which Reginald was more fully *en rapport* than he was with high goodness. True, she expressed disbelief in him, even on the one point on which he could somewhat justly value himself; but she looked “sort of loving” out of her eyes all the time; and Reginald had never resisted that kind of flattery.

And so they sat looking at one another; he a silly slave to her wiles, and crushing back the honest longing he had had for her approbation of his best virtue; and she, a slave to the conditions imposed on disfranchised womanhood, and crushing back her longing for his recognition of her individuality and her right to be of sound use to the world,—practical, sound use. She could not accuse him of deflection from that virtue which woman is taught to most strenuously hold herself, and man's breach of which most cruelly afflicts her. So she accused him of lying,—a slave's vice,—which he, not being a slave, need not lean

toward. Thus they played at cross-purposes, neither helping the other out of the social tangle.

When he rose from the table it was with an angry perplexity.

“What in the mischief has set her to believe that I am such a liar?” he said to himself.

And as she went up toward her pretty private parlor she was thinking to herself: “He is as truthful a fellow, as far as his words and promises go, as I happen to know. But his fickle passions are what I despise him for. He really thinks I doubt that he has the rosebud and the poem on his table. I as good as saw them when he said it. But that means another love; and that is what he was gazing at, with his knife and fork in the air like a farmer. I’ve got the idea now. They were farmer’s people when he was twelve or so. He of course had that habit then, and he was thinking of his early boyhood and fell back into those rough ways. This new love, this rosebud flame, has something to do with old times. She can’t be a very young girl, then.”

And so soliloquizing, each within self, they walked up the broad stairway together.

“Your rosebud took you to boyhood, didn’t it?” she asked, turning square upon him at the landing, and facing him as he stood on the step below.

“It is no use saying yes or no; you don’t believe me,” said he, with a blunt boy-directness that seemed to touch her.

“You great goose!” she said. “Of course I believe you.”

“You said you didn’t.”

“Well, what of that?”

“A good deal of it,” said he, indignantly. “I believe you when you tell me a thing.”

“More goose you!”

He stood and looked at her like one dazed. He was trying so hard that day to bring his life to firmer foundations; and she stood there laughing at him as though lies and truths were all jokes to-

gether. "Good heavens, what do you mean! Do you mean that you lie?"

"Yes, that's what I mean; always do," said she.

"Then you are lying now?"

"Of course."

"Oh, then, if you are lying when you say that you lie, you would be telling the truth then; only if you are telling the truth when you say you lie, then you are lying."

"You need to go to sleep and clear your head," said she coolly.

"Look here now, tell me once, are you truthful?"

"Yes, I am full of truths of one kind and another: oppressively full. I should like to unload."

"And yet you say you are a liar?"

"Oh, yes. Now let us go right over and over it again and again; it is only quarter past eleven," said she, laughing at his eagerness.

"You call this a great joke, don't you?" with passionate intensity.

"Perfectly convulsing," she answered, with a look as if her patience was about gone, and as if, should he dare to browbeat her any longer with that look in his eyes, she would establish her claim to a new line of ability. This possibility was so evident on her countenance that he said:

"I believe if you can lie like this, you can do anything."

"I seem to feel some undeveloped ability stirring within me myself," said she; "nothing of course in the chewing, drinking, sweltering animalism-line. But let us say some skillful, intellectual achievement, which might rid the world of a few thousands like yourself, and make room for a new race," said she with a deliberate consideration that had in it the *savoir-faire* of a society woman, wrought up beyond much more endurance of the life she had been forced to lead,—a life now coming in sight of the convincing truths of this liberalizing age.

Poor Reginald stood actually aghast. His lower jaw had fallen and his eyes protruded, as, with his third finger pointed to his breast, he

stammered: "Me! Rid the world of such as me? What have you against me?"

She looked at him with fury suppressed; and at last, when she had controlled herself enough to speak, said, in a low tone, full of the sense of insult and degradation which our false social conditions have forced on thinking womanhood: "I have just that against you, which you would have against me, if my character, through and through, was a facsimile of yours. Sir, that is what I have against you!"

He looked at her dumb. "I don't understand, I—"

"Oh, well, take the night to it! Think your life over, every step of the way up, since you have entered young hoodlumism; and just fancy that a twin sister of yours had kept with you all the way, step by step, in all your paths—where would she—"

Reginald had leaned against the balustrade perfectly white. "You are a very fiend," he said; and then he pulled up stairs as a man gropes who has been struck by blindness.

Mrs. Mancredo was frightened. She wanted to help him up. "You—you've done enough," he said thickly, without looking at her. And she went into her parlor and he went up to the next flight.

When Reginald had closed and locked his door and mechanically thrown himself on a sofa, he lay there for some time—not thinking, yet not unconscious. The room had been quite shut up, and the bud, now half opened, had filled the air with its exquisite fragrance. He sensed this fragrance, and, in the half stupor which had come to him, he felt the presence of tender, soothing hands passing, not over his head, but near the very brain substance within his head. His mind seemed reëchoing the speech he had made about Petrarch's Laura, on which he had prided himself. And as it repeated itself, there were withdrawn all gross elements, until the spiritualized worship which Petrarch had for his paragon of true virtue, seemed to ensowathe his being with a heavenly marvel of pure love. A mellifluous rapture of mind, all separate from the senses, overflowed his highest being; and

then, as clearly as ever he felt the sun's rays, he felt his own mother's presence, and knew, or thought he knew, that he was falling down and down serenely into her care, with an ecstasy of the annihilation of self, and all self-burdens.

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The next morning Mrs. Mancredo took an early breakfast, and then staid in the parlor a while, looking about. She breakfasted three times that morning, and then asked if any one had seen Mr. Grove. It was discovered that no one had. Then Mrs. Mancredo, remembering how he had groped up stairs, followed the matter through. The result was, they found him insensible in his room, and one glance at him told it was no inebriate's sleep.

CHAPTER III.

A PARTIAL paralysis had befallen Reginald Grove. At his first stage of consciousness, Mrs. Mancredo noticed that when a servant in clearing the room took up the withered rosebud, his heavy gaze followed it. She replaced it, and then bending over him said: "Do you want to see her?"

The eagerness of his attempt to respond showed his wish. Mrs. Mancredo ordered her carriage for a drive past the gardens of the town, on the lookout for moss roses.

"She must be a widow," she was saying to herself, when her thoughts were interrupted by the sight of a rosebush, much beaten down on the side next the house-steps; and on the other, in the full glory of its mossy beauty.

"Turn round, John, and go slowly back, and then come to this spot and on, till I tell you to stop."

As they passed the house the second time, Mrs. Mancredo had a good view of the roses, and of a young woman whose every nervous motion meant purpose, watering the bush. Mrs. Mancredo stopped the carriage and descended. On approaching Miss Daksha she looked at her steadily a moment, and then presented her card.

"I came—I came to look at your moss roses, and to talk about them. What has happened to this bush?" she said abruptly.

"It has been abused."

"Did you ever live on a farm?" said Mrs. Mancredo then, after a long pause.

Ethelbert turned and looked at her, and then drawing chairs into the shade, said with a strange, sweet smile: "No, I never did. Now please sit here and I'll sit with you, and you shall tell me what you really want to know."

Mrs. Mancredo was a bit overwhelmed; but she sat, and wheeling her guns, said as suddenly as possible: "Reginald Grove wants to see you."

"Is he ill?"

"You know him, then?"

"Why don't you say whatever you have to say?" said Ethelbert simply.

"If I did, I should say that you gave him a rosebud and loaned him a volume of Petrarch's 'De Vita Solitaria,' and that he loves you, and is sick, paralyzed, dying!—and wants to see you," she said with Italian impetuosity, leaning more and more toward Ethelbert, trying to shock the secret out of her, with each added word. "You know him, you gave him the rosebud — the book?"

"I spoke to him for the first time yester-morn. I have seen him several times. I gave him the rosebud; I did not loan him the book." She laid her cool hand on this woman's burning hot hand, saying: "He is nothing to me more than any and every human being is. Any child five years old, with beautiful possibilities, is more interesting."

"Then why pin a rosebud on his coat?"

"He pinned it there as a sort of symbol of his lost sweet childhood, which he wishes he could regain, and which I think he could."

"O, this is stupidity!" said Mrs. Mancredo in quick Italian. "We all know that can never be done! What is he, that he should have his childhood back again, more than I should — more than thousands? No! he has made his bed, and there he shall lie upon it, a paralyzed idiot, for what I know. He is a bad man! Do you understand what that means? And he is a rich bad man, and his visits to this simple house and to you mean no good! Do you understand that?"

"I understand you," said Ethelbert, rising and looking down upon her visitor, "but you don't understand me, and cannot. Till you have known me a long while, you will misinterpret everything I say or do."

"How old are you?" was the next angry question.

"Ages old. I am able to help you and this sick friend of yours. I am sorry for your trouble," said Ethelbert, with a divine pity in her voice and look, and an uplifting power going forth like a cooling shadow displacing the glare and scorch of passion; until, in the cool of it, the tears which, unshed, had burned Mrs. Mancredo's eyes ever since she had seen Reginald groping upstairs the night before his shock, came forth, relieving her spirit.

Then altogether perplexed, but believing Ethel's every word, she said: "Can you come down to the hotel and see if you can ease him? The doctor says that his paralysis comes from the 'functional disorder of the nervous centers,' whatever all that is."

"That is hemiplegia," said Ethelbert, "and means 'I strike one-half,'—so he is paralyzed on one side. If that is it, one corner of his mouth will be drawn a little, and one cheek will look in a sort, withered and drooping. If it is that, his mind will be curious."

"You are a cold-blooded thing, any way," said Mrs. Mancredo, frightened and angry.

Ethelbert opened her eyes reflectively.

"Forgive me," said the excitable woman, "and get into my carriage and come now."

"In a minute," said Ethelbert; and in about that time she came back with her hat and her mother, whom she introduced, saying:

"My mother will go, too." And cutting some fresh roses she followed the two elder ladies into the carriage, and they drove away to the hotel.

Reginald was awake when they entered; and Ethelbert had given the flowers to Mrs. Mancredo, who walked with them to the sick man. He smiled that strange half smile, which was contradicted by the paralyzed muscles on the other side of his mouth. "He will get on in a way, you know,—in a way," said the physician. "He will perhaps be talking and about again, in a way, you know,—in a way."

"I found her, Reginald, she is here," said Mrs. Mancredo, and she motioned to Miss Daksha to approach. A look of heavenly rapture overspread his countenance. In a strange, full voice he cried out: "My mother!"

With an exclamation the physician started forward, but fell back, as Ethelbert said all motherly: "Yes, Reginald."

He looked at her with consuming eagerness. "You have been gone so long," he said, a little thickly. "Where is Cousin Alitza?"

A muffled shriek from Mrs. Mancredo thrilled through the room.

"You know what he means!" asserted Ethelbert, looking at Mrs. Mancredo, who, with a perfectly bloodless face and a shrinking, stealthy step, approached. Reginald Grove looked at her puzzled, and then said fretfully, lifting his eyes to Ethelbert: "You have all been gone so long; see how she has grown."

There was an oppressive hush of bewilderment. The doctor was held back by the unmoved air with which Ethelbert kept her post, giving way to her as if she were the physician of the occasion in whom he trusted. She stood, gently stroking Reginald's head. He raised his other hand and patted hers languidly, as a pleased child would do, and so presently fell asleep. Then the other physicians came in, and a little apart discussed the case, perplexed.

"He called you Alitza. Your card was marked Corrinne," said Ethelbert; and after scarce a moment's halt Mrs. Mancredo said with truthful rapidity: "I am — I was — Alitza Corrinne Roccoca, his cousin. I have seen him but twice since I was seventeen, until I met him in this city. He loved me when we were children; he hated me when I was older. He never dreamed that Mrs. Mancredo was — is — Alitza."

Ethelbert was silent; she was thinking of his perplexed words: "You have all been away so long; see how she has grown," and of the childlike manner in which he had clung to her and called her "mother." She remembered a curious case of mental-aberration of

which she had read. "Doctors," she said, "your patient's mind has become blank, back to the time before his mother's death. "Don't you see? He thinks I am his mother; and his mother passed away when he was five years old. He is a child again; that is all."

"Yes, but a paralyzed one," said the physicians.

CHAPTER IV.

THE doctor motioned them all to come with him to an adjoining room. And then Mrs. Mancredo told all she knew about the rosebud which had become associated in Reginald's mind with his early life, and of the conversation which had taken place between them the night of his attack, adding:

"I was in the family when he was a little fellow, before auntie died. We parted after that, and only met a few times when I was a tall, thin, sallow girl; and — and he did not know me when we met again here at this hotel this summer, in my robust maturity. He isn't quick, Reginald isn't, and I've puzzled him my share, one way and another. He has been getting in a bad way, poor Regie, and here's the end of it."

And to this the doctors agreed. This was the end of poor Reginald Grove; and as his fate seemed settled, the older Mr. Grove, when he arrived, accepted the statement that Reginald was a wrecked man, body and mind. And when Mrs. Mancredo had made herself known to Mr. Grove on his arrival, in a softened state of feeling toward both the father and son she found herself promising more in the way of help and responsibility than she at first realized, or afterwards wanted to perform. And the elder Grove (deeply interested in speculations in Mexico, and interested in his own approaching third marriage) was well content to turn this responsibility over to Mrs. Mancredo, with (it was popularly said) the promise of all the money necessary for Reginald's needs or fancies. It was not until Mr. Grove had steamed away to Mexico that Mrs. Mancredo really began to look about her; and then she did it with some disgust at her own stupidity, as she was pleased to name the sympathy that had overwhelmed her and swept her on to undertake, in an indefinite way, all that the care of Reginald involved.

One warm day in the late fall she brought Reginald in her carriage down to the Dakshas. He was urgent to go there every day, and was often brought down and placed in a long-chair out on their piazza, where, with his volume of Petrarch (from which he was inseparable) he passed many pleasant hours. His facial disfigurement was not as marked as at first. But he was paralyzed through one arm and leg, and the sense of taste, touch and smell seemed deadened. His hearing and his sight were not perceptibly injured, and the childlike alertness of his questions seemed to show that the gray matter of the brain, like a galvanic battery, still generated the electric current sufficiently to produce and accumulate nervous force for the few demands which the partially deadened coarser part of the brain now made upon it. There was evinced by Reginald an utter deadness to the passions of fear, desire, etc. The central ganglia, which serves to do the drudgery of the brain, leaving the gray matter free for higher, more difficult kinds of work, was injured; thus overthrowing the balance of power between the highest meditative, spiritual faculties, and the seat of those practical faculties which insure energetic daily activities.

It was as if the partial paralysis which had befallen Reginald Grove had sent a partial sleep to the abused and overtaxed faculties of his animal being; while the higher hemisphere of his brain, so long crippled by inaction, now arousing from that lethargy of disuse, put forth dormant strength. Whether true or not, this was Ethelbert's theory of the case, and her study of developments confirmed her in it. He was, in a sense, helpless and forceless; yet the childlike, placid clearness of his ideals, and the exhalation of sentiment in view of nature's beauties, were so inherently clear-cut and rare, that, broken and disorganized though he was, Reginald Grove was now a less disagreeable person to Ethelbert than he had been on his first tumultuous visit. He was seldom pettish or unmanageable when with Ethelbert; but to Mrs. Mancredo his talk was unendurable. She called him a miserable fellow, blaming him passionately to Ethelbert.

“But I don't think he is miserable,” said Ethelbert, in her quiet way. “He was miserable, when in other moments he loathed himself for his self-mismanagement. He acted like a soul in torment the first time he was here; and I fancy he was not then at his worst.”

“I am sure I can't understand your notions. Do you mean, you think he is less miserable than before?” said Mrs. Mancredo, looking toward Reginald, who sat reading the book from which he was inseparable, as a very little child reads. The sight of that book made her wild with nervousness. There seemed something uncanny in the way he had identified himself with the personages and ideas there. And his numerous polyglot questions asked in regard to things she could not explain, and his weird, childlike shrewdness of imagination as to some unseen world of mind and spirit, were getting to be the horrible thing to Mrs. Mancredo.

From what in the apparently stolid, noncommittal old Reginald, this spirit of occult divination of the purposes, powers and results of Petrarch's struggles, had evolved itself, she could not fancy. And she was getting so nervous at the steady illumination of his eyes that she would have given half she was worth to have removed from her memory all knowledge of his existence. Whether he had become absolutely foolish, or uncannily wise and weird, she did not know. But her refuge was Ethelbert; and Reginald's unaltered fancy for calling Ethelbert “mother,” seemed to favor Mrs. Mancredo's dawning hope of a way to get rid of him helpfully. And as she so thinking stood there, down in the garden, looking back at him up on the piazza, he called out: “Mother! mother!” and they both walked quickly to him.

“Let's have a nice read about ‘of such is the kingdom of heaven,’ and about the poor boy out of whom the devils were cast. I want to know about those mighty works, and how power did them.”

Mrs. Mancredo, with an ignorant person's horror of what may result from irregularity of mental action, felt it was awful that a man who had lost the gustatory appetites which render nice food a pleasure to the

palate, should yet, as Ethelbert said, feast on the high thoughts and things of the unseen realms. For Ethelbert believed he did not *think* in the sense of concentrating attention; but, instead, she believed his mind simply reflected back to his attention what passed in the realms of life above and anear him, as a lake reflects all that shadows itself upon its surface; and this she explained to Mrs. Mancredo, adding:

“It is for this reason that I wish he could be always cared for by some discerning person, who, dwelling unmoved in that beautiful realm which now has hold on his mind, and who, reading his very thought, would thus sustain him at peace there, as a student under these angelic teachers, and so educate him for a real manhood which he would thus yet attain. Do you understand?”

“No, I don’t understand,” was the blunt response. “All I know is, he has played out his little play on the stage of life, and has made a tragedy or farce of it, common enough in this age. He makes me wild with nervousness sometimes. What do you want me to *do* with him, for heaven’s sake?”

“You are right. It is for heaven’s sake that I want you to do it; for there is a heaven, and it belongs on earth,” said Ethel, slowly. “I believe it is only the organs at the base of his brain which are exhausted; and as they are nearly deadened, he seems like a fool to people who can only use their lower brain, which is the seat of the senses and passions — but — ”

“Do you mean that as I am not alert on those spiritual planes which arouse themselves in this ghostly way with him, and as he cannot use his common-sense faculties, which are alert enough in me, I probably seem to him to be as much of an idiot as he to me seems to be?”

“I mean you have no common ground to meet upon just now. Not, however, that you are unspiritual, but because your nature is so closely knitted up, that you act and think as a well-constructed entity, dealing with entities, not with fragments.”

“Well, we never did have any common ground,” said Mrs. Man-

credo, just as Judge Elkhorn came on the scene. And then her mind took hold of the fact that if she could not get along with Reginald as a whole, she certainly did not want to deal with the ghastly fragments of him which seemed left. And this she told Ethel.

"He never has been mentally whole," said Ethel. "He is gathering up his fragments," said Ethel. "Don't you want to help him?"

Then Mrs. Mancredo gave Judge Elkhorn a crude version of the story, appealing from Ethel to him, concerning the whole business, in a way which some women have; not because they are going to act on the advice they may receive, but because they understand themselves better after hearing themselves "talk out the whole problem."

Judge Elkhorn was a bright man in many regards, and had had an ambition to electrify the world with a theory which would give a new basis for action in reforms; but in dealing with such a case as this, he had certain serious limitations. For he prided himself on never going beyond the common-sense recognition of objects which he could taste, touch, feel, smell and see. But here was Reginald with the common-sense plane of mind (that is, the plane of mind on which practical people live externally and meet each other) terribly damaged, and with three out of five sense-avenues to knowledge, shut up. And yet Miss Ethelbert claimed he was living in a rather select sort of world of his own, after a tranquil fashion; not devoid of certain startling gleams of intelligence, nay, wisdom. But as for an unseen world, and "an education beyond the grave," Judge Elkhorn was pleased to say, "he hoped he had left all faith in that sort of thing along with fear of spooks and the dark." He was willing to call Reginald's state "a curious phenomenon." For the rest, he would have liked to have relegated this man to the obscurity of some asylum. For if he disliked Reginald when he was well (?) and obtrusively at home on Ethelbert's balcony the day they first met, he disliked him vastly more now that he, as a child, was ensconced on Ethelbert's attention.

Judge Elkhorn thought the whole thing preposterous; and notwith-

standing his fine humanitarian theories for helping misery in the mass, he would have liked to take prompt steps to hinder its being served up in individual cases, in polite society. He quite laid down the law on this subject to Miss Daksha, and interposed his particular likes and dislikes as if they were the code of the Medes and Persians. Ethel let him proceed. But she held to her faith in the final rehabilitation of Reginald, and expressed it.

So, in language of his own, Judge Elkhorn at last reassured her that her concern for this case was really unfitting.

“Who being judge?” said she.

“I shall have to be judge of your conduct, if you desire to retain my friendship and respect.”

“But that is *not* my desire. My desire is to get Reginald Grove well,” she said quietly, holding Judge Elkhorn steady in the light of her self-directing intelligence, until, without more words, he himself saw that he had supposed her general friendliness for him was identified with an enfeebling dependence on his approbation.

Then —

“Mrs. Mancredo, what will *you* do for this man?” Ethel cheerily asked.

“What can I do?”

“You could take Reginald away from the hotel-life which you dislike, and which you find so injurious to both of you; and you could get a nice, rightly adjusted home. And then, from the pure potencies of your splendid being, you could second nature’s recuperative forces in *him*; and they, unthwarted and assisted thus by you, will build him up again into health of body, by giving him a new affluence of mind. Then *mind* will recreate the body. To accomplish this would perhaps take years of real mothering-wit and wisdom. But —”

“Years, Ethelbert? I should be an old woman by that time, near my fifties. What is a woman worth then? And what would this rejuvenated young scholar care for me? I mean — this is nonsense; and yes, *what would I be by that time!*”

"You would be a woman who at least would have achieved one defined object in life. You are now sick of existence. Money spending, dressing, dining, and days spent in wishing that things and men were different, have given your active imagination and non-concentrated powers no comfort for years past. Neither could you get much good by running up and down the world, trying to get an audience to listen to your theories. Absolute, concentrated personal work, done well, on the spot you stand on, will not fatigue you any more than does the toil of mere self-exhibit and self-protection from the inroads of others on your property and yourself. You say twelve years hence you will be a woman in the fifties, if you give these years to work. How old will you be twelve years hence if you don't?"

"There are always asylums and skilled people," she suggested, trembling with alarm, not so much at the work, as at undertaking to settle herself to a twelve-years' job for him. She was very pale, and looked toward the man with a shrinking, like that in the eyes of a dumb creature being led at last to the altar of final sacrifice.

"Yes," said Ethelbert, "there are always asylums; and they are getting fuller and fuller of people who know so ill how to deal with time, that fearing, faltering and fightings have landed them there to die, while their friends outside, fearing, faltering and fighting against their fears, soon need asylums, too. This man's trembling intellect would be ruined by a few months in the average insane asylum. You say you would be an old woman at fifty if you tried to save that man; tell me, then, what will you be if you don't?"

"Mother! mother! please call little Alitza; she can read me the story of the little leaden soldier; he didn't fight well; he fell in the gutter."

Of course that was Reginald's voice speaking out in good English this time, which was enfibred by the childish ring of a perfectly care-free mind, when it is filled with blithe imaginings.

Judge Elkhorn looked at him with startled attention, and Mrs. Man-

credo shuddered, half whispering: "We used to read 'Comte d'Andersen' in the French, with his mother. He was such a pretty little fellow, and took up French so easily. I learned it, too, though Italian was my baby tongue. My father was French. O dear, my life has amounted to nothing after all my efforts!"

"How would it do, then, to cease efforts, and in a home be easily useful?"

"It would make a scandal."

Ethelbert unconsciously drew herself up, till it seemed as if the universe did not contain air enough to fill her expanding lungs as she said:

"Don't talk of scandal. Needs break through stone walls. Take counsel of your own soul, though all the world should be scandalized thereby." And then, turning at the repeated call for "mother," she went to Reginald, who could not be satisfied without a caressing touch of her health-giving hand. But then, contented, he went on with his reading, caring for the attention only as a petted child cares for an accustomed endearment which is hourly, perhaps, received.

Yet Judge Elkhorn looked not incapable of striking the paralyzed creature. But the Italian, with an instant's sharp scrutiny, saw only in the act that Diana-like integrity of purpose, which like a light reflected, beautified her own face, too, with the mother-tenderness that filled Ethelbert's being, as she said:

"Will you go to Alitza's house, or stay with mother?"

"Of course I shall stay with my mother. Alitza may come when she chooses," said the invalid again in English. And Elkhorn, with arms high folded, looked on, forgetful of all else but the simple intelligent purpose which made radiant these workers. Was it that passion by them had been triturated into the high potency of a god-like vigor, which was sent now through the earth to bring redemption to universal man, and (at their hands) to this individual, by the way?

"Yes, yes, take him, keep him here," said Mrs. Mancredo. "Do as

he says, Miss Daksha. He is coming to seem such a dreadful responsibility — guarded by angels, that —”

“Oh, if this is the style of doing things which women are going to put on the world!” the judge exclaimed, “asylums and criminal courts will get to seem more devoted to miracle-working than the churches now are; and every idiot will become a center for spiritually scientific endeavor.”

“They never should have been anything less. In fact, idiots don’t belong. They are transgressions of law, as much as criminals. They, with hundreds of other things, are but the results of women’s unnatural relation to the university-education, which must be by *her* bestowed on man,” said Ethelbert, leading them away from proximity to Reginald. Because even though he seemed unobservant of what was going on about him, she thought that when he was not directly *addressed* he (as if in echo) heard what was said to or about him. This manner of dealing with him rendered his visible presence in this world of effects a means by which those who were about him in this world were partially introduced to the other.

The judge and Mrs. Mancredo stood drawn together, looking back at this alienated mentality. Then she half whispered:

“They say at the hotel that he ought to — well — not be at the hotel, no matter what big bills I am willing to pay, and all that. So many people are in a rickety mental condition themselves, that — instead of *studying* a case like this, Miss Ethel, as *you* do, it alarms them, and — and — well, I don’t know myself what it does to them — yes, and to me, too. I will confess I dislike sick men. And it sometimes seems to be not Reginald at all, but a ghost which has arisen out of his childhood — sort of waiting to have another try at what he can make of life.”

“Yet there are hundreds of such men everywhere, and we can’t afford to use our brains over them. Why should women spend their lives doing such jobs? Men choose to go the pace that kills, one way

and another, and will not hear one word from women till they drop down dead weights on the shoulders of —”

Mrs. Mancredo broke forth into convulsive weeping. “This was too much for Judge Elkhorn. He took sudden leave, assured of one thing: that was, that Mrs. Mancredo saw the cleansing work which would have to be done in society’s Augean stables if women took up the business of turning these stables into ‘the home of the brave and the free.’ And he saw that the idea that she *ought* to save this man, now had a hold on Mrs. Mancredo, and he knew that when a strong woman thinks she *ought* to do a thing, the ship of state may as well clear its decks for an encounter from all the guns hitherto known or unknown in moral combat. For he had learned that women are constitutionally brave as well as educationally timid, and that they set no limits to their daring when once they enter the lists to do the thing that must be done.

After he was gone, Mrs. Mancredo stood watching Reginald’s happy, superintelligent look. Then —

“What have you done to him and to us all?” she said. “It is as if — as if we were watching by the hallowed dead.”

“I think it is wonderful myself,” said Ethelbert. “I have concluded that the core of Reginald’s nature is the love of truth; and that this core of his being has not yet been ruined by social abuses; and that this love of truth is a radical root, from which a resurrected life will arise. There is hope of a tree, though it be cut down, that it shall live again if the roots are healthy. The roots of his life are better than the visible growths that have appeared,” said Ethelbert.

“Oh, let me come here, too! Let us both come!” cried Mrs. Mancredo, after the strange, trembling silence; “I can’t keep away from here. I am so much happier here than I have ever been in my life; I feel so broken up and stripped of everything, somehow. Let me fetch down a few things. You can crowd together a little and give me two rooms; or better still, throw out an addition across the house. You can make new parlors — so — with a veranda round them, and give Regie the

sunny half, and — and take me in and educate me, too. You've tossed me all up, somehow. At the rate I am going on I shall be a selfish old woman at fifty, and have done neither Regie nor myself nor anyone any good. But really, you know, he don't deserve a bit of this at my hands. Do you know the night he had the shock, I felt as though — as though —”

She stopped and looked at Ethelbert's impassive face. “You have never asked me what there was between Regie and me,” she said. “Sharp as you are, you must have known I hated him. Well, yes,” hesitated Mrs. Mancredo, “in a sort, I hated him. Have you never wondered what there is between us? You don't look as if you cared now.”

“I should be sorry to have anything between him and his best development, or you and yours. All the rest does not amount to much either way at this terrible social crisis,” said Ethelbert, as she gazed adown the long ages which had been leading on to this stage of general social, chaotic development, which is but an outward sign of the particular state of the aggregated individual. “And instead of feeling frightened at wickedness, and planning a punitive reform, the simple thing to do is to recognize these conditions as *stages* at which the fomentation takes place, which always precedes clarification. A thorough clarification of society is at hand, the outcome of which will be, ‘the new order of the new age.’”

“I begin to think so myself,” said Mrs. Mancredo, after a long pause, in which she had watched the thought-gleams in Ethel's eyes. Then, vexed at her own perplexity, she said uneasily:

“I wonder if anything would interest you that was not purely metaphysical or psychological? I mean — in fact — I want — that is — I wonder —”

“Oh come, tell me. How far *would* your ideas of old-fashioned duty carry you? Would they make you interfere with another person's business? Would they make you make a body tell you all she knew about

herself, and make you bring a body right down to the grindstone of confession, and bind her to your dictatorial law of ways and means of repentance?"

Ethel laughed amiably, saying: "If you want to know my character, you would better glance at my life."

But still, with an alarmed, distrustful, quizzical look, the outgrowth of her experiences, Mrs. Mancredo said at last:

"Do you think you can take better care of Reginald than I can?"

"I can do my duty better than you can do my duty, but I cannot do yours; but on my way to do mine, if you are with me you ought to get some view of what your duty is, as I shall get new views from you regarding *my* work. That seems to be the whole of the affair," said Ethel, taking Mrs. Mancredo's hand cordially.

"Is that so? Would you not dictate to me, nor talk to others about me, nor flinch from your duty if I neglected mine?"

"I only know," said Ethelbert after a pause, "whatever comes to me to be done, I shall do, but I shall accommodate my actions to new circumstances which may arise, for I should be sorry to have anything come between Reginald and his best development, or between you and yours. The development of the individual is the point; all else is inconsiderable."

"Now look at me," said Mrs. Mancredo, taking her hand tightly, and looking her straight in the eyes. "Remember what you have said, for I shall not forget it. Listen: I am Reginald Grove's wife."

Ethel caught her breath, for this she had not foreseen.

"Now, then, how far will you practice your personal liberty principles? How much will you leave me in perfect freedom to choose my own duty? Remember, you have said you would be sorry to have anything come between Reginald and his best development, and me and mine, and that all the rest amounts to little either way.

"Now, then," she continued, starting off again after a little pause, "if you don't want anything to come between me and my best develop-

ment, you will let me give up my life there at the hotel, and you will make the changes in your house that I suggest, and let me pay you the hotel prices, and bring along my carriage and servant John, and take me into the family on the 'personal liberty principle' with which you four heavenly mortals control or don't control each other's lives. And you will angelically mind your heaven-appointed business of evoking Regie's lost angel, and leave me to evolve my own as best I can."

By this time Ethelbert's beryl eyes were looking into Mrs. Mancredo's black ones, as if this arrangement were a simple plan for a lawn party.

"Why don't you look disgusted at a woman who passes as rich Mr. Mancredo's widow, and who is really Reginald Grove's wife, and has never been any other man's wife, nor anything like it, in any way to anybody!"

"Disgust must be too unpleasant a feeling to take on one's self prematurely," said Ethelbert, with her rare sweet smile, as she took Mrs. Mancredo's hands in hers and sat looking way down through the turbulent surface of her eyes, into the sorrowful depths beneath; then: "When I learn all, I am sure I shall have reason to congratulate you, that with all your temptations and perplexities you have done so well."

"How well?"

"I only know that you want nothing between you and your upward path; and that is well, absolutely well."

"That is true; and I have never wanted any evil thing, and I really doubt if anyone really wants evil things. Shall I tell you my history now?" she continued.

"I don't see why you should."

"Have you no curiosity?"

"Not of that kind. I am curious to know just how Reginald's brain looks, and if his tranquil, happy life is accumulating force in the superior brain faster than he is using it. I would like to see if recuperative energy can be stored up like money in a bank, ready for a heavy draft, and —"

"If you weren't so interested in all that, you would be more interested in my affairs."

"Yes, if I were not so much interested in life as a *religiously-scientific-problem*, I would be more interested in gossip, and would now bid you good-by, and immediately would set the town alive with a little romance; which, instead, you will tell me much later, and will tell the rest of the world when you choose." And with a long grasp of the hand, Ethelbert moved away as she spoke.

"Don't you care to know?" said Mrs. Mancredo, following her up.

"I don't care to know anything except the resurrection-truth that you can still make your life as beautiful as you choose. You are thirty-five years old; you have forty-five years to live in this world," said Ethelbert. "Think of that, and fashion circumstances accordantly with the result you would like to see."

"Well, I declare, I never thought of that way of doing," said Mrs. Mancredo, after a pause. Then: "Do you really mean to say that you take me on trust?"

"I do," said Ethelbert; "and 'equal exchange is no robbery.' You take me so, too, do you not?" And a hand-grasp, peculiar and vitalizing, sealed the compact. And this was the last reference made to that matter till years afterward.

The house had not only been promptly enlarged, and Mrs. Mancredo very promptly domiciled there as she desired, but also within two years other developments had taken place. Mrs. Mancredo was now "one of them," and participated in their many other lines of work, an account of which in the limits of this little booklet will not appear. This is but an episode in the doings of the dualized, and it must suffice to say that, under the best health conditions, physical and psychical, Reginald so improved that strangers recognized him but as a lame man, who had been paralyzed, but who was a person of winsome, gentle manners.

His speech was inconsequent, and often polyglot and startling in its sudden outbreaks into good English concerning unknown themes related to realms unknown, and intangible to those who could not comprehend his mental movement.

The home of the Dakshas was more than ever like themselves; or it would be truer to say, was as much as ever like themselves, since the changes which had developed were but outward signs of the average spiritual state of the occupants of that home.

The house eventually was greatly enlarged. For Mrs. Mancredo and her servant having come to stay, the sustained condition of spiritual attraction necessitated a steady extension of the outward buildings.

As, for instance, when Bertha Gemacht (whose life was a romance) had first heard of Reginald's attack, and of Miss Daksha's intention of restoring his faculties, she had presented herself to Ethelbert, internally necessitated to explain her relation to the problem in hand. For the memorable scene and conversation on the balcony had left with her a fixed belief that the vital force of vein and brain is the vigor of Jehovah in us; and that those who reverence it according to the law of right use, having englobed that vital force, are thereby enriched, and fitted for a great order of service. For that this wealth of vein and brain is wealth, indeed, of an absolutely empowering sort; and is, in itself, *power*. And she had fully learned that by its inherent *empowerment* it naturally introduces its possessor to services which can only be carried forward on the plane of superordinary intelligence.

Bertha had taken to this philosophy as naturally as she had to breathing. But her heart had lately become very sore with the fear that, as the workers were to be "the pure in heart" who see good and God, she, for cause known to herself, might not be considered "pure in heart," and so might be rejected as not fitted to help even in the humblest way, in the splendid work here opening up. The bitterness of this dread had filled her mind for weeks,—yes, from the first. And the bitterness was none the less bitter from the fact that the very *circumstance* in her life

which she felt would be taken as ground for her rejection from this work for the new age, was in her good judgment the circumstance which had educated her to well do one line of work, that ought to be a collateral to the rest of it, as carried on here.

So one day she came suddenly to see Miss Daksha, appearing at the sunlighted stretch of rooms, the abutting tower-end of which was connected with Reginald's suite. She glanced furtively at him, halting as she knocked, and Ethel, understanding all, said at once :

"Bertha, I call him — not bad, but bewildered ; not sick, but being healed ; not lost, *but in process of finding himself*. His helplessness now exists because Mother Wisdom Divine has *arrested* him, by putting to sleep certain of his faculties, in order to the better releasement of his higher nature. As we understand this matter, he is mentally in communion now with saintly spirits. And if your angel and mine can but wisely conspire with angels higher yet, he will be safely carried through this crisis ; and in a few years he will have forgotten all of the evil things of the past, and will be ready for a new life. And then all will go well, if but only people will then not remember against him his follies and transgressions.

"For Bertha," Ethel said, curiously looking into the steadfast German eyes, as if showing her a sight of "those invisible things of God, which are clearly seen, being understood by things which are made." "Bertha, Reginald ought not to die yet physically. Dying as he now is would but necessitate that at his next incarnation some other woman would be tortured to give birth to perhaps an unchanged *distracted* being, with the same self-destructive tendencies as those evinced the day when, years ago, he was beating the rosebush to pieces.

"All that unfortunate waste of mother-pain can be prevented ; for we here will now take up for him, and others, the work of being spiritual mothers, who will very simply, in this home, supplement the work of the other poor mothers who have had to give birth to ill-conditioned children, without being properly accoutred, with the time, money, and

education requisite to enable them to teach these children the ways of life.

“That day on the balcony when he was destroying the rosebud, his mother’s spirit touched mine (as mine now touches yours), and she urged me (as I am now urging you) to bring this child out of his state of arrested development into harmony with righteousness. She informed me that in the bonds of matrimony, as well as out, Bertha, mothers often endure abuse which no creature but man thrusts on his mate; abuse which devitalizes and poisons the fountain at which, born and unborn, the babe is fed; and which weakens the nerve substance of the child, by draining the vital forces of the mother, in a way more ruinous than would be a sword-thrust.

“This mother with spiritual insistence urged me to keep her son in the body, and to carry him through this valley of the shadow of death, so as to enable him to attain a resurrection to newness of life in this body.”

Bertha’s eyes were raised in soul-flaming sympathy with the sufferings hinted at. Such violence had been done her. For years she had been hurled into wraths and torments, and into the dangers of that moral defeat from which she had been delivered by Ethel’s comprehension of her inward righteousness, as opposed to the outward conditions that had been thrust upon her, and as opposed to the reputation which she had unjustly been made to bear.

And of all this she thought. But Ethel’s stated recognition of the *commonness* of the outrages put on woman as maid and mother, now aroused her intelligence as to the *general* need for a general enlightenment. But her wrath was inexpressible, and she cried out suddenly: “O, but he is a fool, that Reginald! If he had treated me well I could have done him great good. I hate him! I wish he would cease to live in any world,— could be blasted, blotted out of all worlds, and made into nothing at all, with a lasting ache of shame to it! For he is a fool. Miss Ethelbert, it’s — it’s him! That’s who it was!” And she cov-

ered her face, stretched and distorted with loathing, and whispered dreadfully :

“ Let him die as the fool dies ; withhold your breath of life from him. Dead he would be but for the vitality you exhale upon the upper realms of his being. Let him die ! Let him be damned, as he has damned my poor Waldemar into being ! I do hate, hate fools ! ”

Just so had Mrs. Mancredo said : “ I do — dislike sick men.”

And Ethelbert, well knowing that woman’s dislike of folly and sickness would turn men away from both, if woman were free to rise to her own heights, said calmly : “ It is precisely because you hate fools that you will conspire with me, his mother, and other angels of God, to annihilate the fool and evoke the man. Two children, Waldemar and Reginald,— is it not so ? Your Waldemar is your son, and better born than Reginald. For after that assault you were deserted by your assailant, and lived in virginal conditions through all the time of the coming of your son to this present incarnation. You have lived since, loathing evil, seeking the good and pursuing it, and — in an humble sense — pondering these things in your heart, as did the mother of our Lord ; and — ”

“ Aye, I hate him ! I would gladly have been like the Virgin Mother, reverently treated, by the spirit-of-life in some good man,— if not by the Angel of the Annunciation. Mystery and unfathomable mystery as it all is, I claim I should have had the highest and best. I am a good girl ; I am from a good family. I love that story ; I love the mystery as the good Father in our mountain village in Germany taught it. I meant always to be like Mary, blessed among women. Reginald betrothed me ; and betrothal is almost marriage in my land.”

She turned, and gazing again back toward Reginald’s chair, said again : “ Aye, I hate him ! Beast, brute ! I think—I think I must kill him ! I do hate him ! What will my Waldemar think of me ! I hate that *man* ! ”

“ Who ? ” said Ethelbert.

"That man," said Bertha, with a point of her finger, like a sword-thrust. And Reginald, as if shocked by an electric charge, sent forth a cry, springing forward as if galvanized; and Bertha, frightened, heard Ethelbert say, steadily:

"There is no man there,—a crippled child, an absent spirit, a wraith, a wreck, a ghost, a 'remains' of the criminal who was arrested in the act of killing a citizen of this nation, called Reginald Grove; that 'remains' is there; nothing more. A child waiting to come forth to the business of making one more try at self-management, is there."

"You were right," Ethelbert continued, not unobservant meanwhile of Bertha's alarm at the effect of the electric-battery which her finger had fired at Reginald, and at the flush which had mounted Reginald's face. "You are right in saying there are too many born and buried. Let us not bury him (this 'remains'), but let us electrify him into newness of spirit, and then he will not need rebirth of the body. Give him another chance. You and Waldemar shall have yours."

"No; for if he gets well you will be making him marry me. All the good ladies try to make those kind of men do that. And the men hate us, and we hate them; and even when they are of our own class, they always think we are worse for what was as bad for one as for the other. And they think they have done us great honor; and we keep on, never able to do anything that will make the wrong right; and all that comes of it is hate, hate, hate; and more babies are born, all of them full of hate; and the mothers can't take care of so many; and it's all nothing but hate, hate, hate. And the mother dies hating, and the children live hating; and it's all foolishness and misery. You are my enemy if you make him marry me; and you can't be my friend if you are his."

"Now, then, is he going to stay here?"

"He will stay here," said Ethel.

"Then I must go."

"Must you?"

"Yes madame, you would not have too such people under your roof!"

“The clear dome above us is the roof I live under,” said Ethelbert, “and it covers all sorts of acting people. A few boards nailed together neither roofs life in nor shuts life out. People who are separated are separated by partitions thin as glass and strong as adamant, and repellent or death-dealing as a live electrical wire. Go or stay, as you choose. But, dear child, you need never fear that I should make Captain Grove marry you, or make anybody do anything. Liberty is the law of life. But I see your perception that you are to Reginald a part of a dreadful dream, the same as he is to you, may be true. A hundred marriage services would not in themselves unite you. All you say of the disaster which comes from these unintelligent methods of compelling legal-unions between persons who are abhorrent to each other, is true. You need have no fear of any compulsion.

“We are living in a revolutionary epoch. My family believes marriage is the great sacrament of life. But we do not perceive, however, that all legal marriages are so formed and sustained as to render them sacramental to the parties concerned. Yet we do think that the highest type of marriage is symbolic of the kingdom of heaven. But I will tell you this: If your case were mine, I should not try to right up the wrong I had done by going on to do more wrongs under the shelter of legality. If you consider that Waldemar was damned into being (that was your term, not mine, I should not use it; I do not think he is), your next care should be to bless him out of that condemnatory state, by giving him such instruction and such simple joys in life as will secure him against perpetuating any form of wrong-doing. Put away sadness, Bertha, and remember not wrongs against your brother Reginald. Correct the past by dealing sensibly with the present. Truth and right living will bring good results to the future.

“A large proportion of morals and manners today are unintelligent. Yours have been. But all that ceases today. Excessive emotional wrath at those who have blundered with us, does not help either them or us to better intelligence, nor to the best adjustment of results.”

“Unintelligent? What a nidding word for, for —”

“Yes, unintelligent. A fuller intelligence will render all the mysteries and miseries of life intelligible. For whatever is in the past, you are, with others, responsible. Now waste no more brain-substance in grief, shame or wrath, but conserve all your nervous force for your work. *Assume the motherhood* which you *presumed* upon. Your mind is crowded with artificial distinctions. A few simple principles, held to amiably, will make all your life sweet and intelligent, even now.

“You love purity. That characteristic is rooted deep in your nature. You are ethically valuable to the kind of work that must be done in this age, because of that characteristic. I will tell you five points of faith that abide with me. Then you will see why I say that *any methods of abusing the brain-substance is unintelligent*, and why I say that fuller intelligence concerning woman-nature and possibilities will render *intelligible* the past miseries and mysteries of life, and will displace them with the spontaneous joyfulness of wisdom’s way of living.

“Do you understand?”

“Certainly I understand. Tell me your five points of faith,” said Bertha, clear-headedly.

“One is, that purity is natural and inherent in humanity. Next, it consists in an invulnerable ability to garner up the vital force within the seven nerve-centers ready for use, just as the electric current is captured and held by the electric dynamo, ready to be put to use in a scientific and purposeful way; in order that great things may be achieved for the race, by means of its light-giving, heat-supplying, weight-lifting and propelling power. Next, I believe purity is a profitable, satisfactory personal possession. For it fills the nerves and brain with a reserve force which is a tremendous reconstructive energy. The possession of purity is always back of that steady brain-building which goes on, with its incessant increase of mental grasp and power of intuitive perception. So that those who have large reserves of the *wealth* which *purity* brings, can lay hold on the history of past ages, taking

possession of such history in great blocks of time and events; and they can apprehend things which are to come, in time to prepare for crises, one after another, in such a way as to turn what would have been disaster into success. Purity gives one self-possession, and creates a simple, unsullied self, well worth possessing.

“It enables people to dare to state themselves in unqualified correct terms. For their unmixed simple purposes bear each other out in the long run. And I say, Bertha, if all women were legally upheld in being what men delight to be called (that is, Right Honorable,) the sons of such women would be by nature ‘Right Honorables.’ I will uphold you in being right honorable, Bertha, and Waldemar shall be Right Honorable.”

“Gott be danken.”

“There cannot be a more profitable and satisfactory possession than purity. It fills one with courage and truth, and makes honor easy. Its joys fade not away. Its hopes are fulfilled, and I believe if we were all possessors of this type of purity, and understood how to live according to its law, the social result would be, that humanity would become like the angels of God: right, bright, agile and light; with probably less marrying and no divorcing; because of the well-poised, well-contented lives to which such men and women will have attained. If all possessed this type of purity, there would be an end to these inordinate desires which now make some people to be self-tormented monsters, and others to be their victims. When this type of purity exists, then family life, worthy the name, will be established on a plane of health-giving-comfort to all concerned. While those who, St. Paul says, ‘do better than to marry, though to marry may be to do well,’ will be able, Bertha, to coöperate together in simple, unsullied service to the world, which always needs such service.

“When people come once to know the buoyant delight way down to old, old age, which is ushered in by a scientific life of purity, they will never thereafter rack themselves with the disorders and maniacal nerve-

lessness which comes, Bertha, one way and another, from the abuse of vitality.

“It is doubtful if people, as a whole, will ever learn life’s true and refined joys until women are legally upheld in their own work of carrying out that law of liberty to all as opposed to license in any; which law enables the evolution of such a joyous love of decency, and such reverence for the God-power in the blood and brain of each, as shall secure health, wealth and vivacity to individuals and the nations throughout the earth.”

“It is all true, true,” said Bertha. “But that comes from beliefs which are all one. But yet you said five points of faith, and I shall learn them all. So you would better name the fifth, by telling me what is purity. You say it is natural and inherent to humanity. And you tell me it is profitable; and what the social result would be if we all possessed it and lived according to its law. But what is it, what does it consist in?”

“To be pure, the dictionary tells us, is to be unsullied, unmixed, genuine, unqualified. Purity is free from a burdensome sense of shame, and is full of an invigorating courage which is wide away from all necessity of making and loving those things which the Bible calls ‘lies.’ Because a robust healthfulness fills with courage those who habitually practice the scientific law of purity. So that, in the character of a Right Honorable, purity, courage and truth knit each other up into a triuned power against which nothing can prevail. Purity knows how to deal in an offhand way with its own nature and needs, being full of the courage of its own convictions as to what it wants to do and be.

“The courage of purity is full of simplicity and high achievement; quite the opposite of that bravado which, attached to inordinate desires, is full of duplicity and failure. Purity is not timid, for it is its own protector. It is genuine, unmixed God-power, and makes its possessor a partaker in omnipotent omniscience. This fact all can prove for themselves who enable themselves to do so.

“It consists in an intelligent use of the vital element of blood and brain ; and this intelligent use is religion itself. For, Bertha, the vitality within us is the divine creative power of Jehovah, and should be revered with awe. I repeat it, I distinctly believe this elusive, thrilling gladness-element of mind and nerve, is the joy-power, the intellectual vigor of that Vital One, the being whom we call God ; who is the breath of our lives, and of whom we are competent to know more and more eternally.

“Now the only real *class* distinction between people is — not that some are rich and some are poor, not that some are university graduates and some are not, but — that some have cultivated and *know* their possibilities of garnering up this vital force within their own nerve centers, ready for use, just as the electric dynamo captures and garners up the electric current, that it may be in readiness to achieve great results for this great age.

“Those who have this order of self-sovereignty have what the world cannot give and cannot take away. Those whose self-sovereignty is founded on this unimpregnable purity of brain and nerve have entered into a permanent delight in life. And no matter to what retreat their humble duty calls them, they are among the rulers of the age.

“Ach, Himmel! It is the secret of the sanctuary!” said Bertha. “We of the high mountain regions are taught it, in the old fatherland. Nothing can be wanted, if Waldemar and I have and hold this, and give it to the world.”

So thus came Bertha into the home of the Dakshas.

CHAPTER V.

AS Bertha left the room Daniel entered it. Then, as do saints on the other shore when dealing with those who have come up out of great tribulations, so these two looked each into the eyes of the other, and met there, love-full-of-wisdom.

In the silence they stood for a moment, thinking of the "foundation stone" on which the "builders build,"—a foundation stone which supports that gate of opulence which is coeval and consonant with the temple of life. A foundation stone, diamond-like in its adamantine strength, and a radiator of shafts of that light which has lighted every man who has come into the world. Rays of which, mingling with rays are emitted now everywhere, till the dispelling of all darkness is at hand.

"I have heard from the Landseers," said Daniel. Then, as if that statement were but in continuance of the thoughts which had swiftly glanced from mind to mind, he added: "The work of individual spiritual construction moves on so fast in the world today, that soon no man will question his neighbor, 'Know ye the Lord?' for all shall know that all others, too, do know him; and shall know *who* he is; for they shall see him as he is, and know that he is He-vaw. It is becoming well understood that the pure in heart see He-vaw, and seeing He-vaw as he is, become like He-vaw. But we need for *use*, institutions for training our young men in this art of life."

Words were few and powerful in which Daniel and daughter treated the mysteries at stake in the swift transactions taking place under their roof, and under the broad dome of the blue above.

As has been said, the Dakshas were what today's people commonly recognize as "old, old souls." So though by many this will be unbe-

lievable, their opulent minds kept always in circulation the *thoughts to be uttered*. And their eyes and ears conveyed and received suggestions, information and impressions as swiftly as the electric current receives and carries messages. For "the wheels" which some joker declared were in the Daksha-brain, were there, and what is more, "the spirit of creative life was in the wheels." But if (as it was said jocularly) there was a buzzing in their bonnets, the bees that buzzed there were all honey-makers for humanity.

But Judge Elkhorn not only lacked all such activity of brain-substance, but was an inherent pauper concerning this order of social opulence. Moreover, he did not believe any one could have what he did not. So the wit about the wheels in the heads of the Daksha family and the buzzing of the bees in their bonnets was the judge's own. Meanwhile he wished for their power. For he was a man as painfully curious to know everybody's past, and the whys and wherefores of all that they did, as he was anxious to reservedly shield his own past, present and future plans from inspection.

So, as Mrs. Mancredo did not explain to him her affairs, he only knew of them what had been reported at the hotel; namely, that she was an adopted sister of Reginald Grove. He knew that one of the women under the roof claimed to dislike Grove as a disagreeable sick man, and another had declared that she hated him as a furious fool. But as to Miss Daksha's sentiment toward the man whom she was said to be saving, he could discover nothing. And therefore that matter uncomfortably occupied his mind. For, in his conjectures concerning Ethelbert, he had nothing to go upon but a more or less murky form of concluding that the acts of *all* women were based upon some emotional, self-seeking foundation.

He was not to say "a nice man," this Judge Elkhorn. But of curiosity, persistence and "prod," he had no lack. He had some things in stocks, some things in banks, and some things in mortgages on farms out West; but his poverty was extreme and corrosive. One form of it

that was eating his vitals this day, made him peer sharply through his glasses and thrust his head forward in a way which caused his Adam's apple to choke up against his collar ; and that resulted in making him pitch his very hoarse voice up very high in the effort to get it, if possible, a bit higher than that collar, and so on a level with his greatly heightened curiosity.

For this curiosity took form in the desire to know what conditions could have existed which made both Mrs. Mancredo and Bertha Gemacht look at Reginald as they had looked at him in the judge's presence. For in the look of both was repulsion, dread, and distinctly a look of enslavement to him, to which was added a portrayed sense of angry restiveness under that enslavement. What is more, he had twice noticed how invariably they turned away from the sick man, and gazed appealingly (it could be called nothing else) into the eyes of Ethel. And he had seen that her superordinary manner steadied them, and correlated them with strength. For strengthened they were, as all are strengthened who are released from fear, and allied to that power which comes as direct from All-that-is as water comes into a basin from a reservoir to which its conductors are attached.

Judge Elkhorn knew, too, that Mrs. Mancredo, her carriage and coachman, John Sullivan, and a North American "Indian-rubber," as she called him, were all long since settled in the Daksha family. And he knew that the man Fleetwood liked himself very much ; and often said : "We are the ancient people, and we know the laws of the spirit of peace and purity, and our medicine men deal with medicine of a secret sort, for those who can take it in faith." Elkhorn also knew that there had come into the family a Madame Roland, a *religieuse* in heart, and a companion of the toilet to Mrs. Mancredo in practice. He knew, too, that Robert one day had imported into the family a Japanese gardener and a Chinese laundryman. At last in answer to Elkhorn's urgencies, Daniel Daksha provisionally admitted him to the family, under the promise to withdraw within two weeks unless he was asked to extend

his stay. He was an expansive liberal-leagued man; but he did not like servants to forget their places, as he had told Robert. Then Robert had explained that, as their household was based on the principle that "a true aristocrat was one who best served the greatest number and asked least for self in return," Ethel, Daniel and Althea were preëminently the servants of the family. But as for himself, Robert said, he did not pretend to live up to that ideal as yet.

In this way Elkhorn learned that this conglomerate household was distinctly trying to practicalize the royal law of liberty; and that under that law, one person would no more force chains on any other than he would consent to wear chains himself. This sounded well to Elkhorn, until Robert, who did not stay his tongue, added:

"It takes the age long development that comes to the true old aristocrat (like Aristarchus) to carry out this ideal in a really royal way, because ordinary selfishness and self-conceit are unequal to the task."

Elkhorn did not like that. But then Robert didn't wish him to like it, as he objected to having Judge Elkhorn come into the family at all. For he considered that Elkhorn had roots of character which rendered liberty for him, an unattainable glory. Because his progenitors had been through so much fighting and persecuting in trying to obtain liberty for their *own* consciences and for Calvinism, that, though the tendency to persecute and fight remained with Elkhorn, liberty was neither yet obtained by him for himself, nor was it by him permitted to others. But this was exactly what Judge Elkhorn did not realize about himself. He figured as a liberty league man; but of late was beginning to realize it is a mighty acquisition to really be in league with liberty. . . . Meanwhile, Daniel liked Judge Elkhorn for many reasons. For though Judge Elkhorn got as excited over his negations as his progenitors had gotten over their affirmations of immortality, and though he became irascible at the suggestion that there was a realm of life beyond the ken of those senses called common; and though he got very angry with people who insisted on a knowledge of "the unseen world," "invisible

powers," and the theory of a moral accountability beyond the grave, yet Daniel liked him, as a make-weight against the top-lofty theories of people who lived more in the unseen world than in the seen. And Daniel knew himself to be one of these last-mentioned people. And, too, Daniel knew the peculiar fact about Robert was, he at this time knew a terrifying amount about the unseen world, and was receiving as much from the psychical realm as he could support without becoming a maniac. And Daniel knew Robert did not relish having Elkhorn come into the family; for Elkhorn's prowess consisted in trying to annihilate the popular and private reverence which the people of this nation have for their several partial-statements of religious truth. Meanwhile Robert knew it had never been Daniel's way to say, "We— 'us and you' — will chum together against the rest of the world. We have uttered the last word." But Robert also knew that the fact that Elkhorn was on the warpath against almost everything, had but caused Daniel to think his presence in the family might act as an antidote against any tendency to any form of unity which, when based on indolent, ignorant acquiescence, results in not unity, but *nullity*.

Daniel comprehended the crisis which Robert was facing. Poor Robert, who had been singled out from the Daksha family by the not flattering title, "Robert le Diable." Not that he was so really wicked, but because the singular goodness of his style of wickedness made the excessive wickedness of some good people's goodness look very wicked, indeed.

To this nearly overwhelming rush of contending forces, Robert at times submitted quite unresentingly. He knew appearances were certainly against him. He also knew that there was never a crisis at which liberty of individual action was to be more demanded by men and women than at this crisis at the end of the nineteenth century. Only those can understand Robert's troubles who are touched with a feeling of that infirmity under which a brain staggers when the inflow of psychical life is to the full, as much as even the rapidly expanding brain-

cell can carry. For he was still trying to keep his place in the outer world, while passing through such stress of mental weather as is better borne in seclusion, if such seclusion can anywhere be found in these too public times. For only those can carry this inflow of mental-afflatus who have been taught to know that this pressure on the brain-cells will but happily result in an increase of the brain's capacity to commodiously entertain the life that comes into these cells, if but this inflow of mental afflatus can be met with heroic faith and fortitude, *well instructed*.

Daniel was his helper, and had told him that persons who were rightly taught these scientifically-religious facts do not fear, but on the reverse, *exult* in this brain-cracking-pressure; being upheld by their faith that the pressure, endured as a good soldier of the cross should endure it, will but result in the upbuilding of more brain-cells, which will then serve gloriously as enlarged receptacles for the incoming of more brain substance; with the further result that as this development goes forward these good workers will construct a brain-building fitted to carry on an order of cerebation, finer and inconceivably swifter and more reliable than that which is now dreamed of by man as possible.

But well assisted though he was by the dear old Daniel (who had walked that way before him), Robert was at a crisis when he was getting all the inflow of spiritual afflatus that he could carry. And he decided if Elkhorn were to be at the little evening "conversations," dear to the Dakshas, this judge should not be allowed to badger him into discussing psychical matters, about which the judge was as uneasily curious as he was unenlightenable. For Daniel knew that such "growing pains" as afflict men whose mentalities are being adapted to the psychic burden they have to bear, are, to men devoid of these higher inspirational benefits, the unknown quantity in the problem of life. And he considered these experiences used to be called "strivings after God" and "visitations of grace" by Christians of the true spiritual type of the older time. And he believed that in turning his back on

all forms of religion, Elkhorn had turned his face away from the very facts of spiritual development which he was yet curious to dissect now, as a new psychical scientific development.

But Daniel knew that was a time (as it is even now in 1898) when a pressure was being brought to bear on the Committee of the Judiciary at the National Capitol, by a steadily increasing number of men, who (engaged in a religio-politico pull, year after year,) were trying to thrust on this country a credal-constitution, by putting in a compulsory-religion amendment. Though the National Constitution distinctly provides for the exercise of liberty of conscience, and for the full right of the individual to self-government and self-expression. He believed intelligent, alert persons all knew that the insertion of the proposed words would not amend but would *annul* and abrogate the National Constitution of this American Republic; a Constitution whose preamble states, that we hold it to be self-evident that men are born free, and have a right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and whose whole tenor is to protect the individual in freedom of thought and self-expression, and to protect every one from being politically discriminated against on account of religious or non-religious views.

Daniel knew that at a recent hearing at the National Capitol, the Chairman of the Judiciary had said to the man who was editor of a paper called the *Christian Statesman*, and the maker of the little "Christian Manual," in conformity with which he more or less modestly expected to have our American constitutional-liberty annihilated: "I see you refer to God the Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ as Ruler of the Nation? Why not to the Holy Spirit?" And in reply to this, the *Doctor of Divinity* had made answer: "It is not revealed to us that the *Holy Spirit* has relations to nations."

So after such an answer as that, of course Daniel was sure that while people might not blame the man who, as a subject of the British lion, was little likely to have had it revealed to him that a HOLY *Spirit* has relations to nations, yet that their common sense would recognize that

the ignorance which an unfortunate-national-environment had brought upon this Doctor of Divinity did not very specially fit him to go about trying to wipe out other people's Constitution with his little "Manual."

Daniel knew that lofty souls from Africa, Asia, the nations of the Mediterranean and the islands of the sea (represented here as voting citizens allegiant to our National Constitution) had age-long been taught that life, *Life Itself*, is dependent on that Holy Spirit — the feminine in Deity — which continuously broods all-that-is into order; and he claimed no government but the one dominated by that desecrator of womanhood, Henry Tudor, and his followers, would wish to thrust the Holy Spirit out of "relations to nations"; and that *that* government (?) whose hand is against every other knows well that if it can but starve, evict, stupefy and slay our people through annihilating their national money, their national lands, their religious liberty and (that once protective agency) their patriotic navy and army *made up of American citizens*, it can then easily entrap what is left into the present religio-politico-pull, which is bent on establishing on earth that particular form of hell that riots wherever that plundering, preaching, prostituting government (?) makes its lair.

It was a wild epoch. And the increasing ecclesiastic assumptions of a new influx of salary-seeking teachers (?) was on the way to injure the simple purity of faith with which the religiously-philosophical science of the evolution of man had previously been bettering American society; and some men's hearts were failing them for fear.

But Daniel Daksha, who had been a simple-souled, devoted man from his cradle-days upward, and who had suffered many things for the truth's sake, had no fear. For he was a prophet, and had known that in the last days it would come to pass that "the mountain of the Lord's house would be exalted and would be established in the top of the mountains, and that all peoples would flow up to it." He believed this was "the Woman Age," and he was not among the men whose hope of existence lies in swamping women's power, either by its subjection to

animal-abuse in the home or in the shambles; wherein he believed the new movement was putting woman up as a licensed article, sellable for revenue to the would-be on-coming government of the brute, by the brute, and for the brute,—a would-be on-coming style of government which, in its nature, counts woman out of it, because she is human; and the brute-rule has set itself to consume her, when having annihilated her individuality, religiously and politically, it shall then have turned her into a “commodity,”—a commodity to be bought and sold in marriage and out, for the consumption of that brute-rule, to whom “it is not revealed that the *Holy Spirit* has relations to nations.”

In view of all these things, the Dakshas were more than content to have at their home not whist-parties and dancing-parties, but free discussions of these things.

CHAPTER VI.

ONE evening after Judge Elkhorn's arrival in the family when many guests were present, he opened up his warfare with Robert against credulity.

Robert with a glance laid the discussion in Ethel's hands, and then she said: "But if you should succeed in annihilating the reverence which people have for their different forms of religion, and should get them to believe they have nothing to do but eat, drink and die and decay, would they not so eat, drink and be merry as to decay before they died, and yet live long enough to multiply what you call 'dangerous classes'?"

"O!" said the judge, "I would enforce temperance, because I believe people get more happiness out of life by being decent."

"But suppose others think they get more happiness by being indecent, what then? What more has your belief to do with their affairs than the belief of religious people has to do with your affairs?"

"Well, of course, as to that," said the judge, with honest hesitation, "freedom given to the ignorant and passionate would annihilate society, and reduce countries to conditions of carnage. The problem is difficult, because ignorance is so brutish that brute force has to be used to repress it."

"Don't repress it, enlighten it," said one Paul Palmer, swiftly.

But Elkhorn, lifting his voice a little, swung on: "And so it comes about that we have to control brutishness by brute force, or we have to make a compromise with it, by regulating it through license laws so as to repress its encroachments on law-abiding people."

"Where do you get your law-abiding people?" said Palmer; for Elkhorn spoke with the high air of one who has uttered that "last word"

which so many are struggling to put forth in these last days; and had turned a crushing gaze on flippant Paul Palmer.

"What!" said Ethel, "license evil so as to gain freedom from it? A liberty-league man must know that liberty granted to all women and men is based on such freedom for each, that no one is accountable to any other, and therefore no one is empowered to either forbid or grant any act to anyone. Therefore, liberty is inherent only in —"

"Oh, you're getting on fast," the judge interrupted. "On such grounds as that we should have anarchy. Besides, leave out all religion when you talk to me."

"— inherent only in the real individual. Therefore we want to secure that simple form of education to all, which will create a citizenship of real individuals," said Ethel, with an amiable but marked imitation of Elkhorn's manner of riding on serenely to the end of his subject; — a bit of *esprit* which amiably amused him and them all, without distracting attention from the argument. And she continued:

"Judge Elkhorn, if you believe in granting license, you believe in stultifying liberty. For liberty to all leaves no man to grant or forbid anything to anyone. License is the antagonist of liberty. For liberty is the use of law, and license is the abuse of law.

"Briefly then, in this country, where everything consistent with the right of others is already constitutionally conceded to each one, the attempt to give anything more to anyone, is an encroachment on liberty. For it is plain that if among ten people everything is granted to each one which is consistent with the liberty of the other nine, then to grant more to five of the ten is to encroach on the other five, and at once converts the favored five into masters, and fixes the status of the other five as slaves. This has been done. The result is, liberty has been dethroned, and licentiousness is set up in her place."

"But," said Elkhorn, "if it were agreed to all around, for the sake of peace?"

"It would be an agreement to dethrone liberty, and the compactors

would be traitors and self-made slaves; and war, not peace, would be the result. But it has never been agreed to all around. I never agreed to it. It was done by trickery and the feebleness of the enslaved, with the result that for the lack of courage to stand by the law of liberty, we have all become the slaves of license, and not peace, but war prevails concerning every question which is before the country, yes, before the world,— Europe, Asia, Africa, America and the islands of the sea.”

“Miss Daksha,” said Palmer, “according to your opinion, how did all this muss creep in?”

“In this era it practically was never out,” said Ethel. “Liberty, as formulated in the preamble of our Constitution, has failed of practicalization, because people were not, and are not, up to the level, requisite to even mentally grasp the idea. It is God-like, and far beyond the popular ideal of what God is like. And what makes matters worse, it is beyond what the average pulpit now claims God is like. But shall we feel badly about all this? No; let us rather say, that as yet we have not had time, conveniences nor methods adequate to the evolution of the ideal commonwealth of the United States, into which individual intelligence will be presently annealed.”

The power of her thought reached every mind there, poorly as these words convey it on paper. But to invite fuller explanations, Mrs. Daksha said: “Ethel, what precisely do you mean by commonwealth? Anything in the ordinary communistic line, or on the Bellamy idea?”

“Please take from my words the simplest dictionary sense of them, quite unrelated to any elaborated theory,” said Ethel, with that comfortable assurance which comes to each of us, that anyone ought to know what *we* are talking about, however misapprehended other theorists have chosen to make themselves to be, by their play upon words.

“According to my idea,” said Ethel, “Commonwealth consists in the common services which each can perform to others, in releasing and distributing those natural commodities which earth, water, air and the spiritual substance of the universe put potentially into the possession of each individual.”

“Ye Goths!” ejaculated Judge Elkhorn. “You are going into things deep and high.”

“Things deep and high have gone into the question. That’s what makes an intelligent handling of it so difficult on the part of the gold-worshipping, materialistic class of irreligious-religionists who are trying to annihilate our present *real* constitutional Theodicy, a *natural* Theodicy in which ‘the voice of the people’ (might it be really but heard) is the voice of God, the Holy Spirit; that spirit which Churchianity declares before our judiciary ‘has not relations to nations’; and which that set of people apparently intend shall not have, if that *vox populi*, which is ‘the voice of God,’ can be silenced,” said Daniel Daksha.

“It must be gone into deep, broad and high, if we are going to handle it on the square,” said Palmer, who was a most intelligent freemason.

“In politely giving the masses possession of the universe,” said Elkhorn satirically, “how would you regulate people’s way of taking possession and working and sharing?”

“If once we rightly got hold of the principle at stake, that matter would regulate itself. I accept the natural distinctions which now actually exist, and which really will eventually control everything, in spite of all our artificial attempts to the contrary.”

“For instance,” said Elkhorn.

“Will you admit that as we go on now, it takes much of our time to make and enforce laws for building up and hedging in artificial distinctions? And the rest of it to crush out those real distinctions that inhere in the nature of things?”

“For instance,” said Elkhorn again.

“I see Mr. Palmer has made a note of my definition of commonwealth,” said Ethel. “So instead of giving instances of what I mean by artificial distinctions, I will repeat my definition of commonwealth, and go on. Commonwealth consists of the common-sense service which each can perform to the other, by releasing and distributing

those natural commodities, which earth, air, water and the spiritual substance of the universe, put potentially into the possession of each individual. This commonwealth, then, is divisible into three classes of valuables; namely, personal common-sense services; secondly, the natural 'commodities' of earth, water and air, and the spiritual substance-of-the-universe, and for the third class of values — '*credits.*'

"Now my happy philosophy of the matter points to the fact, that one's natural (not his artificial) desires are in the line of his ability, duty and destiny. So that if each man and woman is left free to follow intelligently his and her desires, each will attain the true development and best use of self, for self and others. Thus, a real civil service will come about, not by expending millions of dollars and days in arbitrarily dictating ways and measures by which individuals shall civilly be serviceable, but by leaving each individual intelligently and blithely free to use self-inherent possessions in a way which will occasion a self-adjusting supply of everything to the demands of everybody. This will naturally release and distribute first, personal services; second, the commodities which fill earth, air, water and the spiritual substance-of-the-universe, and will bring into play the third element in the class of values, recognized in the system of social economics; namely, credits."

"But what will be your medium," said Elkhorn dubiously, "of exchange?"

"Time," said Ethel simply. "For of course to meet the orderly demands of each and all, with an orderly supply, will take a great deal of time. But then we each have *all the time there is*; and this, at the start, equalizes the distribution of *that* medium of exchange. And our bank can never fail us, for when our drafts on it are *very* large, we will still have reserves of it in eternity. So time is the medium of exchange for the common-sense services which will release and keep in distributive-circulation the common-wealth-commodities of which earth, water, air and the spiritual-substance-of-the-universe make each of us pos-

sessed. (Silence invited her to go on.) Time is a commodity, for as we all know, 'commodities are a class of valuables organic and inorganic, which may be fitted by human effort to satisfy human desires.'

"Franklin used to say 'Time is money,' but the point I make is, that time is *value per se*; so intrinsic in quality, so invariable in quantitative supply, that it is the natural medium of exchange for all the valuables precious to a morally sustained government of people, by and for people. But, though time is value, it is difficult to place an exact valuation on time without asking, Whose time? And that would seem like asking, Whose rain, whose air, and whose sunshine? Yet it is impossible to place an exact valuation on time without first getting an answer to the question, *Whose* time, whose services? For the value of a person's services depends on the use which the servitor has theretofore made of his or her time. So here comes in the matter of personal 'credits.' So, in coming toward your question, Judge Elkhorn, concerning distinctions as to the way of 'working and sharing,' we might take it as an axiom in the morals of social economics, that the value of personal services, broadly considered, is measurable by the *use* which the servitor has heretofore made of his or her time. And as time is the medium of exchange, a person who has not theretofore made skilled use of his time, might wish to contribute more of it to help out the works of a person who has made great use of his time. This would only include that one day from many people would have to be given to execute the plans which another person might have potentially worked out in the hours of a vision-filled night, as these plans thus led the way into that which would advance the interests of all concerned. All this, American economists of two hundred years ago must have known; judging by the zeal with which, in the midst of their straightened circumstances, they held themselves to the business of developing the capacity of children (the born citizens of their ideal on-coming Republic). These true human-economists bound themselves to culti-

vate in humanity a capacity to utilize *time*. For the development in each little citizen of the capacity to *well-use-time*, enabled each such well-developed person to hold the other in well-poised personal liberty; while each chose for self such an order (or such orders) of personal service as makes each one to be of most value to himself and others."

"Oh, oh, oh!" ejaculated the judge. "Who are the fellows who really did this? Name them, do, Miss Daksha."

Ethel halted at this onslaught from the man who claimed to believe of everybody and everything only what his external senses revealed to him concerning them. Everybody laughed good-naturedly; and Ethel laughed with them at herself. For she knew there was a line between things, perceivable only to the inner senses and those perceptible to the outer senses. But she, like her father Daniel, was a dreamer who worked; and therefore took care to protect herself from seeming like a dreamer who *lied*, as she saw Elkhorn thought and meant to hint to her that she was. She felt what she said was truth, as to the interior aspirational thoughts which were held by many women and men, who, like Hawthorne, Emerson and others of earlier date, had philosophized, romanced and poetized over common-sense facts, and had thus enthroned them; till they now, at least, were lodged in the memories of men like Elkhorn, as entertaining fictions.

Luckily for Ethel she had a merry soul, as well as a philosophically religious one. And, too, she had the faculty of standing off at a distance from herself in a way that enabled her to see herself as others saw her. She was not self-conceited, though to others she seemed so. If she had been, her gift of seeing herself as others often saw her (so frequently was she misunderstood), would have many times a day taken down her self-conceit.

She saw the confusion in Elkhorn's mind concerning her. She knew he was a stoical man, and had no power of imaging the unseen. He was like the men of that class which long ago sprung up and outlawed the poets, and repressed everything of that sort (music included, I be-

animal-abuse in the home or in the shambles ; wherein he believed the new movement was putting woman up as a licensed article, sellable for revenue to the would-be on-coming government of the brute, by the brute, and for the brute,—a would-be on-coming style of government which, in its nature, counts woman out of it, because she is human ; and the brute-rule has set itself to consume her, when having annihilated her individuality, religiously and politically, it shall then have turned her into a “commodity,”—a commodity to be bought and sold in marriage and out, for the consumption of that brute-rule, to whom “it is not revealed that the *Holy Spirit* has relations to nations.”

In view of all these things, the Dakshas were more than content to have at their home not whist-parties and dancing-parties, but free discussions of these things.

CHAPTER VI.

ONE evening after Judge Elkhorn's arrival in the family when many guests were present, he opened up his warfare with Robert against credulity.

Robert with a glance laid the discussion in Ethel's hands, and then she said: "But if you should succeed in annihilating the reverence which people have for their different forms of religion, and should get them to believe they have nothing to do but eat, drink and die and decay, would they not so eat, drink and be merry as to decay before they died, and yet live long enough to multiply what you call 'dangerous classes'?"

"O!" said the judge, "I would enforce temperance, because I believe people get more happiness out of life by being decent."

"But suppose others think they get more happiness by being indecent, what then? What more has your belief to do with their affairs than the belief of religious people has to do with your affairs?"

"Well, of course, as to that," said the judge, with honest hesitation, "freedom given to the ignorant and passionate would annihilate society, and reduce countries to conditions of carnage. The problem is difficult, because ignorance is so brutish that brute force has to be used to repress it."

"Don't repress it, enlighten it," said one Paul Palmer, swiftly.

But Elkhorn, lifting his voice a little, swung on: "And so it comes about that we have to control brutishness by brute force, or we have to make a compromise with it, by regulating it through license laws so as to repress its encroachments on law-abiding people."

"Where do you get your law-abiding people?" said Palmer; for Elkhorn spoke with the high air of one who has uttered that "last word"

which so many are struggling to put forth in these last days; and had turned a crushing gaze on flippant Paul Palmer.

"What!" said Ethel, "license evil so as to gain freedom from it? A liberty-league man must know that liberty granted to all women and men is based on such freedom for each, that no one is accountable to any other, and therefore no one is empowered to either forbid or grant any act to anyone. Therefore, liberty is inherent only in —"

"Oh, you're getting on fast," the judge interrupted. "On such grounds as that we should have anarchy. Besides, leave out all religion when you talk to me."

"— inherent only in the real individual. Therefore we want to secure that simple form of education to all, which will create a citizenship of real individuals," said Ethel, with an amiable but marked imitation of Elkhorn's manner of riding on serenely to the end of his subject; — a bit of *esprit* which amiably amused him and them all, without distracting attention from the argument. And she continued:

"Judge Elkhorn, if you believe in granting license, you believe in stultifying liberty. For liberty to all leaves no man to grant or forbid anything to anyone. License is the antagonist of liberty. For liberty is the use of law, and license is the abuse of law.

"Briefly then, in this country, where everything consistent with the right of others is already constitutionally conceded to each one, the attempt to give anything more to anyone, is an encroachment on liberty. For it is plain that if among ten people everything is granted to each one which is consistent with the liberty of the other nine, then to grant more to five of the ten is to encroach on the other five, and at once converts the favored five into masters, and fixes the status of the other five as slaves. This has been done. The result is, liberty has been dethroned, and licentiousness is set up in her place."

"But," said Elkhorn, "if it were agreed to all around, for the sake of peace?"

"It would be an agreement to dethrone liberty, and the compactors

would be traitors and self-made slaves; and war, not peace, would be the result. But it has never been agreed to all around. I never agreed to it. It was done by trickery and the feebleness of the enslaved, with the result that for the lack of courage to stand by the law of liberty, we have all become the slaves of license, and not peace, but war prevails concerning every question which is before the country, yes, before the world,— Europe, Asia, Africa, America and the islands of the sea.”

“Miss Daksha,” said Palmer, “according to your opinion, how did all this muss creep in?”

“In this era it practically was never out,” said Ethel. “Liberty, as formulated in the preamble of our Constitution, has failed of practicalization, because people were not, and are not, up to the level, requisite to even mentally grasp the idea. It is God-like, and far beyond the popular ideal of what God is like. And what makes matters worse, it is beyond what the average pulpit now claims God is like. But shall we feel badly about all this? No; let us rather say, that as yet we have not had time, conveniences nor methods adequate to the evolution of the ideal commonwealth of the United States, into which individual intelligence will be presently annealed.”

The power of her thought reached every mind there, poorly as these words convey it on paper. But to invite fuller explanations, Mrs. Daksha said: “Ethel, what precisely do you mean by commonwealth? Anything in the ordinary communistic line, or on the Bellamy idea?”

“Please take from my words the simplest dictionary sense of them, quite unrelated to any elaborated theory,” said Ethel, with that comfortable assurance which comes to each of us, that anyone ought to know what *we* are talking about, however misapprehended other theorists have chosen to make themselves to be, by their play upon words.

“According to my idea,” said Ethel, “Commonwealth consists in the common services which each can perform to others, in releasing and distributing those natural commodities which earth, water, air and the spiritual substance of the universe put potentially into the possession of each individual.”

"Ye Goths!" ejaculated Judge Elkhorn. "You are going into things deep and high."

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"But what will be your medium," said Elkhorn dubiously, "of exchange?"

"Time," said Ethel simply. "For of course to meet the orderly demands of each and all, with an orderly supply, will take a great deal of time. But then we each have *all the time there is*; and this, at the start, equalizes the distribution of *that* medium of exchange. And our bank can never fail us, for when our drafts on it are *very* large, we will still have reserves of it in eternity. So time is the medium of exchange for the common-sense services which will release and keep in distributive-circulation the common-wealth-commodities of which earth, water, air and the spiritual-substance-of-the-universe make each of us pos-

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Ethel halted at this onslaught from the man who claimed to believe of everybody and everything only what his external senses revealed to him concerning them. Everybody laughed good-naturedly; and Ethel laughed with them at herself. For she knew there was a line between things, perceivable only to the inner senses and those perceptible to the outer senses. But she, like her father Daniel, was a dreamer who worked; and therefore took care to protect herself from seeming like a dreamer who *lied*, as she saw Elkhorn thought and meant to hint to her that she was. She felt what she said was truth, as to the interior aspirational thoughts which were held by many women and men, who, like Hawthorne, Emerson and others of earlier date, had philosophized, romanced and poetized over common-sense facts, and had thus enthroned them; till they now, at least, were lodged in the memories of men like Elkhorn, as entertaining fictions.

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She saw the confusion in Elkhorn's mind concerning her. She knew he was a stoical man, and had no power of imaging the unseen. He was like the men of that class which long ago sprung up and outlawed the poets, and repressed everything of that sort (music included, I be-

lieve); because these things, according to these realists (?) led to lies, and were lies. All this was in Ethel's mind as she caught Daniel's eye, and they both laughed out cheerily. For Daniel had often been called a — (that name you know) and, too, he had been quite outlawed long ago by deacons, who called him a "rationalist." And then when he patiently inquired if they would rather he should become "irrational," he was churched for it. So when Ethel and Daniel had rung forth that swift chime of laughter, it had rung up memories of these things to the ears of all who heard it.

Her pleasantness and just estimate of others seemed to have cleared the atmosphere. And Judge Elkhorn said cordially, but a little quizzically, "Well, we'll take all that on the strength of our faith in you, Miss Daksha. But go on, and take your time."

"Yes, take your time," said Robert, accenting significantly. "This is not half bad that you are saying, Ethel, but it is quite a fairy tale to everybody who is listening to you, you know."

"On, on with the fairy story," said Paul Palmer.

"I am talking to you about the realness of these men's ideals; men like William Ellery Channing, Warren, Emerson, Thoreau and men of earlier and later date than either of these; men some of them who had the serious scholasticism which was held in the college of 'Mary and William,' of Baltimore. And I receive from them proofs that they had hold of the fact that the *spiritual essence* of the social economics of a self-governed people, was their goal; and that their idea of real social-economics included a full,—a supernal evolution of national moral-power.

"These men and women of early and later date steadily put forth teachings which impressed the fact that, to the faithfulness of the individual conscience, the liberties of the race were committed. And so I legitimately conclude that national moral-power must now be evolved by persons who, with leisurely intelligence, apply themselves to dealing with the commodities of earth, air, sea and *the spiritual substance of the*

universe as they engage themselves in graciously exchanging mutual services. America has such men and women, and needs many.

"There is time; there are personal services. What hinders us that we are not baptized in the water of life, flowing out from the throne of supernal power? A social waste hinders us, and that waste results from a fallacy which seeks to sustain the relation of supply and demand, on the basis of the legal tender of a money token; as if to say: "I know that man is hungry, the money in his hand shows it."

"But, Miss Daksha, we can't keep brutes in order with these elusive, transcendental theories," said Elkhorn.

"Yes," said Palmer, "the question is, How can we keep brutes in order without throwing license as a 'sop to Cerberus'?"

"To keep brutes in order is not this nation's problem, as woman, the mother of man, understands it," she answered swiftly. "We are not dealing with a menagerie. We are dealing with a nation of immortals whose native air is liberty. And as to raising the question as to whether all people shall be allowed to breathe their native air of liberty, that would be but insolence on my part, if I should name it. These, '*the people*,' are endowed with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. How, then, can any two or three people talk of keeping the rest in bounds?"

"But, Mr. Palmer, the simile is fortunate which compares license to a sop thrown to Cerberus, that hundred-brained-monster. For you remember in the Greek story, that sop was flung *up* to Cerberus, by those who dwelt *down* in Pluto's regions, and who wished to keep Cerberus down there to guard the mouth of Pluto's regions, and who wished to keep him content with being chained there."

"Do you see? It is in exact correspondence with the doings of modern Pluto-crats who toss the sop of license up to the enchained masses, to keep them content with conditions which are hell-on-earth to us all."

Such angelic tones filled her voice, such angelic pity illumined her paling countenance, as she said these hard-sounding words, that that

hell-on-earth appeared at once to be what it is, a hideous intrusion on a fair realm. And two men sprang to their feet, as if to smite the thing back to the under world, and deliver Cerberus from his chains.

Ethel stood beside them, one with them in the purpose; saying, swiftly, with the flame of a white-light-spreading through the very pores of her fine face:

“Hold to your present thought! And take home now the part of the story popularly forgotten: Pluto promised Cerberus, as a gift to whomsoever could release and bring him to the upper air *without the use of weapons*.

“The promise holds good today. But — but among the Greeks there was a man — Hercules. He did it.

“There are such men among Americans. Hercules did it. How? Certainly not by licensing Cerberus to remain chained down in Pluto’s regions. What Hercules did do, was this: he brought Cerberus a morsel fresh from the feast of the ‘gods of Olympus’; and Cerberus, at the taste, aflame for more, burst his chains, and willingly he went away with Hercules to the upper air, where such feasts awaited him.

“Men of America, the trouble with our nation is, there is a dearth of deities at our Capitol! There is still a lack of Herculean power! We want more there at the moral-feasts of our Olympus, the flavor of which would be new to our desiring, fighting, frenzied Cerberi! It is not that our ‘masses’ are so greatly degraded. It is that our superiors are so little superior; are, in fact, so much at one quality with the chained Cerberi, that, for the gift of Cerberus, no man has yet been able to bring him to the upper air. Worse than that, faith is nearly gone, that there *is* any upper air, or that there are at our Olympus any Capitolian gods.”

“No. The smoke of hades and the ‘sop’ flung up by Pluto are there; and the snapping of the jaws of the Cerberi-congress, as they jump this way and that to catch ‘the sop.’ These things are there,” said Elkhorn.

“Plus — some men who are to be honored,” said Paul Palmer. “Still,

that is only partly the fashion of that place," continued he; "the smoke of the torment still ascends. But the question there honestly today is, What is to be done about it? There is an upper air somewhere, and there are men in the Congress of the United States, and in the parliament of Britain, and in the legislative bodies among the peoples of every country in the world, who are seeking for these heights." He halted, then looking out from under his deep brows, in intensity of up-flaming hope, he said with ferocious directness:

"Ethel Daksha, I ask you, what *can* be kept restrainingly before the masses, if (according to your idea of liberty) we take away from them fear of punishment? If no man or woman is amenable to any other, will it not be grab, tear and carnage, by the hundred-headed-monster?"

"What is it now?" said Ethel, "when everyone is presuming to frighten and to dictate to everyone else? But I will ask a better question than that. I will ask if *you* are kept up to duty by fear of punishment? If not, by what?"

It was long before he spoke, and no one thought of breaking the silence, for it was a solemn one.

"Whatever rectitude there is in me," he said, "comes from an inherent repugnance to making chains for myself by forming habits that would fit me to dwell in Pluto's region. Yes, it is a repugnance to the smoke, stench and torment of the Pluto-critical domain, which was graphically and practically explained to me in earliest childhood, by my most vigorous mother. It is this deep-seated repugnance to moral smoke, stench and torment, which keeps me up to my idea of duty. And then, Miss Ethel, I certainly am not better than other men, but I surmise I was vastly better taught than some men are, from babyhood, and before birth. For, like thousands of men everywhere today, there comes to me a sort of homesick, perplexed feeling, at having to sojourn amid such 'hell-let-loose' conditions as (so-called) *society* today represents. But we all seem to be chained, paralyzed, hypnotized,—heaven knows what, and unable to break up the influence, which has its grip on the church, and which the church wants to clamp on to the state."

“Paul Palmer,” said Ethel, with Quaker-like simplicity, “if thy mother had been at the Capitol, those who now conduct like Cerberi would have long since known themselves for what they are — not brutes, but interiorly pure spirits — perplexed and homesick at having ever to breathe the miasma of the Plutonic shores.

“Look at this picture.” Ethel showed one of Flaxman’s engravings of Psyche in the lower regions: a fair spirit, standing in a dark defile, gazing upward in a maze of wonder, as with hope astrain. “Believe me, brothers, that is the spirit of the new age. A beautiful thing, intelligently expectant of soon being *itself*. We are all immortal men, and those whom Pluto seems to have chained, are not chained except by the fetters of one delusion — they deludedly think themselves beasts. But they are inherently of the so-called Dios Kouroi. And the Dios Kouroi know there is food in the upper-air, and place and pleasures there convenient for the hundred-brained Cerberi who are but undeveloped gods.

“Believe me,” she said slowly, a look of infinite joy glorifying her upraised countenance, “the Herculean power of the *Dios Kouroi* can, when ordered, bring from the upper air a morsel to the Cerberi, and without weapons win them away to the heights.”

Then to her it was as if down-reaching mighty arms, with clasped hands passed under her feet, lifted her with blissful enswathement to an electric oneness with delight-in-right.

Elkhorn felt as if he were walking on a wave of light, whose warmth filled the marrow of his bones. Feeling, too, he was one of the very gods for whom Ethel had asked, he opened his mouth to boast: “I have tasted, I can give,” when it all passed, and he dared not boast of what he now doubted having for the moment received.

Paul Palmer had covered his eyes, and stood trembling, white, radiant and reverently assured forever, that there was an “upper air,” and that there was a goddess there; and that for him life held but one purpose,— and that was to do Herculean work for the hundred-headed

masses who all hated their chains as heartily as did he. Masses all of whom would win away to the heights, to go no more down forever, could they but be fed with such morsels as these there, in that moment of transfiguration had tasted.

“There will be no more working against nature when in the near future the mountain of the house of Yod He-Vaw shall be established in the top of the mountain,” said Daniel, “for the center of gravitation will be established in the upper-air when woman, released from bondage to brutality, bounds up and stands at her post. Then all men will scale Alpine heights of purity, wisdom and wealth, for the love of the womanhood there, the eternal feminine in Deity.”

“Alpine heights! Woman there!”

It was a cry of rapture from beyond the portière, in the added suite of rooms which had been built on for Reginald Grove's use.

Ethel heard it, and explaining it as if she were double-brained, said: “He is in the garden of Eden, the place of innocence where spirits in liberty live, as live the lilies of God; neither fearing, fighting, nor desiring desires; but where, welcoming the will-of-wisdom, they become like the self-unioned One. See?”

With a swift impulse, turning on one toe-poised limb, winding so, her clinging gown about her svelt figure, with arms extended, head thrown back and face upraised, she stood, a radiant image of dual being, unified in cruciform.

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What had come to her? Had the ecstasy of the “real cross” drawn her up into itself? Had she for a finality won away into the company of those who unintermittingly do the will-of-wisdom?

Free and far through Emperean space on wings of vision fleetly she fled, gleaming from the gladness of the star-filled air the truth (known to the intelligences) of the meaning of that victory won over Semiramis, when defeated on the banks of the Indus she flew away in

the form of a dove. For the starry hosts were showing them the meaning of the "whirling wheel of Ixion," on which the spirit of the world will still be crucified until the coming-woman, by self-use, shall have expressed to the race her relation to the world's work, and worship; and so shall have healed it of its woes.

And the two men to whom Ethel was giving participance in all she was sharing with the angels, heard jubilates in the upper air, pitifully tremulant, yet glad, which revealed that the cries of the world are but the growing-pains which all endure while getting the growths that bring forth new forms of life, of knowledge and beauty.

To Paul Palmer's entranced uplook, it seemed as if the bounding moon, shining through the great window back of where Ethel stood, could hardly wait for gladness in going through the blue; where the sparkling stars were the dust of the wisdom of the ages, transmuted into the gold of those supernal heights.

And lovingly laughing together, the moon and earth and they seemed bounding through realms where old beyond compare had grown that seed-thought, which now, falling to earth, is sowing itself and springing up daily in the electrical doings of those who, inwardly yearning for it, put forth the deeds which the reception of this seed enables.

On, on, through spheres where the inhabitants know full well that the crassness of selfhood is but the undeveloped manner of the creature, as it struggles toward the real humanity, whose spirit is a form of WILL refined to WISDOM.

On and on — till — oh, ecstasy — next —
 "Ethel, my daughter."

It was to the three as if those words had buffeted their way to them across ages of absence and realms of peace. Then, somewhere in the star-garden it seemed Daniel must have met them. As friendlily near, with swiftness indescribable, they shot earthward together (or thus it seemed) lighting so, as a thistle-down alights upon the earth.

Ethel's eyes met Daniel's as he stood beside her; and with the

memory of how the star-seed was sowing the earth with thoughts for this new age, she cried out ringingly: "Was such bravery of beauty ever before seen by you, Daniel?" Then — "oh, I understand," she whispered hushedly, steadying herself and them all.

For she perceived what had befallen. But she well knew how to bridge the chasm between ecstasies and earth's needs so as to turn raptures into rational-spiritualized results.

Her first swift act was to concentrate on Reginald this focussed energy, in a way to fetch his wandering mind into harmony with the work of this epoch; not by sundering him suddenly from the realm he lived in, but by giving him an interior sense of the presence of those who stood there with her and with him, in that instant's transfiguration on the mount of vision, when altogether they were allied to the doings of the dualized.

Ethel never "lost herself" — as the term goes — in these ecstasies, any more than an eagle in the delight of its ascending flight to heights, even above the eyrie where it dwells, loses itself. It is an eagle still, and knows its way aloft and below. Nevertheless, she knew that when she went aloft this time, it was as if at the sound of a triumphal trump, persons there rallied and sped away with her. And upborne by her wings and seeing with her un-sun-blinded eyes, they saw what she saw, and learned what she knew. For when the urgency of her need rang through the silence, calling on life, that Life *per se* should show itself to those who knew it not, that the sight of it should baptize this household into fitness for the Herculean-labors of this epoch, she knew trusted helpers then, with an underlift, had upborne her and hers into participation with all-creative bliss. And that what they then learned no art, not even music's own, with octaves ever so many, can hint to mortal ears.

For what these seers then saw, tones, nor half-tones, quarters nor eighths, in octaves ever so many, not yet have learned to melodize.

"Grace of heaven, Daksha, is she living woman, or spirit only?" said Paul Palmer breathlessly.

"I only know," said Robert, in tones muffled by his heart's quick pulse, "that one day the spirit of harmony came and dwelt under the roof, where I had had cradle. And this is she."

"Yes, yes, it is the new Madonna," whispered Reinsvelt, Robert's artist friend. And he sped away out at the path from the house to the street.

"He does well," said Paul. "He goes to whiten white canvas with that white 'vision's inward illuminings.' Visions, which will 'pierce gross sight, and with mild persistence urge man's search to vaster issues, whose growing sway controls the growing life of man.'"

"He has caught the art-thought of the new age. For you see, Robert, as the pictures of the Crucified Man have tortured woman's soul to a devotion of self-sacrificing desire to rescue man from the cross which man's passions make for him,— so the new picture of that dearer self, in ecstatic union with the gladsome heights above, will arouse *men* themselves to become the sanctuary of nuptial rites. For see you not the meaning of George Eliot's most wonderful poem? 'Oh, Might I Join the Choir Invisible?' Robert, Madonna, self-crossed by the will-of-wisdom is Elohim; the cabalistic feminine-dual of the Hebrew. And it lacks not the mother there, but 'shapes it forth before the multitude, divinely human, raising worship so, to reverence more mixed with' WISDOM."

And Paul Palmer, like Reinsvelt, as if empowered by some dynamical battery affixed to the forces of heaven, sped away to write of new deeds for the redemption of that hundred-headed power, the Cerberi — the masses of the people. Seeing that we are all of the mass — *the high mass*.

For as Ethel, raised from private considerations, lived amid public and illustrious thoughts, those whom she attracted were attracted not to her, but to the *public and illustrious thoughts* which were her realest and most entirely creative self. So that the centripetal attraction toward this self was balanced by the centrifugal force which sent those

who admired her out and far away from her bodily-presence to work the work of that force which sent them on its way.

As had done Paul and Reinsvelt, so did the rest, one after another. For they speedily bethought them of deeds that should be wrought at once, impelled by the new force to high enterprise.

For the centripetal power that attracted people to Ethel was like that of the sun or of mightier Arcturus, never absorbing them emotionally into her atmosphere; but on the reverse, filling them with the vigor of God, and sending them to achieve newly discerned lines of public beneficence.

Thus Ethel suddenly found herself standing alone. For everyone had fallen away from her presence, away and out to do the will-of-wisdom. And for an instant she halted, with a sense of sudden and unaccountable desertion; forgetting for the moment how many hundred times the same thing had befallen her, after one of those mystical uplifts had filled with power those who had entered with her into the moment of full vision, and who from thence had hastened gladly down among the multitude to practicalize there what the vision had but illustrated.

"'Twas but that 'loneliness which inures to oneliness,'" she said to herself; entering then herself again into the at-one-ment with the divine purpose.

Then it came. And reeling under the sudden inflow of the might of the Eternal, as it surged through brain and nerve, she knew some great need was at hand, calling for all the power with which she was now being surcharged. Then arms trembling with the eagerness of a shuddering soul's necessities, closed around her.

"I have waited years. Love me, Ethel. I am friendless, distrusted and forlorn. Let me tell you fully now, my story and Regihald's. For I have a suspicion that haunts me, and I want to get square with all moral questions all round. But all stands still, while Reginald is as he is. It is time he was well."

In external stature Ethel was a grand, large woman. And with a solemn glorifying of her power, inhaling a breath which attendant hosts supplied, seating herself, she took to her arms her courageous friend, holding her commodiously, and saying: "Your hour has come. Tell me what you will. Your work is ready for you now, and you for your work, choose what you may."

And as great Isis might have held a woman, childlike in proportion to herself, so held she Alitza Roccoco, bathing her spirit in a *love* now again becoming known to mortals in this passion-wearied age.

CHAPTER VII.

THEN,—

“But Reginald’s mother died,” said Alitza, in a singularly half-muffled tone, as if she had been long going forward with the story, and now but made an addition. “Then Uncle George (as I called old Grove) sent me to a good school. It was thought by some to be very good of him; but there was much more back of all that, you must know. I was a thin ghost of a girl then; thinner than I have now become, and I had cross-eyes (as people call it), and I was sallow. But little Reg was used to me; so to come to it at once, the summer I was seventeen I came home from school to the old Grove place. There was no one there but one old servant and Reg, who had been suspended from the academy on some charge; so there we were together two months, as good as in a wilderness.

“The first thing I knew we were engaged to be married, and then nothing would do for Reg but a drive to Hartford, to the minister’s; but I knew the minister would not marry us if he knew we were both under age. So as quick as he asked how old we were, I said I was eighteen and Reg was twenty-one. And then came the trouble; for truth, of a sort, was always Reg’s strong point. And as we rode away together, married tight enough by the minister, he looked at me with absolute dislike, and wanted to know what I told that story for.

“I told him that as he had been teasing me for six weeks to marry him, and as I had at last said I would, some one had got to tell the lie; and as he hated to, I did it for him out of kindness. I felt bad about it myself. And then the minister had looked at us in a queer way; and Ethel, I was such a simple, ignorant little child, that I did not even know then what disagreeable thing the minister might have been think-

ing, other than that I was telling a lie. And I knew I was, and that made me color up; and that had made Reginald mad. And so the outcome of his haste to tie me to him by that ceremony was that he had called me a liar, and I had told him I hated him. Then I would do nothing other but drive straight to the old home, half frightened to death at what I had done.

“Then you must know, as we drove up to the house up came a common sort of a fellow on horseback; and the first thing he did was to joke Reg for riding with me, when he was suspended for a flirtation, at least, with a common sort of a girl who lived in the academy town. I was as mad as a lunatic at that; for though I understood nothing about such sort of talk, I loathed the least breath of it as badly as Reg hated lying. And while I was in a frenzy of wrath, and tearing away at both of the impossible rowdy boys, up came old Grove, driving in from somewhere with ‘friends’ to whom he was going to sell the so-called Grove place. The sight of me there made him mad anyway, for a reason that I can now understand; and in a minute the other young boor had let out all about our foolish work at the minister’s house; and, too, Reg’s affair with the other girl; all this — imagine it — was blazed out before those four men; mixing me, Reginald’s good straight maiden wife, up with things which I simply felt sure were very detestable.

“Well, I went to my old nurse’s room (she had always staid there in the family for my sake), and I got from her papers which auntie had gotten from old Grove before she died, and had made nurse keep privately for me, though he had hunted for them everywhere. For you must know that they were legal documents which showed that the estate we lived on and every cent of money on which he had been speculating was my money, which he, as one guardian, held in trust for me, and was bound to invest for me. So the more successfully he turned it over, the richer I was growing. Well, you see? But the point with me was, I knew the possession of this paper gave me a jack-wrench to put on old Grove, whenever I got ready. But I loved Reg then in a way,

and could not disgrace his father without disgracing him. And I didn't see how I could go to my other guardian without letting him know how bad old Grove was. My nurse had talked a good deal to me about it, and I had made up my mind the week before, romantically, that I would marry Reg and turn my property all over to him, and save his feelings, and keep him as rich as he thought himself to be, and give him a surprise the day after we should be married, by telling him all about it.

“What I did do was to take all those papers and my wedding certificate and get away, carrying with me a look as if I would just as lief kill anyone who spoke to me disrespectfully, like old Grove had done. I was hateful enough looking to get on quite well. I got a good place to do housework under the name of Jane Collins. I stayed there two years, saving money, and terribly frightened lest Grove or Reg should find me. Next, the lady I worked for recommended me as housekeeper for a half-paralyzed old man, because I was good, and as ugly looking as gloomy sin. I was a good nurse, and he said my touch made him stronger. He was kind, but rather romantic; and finally I had to tell him my story, because he wanted to marry me. I showed him my certificate, and then I showed him my other papers; and because I could trust him, I told him I had a plan of my own. I wanted a very fine education, and I wanted to put my other guardian on old Grove's track, so as to get my money all into my own hands clear and fair, and then make it all over to Reg, who wasn't fit to rough it, somehow. But that I had got to do carefully, for I was legally his wife, and so the money was his in a way; but that I would never be Reg's wife any longer than till the day I could find myself in a condition to be divorced, and could make him marry the girl who had been a good girl till he ruined her. My idea was that she really was (law or no law) his wife more than I was. Heaven knows I didn't want ever to see him again. Yet I had that romantic, real, dispassionate sort of principle which made me determined to keep my vow to do him good and not evil, all the days of his life. So, as I say, I was bound he should have the money, and marry the girl of whom I have told you, but whom I never could find.

“All this seemed just fun to old Mr. Mancredo, and he took so much interest in the ‘joke of the thing,’ as he called it, putting a lawyer on Grove’s track, and fixing things up a little, while getting at facts, that he grew better in health under it; and he had my eyes straightened, and gave me the best of teachers, of which he was chief. And with kindness, approbation, good treatment and all, by the time I was twenty-four I was not only quite handsome, but had everything all about my business in my own hands. But the poor little girl had died,—so somebody said, but I’m not sure,—and that took my courage down. And Reg was at West Point, ‘swinging round on my money,’ Mr. Mancredo said. But you see Reg had called me a liar, and I loathed the whole mess. But you see I had a woman’s pride in *being*, myself, *intrinsic wealth* of a finer sort than that thing called ‘money’ can fully represent. I wanted to know how to do well (and in a way which would be of marketable value) every sort of thing which could be needed in the economics of a broad social-system. It made me sick to see men, who inherently had nothing worth exchanging, quarreling so much to get their clutch on the ‘medium of exchange’ called money. But not to stop about all that now, I can only tell you that old Mr. Mancredo laughed so much, and had such a good time over my theories, that he legally adopted me as his heiress and daughter, and then got so well that we travelled all over Europe and the Nile country, and he made my guardian stop bothering about the laws of the matter, and appearances, and the rest of it. For why should I go back to Reginald, who hated me, and force on him my money as a gift, which he now was enjoying much better under the supposition that it was his of right? Besides, I was really punishing old John Grove most deliciously; and I relished that. For he was a singularly offensive old animal; and besides, ‘if your enemy thirst, give him drink,’ and he was awful on the money-thirst. And I was helping him to pour gold down his own throat, with just enough of a scare with every gulp to make life a terror to the old animal; and it was fun to me. But just before we sailed for the

Mediterranean I did send Reg one ringing slap. For I was angry that he was such a coward as not to have fought for me against his father. But then he was afraid as death of his 'old dad,' as he called him; just as his mother had been. I wrote to him that his mother in heaven would never forgive him for his treatment of me; for that she had left me in his care, as a younger sister. And that now, however low he sunk, he might look about him in the sloughs there, for any woman whom he met might be the sister to whom he had betrayed his trust. I did not mean to give him a chance to take much comfort in his badness. But I meant to do more than to merely put a 'death's head' at the feast of life which he had spoiled for me. I knew that this letter would put him on the wrong track, so that he would never look for me among the cultivated, scholarly, useful women, whom I intended to lead before I was forty. And besides, I felt it would give him an idea of the fact that all women are the sisters of all men, and that a man is a felon if he betrays their trust. So I thought this letter hit off all these things pretty well; don't you see that it did?

"Well, we travelled everywhere, Mr. Mancredo and I, and I cultivated a leisurely, haughty manner, and grew high-colored, with magnificent eyes, they said, and then I knew how to dress. And people commonly called me 'Mrs. Mancredo.' Sometimes I corrected it and sometimes I did not. The world was so full of tangles that I scorned to bother myself about names. I knew how staunch I was. And besides, I had such an innate passion for chastity and continence, that the other sort of life seemed as idiotic to me as to have dashed my brains out a little every day would have seemed. Dear old Mancredo called me a very brainy woman, and I valued that, and I enjoyed being good without letting anybody know it, if you can imagine such a notion. But then, always, Miss Ethel, I have devotedly loved my guardian angel."

She became silent, and the silence was preserved. Then —

"We lived in Italy several years. My mother was an Italian, and so

was Mr. Mancredo, and I felt to be the middle-aged, rich Italian woman whom, by adapting myself to dear Mr. Mancredo's language and needs, in his lameness, I was becoming. When he died I was as much a widowed heart as if I had been his wife. He called me always a truthful, sound nature, and encouraged me to believe that my last 'slap' at Reginald would sicken him of vice, which, by the way, he curiously enough did not believe Reginald was particularly guilty of. He said the false conditions of woman's environment had cultivated lack of frankness in me, and that a certain sort of farcical manœuvring even now made me like to put people in the wrong, to my own disadvantage, rather than to allow them to intrude on my business, which is true. 'You are too fond of being privately good,' said he, which was a funny fact.

"After everything was over and I had gotten back to America, Mr. Mancredo's lawyer (and he was my guardian) wanted me to come down on old Grove, whose touch was turning everything to gold. They had come out West here, and Reg was riding the social wave buoyed up by my money, and I decided to come West and take a look at him, with the agreement that at a word from me my lawyer should come on and fetch old Grove with him, for he was under close surveillance on two accounts.

"And then at the hotel I found the poor fellow, awfully gone down, and drinking away like a man with something on his conscience. I felt vexed with him for getting nothing but brandy-slugs out of all that money, for there were people who needed it, and could have used it if he couldn't. I found it was said that he was a fellow who was afraid of women. He had a queer way of looking at them, and his way with me was his general way. Perhaps he thought any one of them might be me, and the dread *wore* on him. But he did not know me, and I rather had to press myself on his attention, to try to make things come about so we could settle on a divorce. But my attention to him made him shyer and more distrustful than ever; yet he was perplexed by a half recognition at times, too, I think.

“He never knew me, though, till that night on the stairs when I asked him what would have become of that sister of his if she had been as unprincipled as he had been. And then, oh dear, poor fellow, that was the end of all for him! I have never been much to him, and never anything to anyone else, but I have always been true to myself and to my guardian angel.”

She stopped and gave way to the weeping that had twice interrupted her, then said, drawing a full breath :

“So I am honestly and only Mrs. Reginald Grove.”

“Oh, my good Lord!”

It was Reginald’s voice, in full manhood’s tone.

“Oh, go to him, Ethel, I am afraid!” said Alitza.

But Reginald, parting the blinds, stepped out of the long window and stood in the moonlight looking about him, with his hand to his head, gazing at Ethel, who, rosy-red with joy, looked into the eyes of an irate but not insane man.

“I have had enough of this talking outside my window. I tell you I don’t know where I am. Send for Mrs. Mancredo. She’s a straight woman, but by George, how she *will* lie. Why, Miss Ethel, I didn’t know you. You are looking old and queer, somehow. I’m frightened somehow. This room and place —? Send for Robert. He’ll take me round to my hotel in his trap, as he did yesterday.”

“Take my arm for a moment, and we will walk up and down the balcony,” said Ethel. “Your foot feels as if it were asleep, does it not?”

“It feels as though it were waking up. Get out, man! Hold off there!” said he, bracing back against the wall ready to strike out at Fleetwood, his nurse, who approached too much in the character of an attendant to escape distrust.

“I am here, Captain Grove,” said Ethel. “You are my guest.”

“I am your guest, Miss Ethel? Well, that’s all right then. You hear that, you peeping idiot back there? I’m Miss Ethel’s guest; but I tell you others, the whole posse of you, to keep away from me, or I’ll

knock you all down, like ninepins in an alley. They are for shutting me up somewhere. I have heard lots of talk about it, and if that dark fellow isn't a doctor, what is he, with his soft-stepping ways?

"There, look at that. There are my roses, not wilted yet; and there is my Petrarch. There's no drunk about me. I was here yesterday. I remember everything: only I forget some of it. Oh,—oh, Miss Ethel, what has happened?"

"Just this: you have been ill, but you are getting well now."

"There now, you're telling the truth. But when have I been ill, and where have I been ill?" said he, reassured, yet with the anger of a proud man fighting against the treachery of his faculties. "Look here. That's — *that's* Mrs. Mancredo that I hear crying somewhere. It breaks me all up to have that woman so unhappy. Come, Miss Ethel, if you believe in prayer, down on your knees, and tell them up there to keep paralysis off a fellow like me. I'm not half a bad lot, I tell you. No, indeed; I'm not half bad."

At last Ethel brought him to see that if he would submit to patient thought he would soon bridge the mental hiatus that now afflicted him, since his mind had been abstracted from things about him. But that only made him anxious to have one good fight with the best fellow there, to prove that there was nothing the matter with him, and never had been.

"Well, then, take me," said Daniel Daksha, coming up; his presence so full of blessed content that Reginald laid his hand in that man's with a comforted sense that "old Heem," as he was sometimes called, would see him through all right.

It was held to be desirable that Reginald should be saved from the sudden shock of the knowledge that as thirty odd years had been blotted out of his memory at the time of his paralysis, so now at this crisis of probable recovery the years which had since intervened, with their life of other worldliness and other consciousness, were swept away for the moment, like a dream forgotten.

Daniel's full comprehension of a brief but similar lapse from consciousness that had once befallen him, prepared him to help Reginald thoroughly.

Reginald was singularly, courteously grateful for the care which he saw had been taken of him, in bringing him to this private home. But his mind was full of shadowy incidents related to the two worlds in which he had lived. And Daniel well knew the terrors and mental perils of a man recently returned as from a far country. He knew Reginald Grove felt badgered and broken-hearted at the incongruous, conflicting memories which bewildered him; and he felt that presently, when Reginald should begin to recall the blissful states of existence now left behind him as in a dreamland, he would fall into conditions of homesickness for those states of exaltation, which might result in settled melancholia or suicide.

The possibility of this man's being mentally wrecked, after all the lofty care which had been bestowed on him, seemed a disaster which could and should be diverted. For it was Daniel's theory that a man who had gone through such an experience as this, should find a way to make himself of use to others tempted and tried in a like way; and that therefore he must pull through.

So rising to his feet, and standing between Reginald and Ethel, he said staunchly, looking at Reginald:

"Ethel, he is well now; and what I have to say is, that a man who has been so expensively educated by angels in heaven and on earth, as this Captain Reginald Grove has been, will of course be honorable and soldierly enough to review coolly all the extraordinary lessons he has learned, digesting the facts which seem confusing, and winning out of them at last an order of knowledge which will fit him to do for other needy fellows the same things which we Dakshas have done for him."

Reginald looked up with a glad, proud expectancy, now quite sure that all was right enough with him, and that he had had some unusually good thing befall him, which in some way fitted him to be quite a friend with the Dakshas, and a coworker with them in unusual lines.

Then with the strong tone of one determined to get at facts, he said : " Miss Ethel, what whitened your hair since — since the day on the balcony ? "

" It turned white in one night. For I will tell you this : there is a world where a day is as a thousand years ; and we learn fast in a few seconds there."

" And did you go to that world ? "

" I did," said Ethel.

" How did you get back ? "

" It was my inner self that went. No one looking at my outer self — my body — could have seen that I was away."

" Well," said Reginald, after a prolonged look into her face and his own memories : " I see that you are the same old truthful young girl, who said kind words to me one day out on your balcony, all about my mother and roses, and the goodness of wealth, and that you wished, with me, that I was but five years old. Now what you say would look to some people uncommon unlikely. But — but if you don't know about your own hair — whose hair should — " He heard an hysterical giggle.

" Oh, there she is at her old tricks. There's Mrs. Mancredo making fun of a fellow," he said irritably.

" But then, you see," said Ethel, " she's not been away, as you and Daniel and I have. But you will soon find your way back ; we did, though it seemed unnatural at first, and we felt homesick for the upper air. Sleep now ; in the morning all will seem more natural, and Mrs. Mancredo will help you."

He slept, and slept soundly. In the morning he was up early. What he wanted to see now, was Mrs. Mancredo. She seemed to him somehow to be his oldest friend ; and a homesickness for old, old friends had begun to lay hold on him.

He warily looked about. The doors were open ; he would go out. If any one stopped him he would know they thought him mad ; and if they did, he would knock them down and run. But no one seemed to

care where he was going. He passed Ethel and she bowed to him, with a cordial good-morning; and Daniel Heem, who was reading on the other balcony, bowed cordially; but it was all with the air that they were all alike, and at their ease in that house.

There were two men down by the lake-bluffs. But no one seemed to care where he was going. The air and the sunshine were good; and it felt strangely good (though queer) to use his own legs. He looked about warily, tarrying in the rose-garden. But no infant ever longed more than he for caressing love; and no man fired with wrath against some tormenting thing, felt readier than he to deal a death-blow. Yes, he would get away to the little old arbor in the shrubbery, and there, all alone, he would cry his heart free (he told himself) for something he had lost. Then crying as he ran, and running as he cried, he at last flung himself down on the breast of mother earth, longing for some unnamable treasure.

What had befallen? Realms of being had been opened to his knowledge, whose delights the repeating power of his brain could not repicture. He felt as if starving for what he had lost. He bit at the earth, with inarticulate cries of soul-bereftness.

Suddenly two arms closed about him, lifting him till his head rested on a throbbing bosom. They tightened till he felt himself swayed gently to and fro, while sobs, strong as his own, shook the rocking form which held him. As he lay extended, half along the ground and half in this sheltering care, there came to him something of that sort of peace in which his senses had been enveloped when he before had floated away into that child-kingdom from which he had had last night so rude an awakening. He waited wonderingly.

A hand pressed back the hair from his forehead.

"Don't you know me, Reginald?"

He opened his eyes and saw black velvet. Was he dead? Was coffin couch so soft? Did angel arms so sweetly clasp poor mortal form within that narrow bound?

Not yet, at least. For bending over him he saw black orbs and cheeks tear-flushed. The velvet was a woman's dress; and laces there rose and fell with the palpitations of a woman's heart.

It was Mrs. Mancredo; and she held him tight, as if she would never let him go.

"I thought you were my mother," he said.

"Ethel Daksha, do you mean?" she asked, after a strange pause.

"No-o-o, my own dear mother. I thought I was well dead at last; I wish I were. I have been so knocked about."

Presently he said, out of the silence, in a good common-sense way: "I must be awfully sick, or you wouldn't hold me — like this, as if — as if I were fainted, you know."

She shivered. "Don't you know me?" He sat up and looked at her, and wondered if he must doubt his own senses next. No, the flush on the dark cheek, the soft brown orbs and wealth of black hair, were all beauties possessed by his tormenting friend, Mrs. Mancredo. Like a summer night-lightning memory flashed, sending him to search her face to find in it — the link lost in his twice-dissevered life.

"Of course I know you," he said angrily; "and as I don't seem to be dying, I'll stand on my feet." And he gave her his hand, helping her to rise, with his wits all about him.

Something in his act and look whelmed the soul of this strange woman who had been his playmate from childhood up, and had parted from him on the bridal hour. And sinking on the arbor-seat she wept violently. With a scowl of distress and of another emotion, in which there was no liking, tortured by the mental hiatus which the sight of Mrs. Mancredo intensified, he said suddenly: "Why do you tell such falsehoods? I hate it in woman."

Astonished, and giggling nervously at his queer starts and turns, her eyes shining like lambent stars through the mist, chiefly concerned not to startle him, and falling back into the way which, as "little Alitza," she had had to use toward him for the last five years, she gently said:

"Well, Regie, I never will again."

“Oh, oh, they speak like that where I just came from!” he cried. “Tell me, oh, tell me, was it a trance? I cannot endure this cloud over my mind which is so thin that I can almost see through it, and yet so dense that it stifles me. Tell me all!” he pleaded.

“I will. Stop me if I skip anything that you want explained. You have been for quite a while with the Dakshas. I have been here, too. You have lived a double existence; and though I could see you every day, you seemed never to see Mrs. Mancredo, but instead, your thoughts were away in some other world and time. You thought Ethel Daksha was your mother, and always called her so. And once I dreamed, or I saw you, with your real mother and Ethel Daksha together in the unseen world, and —”

“Yes, yes, angels and my mother’s touch—and—Laura and Petrarch, and sustained ecstasies she brought in on my soul, flooding my very brain with joys, warm, white, flying joys — which — oh, it is gone, I am lost again. No, no, I have it. There was great whiteness, great light, Alpine heights and woman there, in the grace and glory of electric might, competent to make man mount as on wings, as eagle’s wings ascending heights, else inaccessible! I was a boy, always playing with joys, sweeter than wine and more freely fine. No one blamed another there, and no one hurried. And I saw always Alitza there; and nothing had harmed her, for her angels had guarded her at every step. Oh, take me back! No, no, I will not go back! You think I rave; I do not, I only remember too much at once. I must remember that Daniel just said — you heard it yourself — that a man so expensively educated by angels of earth and heaven must be honorable and soldierly, and gather himself to do for others what has been done for his redemption to good use on earth. Come, oh, once more try and bring me what I lack!”

“You know, Reginald, after we all had last night a strange, a heavenly strange evening, you suddenly roused out of your long, long inattention to what was going on about you. And now you seem to

have forgotten everything since the night five years ago when you quarrelled (are you listening?) with Mrs. Mancredo on the stairs of the hotel, when — ”

“ Oh where, where is little Alitza — playmate, sister, and — she, you — it is strange you are both such liars ! ”

“ Reginald Grove! You miserable thing,” she said in wholesome anger ; “ is that all you can remember about me — us? You are not worth saving.”

“ Oh, Mrs. Mancredo, you are — are only and honestly Mrs. Reginald Grove! I heard you say it. Wait, my brain can't stand it. You are — ”

“ Only and honestly Mrs. Reginald Grove,” she repeated. “ My only marriage is with you, just as you understand and remember its limitation, nothing more. We are all seeking a simple life here, with little marriage or giving in marriage, because the power of the angels, with whom we co-operate for the redemption of the Cerberi, is all and in all for us.

“ And Reginald, listen to me carefully: No one blames another here ; no one hurries or worries, or enters on wordy discussions of past blunders or future plans. We act, leaving no room for license, but taking the liberty to each one be his or her best self, according to individual judgment.

“ Now, Reginald, my permanent relation to you is that of sister. I have in no real sense ever been, or wanted to be, your wife ; neither shall I ever be. You will hear from the lawyer tomorrow how absolutely sisterly was the affection which impelled me to agree to your wish for our marriage, such as it was ; and you will see that the plans I laid in my own mind at eighteen, will be carried out if you like them, now in our maturity. I shall then be legally divorced from you, and — ”

She looked at him. His face was bright and cheerful, interested, and perhaps a little perplexed ; but above all, cheerful, alert and rather exhilarated.

She continued. "Remember this: We here are all dwellers on the threshold which is between things seen with the physical vision (so to say) and the things which are invisible to those eyes. We are chiefly interested in getting ourselves (and keeping ourselves) in right relations to the realms of supersensuous life, with which we may choose to surround ourselves. For of course we draw about us spirits, which in tendencies and longings are like ourselves. Listen to me: One of the family here, who has a far-reaching inheritance of psychic-faculty and self-poised spiritual power, is —"

"Is," said Reginald, "the one woman in the world who is, in a way, my wife more than you are."

Alitza sprang to her feet, flushed and with blazing eyes. For however thoroughly she ought to have been glad that the way was so clear, and Reginald so evidently relieved and ready to give her up, she was not prepared for this raw style of arriving at the conclusion. Till, suddenly, "Truth is his strong point, you know," seemed uttered in her ears, as if in Ethel's distant spirit tone. She caught herself up and steadied her angry pulse, and listened, trembling and expectant; but there was nothing more.

Then "Very well, you know your business and I know mine," she said, and left him.

He had all his wits about him, and filled with a sudden sense of the electric shock which Bertha's finger-point had sent through him on the day of Ethel's conversation with her, he gathered up (with a tingling sense of shame) all that they together had one day said of him, as being "a fool not worth mothering."

The blood surged through his brain, bubbling up cleansingly through all the stagnant cells, bringing him in its parts and as a whole, a memory of the things which had been going on about him for the five years of double-consciousness through which he had lived.

Later in the day he felt strangely happy, and clear-headed and proud, and ready for life; as if he had been assured by competent judges that

he was really a much more level-headed man, and had always been more level-headed, with a much clearer eye for the main point at stake, than anything in his stultified life heretofore had proved.

He saw perfectly well that the story of his life could not end here amid the congratulations of his friends over his return to health, and their assurances in relation to Mrs. Mancredo that he was a lucky fellow, with a wife possessed of such faithfulness and maturity of youthful power. For of course the story that she was his wife, and all the rest of it, had gotten abroad. And Reginald knew it had.

Perhaps if his mental grasp as to moral relations had been as bewildered as it was when, five years before, he regularly turned to his "drinks" in order to quiet his perplexities, he would have accepted the congratulations and slipped along the lines as publicly expected of him. But five years' immersion in the blithesome delights of a world where righteousness reigned, had fortified Reginald in his inherent love of truth and straightforward dealing, and had enabled him to adopt as theories to be immediately practicalized, the methods of honor (founded on simplicity and courage) toward which the Dakshas aspired.

So when a few days later he found Alitza had legally passed over to him a good little fortune, and had taken steps to secure (on some of the many available pleas) a legal release from the results of that marriage-ceremony, he said, cheerfully and blithely: "That's all right." And when he further learned that Alitza had deeded a further amount of wealth to Bertha Gemacht, he said: "That's all wrong; I won't allow it. I hope to marry her, and so right up things. And the other money is enough for both of us," showing that, as Alitza said to herself, "five years, even in the society of angels, could not rid the Grove blood of the thought that a man can cast off a woman when he chooses, and then marry her when he gets ready; but that, having married her, such a man felt it was better for him that she should possess as little of that legal-tender called money, as possible; seeing (to the Grove notion of things) it was sum and substance of independence. She told Ethel that

the irrepressible young hoodlum stood confessed at this touchstone, as far as his relations to what he would have called 'this sort of a woman' were concerned. Then she said to Grove: "It seems difficult for you to understand that you have nothing to do with what money someone else may choose to give to a third person, let that third person be whom it may." For quarrel these two people must, by nature. And glad Alitza was that she had always kept him beyond arm's length, and now had not let her sympathy with his sickness, or her joy at his recovery, cause her to abbreviate the distance between their ineradicable antagonisms.

"This is a different case," said he.

"All cases are alike here, for all are individuals," said she.

"But — she — she's to be my wife."

"That's what you don't yet know," said Alitza. "Pah, it takes more than a visit to paradise to take that sort of stuff out of your brains. I see the use of purgatory now. You ought to have gone there and staid longer. We've all agreed to let you drop, the next time you knock yourself to pieces. So look out!"

"All right, then, I won't take your money," said he.

"Well, leave it; or you can put it into the sinking fund for the enterprise of this family," she said. "No one is overinfluenced here."

And he did it that day.

And then the divorce was amicably enough accomplished, but the other marriage did not occur.

He said to Ethel afterwards, with wide eyes full of childlike wonder: "How queer! Do you know *she* refused me? I'm — I'm afraid, you know, she's somehow gone wrong, in spite of all your good opinions."

And Alitza, speaking of this remark, said, irate, to Daniel: "After all, it does seem as if it took a burial six feet under ground to get that stuff out of him and his like. Why can't they take to decency as naturally as women do?"

"Oh, all he needs is some real misery," said Daniel. "Leave him to get it in his own way. He has dreamed of heaven and languished sen-

timentially in paradise, but his business is now to pull himself up out of sluggish uselessness to others. Turning away that money of yours into the public good, is a hint at something courageous."

"Anyway," said Alitza, "Regie's as truthful as a dumb brute, even when he is tossed about by his instincts. He told me today that he had never had any feeling toward me but a brother's anxiety and sense of responsibility, and that he knew all about the property matter from the nurse; and that he did hate his 'old dad,' and had a sort of hankering after revenge; and besides, felt it was too mean for the old man to be cheating me out of my money. And when the nurse said 'there was enough for both, and for him to ask me to marry him,' he thought it would be about the only way to fix things up easy all round. Yet that when it was done, and we quarreled all the way home from the minister's, he felt sick of it. For he had no love for me like that. And the sight of his 'old dad's' fury threw him into confusion and terror, and a sort of dumb sickness, just as he had seen in his mother many a time. So he said today, in his simple way, he was as glad as anything that I had pulled through life so splendidly; and was glad, in a way, that we didn't in the least care for each other, and could be divorced all comfortably."

"It's a queer case, and, in a way, uncommonly sweet, take it altogether, as these sorts of confusing marital troubles go in these days. For I was privately planning to marry him, so that he could have the house and money that he thought were his own, without creating any fuss with old Grove over the affair. And he was chivalrously going to marry me (in fact did in a way) so as to deliver me and my money out of old Grove's clutches without disgracing his father. Of course it was all quite as if the question of managing the money were the one question on earth to be considered. Isn't it disgraceful? Think of the confusion that comes of unintelligent conduct, in regard to what real love and real marriage is. In a way, Reg is a lovable fellow, and has some common sense in him. He is my own cousin, anyway, and I

would do anything to save him except to marry him, and luckily he don't want me to do that ; so I can mother him still, as I have always done. I promised his mother I would do my best for him ; and I find he had promised to do the same by me. And I think we have both blunderingly tried."

"Oh, he'll be well mothered among them all," said Robert, when Daniel one day told him all this. "And the queer part is, it is my opinion that Mrs. Mancredo loves him with the soundest kind of a real wife love, whether she knows it or not. But as for him, he says he has never had a permanent attraction toward any woman except the mother of his child. And now she dreads him with a furious fear, lest he should somehow set up a claim, and get power over her boy. I've seen women like that before. I wonder where these transitional states will land us all."

"It is the great question of the day," said Daniel. "But manœuvres on the part of men to disguise from women the conditions of this crucial epoch will not help the cause along. Men must come into recognition of the fact that perfect frankness between men and women will lead up to a natural settlement of the matter as nothing else will do. In fact, it depends altogether upon the courageous doings of the dualized."

"Just what do you mean by dualized?" said Robert.

"I mean first, as Bacon says, the men and women 'who have procured the will to obey the reason, not to invade it.'"

"He called that the moralization of the whole being ; you call it the dualization. But you include something else," said Robert, "in your last meaning."

"Oh, that last point comes later. And no person is ready even to discuss that, until first the subjection of the will to the reason is accomplished by them and in them. That includes the real moralization of the whole being, body and spirit," said Daniel.

"And so, Robert," said Ethel, "it is mother-wisdom, full of divinest

love which impels Bertha to protect herself and child against what she fears in Reginald. But perhaps the same mother-wisdom, full of divine love, will—now that she is financially independent of him—bring her, in the near future, to be as noble a wife-friend to Reginald as ever a poor, struggling fellow-creature had. She is a noble woman, rightly considered.”

“She is,” said Mrs. Mancredo. “And she is quite the person to never rest until she puts one for whom she feels responsible (as she now does for Reginald) into the way of finding his best self. She wants to help Reginald exactly as she will Waldemar. That is, to tell him all the facts, and then leave him free to become what he adores in—well—that is—oh, how can one express it!

“For my part,” she resumed, “my love for humanity is and always has been broader, more intelligent and spiritualizing than a self-arrested, masculine soul can imagine. The fact is, men in the past have praised a *simulacrum* of womanhood which with dire ARTS and infernal-wizzardry they, themselves demonologically concocted. Then they have set up before the *androgynous* mind of a vigorous, virginal womanhood, this unclean SIMULACRUM of woman, as the thing that she must emulate, or be damned, to use ‘pulpit words.’

“It is of no use opening your eyes, Robert; I may take my departure the *next* moment, but I will tell the truth *this*. But the best way to stop talking disagreeable things is to set vigorously about doing agreeable things. So now what I have to propose is this: In this house we bachelor-maids (glancing toward Ethel) and MAIDENLY-MOTHERS who *enjoy* a celibate life, and who are legally and financially independent of men, should hold on to our shekels and our homes (NOT AS FOOLISH SOCIAL-CENTERS or as unremunerative idols, to be scrubbed and garnished, but) as centers where we can do what the Bible speaks of when it says, ‘He sets the solitary in families.’

“It takes so much time to run up and down the earth and to salary officers to show us how *not* to do it, that I would rather permanently go

right on here, ready for emergencies, with an occasional timely home-extension."

"Oh, I imagine that really would be about like our Daniel's idea, when I was a little fellow," said Robert. "When we first came out West, and when we had plenty of grain and three or four cows, and a well-built, sunny house, and the big windows full of plants, and an outfit of kinder-garden 'gifts' and Daniel's perfect knowledge of the philosophically-religious-science of child-gardening; and when I had agreed to buy all the clothes for as many children as happened to come to the door, and when we were hindered, because the mother there," he said, halting with a quizzical glance at Althea, "would not have all sorts of nondescript children homing themselves in our house. Your thought, Mrs. Mancredo, is about like Daniel's and mine then was.

"But, Mrs. Mancredo, my mother was queen of that home, and was a splendid homemaker, with Daniel's help; only in our case she was the money-maker, and Daniel was the family philosopher. Yet she would no more tolerate the thought than as if there were some moral taint, in being simply good to folks. And as Daniel was taking the part of mother-man and Althea of the *man-mother*, Daniel succumbed. Now seeing we are all telling the truth, JUST AS IF THE LIGHT THAT LIGHTETH EVERY MAN WAS SHINING RIGHT THROUGH US, REVEALING ALL THAT IN EACH OF US HINDERS THE GROWTH OF 'THE LILIES' OF THIS RESURRECTION TIME,—let's have the man-mother tell us, if she can, why she did not let other children share Ethel's ideal surroundings and true academical-advantages, which that man-of-men, Daniel, was so lavishly bestowing on one little solitary girl. Will you tell us, lady?" said Robert.

The giant was timid and fragmentary in his statements, like one whose brain was crowded full of self-adjusting ideals. His headaches made him distrustful of himself in these days. But better times were coming.

Althea, the man-mother, the business head of the family (for that she had been), looked perturbed. She wished Robert had not brought up

that question, either publicly or privately. She looked at him in a way that meant: "Robert, tell them it's no matter about it." But he did not tell them so; he wanted to know. They were all hunting for truth, and women were wanting men to tell the truth squarely to them, so that men could start *and eventually* "square the circle." By inference, women are to now explicitly unveil the remote recesses of their mental-hiding-places; and that was what the judicial-looking Robert now said blankly to Althea.

Althea, quite amazed, raised her eyes, so like Robert's, with a half-challenging shake of the head. But he looked stringent and unmoved.

She rose a little uneasily on her chair, quaintly folding her handsome hands, like a child who "did not know the answer." No one smiled. All gazed at her unflinchingly, every eye magisterially beholding her.

For all the years of the children's lives *she* had taken *them* to task like this, saying: "Of course you know *why* you do each act; or, of course you would refrain from action till you found out."

She had never been taken to task before, and had rushed through too many strokes of big business to submit to much interference.

It was not that she was unwilling to explain the facts of this affair: it was that she did not "understand such a little thing." So she said: "I do not know."

"Oh, oh, Robert, would *you* ever dare to 'NOT KNOW'?" said Ethel, folding her hands in imitation of Althea.

"Not in my wildest moments," said Robert.

"Why," interposed Althea, "what else would you have me say, when I don't? Doubtless it is something to do with some two or three-thousand-year-old-scare which some antediluvian ghost of you men put on my ancient shade, when you tried to tell as bad falsehoods as are sometimes told now, concerning woman's nature, duty and — concerning the *secrecy* necessary to be sustained about home-affairs, because of the untellable horrors prevalent within palace and hut, — where worse than brute passions usurp control over the priestesses of what — home?"

No, that is a word very generally needing to be illustrated by a new style of marital life. However, Daniel and I know what HOME is; and so do my children. There was nothing in our home which would not have bettered the world to know about. That is the reason I can't tell you *why* I was averse to have a lot of little children educated and homed and cared for with Ethel," she said perplexed. "Perhaps I was feeling stingy and tired. At any rate, I remember I wanted to get rich.

"But Daniel; consider what an exclusive home I was born and bred in, and how long ago it was, and what departures from old-fashioned dependency I even then had risked. The fact that of old, woman was chiefly protected in an enforced-penury, of which she was bitterly ashamed, tended to give her that preposterous fashion of (metaphorically) peeping out of doors and windows, and scurrying round to make the best of things before admitting eyes (much less individuals) into the secrets of the domicile where she slaved (as I never did); but where she did not intellectually and morally reign, as Daniel and I together did.

"Now, Robert, I hope you are satisfied. I have told the truth as to an age-long tendency in women 'to want their home all to themselves.' But other things and complications there might have been about it, too. I am tired of that subject now, Robert."

"But just one word. Why should women feel so afflicted about this penury business?"

Althea, for reasons of her own, did not like this following up of this matter, and Ethel took on herself to answer:

"The reason was and is, because the world is the continent of every form of life, knowledge and beauty necessary for all the needs and delights of an intellectualized humanity. So woman's discontent, anger and unrest at stagnant, self-stultifying conditions, are elements especially serviceable to her less alert and foreseeing companion."

Adding: "'The sense of beauty, *next to the miraculous, divine suasion*, is the means through which HUMAN character is purified and elevated.'"

"I like that answer well," said Robert. "And I think the power which beauty has over us all makes us more amenable to that 'miraculous, divine suasion' through which man is finally purified and elevated.

"Well, that's finely finished, and I think we are to be congratulated on the success of our attempt at square dealing," continued Robert. "But you know, Ethel, in the old days you and Daniel had some mysterious talisman by which you discovered if any *goddesses* came to town in the Civil (?) War-time days, when so many unhappy babies were likely to be neglected. Other kinds than the goddess sort you seemed to think were material not worth your time and attention. I have thought of your way of discriminating then, in association with the amount of time which you blessed souls have since seen fit to give to that Reginald?"

He put this in the form of a question, and Ethel said :

"There is in Reginald 'a little seed of immortal power, which will save its kind alive.' Therefore he was especially worth saving. He will help progress toward conditions in which the ARTS OF PEACE will prosper. For this progress is dependent on the *intelligibility of the doings of dualized* — self-harmonized natures. *He* will make such things intelligible when he gains equilibrium.

"Bertha, now, is such an one. She has come up out of the scath of great tribulation, and she has washed her robes white in the life-blood of her own bleeding heart, image as it is of the bleeding heart of the Mother of divine Humanity. She, the outraged, has become pitiful to him who crucified her and put her to open shame — a shame which she will never forget. And," continued Ethel, after a strange pause, "which I should be sorry to see her forget. For such dealings with woman are not to be permitted nor condoned. Nevertheless, Reginald is worth saving, though he should not be encouraged, Mrs. Mancredo, to suppose Bertha will have anything more to say to him than to —"

"What, Miss Ethel, do you really mean that you women are going to conspire to make all other women leave us men alone in peace?" said Reginald, walking out from his secluded chair in the corner behind the

portières, where he had half relapsed into his old fashion of floating away into union with *reflective agencies*. "Do you mean," he repeated stumbingly, as he came into their circle, "Do you mean that women are to be taught somehow to leave us men to mind our business? We men are dead tired of women, all of us; but we can't really get rid of them. We often feel like shrieking out at women: 'For heaven's sake, take yourselves out of sight and hearing for a thousand years. Get out of our light, and give us a chance to find *ourselves!*'"

"They take too much out of our self-esteem when they tell the truth; and when they don't, they take too much out of our esteem for *them*, which is worse yet, for our comfort. We know there is something wrong about us, but as we don't quite understand ourselves, of course we can't make them understand us. The reason I want to shriek out at them is — well — it is queer, but it is because I like *them so much.*"

Robert laughed out, as if he had a fellow feeling for Reginald in this difficulty.

"Now that sounds queer, but it is the truth, isn't it, Robert?" he said, with translucent, beautiful orbs raised in integrity. For Reginald was having an amazing good time, telling the truth as he understood it. But then he went on and told other truths so simply and helpfully, that they began to fear he was really getting sick again.

"See that? Now look at that," he said. "I have been listening to you, to see how much you would bear in the way of real endeavor at truth-tellings. And now, when I speak as plainly as I can, you think my brain is giving way. Now listen to me. If a lot of good men and women don't speak the truth about this matter of love, a lot of good brains will give way under the contradictory teachings that some sorts of churches are by silence consenting to, while protecting men in debauching woman-power, in marriage and out. Protestant churches never, in my experience of their doings, assist women to establish themselves on their own moral heights; even though these churches know that, standing thus and there, women would lift men up to these

heights, and so easily hasten forward man's truly human development. Besides, such women's sons would be born right the first time, and have less need of a second birth. Woman could do so much for us if we would only give her a fair chance to work according to her genius.

"You know how it was with LAURA?" Nothing could exceed his tenderness and devotion as Reginald uttered this name, once so dear to Petrarch. And then, as if reciting a memorized matter he went on in his distant, ventriloquized voice:

"If that idolized object of Petrarch's vehement passion had not held to her rectitude (notwithstanding the harsh vicissitudes of her home), that man Petrarch would never have known that *that* woman's personal attractions were not her *real* charm for him. For that *they* were excelled by her inherent moral glory and her spiritual-percipient.

"He would not have known that what he really adored was her *interior* SELF, which SELF it was his business by the grace of HE-VAH to develop *in himself*. And if by lack of rectitude she had failed of holding him up to the business of understanding her spirit (instead of merely possessing her personal attractions), he might not have learned the truth as to WHAT LOVE FOR WOMAN IS FOUNDATIONED UPON EVEN IN THIS LIFE. And in that case he would not, at her translation to the unseen world, have been carried forward by his love to THE TRIUMPHS OF SELF-DISCOVERY which befalls us when the Lord into his garden comes and the LILIES GROW AND THRIVE."

He was looking straight into the air as one does when remembering (or putting together again) the parts of a total, which, though perfect in its whole, is yet painfully puzzling in its stages of partial development.

He was looking into the air much as he had been used to do before his recovery of speech, when in mellifluous tones, scarcely audible, he had talked on in a language quite unknown as the listening Ethel upbore his highest intelligence, aiding him as he tried to tell what Petrarch had sought and at last had found in his "VITA SOLITARIA."

“As it was, after Laura’s translation to the unseen world his love for her spiritualized into a worship for that *love-full-of wisdom* which our Lord promised to send to lead us into all truth, and which he called ‘the Comforter,’ which was to dwell in disciples of holiness.

“Well would it be for us if we could first, chastely love all womanhood as sisters; and then as mothers, noble and dignified, which is far from being cold and proud. I am sure woman could (if we cleared her way respectfully) put us at our ease with her on her own supernal plane, without descending to us from it. If woman remained on her lawful heights she would leave us men always aspiring toward some veiled and virgin loveliness which would quicken each dulled spirit, and set it free from the chains that bind *thought* to the person, instead of to the *spiritual-principle* toward which, in reality, man’s interior nature aspires.

“Of course all this is only saying that woman is a help, able to meet her brother’s painful needs at this *fin de siècle*. And that she is awfully benevolent to do it, when she has a right to better enjoyments than that of the misery of birthing and burying babies — many of whom are not fit to be born — and to better enjoyment than this taking care of men, who are not fair enough to secure to *her* those advantages which would enable her to act freely, according to the teachings of supernal light.

“I have always been sure,” added Reginald, “that at a certain stage in man’s development the best thing a wisely-helpful-woman can do for a man, is to set him absolutely free from love to *her*. That, chained to *her no more*, she can then, with kind demeanor and dear reserve, explain him to himself by revealing to him the mental-mystery of that finished femininity, which is type and potency of the ‘sleeping beauty’ within his own being,—a sleeping beauty yet to be electrified into activity by man’s strenuous englobement of his brain substance. Thus, a fair face will conduct men by a fairer way to his one means of self-release from loving an extraneous self, and will bring him to the treasured bliss which will ne’er abandon the man who attains it! Thus man — like woman — will become wholly sexed: neither male nor female, but —

both ; being self-whole, self-harmonized, like the lilies of the Resurrection."

Robert had grasped Reginald's hand.

A silence had settled upon them.

Then Robert, with smouldering rage, broke forth relative to he — knew — what —

"And yet in the face of all this, think of the embrutalized form of marriage-ceremony which thrusts words into the mouth of a spiritual man who is suitor for a life-long union with a woman who is an image of the feminine in Deity! Think of a decent man having to take into his mouth that indecent, shabby remark ; a remark which is prescribed to him by a shabby-church in response to woman's enforced promise that she will obey him. The decent man is made to say (and worse still, the intellectually-hungry maiden is made to hear him say) 'With my body (why not with my brain?) I thee worship.' 'And with all my worldly goods (why not with his best intelligence?) I thee endow.'"

"Is there not some immediate way to lift the grace of fine living out of the sloughs with which a most materialistic on-striding form of religion is saturating it?" he asked impatiently. "It is you women who are to blame for upholding this materialistic-sacerdotalism," continued Robert.

"There is a way," said Daniel.

"And we will fetch it forward," said they all at once, steadying poor Robert, who had had a peculiar state of nature, added to a sight of "the better way," to rightly adjust.

"Yes," said Daniel, "there is a way ; and it is bourgeoning forth on every side. It is the Resurrection-dawn, for now the Lord into his garden has come, and the lilies grow and thrive."

AD FINIS.

“ . . . the lover ascends to the highest beauty (to the love and knowledge of the Divinity) by steps on this ladder of created souls. Somewhat like this the truly-wise have told us of love, in all ages; the doctrine is not old nor is it new.

“ If Plato, Plutarch and Apuleius taught it, so have Petrarch, Angelo and Milton. It awaits a truer unfolding in opposition and rebuke to that subterranean prudence which presides at marriage, with words that take hold on the upper world, whilst one eye is prowling in the cellar; so that its greatest discourse has a savor of hams and powdering tubs.

“ Worst, when this sensualism intrudes on the education of young women, and teaches that marriage means nothing but a housewife's thrift; and that woman's life has no other aim.”—*Emerson*.

FINIS.



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