

Gone West:

Three Narratives of After-Death Experiences

COMMUNICATED THROUGH THE MEDIUMSHIP OF
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OF TRINITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE

THIRD IMPRESSION

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DEDICATION

THIS WORK BY ME IS INSCRIBED TO REGINALD
LUCIEN WARD,
WHO FELL IN THE TIDE OF BATTLE WHERE
FLANDERS MERGES IN FRANCE;
AND PASSED FROM UNDER TIME'S FINGER WITH
NEVER A BACKWARD GLANCE,
FOR LOVE OF HIS NATIVE LAND IN BATTLE AGAINST
A HORDE.

AND UNTO HIS COMRADES IN ARMS OF EVERY RANK
AND CREED,
WHO GAVE THEIR ALL IN THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE,
HONOUR, AND TRUTH,
AGAINST THE POWERS OF EVIL THAT KNOW NEITHER
PITY NOR TRUTH.
TO THE MEN WHO HELD THE BREACH IN THE HOUR
OF BRITAIN'S NEED.



H. J. L.

Frontispiece.

FOREWORD

By Conor Mac Dari, Jr.

Discussions concerning after-death states usually end by the well known pronouncement that “Nobody ever came back to tell about them.”

In “Gone West” we have the answer to this because Mr. J. S. M. Ward, the author, did just that. He visited the Astral Plane regularly, retained his consciousness while there, and his book is a fascinating record of his experiences among the so-called dead. He describes some of the dangers ever existing on the Astral Plane in the form of evil entities who endeavor to entice occupants, especially newcomers, to yield to the indulgence of liquor, sex, and other sensual vices in which they had participated while on earth. These evil entities, who are as a rule former earth inhabitants, urge all among whom they mingle to practice the obsession of mortals and thus help to swell the ranks of the forces of evil.

On the other hand, Mr. Ward tells of the opportunities open for spiritual development and thus provides the reader with the necessary information to make the correct choice of companions and the paths to follow for his betterment. (In this regard the undersigned strongly urges the reader to direct his attention to “The Officer” Part II).

The following, in Mr. Ward’s own words from the introduction of another work on the same subject will serve to make his position clear: — “In giving this narrative to the general public, I have been actuated by the desire to bring comfort to others in a similar position of loss. I knew that the dead die not long before my brother died, but of the manner in which they live I knew only a little. Except for a brief account of the astral plane by W. A., and another rather specialized account by the Officer, my knowledge related mainly to the spirit plane. Of the astral plane under war conditions I knew nothing.

“The interest *Gone West* aroused has been shown not merely by its sales, considerable as these have been, but by the large number of letters I have received, which have been of the greatest encouragement. Those of us who are endeavoring to spread the true knowledge of life beyond the grave, are doing so in the face of opposition alike from the ordinary man of the world and from the ministers of established religions. Sometimes we are laughed at, whilst at other times we are called necromancers. Some of our opponents even go so far as to hint that we are not quite sane, but this has always been the way in which new truths are received at first. Nevertheless, it may be of interest to my readers to know that I am a perfectly normal man – one who is earning his living in business and who has every day to deal with complex mundane matters. The fluctuations in the rate of exchange, sources of the raw materials of industry, the German methods of trade penetration, and trade statistics are a few of the subjects with which I am concerned, and on all of which I have written articles and issued reports which are readily taken by the trade journals.

“I assure my readers that, from the financial point of view, it pays far better for me to write two or three articles on Openings for British Trade in say, South America, than it does to write such a book as this. I am not a medium plying for hire, as the daily papers would call it, and if you met me at dinner, unless I spoke of these things, you would find me no different from a hundred other busy men of affaires. Why, then, should the critics suppose that my ordinary clear business mind fails me when I turn to investigate psychical phenomena, or think I should waste my time practicing a heartless fraud on my readers? After all, those are the alternatives. If I did not feel that the message these pages contain was not merely true, but of vital importance to our sorrow-laden world, be assured that I would not thus publicly reveal much which is absolutely sacred to my personal life.—”

The later work from which this quote was taken, entitled “A Subaltern In Spirit Land” describes the passing of his mother and her arrival on the astral plane, this being the reason for the reference to his personal life.

The undersigned has been a student of occult subjects for over seventy years and I can honestly say that “Gone West” offers the best rendition of life on the astral plane that I have seen expressed in print. Those involved are performing a great public service in again making available this priceless knowledge so vital to the spiritual progress of humanity.

Conor Mac Dari, Jr.

August 3, 1974

INTRODUCTION

The manner in which these communications came to be received is plainly set forth in the book itself. They were due to the desire of H. J. L. to convey to me an account of life beyond the grave. He discovered that I was mediumistic — a fact of which I was unaware, although I have for many years been keenly interested in the occult.

The methods employed in conveying the information contained in this book were twofold: —

I. *Visions*. The first of these was prophetic, and foretold H. J. L.'s death. The first one after his death was very vivid, though at first I thought it was a dream, but nevertheless wrote it down. As the visions continued regularly once a week on the day of the week on which H. J. L. died (Monday), I was compelled to alter my views. In particular I noticed four chief differences: —

(a) They were coherent throughout. One of the most unsatisfactory features of dreams is the incoherency. Scenes shift from place to place without any regular sequence. People do things they would never do on earth, and the characters change before our eyes.

These visions were real through and through, coherent and logical in their development and, moreover, took up the narrative where it left of the week before.

(b) A normal dream fades almost at once, and it is rarely the case that it can be remembered in its entirety a few hours later.

The visions remained firmly impressed upon my mind until they were written down, which sometimes took a couple of days. Once they were written down they would tend to merge into the general body of remembrances which every mortal carries in his brain.

(c) The information was not due to the conscious or subconscious mind, for much of it was in violent opposition to my preconceived ideas on the subject, and it was some time before I would accept them, though I do so now completely.

(d) These visions contained verifiable facts entirely unknown to me, which nevertheless proved to be true on investigation. Some of these facts were of a personal and private character, known only to the dead man and one living person, and the latter admitted their truth.

Further, there were certain references which, to the writer, were unintelligible, but were recognized by the living person to whom they were related (as requested).

II. The other communications were obtained by automatic writing. With the exception of the first two or three, I was in complete trance, and was quite ignorant of what was written until I became normal again. The possibility of their being the product of my conscious mind is thus eliminated. With regard to the subconscious self, I would like to take this opportunity of protesting that while I am prepared to admit that such a thing does exist, I nevertheless hold that in most cases the word is a bogey set up by scientists to explain phenomena which they are unable to explain by the ordinary material laws, and which they are unwilling to ascribe to spirit influences. Yet, accepting the subconscious self at its highest valuation, it will not explain the presence of information which was quite unknown to me, and which, on its being investigated by others, proved to be correct. As an example of this, but not the only example, the following may be noted as given by J. B. P.: —

“I am only going to give you the name of a friend I met in this city. He is a Baptist, not a Congregationalist. His name is Richard Gresham Barker, born Oct. 20th, 1807, was Sheriff of Nottingham and a colliery manager at Babbington, near Notts. He died June 21st, 1892. His brother John was twice Mayor of Nottingham.”

It was only after considerable search that Mr. K. was able to prove these facts to be correct, even to the minutest detail.

But without devoting more space to these problems, for those who desire verifiable evidence may obtain it from any ordinary spiritualist society, let us turn to consider the matter given in these pages.

The original plan of the work as arranged by H. J. L. was as follows: —

The Astral plane —

(a) As seen by a bad man, viz. The Officer.

(b) As seen by an average man of the world, viz. W. A.

The Spirit plane, divided into —

(1) Hell, or the Realm of Unbelief, related by The Officer.

(2) The Realm of Half-Belief, related by H. J. L.

(3) The Realm of Belief lacking in Works, related by J. B.P.

(4) The Realm of Belief shown forth in Works, related by The Monk.

Owing to the enhanced cost of production due to the war, it was found necessary to reduce the book to a manageable size. To do this we were reluctantly compelled to publish only The Astral Plane, Hell, and the Realm of Half-Belief. As these are set forth in full, it will not be necessary to deal with them here, but a few words may be devoted to the two higher realms.

The Realm of Belief lacking in Works, as depicted by J. B. P., is much brighter than the Realm of Half-Belief, the light being as the light in England at about 8 a.m. on a summer's day.

To this realm go all those whose faith was strong, but narrow and rather bigoted, and who failed, as many do, to act up fully to their beliefs. In the lowest division of this realm the spirits are still strong believers in their own particular sect, and there is a marked tendency for them to remain there segregated into narrow communities. Their principal failings are self-complacency and an unwillingness to make any effort to progress higher, being often well satisfied with their surroundings.

In the next division the smaller differences between the sects tend to disappear, and a few broad communities take the place of the numerous narrow religions from which the individual spirits have risen.

Those who have come up from the Realm of Half-Belief, like J. B. P., do not drift into the narrow sects of the lowest division. They arrive freed of preconceived prejudices, and devote considerable attention to the study of the various faiths they find there, and endeavor to draw from each the vital truths which are enshrined in them.

Some of the most interesting revelations J. B. P. made were that the Gods exist, or, at any rate, the forms of the Gods, and condescend to answer the prayers of their worshippers. In particular, he describes a service in a great Egyptian temple at which Osiris appeared. Similarly, he has visited a Hindu temple, where Kartikeya, the God of War, presided.

He also gave a most striking account of a library in the Realm of Belief. "These libraries are on so vast a scale that they look almost like cities; there are many of them, of course, but each is divided into three sections. The first contains the forms of books which have ceased to exist. I mean by this, the actual volumes themselves. Of course all books do not come to us, many go to Hell"

"The second section is very different, for in it the books are not the forms of books made on earth but those created here. The best way in which I can describe them is to compare them with picture books. In short, they contain ideas in picture form, and can be read by us just as the thought-pictures of our friends can be understood by us.... Few books are written for the first time over here in script...."

"The third type are difficult to describe as books at all, for the picture idea has been carried out to its logical conclusion. The nearest thing to it on earth is the modern picture-palace. Imagine a large room; at one end is a kind of stage, on which perform what at first sight appear to be real men and women. These are thought-forms, strongly visualized by

the committee of scholars in charge of the room.... Thus an episode in History will be enacted in all its detail before our eyes.”

His description should be compared with the account by “The Officer” of a library in Hell.

The Realm of Belief shown forth in Works is seldom attained immediately after death. Thus to reach it a man must have been not only endowed with a strong faith, but must have risen above any narrowness of spirit, and, moreover, have lived a life full of love of his fellow-men. His faith must have been shown forth in good works. Indeed, those who so attain it may well be considered to have been saints on earth.

To this realm the spirits after death rise, but often by slow degrees, and once there, must remain a very considerable period. The light there is as the tropical sun at midday, and less advanced spirits would be unable to bear it.

The development of the various religious beliefs towards unity is set forth plainly in the plan contained in this work, but it should be borne in mind that this unity is attained not by watering down all faiths to one nebulous creed, but by the absorption into one community of all the facets of truth which each faith held, while what is false is shed.

The spirits in this plane devote themselves very largely to helping their fellow-men, especially in Hell, and continuously journey down to that place to save those who are in bondage.

The monk Ambrose, who died in the fourteenth century, devoted most of his life to this work, and at length obtained his desire, and passed through the “Wall of Fire “ and was lost to us. Animal lovers will be glad to know that his faithful dog followed him through the “Wall of Fire.” With him passed also the spirit of a woman whom he had always loved, but being a monk could never marry on earth.

They passed through the “Wall of Fire,” or light, as it was described, to the mystic union of soul with soul, which it is understood takes place in the regions which lie beyond the “Wall of Fire.”

What is this great “Wall of Fire” which cuts off the Sixth or Spirit Plane from that which lies beyond?

I am unable to answer this question. By some of the spirits it is called “The Second Death,” although this phrase is also employed to describe the transference from the Astral to the Spirit Plane.

We are told that some of the spirits fear it as men fear mortal death, but whereas death comes whether we wish it or not in its due course, this Second Death takes place only when the spirit is ready and anxious to pass on.

It appears to affect the form, which seems to pass more completely under the control of the entity, but the entity itself is not destroyed. This was made clear by an angelic form who guarded the entrance leading from the Realm of Belief lacking in Works to the Highest Realm. For when J. B. P. questioned him on this point he informed him that he had passed through the “ Wall of Fire “ long before, and had now returned to labor on the Sixth Plane, adding, “... but on this plane forms are needed, and therefore we assume one. This is not my original form — it is not the form of an earthly man, but that of an angel. I create it by willing so to do.

As I think myself, so I assume a form. If I desired I could assume the form of an animal or of a flame. Behold.”

J. B. P. “Before my eyes he took the form of a great flame.

““The pillar of fire!” I cried. As I spoke he seemed to change at once, and became like a cloud. Then the cloud became all light, and once more I saw him in his angel shape.

““Cannot the evil spirits also do this,” I inquired.”

““The Officer has described something similar. Those spirits whom you call devils can, but I may allow you to probe no deeper into these mysteries as yet.” he replied.”

This Angelic Being, while refusing to give any details of what lay beyond the Wall, yet stated emphatically that the personal entity was not destroyed, though the form was affected.

Beyond this I have been unable to obtain any information. The spirits on the Sixth Plane do not know, and the guardian spirits who come thither from the higher planes refuse to speak.

Some people believe that on passing the "Wall of Fire," the spirit returns to earth in a fresh incarnation, but while this is probably the case with some, I am doubtful whether it covers all. We are informed that there are seven planes in all.

This work deals with the two lowest only, and since these Higher Planes must be peopled, it appears more likely that the most exalted spirits rise higher and higher without the need of reincarnation, whereas more lowly spirits need to return to earth to develop certain characteristics.

As to the difficulty of obtaining information from these higher planes, it seems probable that if received it would be so far above the heads of us mortals that we should be unable to comprehend it.

Even the highest realm of the Spirit Plane is so exalted that the monk declared that much of the information he could give would be beyond us on earth, and therefore devoted most of his narrative to accounts of his missionary work in Hell.

I am still continuing my investigations into life beyond the grave, and if this book should prove acceptable, hope at no distant date to publish a second volume containing an account of the two remaining realms, and a more detailed description of life on the Astral Plane.

Since the death of my brother in the trenches of Flanders, I have devoted most of my attention to conditions on that plane, and especially to the spirits of those who have died in battle. Their state is somewhat abnormal, and indeed the whole Astral Plane is greatly disturbed. My brother is now engaged in making a survey, as it were, of that plane, and is being assisted in his task by H. J. L.

If any reader has a question on life beyond the grave to which he desires an answer, I would endeavor to obtain it, but wish it to be plainly understood that I do not mean thereby that

I will endeavor to trace any particular persons, nor to obtain messages from them. To do so is not my object.

As an example of what is required, I was asked to make inquiries as to the fate of animals after death — and the result is seen in this book.

As to what opinion the reader will form of the present work I know not, but, for myself, I have been profoundly impressed with the reality and the reasonableness of what I have seen and what the spirits have related of Life beyond the Grave.

J. S. M. WARD.

P.S. — Exception may be taken to the publication of the Officer's narrative, on the grounds that it is so gruesome that its appearance will serve no useful purpose; but my justification is (a) that the communicating entities desired its inclusion; (b) that on the astral plane there are grave dangers of which it is important that newcomers should be warned; and (c), that the Officer is now helping those who are passing on to the astral plane from the Great War.

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PART I

COMMUNICATIONS FROM H. J. L.

Who died on the 5th of January, 1914, at 9 a.m.
on his 80th birthday

 THE LOWEST DIVISION OF THE SPIRIT PLANE

 Chapter I

The Doorway Opens

I, J. S. M. Ward, had a vision early in December, 1913, in which I learnt of the death of H. J. L., my uncle and father-in-law. The vision began with a message that he had died suddenly, and, went on with the funeral, at which I was present. The sensations of grief, and the remarks and actions of the other mourners, were vividly impressed on my mind. When I awoke and later informed, Carrie, my wife, we decided to go down and see him when up in town, but unfortunately Carrie was not well enough to go on the day we had selected. On Jan. 5th, H. J. L.'s birthday, we received about 10:15 a telegram to say H. J. L. had suddenly died. All the sensations of grief that I had felt in my dream were repeated exactly, as were the incidents of the funeral. Even his face in his coffin looked like the one I had seen in my dream; it differed considerably from his face when alive. He was buried on Jan. 8th, 1914.

FIRST TRANCE VISION

During the night of Monday, Jan. 12th, i.e. one week after his death on Jan. 5th, at 9 a.m.

I dreamt I saw Uncle like, and yet unlike, he was before he died; something between what I remember him as before, and what he looked like after death.

He said: "I have been trying to speak to Carrie, but can't, so I have come to you. Tell her I am alive, more alive than before I died; that I am mentally clearer than I was for some time before I died. But here I have had to set to work to learn, as if I were a child again, much of what I should have learnt on earth. I am with those who did just believe, but had not much real belief. Tell Carrie this.

"It was lucky for me that I did believe to a certain extent, as otherwise I should have been with the 'set' who are below us, i.e. those who did not believe. I used to say it did not matter much what a man believed, but I am learning I was wrong. It makes a big difference, at any rate at starting. The set above us are those who believed but did not fully act up to their beliefs."

J. W. "What do you mean by these sets?"

H. J. L. "After I died I found we join that set of people to which we naturally belong — that is, those who hold the same sort of belief or unbelief.

We have a teacher, somewhat like, the angels of the parsons, but they [the teachers. — ED.] don't look a bit like the silly pictures you usually see. This teacher instructs us in what we are lacking, and when that lack has been made good, we move on to the next set, which includes many more different people than our own. We get very bored with meeting only those who think exactly like we did. There is much more variety in the next set."

J. W. "What is that set?"

H. J. L. “Those who believed, but did not fully act up to their beliefs.”

J. W. “Is there Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory?”

H. J. L. “I do not know whether there is a Hell. You see, I know nothing at all save about my own set, and the ones above and below. There are plenty of old friends I expected to see and have not; but, of course, they may be and probably are only in another set. Those who did not believe are in the set below: after a time they come to us.

“As to Purgatory, that corresponds roughly to where we all are. Only it’s more a place of learning than of punishment. Still, we are punished, because I can’t help regretting the time I wasted on earth which would have got me into a more congenial set.

We all, strange to say, are rather lonely here. We are too much alike to be companions, and want to get on, so as to meet our old friends, who, we believe, are in other sets.

“I am learning, but it’s slow work. I feel like a schoolboy again. It’s funny — I died on my birthday and was really born here on it.”

J. W. “Did you know anything of your funeral?”

H. J. L. “Yes, I saw myself lying dead, and saw you come and look at me.

“Be sure and tell Carrie what, I said; that it saves a lot of time if you do believe, and that we do live after death. I am very glad I believed as much as I did, and I wish I had believed more.”

J. W. “Would you go back if you could?”

H. J. L. “No, certainly not. I am much happier here. I am making progress.

“However, I must be off now. It seems a funny thing to say to a schoolmaster, but I have to begin my schooling all over again.”

(End of Vision. — *J. W.*)

SECOND VISION

Jan. 20th, 1914.

During the night of Jan. 19th, 1914, I again dreamt in a trance that I saw H. J. L.

J. W. “How are things going on with you?”

H. J. L. “Well, but slowly.”

J. W. “I — we wanted to ask you some questions.”

H. J. L. “Fire away. I don’t know that I shall be able to answer them.”

J. W. “Where are you? Do you come to me from somewhere else?”

H. J. L. “Not exactly. I am here all the time; our world impinges on yours. I hate similes, but I can best explain it by one. You know those “Pepper’s Ghosts?” Well, it is as if we were thrown on to your stage, our scenery — and our characters walking about you, but unseen by you. Just as a real man on such a stage would not see the phantoms which surrounded him, but the audience sees both him and them. Or like a bank of clouds which blends into a range of hills, so that it is hard to say which are hills and which clouds.

“We are in the same world as you, but not subject to the same laws. For example, time and space don’t exist. This sounds trite, and so it is, for the truth usually is trite, because it’s true, and therefore always has existed.”

J. W. “But you are here now. How, then, can there be no space?”

H. J. L. “Compare us to a thought. We are more than a thought, for we continue to think; but compare us to a thought; you may then get some idea of what I mean. When on earth you think Ravenscroft; your mind calls up a picture of Ravenscroft and the people there. You see them as they were. To that extent we and you are alike; but your finer senses are controlled by your body and you are unaware of what changes may be taking place. Now, you know something of telepathy. Do you remember my telling the story of the only true ghost-story which the Psychological Society got, the one sent by the doctor?”

J. W. “Yes, I do.”

H. J. L. “Well, after that I said, ‘I think most of that stuff’s rubbish, but there may be something in telepathy.’ “

J. W. “I remember perfectly.”

H. J. L. “Well, Jack, there’s not only something but almost everything in telepathy. It’s the outer edge of those faculties which we have to develop here. It’s the main link between our world and yours. You know that some people have learnt of things which are happening to their friends at a distance. We all can do so here, and that is the way we communicate with each other; speech does not exist with us. This explains those sayings in the Bible about nothing shall be hid. You cannot tell lies here or be deceived. But that is not all, for every separate thought exists of itself and we can see them all.

“This explains the doctrine of the Catholics (at which I used to laugh) that a really evil thought, such as murder, is worse than a venial sin.

“My punishment consists largely of this, that all my evil deeds and thoughts rise up before me in as real a shape as I myself possess. They are there with all the surrounding impedimenta.”

J. W. “What *do* you mean by that?”

H. J. L. “Well, Jack, I don’t want you to think worse of me, so instead of quoting a real offence, I’ll show you what I mean by a fictitious one.

“Suppose a man committed a murder, or even meditated one — riot merely the actual murder, but all the surrounding details, such as the furniture and room in which it was, or was intended to be committed, are here.”

J. W. “Then do you mean to say that there is no difference between the fault thought of and one committed? “

H. J. L. “It all depends on the reason why it was not. Supposing your better nature gains the upper hand and you refuse to act as your lower nature prompts you; then, after seeing the evil thought, you will be refreshed by seeing the good one — for all your good deeds and thoughts come here also.

“If the sin had not been committed solely because you were prevented by something else, then there would be no good thought to refresh your weary spirit. Of course a man may be temporarily prevented from giving way to an evil passion, and afterwards rejoice that it should have been so. All that he will see here. Thus each one lives in a world of his own creating, and the more nearly his world approximates to that of others around him, the more company, the less solitude will he have.

“Solitude is one of the worst punishments here, and so those who, though having many faults, yet loved much and had many friends, get their reward.”

J. W. “Does this state remain constant, or do you get to know more people and your former thoughts haunt you less? “

H. J. L. “Now I told you we did progress only last time. You should not ask unnecessary questions, nor try to catch me tripping. I repeat, we do progress as we learn, and particularly as we learn to believe. As to the second part of your question, I don’t really know exactly what happens, but as we go on thinking here we create fresh thoughts, and as these are of a nobler nature than those we thought on earth, they refresh us and enable us to bear more easily the grief we feel for our former faults.

“We realize as faults here things that on earth we deceived ourselves into thinking were not faults.

“I should add that at first it’s rather like a hideous nightmare: — all one’s dead thoughts come crowding round; but after a time they seem to fall into a distinct order, but I can’t explain how. At any rate, things become easier. A lot of what I have been telling you I have recently learnt from my teacher. I have also learnt a lot from some of the others.

“To return to how ‘I’ ‘come’ to you. I just think of you, or, rather, concentrate my thoughts on you to the exclusion of other things. That is getting quite easy, though at first it was very difficult. But it’s not so easy to get your spirit in ‘tune’ with mine, so that I can communicate with you.

“I tried several others first. I tried Carrie and I tried. Then I had a shot at F. At last I thought I might be able to get into touch with you.”

J. W. “Then I gather that you are in this world and see it as we do.”

H. J. L. “We are in this world, but not restricted to it. Moreover, it does not look the same to us as to you. We see much more. We see the past, and some, I believe, can see the future, though I cannot. You will understand that, as you dreamt of my death a month before it happened. But I have taxed you long enough. Is there any point you would like to ask about?”

J. W. “Yes. You said something about our lower nature. Do you know whether there are any devils who inspire men with evil thoughts?”

H. J. L. “I do not know. When I was alive I did not believe in them, but since I died I have learnt to believe many things I laughed at then. There may be, for there are good spirits who were never men, but I cannot say I know.”

J. W. “Why don’t you ask your teacher?”

H. J. L. “If you were teaching a boy Euclid, and he suddenly asked you a question about some event in history, would you not tell him to wait till the history lesson came? Well, it’s the same here. There is so much to learn that I must wait till I come to each thing in its proper place.”

J. W. “I am glad you have come to me like this; but why did you?”

H. J. L. “Partly because I like you, but mainly because I think in this way I can do a little good, and it is not easy to do good here. I wish I had done more good when I was on earth. I particularly want you to tell Carrie. She understood me more than most of them did. We were always good friends. I wish I could speak to her, but I can’t. You are getting tired (pause). Your mind fails to keep touch (pause).”

J. W. “Yes, I am tired, but I want to ask you — something — I can’t quite remember what”

H. J. L. “I will come again (pause). I will come again.”

Note by J. W. — I seemed to fall asleep after this, and can remember no more till I awoke next morning.

THIRD VISION

Jan. 21st, 1914.

On the night of Jan. 20th, H. J. L. again appeared to me (in a vision).

H. J. L. “I have come to you again, but only for a short time. I want you to try automatic writing. A man I came across here, called P., suggested it to me; he says he used to live at Sheffield, that he’ll show me how to do it, and that it would be a much better method of getting into touch with the ‘still-living.’ He’s a decent sort of chap, and I rather like him.”

J. W. “I have tried once or twice, but without any real results.”

H. J. L. “Since I died?”

J. W. “No, some time before.”

H. J. L. “Well, try again. I’ve much on hand just-now, but I will not forget you. Remember me to Carrie.”

AUTOMATIC WRITING (1). ALONE

Jan. 21st, 1914.

“I have come to you as I promised. Mr. P. is helping me. He says he is interested, as he used to live at Sheffield. It’s not easy to write this. I hope it is readable. I shan’t write any more now. —
H. J. L.”

Chapter II

Introduction of “The Officer”

AUTOMATIC LETTER (2)

Jan. 22nd.

In preparation for this these questions were written down by me on a piece of paper. I was in semi-trance during this and last letters.

Questions

- (1) Do you not miss your chess and other recreations?
- (2) Any class distinctions?
- (3) Do you recognize ancestors or relations or well-known historical personages?

LETTER

“I don’t miss my chess because I can still play it. Games, entailing bodily skill we cannot enjoy, since we have no bodies, but those entailing mental skill are not in the same position. Chess is entirely a mental amusement, so we do play it with our minds or thoughts.

“I have just been playing with Lasker.¹ He beat me, but it was a good game. He just managed to get (the) opposition.”

“We do not, most of us, want bodily pleasures here, but those who do cannot have them. It’s for the most part the younger men; we older ones, of the genus *sapiens homo*, had got tired of most of that sort of thing long before we died. Those who do crave for it are being punished for liking that sort of thing too much. Luckily for me I was an old man, and I never cared much for most of that kind of amusement.

“As to question 2, of course there are no class distinctions as such. There are no Tories here, perhaps because there’s no plunder,² but at the same time lack of education in the widest sense results in something which at first sight rather looks like classes — that is, men who think and believe alike each fall into sets. The richer classes, who are more cultured, shall we say, are generally in different groups from the poor.

“Will answer No. 3 at another time. Good-bye. — H. J. L.”

Jan. 24th, 1914.

The following was written automatically in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. K., at their house. I was in complete trance in this and all future letters. — J. W.

Questions

- (1) What part of the world was Mr. P in when he passed over?
- (2) What do you mean by “believe”? Believe what?
- (3) Can you recognize ancestors, relations, historical characters?

¹ I later I discovered Lasker was still alive, and taxed him with incongruity. He said he knew but, nevertheless, just as I was able to enter the sixth plane and return, so was Lasker. Quite a number did this, but few were able to retain a clear recollection of what had passed. If they remembered anything at all, they called it a dream.

² Note by J. W. — H. J. L., knowing I was a Tory, often used (when alive) to say the Tories out for Plunder and Blunder.

LETTER 1

“I am here. As to question No. 1, I will find out and answer in a minute. About No. 3: I have not met any historical characters here, but we can, and as we get on into the higher group or set we shall do so. Mr. P. says he died in the Far East — Japan.³ I am getting on quite well now and will come to you on Monday next. I have met a man who has just come up to us from the set below. He is a most interesting chap. He was a thorough scoundrel before he died, and has been telling me some of his experiences since then. He says he has been through an awful time, and so I’ll ask him more about it. I gather he has committed about all the offences there are. About question 2: I mean *belief* generally, belief in a future life and God, and in fact ‘belief.’ The first thing to do is to believe something. It does not so much matter what, so long as you believe. A nigger believing in a fetish is better than a man who believes nothing at all. Believe! I will write again presently. The conditions are better than any before. You need a rest. Try again in half an hour. — H. J. L.”

(Witnessed, in autograph, K.)

Jan. 24th, 1914. 6:30.

We waited half an hour. This time *no* questions were asked.

LETTER 2

“I have come. Learn as much as you can on earth and so save delay afterwards. Now about myself. That man I spoke of is near me. He was a man of good position. Had been an army officer and was turned out for disgraceful conduct. He married a girl and robbed her of her money. Left her behind when he went to India. Seduced a girl there and got her money: murdered a native. They found out about the girl but not about the native. Kicked out of the Army. Returned to England. There went in for bogus company promoting. Robbed dozens of poor people of their money. Finally came under the law. Got five years. While in prison his wife brought an action for divorce and won it.

“When he came out, set up as a card-sharper. Was discovered and turned out of the various clubs to which he belonged. Then he got in with a young fellow who had a new invention. Ran him for a time, “finally murdered him and stole the invention. Got it accepted, and as he was going to sign the agreement was knocked down by a motor bus in the Strand and killed. It was one of the first motor buses invented. He wants to take control. Shall let him for a minute.”

(*Note by Ed.* — Here the style of writing quite changed and the writing itself was done at a great pace. Mr. and Mrs. K. declared that the medium’s whole demeanor changed and became excited.)

Stranger. “I am taking control, but can’t manage it properly. I am not doing this for fun. I’ve been a beast all my life, and if I can do anything to make amends I want to. Shall sometimes. I cannot do this properly yet. I have been a miserable failure all my life, but if Mr. L. will help, as he has promised, shall doubtless make progress. He wants to take control now.”

H. J. L. *again.* “I am afraid he rather exhausted you. I am rather a tyro, but of course he is worse, as he has not had the calming influence of our teacher. He has only just got out of the worst torments, so is disturbed in spirit. Our calmer atmosphere will doubtless make his stuff much more readable. But he was so anxious to do some good at last that I

³ Correct. This fact was unknown to me. — J.W.

had to let him try. He shall give you his experiences another time. They will be quite different from mine. He has been much longer here. He died in 1905.”

(So written in text as if he had paused to enquire — ED.)

“Says it was one of the first motor omnibuses that ever plied. Just his luck. I have taken up almost all the time about him, so will now close. — H.J. L.”

(Ended about 7.30.)

The following question had been written down by Mr. K.: —

Will the officer give his name?

LETTER 3

“As you have probably gathered, several friends are now helping us, but I have now sent away the officer. He exhausts you too much; besides, a man helping me here has told me we must be careful, as he has only just got into our set and so might ‘break loose’ if he comes in touch with earth too often. He means well, but the spirit is weak. However, we will see no harm comes of it.

“I have not met any old friends here, and so am a bit lonely, but am making friends with several men. One went up to the next set. He has promised to come and visit us sometimes, and so I hope to be able to report to you something of the set above us. As to question re officer’s name. I do not know it, but can ask him. Shan’t do so now, though, or he’d want to take control. I am not sure that he’ll give it; rather think at first he won’t, but daresay he will in time. He’s a wild sort of person. I can see you all quite well. There are others with you — lots of them. Of course I do not know who they are, as they do not come from my set. But power is waning. Thank Mr. and Mrs. K. Good-bye — H. J. L.”

Chapter III

H. J. L. Outlines His Plan for This Book

*VISION IN A TRANCE ON THE NIGHT OF
JAN. 26th, 1914*

H. J. L. "I am glad we started that automatic writing, as it has proved so successful. I propose to give you a series of such letters, in which I shall endeavor to give a connected account of our life over here. Now I gather that must of the spirit messages which have been received ignore almost everything which does not come under the writer's immediate knowledge. I propose to go further and to give in addition to my own personal experiences those of members of the sets above and below us. By this means I hope to cover at least those three; and as my friend who has passed on to the set above has promised to try and get in touch with a spirit who is passing on to the one above, I may be able to tell you something of the fourth set. I shall endeavor to give you a description of the 'geography' of this region, if so it may be called. Further, I shall give you my own experiences, beginning with my death and entrance to this new life. Further, I have been back to earth since last I saw you, and have seen a mail pass over to us from our side. My teacher took me. I am therefore able to comprehend several incidents in my own death which at first appealed vague and uncertain.

"Now it is difficult for you to understand our arrangements here; it is very different from what you are usually taught. It is not however so much that the original teaching of the church was wrong, but that it has been misinterpreted by its teachers. At the best, however, they only show a part of the truth. Not even here do we know all the truth. Truth is like a diamond with many facets. Each facet contains part, but only part, of the truth. Some facets are larger than others; so all creeds exist because of the 'facet' of truth, however small, which they possess. No faith which had no element of truth could exist at all for any space of time on earth. Often, however, the 'facet' is very small. The larger the amount of truth, the stronger that faith will, as a rule, grow. Thus the Roman Catholics are a numerous body, but neither they nor any Sect possess all the truth. They simply form one of the communities which exist in the sets where men believed. There are also Buddhists and 'heathen' there, and, indeed, all religions. From this stage we advance until we have gathered in all truth, and then we shall really know what is meant by God. But that is far hence.

"Since, however, it is easier for you to comprehend the new facts with which I am about to deal if you can attach them to some theory with which you are acquainted, I shall adopt the general plan of Heaven, Purgatory, and Hell. Be under no misunderstanding, as depicted by many persons these names are wholly misleading. But if accepted as a convenient and rough classification, they will be helpful. One fact, however, you must clearly grasp. So far as I can discover there is no evidence of the eternity of Hell. Drop that idea and the rest will be easy to understand. At the same time spirits may be in what I will call Hell for countless ages. For example, Nero is there still, and likely to remain for many an earthly age.

"The officer has just come up from Hell, and so that proves it is not a place of perpetual torment. But as most spirits who communicate with the living are fairly spiritual ones, they have never been in Hell, and so can tell you nothing of it. Many do not know of its existence. For we do not know everything, only what, is necessary for our own progress. They need no pains of Hell, and so know not of its existence. Herein lies the interest of what the officer will relate. I myself could not tell you what he can from his own experience. Under Hell therefore I group all those who did not believe. Purgatory begins with our set. Until you have received the first glimmerings of faith you can make but little progress. When this has once been received the spirit enters our realms.

Hence Christ went down into Hell to teach the spirits belief. So today exalted spirits sometimes go down thither to teach them to believe.

“Of Heaven we know little here; it is to be with God, and that is enough for us. We are on the lowest edge of Purgatory, and have far to travel before we reach there.

“Don’t misunderstand me when I speak of Hell; I mean simply the ‘Realm of Unbelief,’ hardest hill the spirit has to climb. When that is surmounted the slope is easier. When speaking of Purgatory you must not think we are unhappy. True, we suffer, but so long as we are progressing we are happy. Our sufferings merely purge away the earthy dross which would drag us down.

“Another fact that may come as a surprise to you is that we can still fall into sin, or at any rate slip back instead of making steady progress. It is no case of rest and fall asleep. We are, very, busy striving to mount higher. But for us there is little temptation to carnal sin; of that we are free.

“But the unfortunate beings in Hell are still subject to their temptations, and to their own harm can sometimes gratify them. Of that more anon.

“Now a word to yourself. If at times you weary of this and think it fails in interest, I ask you not to give it up. It is entailing much labor on me, but I do it gladly, for thereby I am making amends for my own slackness on earth. Believe me, you too will benefit; but above all. I hope the world may deign to learn something from what I am trying to communicate.

“I think I have made plain to you the general plan of what I propose. In reading the ‘news’ I send, don’t jump to any hasty conclusions, but wait and compare the various items. Above all, remember that because I fail to state that a thing or person is there, it does not follow that they do not exist. These realms are so vast that no spirit knows more than a part of them. “Before we part, are there any questions you wish to ask me?”

J. W. “Do you have light and darkness here?”

H. J. L. “Not as you understand the words, for this is not a material world, therefore material light has no place here. But there is a kind of spiritual darkness. In Hell it is utter darkness, for there is no belief. As to what is here, look, open your eyes— see. “

(Suddenly I perceived we were in a kind of twilight or soft evening light.)

“Here we do not perceive so clearly as those who do believe, therefore we are in this twilight. But as we progress the light becomes stronger. The light, if so you can call it, is within ourselves. We must part now.” (He began to fade and grow indistinct, then I was alone.)

Chapter IV

Two Strange Incidents

I was not sure whether the following "dream" really formed a continuation of my trance vision of Uncle, or whether it was just an ordinary dream. It was, however, so vivid and peculiar that I entered it.

THE DUEL

I dreamt I was clad in a light blue costume of the time of Charles I., and was standing in the hall of a large Jacobean house. The furniture was of that period.

Suddenly there was a fierce hammering at the hall door. A man-servant opened it, and I saw a man on horseback. He was clad in black, and his beard was black and cut rather short and square round his face in a peculiar manner. His face was very white, and on his head was a tall fur cap.

He rushed into the hall and challenged me to a duel. I drew my rapier, which had a jeweled handle, as he drew his. He then snatched up a short sword or long dagger, broad towards the hilt, but with a fine point, and with this parried the thrust from my rapier.

My servant cried, "The Italian method," and slipped into my left hand a similar dagger. I can distinctly remember the jar each time our swords were caught on the broad part of the daggers.⁴

At length my blade slipped over his and ran him through the shoulder. He then declared that he would go, but suddenly slipped into the house again and snatched up some papers which were on an oak chest near by. With these he turned and ran into the garden.

Furious at this treachery, I sprang after him and ran him through the body. My blade entered his back between the shoulder-blades and came out a little lower down in his chest. He fell and gasped out his life in a few minutes among the flower-beds.

I fell on the path sobbing and lamenting. As I lay there, I saw the villagers looking through the gates and the servants picking up the body of the dead man. I have a very clear recollection of the intense grief I felt.

Then I dreamt that I awoke from this dream and saw a picture of a sword, the very one I had used in the fight. I thereupon sprang from bed (the one in our room), and going to the chest of drawers found there a piece of paper. I thereon jotted down in pencil the chief points in my dream lest I should forget it.

As a matter of fact I had not really awakened, and in due course awoke in bed. There was no pencil or paper on the chest of drawers.

I did not see how this dream could have any connection with Uncle, but determined to ask him. — J. W.

On Jan. 30th, at 2:50 p.m., Blanche sees H. J. L.

Blanche was leaning out of the dining-room window and looking into the garden, when she got very excited and declared that she saw the "Big Granddad." He was wearing his (black skull) cap on his head, and said, "Hello, Chickabiddy." He came floating down from a blue patch in the sky and took hold of her right wrist and tried to pull her up to Heaven. She pulled, and he let go and went to various parts of the garden, and looked over the whole place by going up to a big rock on the hill behind the house.

⁴ Nov. 7th, 1916. — *Have just seen, in the Tower of London, the exact counterpart of the dagger with which I parried his rapier. They are quite different from any dagger I had ever seen before, and were doubtless intended so to be used.*

She described all this, as it happened, to her mother, who was in the room, pointing in the various directions as the figure changed its position. Mrs. Ward says she seemed perfectly genuine at the time. She repeated it very accurately to me the same evening. She said, "Hello, Granddad," in answer to his greeting. He looked at her "with a smiling laugh!" and he appeared to be moving round the house and garden. — J. W.

This is an accurate summary of what took place at about 2:50 p.m. — C. W. Blanche is four-years, three months old.

Chapter V

The Officer

Jan. 31st. At Sheffield

LETTER 6, AT 7:00 P.M., BY H. J. L.

Questions written down

- (1) Officer's name?
- (2) Had dream anything to do with you?
- (3) Did you come to Blanche on Friday?

"I am here, and will begin by answering the questions first. No. 3: I did see Blanche. I thought I should like to see where you lived, never having been there.

"It was my natural attraction, not any deliberate intention of mine that caused the 'pull.' I am trying to write more closely, as Mr. K. asks, but it is not easy yet. No. 2: The dream is curious, as it has nothing to do with me, but is the theme which haunts a friend of mine here. He killed a Pole who had saved his life during the Thirty Years War on the Continent. Afterwards the man entered the secret service of the Parliamentarians. His grief was because he killed his benefactor; but he had to, as the man was stealing papers which would have implicated many in a plot to place Charles II on the throne. Why you saw it I can't say, but you evidently did, and since it was his mind picture, identified yourself with him.

"As to question 1: the officer absolutely refuses to give you his name, and I think his reasons are good. He shall give you them in his own words. I am standing by, so there is no danger."

(At this point, Mr. K. informs me, my whole manner changed; I became excited; also the way in which I held the pencil changed.)

The Officer. (The writing is quite different here.)

"Give my name? No! No! I will give you the reason, though. I have a daughter: isn't it bad enough that she should have my blood in her veins, poor devil? But that she should become known as the daughter of a murderer! No one knows that I murdered those men. If it was once known, what chance would she have in life? Who would marry her? And what of my poor wife? No, if what I write isn't worth your while, do without it; but you'll be unwise. I want to do some good — not harm — to my wife and child. They say I must stop. Mr. L. is going to take control now."

(Mr. K. saw the change take place in my manner, etc. — ED.)

H. J. L. "I am sorry he would not give his name, but I think he was right. But as I knew he would not, I have persuaded the spirit who has gone to the set above to give his as *evidence*. He has no reason to fear that it will do harm. He shall introduce himself."

(Here my manner and way of holding the pencil changed so markedly that Mr. K. placed a cross against the line thus, X.)

"This is the first time I have taken control, and so will introduce myself and will give you details so that you can prove me. Mr. L. has asked me to help in this important plan of his, and I am to describe, so far as I can, what this set is like, i.e. the one above that in which they who only half believed are. I was Dr J. B. P., Principal Emeritus, ----- Congregationalist Coll. I founded the B — L — B —, was joint editor of the -----, and wrote the ----- . I was born Dec. 17th, 1830, and died Jan. 26th, 1911.⁵

⁵ Mr. K. investigated these facts and found every statement made was correct. We none of us knew what Emeritus meant, but looked it up, and found it meant "retired" or "pensioned." As relations of

Is this *enough* evidence? My friends would probably never believe that I only half believed, and I hardly realized that this was the case myself. But it was due to over-much study of theology. I lost, or nearly lost, the substance for the shadow. Now good-bye.

Mr. L. is in charge of us, and I shall write as he instructs, giving you, I hope, much useful information which I pray may guide your steps to the realms of light. God bless you all four.”

(Mr. K. marked the following with X to show the change of control.)

“I take control again to close this letter (H. J. L.) In the next I shall start giving you the detailed account of my death and first experiences here. The officer and Mr. P. will not appear in the next. Rest half an hour. —H, J. L.”

this man are still alive, and would resent the use of his name, I have been reluctantly compelled to suppress these details, which were absolutely convincing to us.

Chapter VI

H. J. L. Describes his Death

LETTER 7. SAME NIGHT, 8 P.M.

"I BECAME unconscious and after a time recovered, or so it seemed. Indeed, my mind suddenly became clear, but I began to feel a heavy weight. Gradually I realized that this weight was slipping away from me, or rather, I was sliding out from it, as if someone were drawing his hand out from a wet glove. Then I began to feel free at – one end, so to speak, and then I began to see again.

"I saw once more the room and the people in it. Then I was free! free! I saw myself lying stretched out on the bed, and from my mouth came, as it were, a cord of light. It vibrated for a moment, then snapped, and from my mouth came away. At that moment someone said, 'I think he has gone' Or if they did not say it, they thought it. Then I realized what I looked like for the first time. How different from what I had always seen in my looking-glass! But was it I? It looked so strange.

"But even as I looked I was aware of an awful feeling of cold."

(Mr. K. and the others say that while the next few lines were being written, I exhibited all the signs of suffering intense cold. I shivered and moaned, "Cold, cold," most piteously.)

"Cold! cold! Piercing feeling of cold. It pierced me through and through. Nothing I can write can give you any idea of that cold. The icy blast pierced me as no earthly wind ever did or can. I was a naked soul, no body, nothing to give me warmth. I shuddered and shivered like this for many a seeming age.

"Suddenly it seemed to grow a little less. I was aware of a presence. How can I describe him, this glorious being? Then I could hardly grasp any clear idea, but having since been in his company constantly, I can describe him a little better. Even now he seemed to change every moment. At one instant I seem to know him well, at another he changes and I can get no clear idea of his face or form. He shimmers and shines and flashes, and seems as if he were made of fire. His robes, his face, his whole form is as it were fire. Yet that word gives but a faint idea, nor would the word light be any nearer. All color, too, is there. This glorious one is my teacher.

"Hardly had I perceived him, when the whole room in which I stood and the people who were there seemed to dissolve and fade away. Lo! I was in the most exquisite scenery imaginable. Every lovely spot I had ever visited was there, and countless others which I had never seen — beautiful rolling hills clothed with grass and trees; real trees, yes, and animals and even butterflies; flowers, too, of every description, not only English wild and garden flowers, but all manner of foreign plants, orchids and so forth, the like of which I never saw on earth. Nor did they seem strange or out of place, nor yet the sight of tropical palms and English oaks growing side by side. On earth it would certainly have seemed so, but here it appeared quite natural.

"Where am I?' I thought, and no sooner had the idea entered my mind, if indeed one can use the word, than the 'Shining One' seemed to answer.

"You are in the land of After-Death. Are you surprised that there are trees and animals here, and even grass? Know that here comes every thought which you have ever thought; soon also you shall know that is so, to your sorrow; and, further, here come also the spiritual forms of all that ever lived. Thus is our Spirit World built up and thus it constantly increases. All that lives, no matter how humble it be, comes here of itself. All thoughts come here. Hence you recognize many beauty spots you knew on earth. Hence also the palm and the oak, and the orchid which you never saw. You have much to learn.'

“‘Do all thoughts live’ I cried (or thought). Even as the idea formed, the whole scene was blotted out from my perception.

“A horror seemed to grip me.

(Mr. K., etc., declare that here I again began to exhibit signs of acute anguish. — Ed.)

“Like a hideous nightmare, on every side visions seemed to press me round. They weighed me down. I, who but a moment before had seemed so light, now seemed to be crushed under an intolerable weight. I saw them not with mortal eyes; I perceived them with my whole being.

“I call them visions, but they were in real bodily form, like tableaux, moving and acting again before me all my past.

“My past deeds crowded before me, not in any order, but like a dream, all at once. Oh! the anguish as once more rose up deeds long since forgotten. Little or great, nothing was now forgotten. At last, after what seemed countless ages, an inspiration seemed to seize me, and I prayed. I had not done so for years and years, but now I prayed, ‘O God, help me’ and as I prayed, really prayed, slowly the wild chaos began as it were to sort itself out. It, as it were, took a kind of chronological order, and the scenes took the form, as it were, of a street which stretched far away, far beyond my ken; and they will go on increasing as I progress till they reach to the judgment seat of God. And among them I saw many visions which came as a relief to my tired soul — little acts of kindness which I had long forgotten, times when I had resisted temptation. So I found, as it were, my location. — H. J. L.”

Witness, K.

Chapter VII

How the Living Appear to the Departed

VISION IN TRANCE ON THE NIGHT OF FEB. 2ND, 1914

H. J. L. “Ask your friends to keep a watchful eye on you from the time that the officer takes control till the time when I resume it, particularly during the periods of rest.

“Pay careful heed to these points, as there are certain risks which must be faced in this kind of work. You are quite safe so long as you obey my instructions to the letter.

“You will receive a letter⁶ from Mr. K. tomorrow (Tuesday) confirming the details regarding Dr. K., so I trust you are now quite satisfied.

“With regard to what the officer writes, I can promise you every word is true: but he, too, only speaks of what he knows. There may be depths below that to which he sank, and doubtless other spirits have not all had the same experience, though in Hell.

“What he will tell you explains much of the common forms of occult phenomena; i.e. death portents, haunted houses ‘plaguing,’ and so forth.

“Don’t be afraid, we will stand by you, and so long as you obey my instructions you will be all right. Have you any questions?”

J. W. “When you are doing the automatic writing, can you see those who are present?”

H.J.L. “Yes, but they look rather different to what they do to you. We see them as they are, not as they seem to be. Thus it often happens to us that those whom earth folk consider beautiful seem ugly, while those who look homely to you, to us seem beautiful.”

“As a rule, we see the souls rather than the bodies. The bodies are there like a grey mass, as in the Rontgen ray photos the bones show through the flesh. If we greatly wish we can sometimes see the bodies, but even still the people cannot deceive us into thinking them beautiful when they are not. Their spiritual ugliness shows through their physical beauty.”

“We see, too, all the spirits who have been attracted round, whether they are good spirits or evil, for some people and places have the power of attracting spirits, sometimes good and sometimes evil. Now I must return to my task here. — *H. J. L.*”

⁶ *This I did receive.*

Chapter VIII

A Plan of the Spirit Plane

SIXTH TRANCE VISION OF H. J. L., BY J. W.
ON MONDAY, FEB. 9TH, 1914

H. J. L. “For your general convenience let me tell you that this realm is divided as follows: —

- “1. Belief with works.
- “2. Belief without works.
- “3. Half-Belief.
- “4. Unbelief. — Hell.

“When the soul has reached the highest plane of the first division, it goes through something that is akin to a second death, for there it leaves behind its spiritual body. But the soul who attains to that state rejoices in its coming relief — it does not fear it as the mortals do death, for those souls who are not yet ready do not cross the barrier.

“Once they have passed into the next realm, they cannot return. There are, including earth, seven such realms, of which the highest is to be with God.

“We who are here know only of the realm we are in, which we will call the sixth, the seventh being earth, which includes the astral plane.

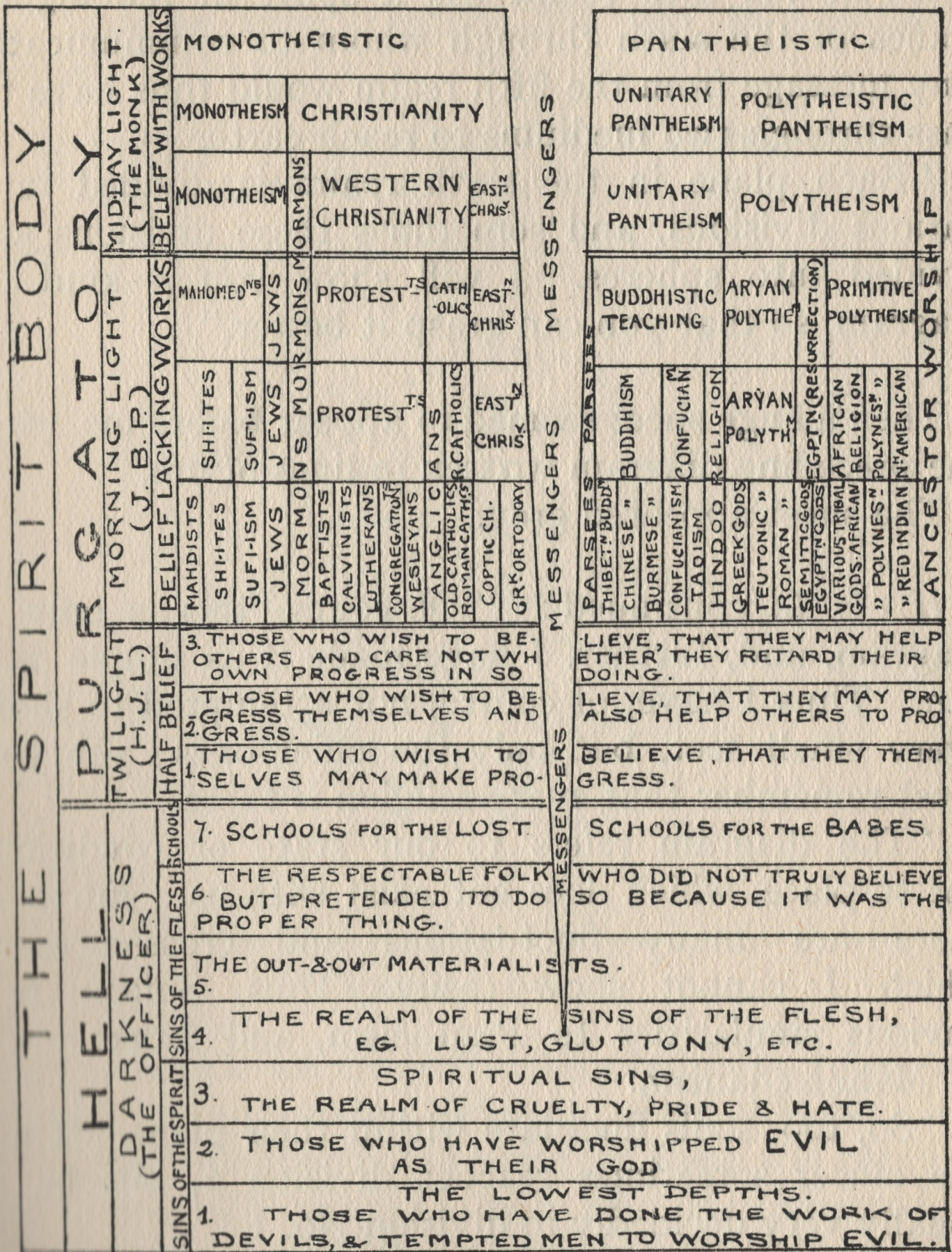
“We cannot go to the fifth until our time has come, and then we cannot return.

“Still, to this rule are certain exceptions. Very rarely messengers are sent down to us from the realms above, but this only happens for some good reason, and is comparable to the visible and audible return of one who is dead to earth.

“The other and more usual method is through a medium. Just as we communicate through you, so those in the fifth realm use a spirit in the higher planes of the sixth through whom to communicate. Any message from the fifth realm would thus have to pass through two mediums to reach earth.

“Each plane in the sixth realm is divided into various divisions, and sometimes these divisions are divided into spheres. I will show you a kind of diagram, so that you can grasp it better.”

Then a huge sheet seemed to appear before me, with the preceding diagram written in lines of fire. The sheet appeared grey.



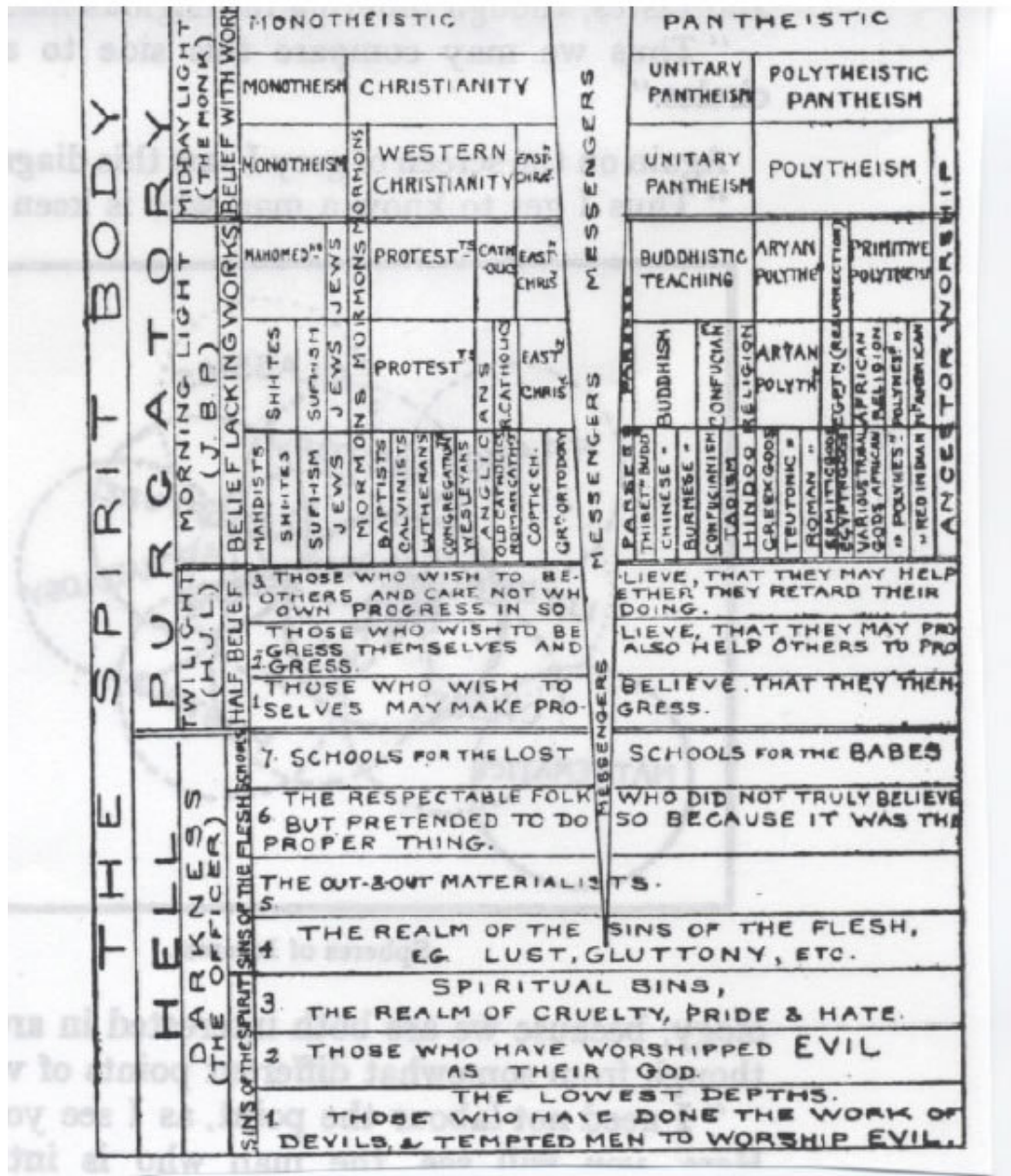


Diagram of Spirit Plane.

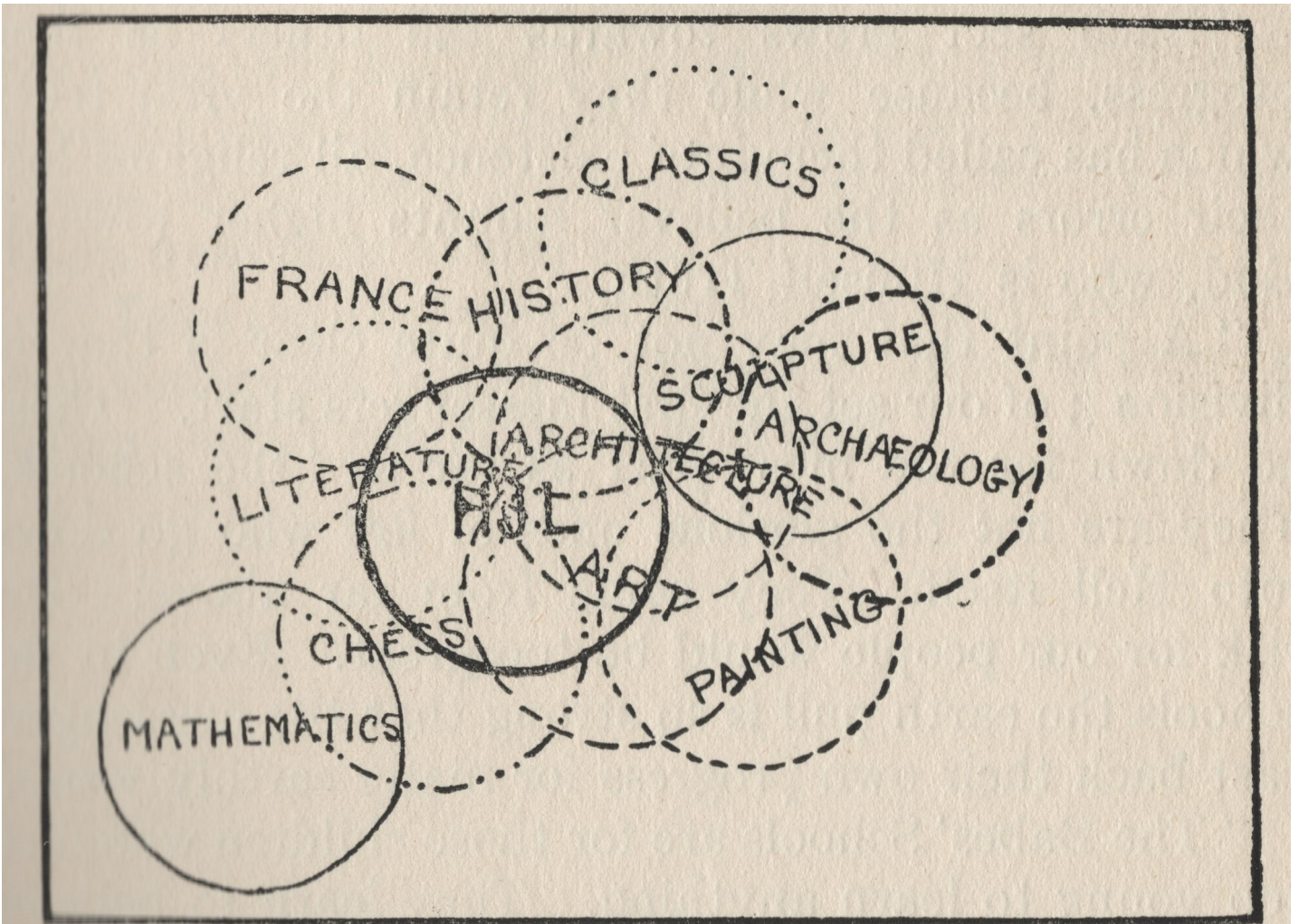
H. J. L. continued: "Of course this is only a diagram, and, further, I have made it as simple as I can. Thus I have, of course, not attempted to show every small sect, but only the chief ones; yet you must remember that every religion is there.

"The diagram refers to our state or condition, not to place, which does not exist with us. Further there are many fluctuations and cross-currents which I cannot show easily. Thus, Sufism has obvious similarities to Pantheism, and Mormonism to Mohammedanism.

"So, too, souls fluctuate within their plane. Thus the officer sometimes reaches division 2, but he is usually very decidedly in division No. 1.

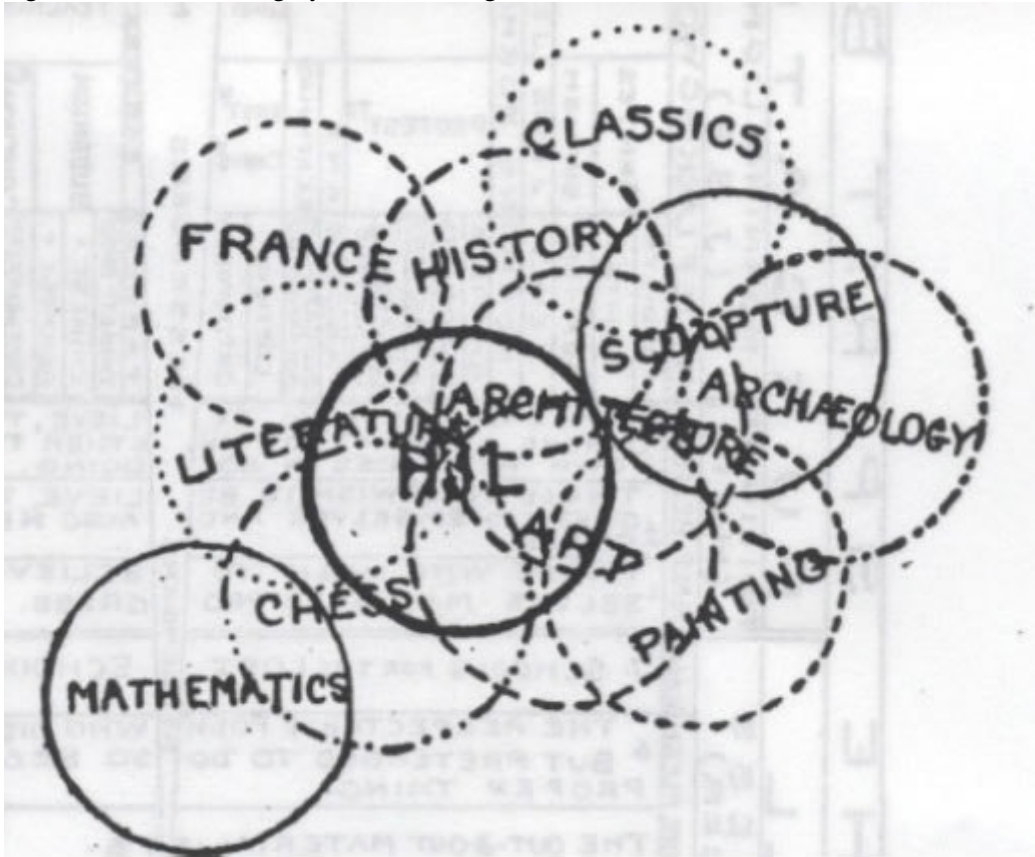
"I am in division 2. As you reckon time, I was but a few days in division I, but to me it seemed many years.

"Here what I call soul-study is the chief business; our relaxation is what was our work on earth. This brings us into touch with men of similar occupations and tastes, though differing in religious matters.



Spheres of Interest.

“Thus we may compare this side to a series of circles.”
Again on the screen of grey I saw this diagram of fire.



Spheres of Interest.

“Thus I get to know a man who is keen on archaeology because we are both interested in architecture, though from somewhat different points of view.

“I need not labor the point, as I see you grasp it. Here, you will see, the man who is interested in absolutely only one thing here, as on earth, will get to know far fewer people. These circles keep men in touch who otherwise would be quite separated owing to different religious outlook. Thus the modern Roman Catholic and the ancient Greek philosopher may meet in the Greek spheres, as these circles are often called, both being interested in Greek culture from a different standpoint.

“While we are in the region of half belief, the religious divisions are only faintly visible, but when one gets into the set above one finds them very clear. You must first grasp a few truths firmly before you are ready to absorb others.

“Each sect grows towards the others as men progress, because while they retain the vital truth which has called them into existence, all religions lose their errors as the believer mounts higher towards God, who is Himself Truth.

“A point that may not be quite clear is that in division 3 of our set the first messengers start. These go, down for the most part, as far as 'the schools' They are not the glorious ones of fire who go down into Hell itself. They come from far above. The risk for our people would be too great. Even in the schools the earth pull is so strong that the messengers cast back their own progress for many earthly years.

“The Babes' Schools are for those children who died too young to learn anything. They learn to believe, and as recreations they learn what you call work, only it is, of course, on a higher plane. No need to learn to read or write, for example.”

J. W. "Who teaches them?"

H. J. L. "From division 3 go down many women who for some reason were never mothers on earth.

Thus they satisfy the primal instinct of women. Also schoolmasters and parsons go there. Often they go down for what you would call a space of time, and then return to their work in division 3; for teaching is not work here, but recreation.

"Now do not turn my diagrams into a cast-iron system. Remember there is far more flux here than on earth.

"Now I have told you enough for the time being. Is there anything you wished to say?"

J. W. "What is the purpose of the 'school for those who have progressed,' and why is it that this school is separate from that for the babes?"

H. J. L. "They must get some vague ideas before they can even half believe. As yet they simply have a vague longing to believe. They must also learn to realize the evilness of the scenes which rise up before them from their former life.

"They are like babes in knowledge, and must learn; but you would not have them mix with the innocent babes, would you? Now good-bye."

Chapter IX

The Passing of a Saint

LETTER FROM H. J. L.

Feb. 14th.

"I HAVE taken control. I have been to see a death from this side. My guide took me. We entered a room, I cannot explain exactly how, but we simply found ourselves there. It was a large, airy room, nicely but not very expensively furnished. Outside there was a garden, but, being winter, of course there was not much life in it.

"On the bed was an old man about seventy years, a parson. My guide spoke:

"This was a faithful minister of the truth as far as he knew it, one of those souls who come straight to the realm of belief, in the land where men believed and acted up to their beliefs. He is the Roman Catholic priest of this parish.'

"Over his bed hung a Sister of Mercy, and beside him knelt a priest, who was giving him extreme unction.

"Suddenly the room became full of beautiful spirits. They filled the room and stretched far out into space.

"Who are these' I asked.

"All the fair souls he has helped to save. See this woman, she was a poor fallen sister whose feet he turned to the paths of truth. That was a foolish boy who, but for him, would be in the set below yours. That father would have driven that girl, his daughter, on to the streets, but he [the priest. — ED.] took her to a nunnery, and by degrees softened the father's heart. Now both of them are in the realm of belief, of those who acted up to those beliefs. All these have come to welcome their pastor and friend.'

"Then I was aware of a still more glorious being.

"Kneel . . .,' whispered my guide.

"All that glorious company sank on their knees, I humbly with them.

"Who is he?' I whispered.

"He is the teacher and ruler of that realm. He comes to take him home. Look!'

"Slowly from the body a light seemed to rise, strongest at the head. It was almost golden, but had a touch of blue in it. Gradually it seemed to take the form of a head and shoulders, and slowly I saw this figure of light draw out from its fleshy covering. Soon it was clear, and at once a glad cry broke from the lips of the hundreds who were present.

"Father, your children greet you with joy and gladness,' they seemed to say.

"And the good priest smiled on them, and, as he did, I noticed the body too seemed to smile. The spirit turned and blessed those earthly ones who were watching by the bed.

"Then the cord of flame, which had been growing longer and longer, snapped, and I heard a wild cry of sorrow from the mourners below; but it was quite drowned in the song of rejoicing which burst from the lips of the spirit throng. The Great Spirit took him by the hand and seemed to say: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a little, now thou shalt rule over many. I make thee the pastor of all these whom on earth thou didst save' and the wild song of joy which burst from the assembled crowd still rings in my ears.

"Then we were alone, I and my guide, and the humble mourners, but I knew it was well, and I too went away rejoicing.

"I shall write no more. Thank all five who have helped to-night. I hope the two newcomers are now satisfied as to the necessity for the officer's work, and also realize the full aim of this book. Again thanking you. — Yours, H. J. L."

(Those present were Mr. and Mrs. K., Mrs. S., Mr. and Mrs. J. — Feb. 10th, 1914.)

Chapter X

Describes the School to which he went and what he learnt there

SEVENTH TRANCE DREAM

Feb. 16th.

H. J. L. "Well, Jack, do you wish to ask me any questions? "

J. W. "What has happened to that beautiful tract of country you spoke of when you had just died?"

H. J. L. "Open your eyes."

Then it seemed as if my eyes were opened and behold! I was in the most lovely country! The light was of the kind one sees on a summer evening. Over the distant horizon the red glow of sunset was just visible, tingeing the hill-tops and reflected in the water of many streams and lake lets. We were standing side by side in an avenue of trees, tall and splendid. I saw *H. J. L.* quite plainly. He was not dressed in the clothes I had seen him in when he had appeared clairvoyantly, i.e. earthly, but in long flowing robes of white which seemed as if they were really part of his body in some mysterious way. A soft faint light seemed to come out from his body, impossible to describe. Looking again at the landscape, it seemed to me to contain everything beautiful of natural scenery. The view grows wider; I perceive lakes and snow-capped mountains, rushing rivers, and lo! Beyond all, the sea. But over all was a soft evening light.

"Do you have day and night here?" I asked him.

"No. The light comes from ourselves, though, indeed, there is that mysterious red glow. It is the light of God, of Faith, of Truth, which reaches us but goes no further. The higher we go the brighter it becomes, till at length it is all in all. In Hell there is no light either from Faith or the individuals there.

"The real light by which we perceive things is within ourselves. The light you see I hardly realize; it is more comparable to the other effects of the landscape than light by which we can perceive."

We seated ourselves on the soft grass under an oak tree, and below us I could see palms and tropical birds mingling with the ordinary English scenery.

"Tell me what happened," I asked, "after the visions had sorted themselves out as you told me they did in your letter."

H. J. L. "On either side the 'street' of visions stretched as far as I could see, impinging on the landscape, which nevertheless I began to perceive again. Suddenly my teacher and guide stood beside me.

"'Come with me,' he said, and led me clean through one of my 'visions' into the country beyond. How to explain exactly what happened to my *visions*, I know not; but though they always haunt me, are with me even at the present moment, though unseen by you, yet they gradually fell into the background as it were. .

"We walked across the fields and down the slope of a hill, and as we did so, I saw the roof of a splendid building.

"'What is that?' I asked.

"'The school to which you are going.'

"'School! I'm not a child!' I cried.

"'Indeed you are, an absolute child in matters of Faith. Look how small you are!'

"As he spoke I realized that he had become tall, but could not realize that I was small.

"We now stood before the portals of the building, surely the most magnificent and beautiful school which was ever conceived.

"Soon I was taken into a classroom, for so I must needs call it; for lack of a better name, and saw a number of boys. Boys! No, they were men, but strangely immature, though they looked like little miniature adults.

“Then I saw their master or instructor. What a difference! Not merely was he a well-grown man, but he seemed to be made of light — light which filled the whole classroom with a bright, soft glow. The bodies of the other boys looked grey, though some were brighter than the others, and mine, I discovered, was the darkest of them all.

“Next moment I looked round for my guide, but he was gone. But the master took me quietly by the hand and set me in a seat. Then began the most wonderful lesson I have ever witnessed. His methods were entirely different to those of the ordinary schoolmaster.

He seemed to draw the knowledge out of the boys rather than attempt to tell them anything. Most of the questions were quite unintelligible to me, though the others seemed to understand them quite well. His method consisted in asking cleverly arranged questions, and the answer to each led on to the next question.

“After a while he turned to me and said, ‘Would you like to ask me any questions?’

“‘How is it,’ I asked, ‘that everything looks so solid here, and, above all, how is it I have a body? I thought I was a spirit.’

“*He.* ‘What do all human beings consist of?’

“*H. J. L.* Body and soul.

“*He.* ‘How would a scientist define these?’

“*H. J. L.* Matter and force.

“*He.* ‘Good. What happens to the matter when you die? Is it destroyed?’

“*H. J. L.* Matter can’t be destroyed. It merely changes its form. My body will rot and become earth, and plants will grow out of it.

“*He.* ‘What of the force which made that body act?’

“*H.J. L.* It has come here. It is the spirit. It, too, cannot perish.

“*He.* ‘Neither the matter nor the force perish. Yet is the body on the earth the same as when you lived?’

“*H.J.L.* No.

“*He.* ‘What makes it different? If you were to look at it now, wherein would it chiefly differ?’

“*H. J. L.* Well, it would be losing its old shape. Its form would be different.

“*He.* ‘The form would have gone. If neither the matter nor the force perish, what happens to the form? Can that perish?’

“*H.J.L.* I do not see why not.

“*He.* ‘What of the form of the thoughts which haunt you? Their form has not perished. Why, then, should your form perish if theirs remains?’

“*H. J. L.* Yes; but I still exist who thought those forms, so someone must have thought of me before I existed if I am like my thoughts. For I thought of them, and so they came into existence.

“*He.* ‘Precisely. Someone must have thought of you. That person is God. He created you by thought, and so, too, you create things by thought. What lessons have you learnt?’

“*H. J. L.* That form, like matter and force, does not perish. Secondly, that, as God created me by thinking of me, so I create forms by thinking of them.

“*He.* ‘And what answer can you deduce to your questions from these facts?’

“*H. J. L.* I suppose all that I see are forms, and being a *form* myself, they seem as solid as myself. But why do I seem solid?

“*He.* ‘How could you seem otherwise? There is no matter here.’

“*H. J. L.* If I went back to the earth as I am, should I then appear to myself less substantial?

“*He.* ‘Would you thereby become matter?’

“*H. J. L.* No. You mean unless one becomes matter one’s self, one would only seem form and force, not matter.

“*He.* ‘If a light is placed in the midst of a cloud of smoke, what would you see?’

“*H. J. L.* Why, of course, a light shining, through perhaps dimly, through smoke.

"*He.* 'What is a flame?'

"*H.J.L.* Force.

"*He.* 'Nothing more?'

"*H. J. L.* It of course has a form.

"*He.* 'What is the smoke?'

"*H. J. L.* Matter and form.

"*He.* Does this not answer your question?

"*H. J. L.* You mean I should see the spirit form shining through the material form as a candle does through smoke or fog?

"*He.* 'Yes.'

"*H. J. L.* Having left matter behind, shall I ultimately also leave behind form?

"As I spoke these words, a terrible stillness seemed to fill the room. All the other boys leant forward expectantly.

"*He.* 'You have asked a question which I at any rate cannot fully answer. But this I can tell you —that we do leave behind the present form on rising to the next realm. What happens none of us here knows. We cannot see beyond the wall of fire any more than mortal eyes can penetrate the veil of death. The Great Messengers may know, but we who do but come from the highest divisions of this realm know not. You still wish to ask a question?'

"*H. J. L.* We who are created by God look to Him for help and consider Him responsible for our well-being. Are we also responsible for the forms we create?

"Again the silence that could be felt brooded over the room.

"*He.* 'You ask wise questions, though so young. What happened to you after you had spoken awhile with your guide?'

"*H. J. L.* I told him of the hideous nightmare which had seized me, and how, it sorted itself into order when I prayed.

"*He.* 'Does this not answer your question in part? Did not your thoughts claim you?'

"*H. J. L.* I bowed my head in shame and sat silent.

"*He.* 'But your question means more than that. Speak on.'

"*H. J. L.* But my thoughts cannot create fresh thoughts, as I can.

"*He.* 'Directly no, but what of indirectly?'

"*H. J. L.* How can they even indirectly?'

"*He.* 'In the material world an evil act is done.

Are there none who copy that evil act?'

"*H. J. L.* That is so, of course. But surely things are different here?'

"*He.* 'Tell him the answer to that.'

"One of the boys then spoke as follows: —

"Nothing exists on earth which has not its counter-part here. We see this in the trees and birds and buildings, as also in many other things. But all things here lack crude matter."

"*H. J. L.* 'But do their evil thoughts here influence others to evil?'

"*He.* 'When on earth did you never notice that two men, or even more, each working independently, even separated from each other by thousands of miles, at the same moment make the same discovery?'

"*H. J. L.* 'Yes, often, but put it down to coincidence.

"*He.* 'There is *no such thing* as coincidence. That word is merely a cloak employed by men to disguise the fact that they are ignorant of some of the fundamental laws of God.'

"'Again, have you never seen how an idea win continue for ages to influence mankind, though all who knew its origin have passed away?'

"'Have you never seen how such an idea, though forgotten in its original home, will yet reappear somewhere else without any known connection having taken place?'

H. J. L. Then, once created, a thought may go on creating fresh thoughts?

He. ‘Yes; but only such as relate to it. It could not create a fresh thought on an entirely different subject.’

H. J. L. But a man can. Why, then, is it different? He may at one time create a cruel thought which will go on influencing others to do cruel deeds, yet at the next moment he may create a thought of kindness which others will develop into much that is good. Why this difference?

He. ‘Of what does a man consist?’

H. J. L. Matter, form, force.

He. ‘Of what does a thought, once created, consist?’

H. J. L. I suppose form only.

He. ‘You are answered.’

H. J. L. Ah, then it is the presence of what you call force. What is force?

He. ‘Some say force is God, and some that force and matter are God, and some that force and matter are the same, and it is this that is God. Can man create either?’

H. J. L. I suppose he creates only forms.

He. ‘Are you not, then, answered?’

H. J. L. I don’t see quite how it answers my original question, namely, why we can create variant thoughts when our own thoughts cannot.’

He. ‘God creates you; you create your thought: your thought influences others.’

‘Your thought’s action is bounded by the thought that created it; your actions are bounded by the force which actuates you. God is bounded by nothing.’

H.J.L. I see it all. I cannot think about that of which I have no knowledge. But God is knowledge.

He. ‘God is all in all. You have learnt your first lessons. Now go for recreation, all of you.’

‘Next moment we were outside like boys running out from school, and we amused ourselves in many various ways. But our pleasures here are mental. What was our work on earth is our amusement here.’

‘I very naturally drifted into the set who were interested in architecture. They varied in size, or, really, in spiritual development. Many were in the upper forms of the school, and one of these suggested we should go off to see some of the famous buildings which had at one time existed.’

‘‘I don’t want to see any of the hideous villas which disfigure most of our suburbs’ I remarked.

‘‘such as one of those you built, eh?’ remarked a boy whom I recognized as a man I knew slightly on earth.

‘I should have felt annoyed on earth, but here I only chuckled.

‘The big boy who had suggested the expedition answered, ‘Oh, you need not fear that. All that is hideous goes to Hell. We don’t get the finest work here, of course — that goes to the people in the sets above us. Still, all our stuff is good. There are some very fine Assyrian buildings we might go and see!’

‘‘Do all the buildings come here, or only those which have perished?’ I asked.

‘‘If a building is practically untouched it does not come here, but if it is partly destroyed and rebuilt, the whole of the original form comes here. You see, the alterations have given it a new form which may in due course also come here. That’s part of the interest of it. You can see how the Tower of London has changed from century to century. Of course we don’t have its exact present form.’

‘So we went off to see the Assyrian buildings, and I enjoyed it immensely;’

J. W. ‘As you are in with architects, do you ever come across a man called A?’

H. J. L. ‘‘It’s funny you should inquire about him, for he was the man who made that remark about the houses.’’

J. W. "About those you built?"

H.J.L. "Yes."

J. W. "How is he getting on?"

H. J. L. "He's in our set. He told me he was fearfully annoyed when he found he was with those who only, half-believed. He said to his teacher, 'But I did believe'

"His guide replied, 'Had you really believed, you would not be here. Like many others, you thought you believed, but belief does not consist of merely saying "I believe." You must truly grasp it. Had you really believed, you could not have lived the life you did. Plenty of people who thought they believed find themselves in Hell. A man's belief must be shown forth in his life, or it is not real. This does not mean that a man who believes may not commit many grievous sins. He may. Nor yet does it mean that he will not suffer for them. We are responsible for every thought and act; but still, belief must be real before it counts.'"

"There is no deceiving anyone, not even one's own self, here. You half-believed, and are, therefore, in this part. Had you not believed at all, you would be in Hell. Now go and make progress."

J. W. "Is he?"

H. J. L. "Not very fast. You see, he was younger, and almost all his interests were physical-sports, good wine, women, and business. He died in the midst of them, and the earth pull is very strong. He is not earth-bound — no one here is — but still he does hanker after the earth. Why, he often plays truant and goes back to his old haunts and friends on earth. It's not with the same desires as the earth-bound go, hoping to be able to enjoy their old lusts, but with a kind of affection for old friends and places. I am really very sorry, for it throws him back terribly, and he's a very nice fellow. However, as he himself says, he died thirty years at least before his time, and I suppose he's got to spend that time before he'll be in the same position as those who died after their seventieth birthday.

"He told that to the master one day when he reprimanded him for playing truant.

"He's fearfully slow in class, can't grasp quite simple things; although he died so much earlier than I did, I've passed him already. But he's a jolly fellow, very popular out of school. He misses his games, though, terribly. He's got a vein of humor. He explained the other day that he prayed fervently that his wife might not die for many years, as he was afraid she would rout him out here.

"Now you have heard quite enough, or you'll want to stick here altogether."

We then began to walk back towards the avenue.

Reaching there, we sat down, and I seemed to fall asleep. — *J. W.*

Chapter XI

He Attends his own Funeral

NINTH LETTER OF H. J. L.

*At home (Glen House),
Feb. 21st, 7 p.m.*

“After I had apparently been attending the school for a long time, my guide came to me one day and said, ‘It is time for you to go to your funeral!’

“‘My funeral!’ I cried; ‘I thought that had taken place ages ago.’

“‘Oh no! he replied; ‘you have, according to our reckoning, been here quite a long time, but, according to earth time, you have only been here three days’

“This was the first time I realized the huge difference between our method of reckoning time, or rather, our escape from time, and your subservience to it. In those three earthly days I had made apparently many months’ progress, had learnt much about spiritual things, and had seen numerous fine buildings of ancient days. At this point I should add that here there is nothing comparable to night and day, nor is there any sleep. This is, of course, evident if you think for a moment, for the spirit never sleeps even upon earth; it, unlike the body, needs no rest.

“Well, my guide told my master where I was going, and I was excused lessons. We were just going to begin work. I expect this sounds rather funny to you.

“Next moment we were at L.D. There was no long journey through the ether, as I imagined would be the case. Simply I found myself in my old bedroom. Of course it is now plainer to me.

“Our world and yours are not separated by anything akin to space.

“One might almost say they are both in the same space. But there, it is impossible to make this point quite plain to you, I fear.

“I, of course, noticed that the room was changed and the furniture out of its proper place, and then I noticed the coffin. It was covered by a large white sheet, but I could see through this, and perceived my body lying there.

“Strangely enough, it did not seem to have the attraction for me which I expected it would. I looked at it more as one might look at a marble sculpture than as at an old friend.

“‘You have finished your work and your day is done, old friend,’ I murmured. Even as I thought this, another thought welled up. ‘Were you really a friend or only a taskmaster? ‘Now at any rate I was free, and I rejoiced.

“After a while I felt I should like to see what the others were doing.

“Next moment I was in the dining-room. It was so full that, to avoid touching the others, I stood in, or, rather, through the middle of the table. Of course it did not interfere with me in any way, nor, indeed, would their bodies, but yet some instinct, probably inherited from my earthly state, compelled me to avoid running into them. I saw them all — you, G., D., M., and Miss P.

“There did not seem to be much to learn there, so I drifted into the drawing-room, where my wife was, but soon drifted out.

“To tell the truth, I rather felt as if I was in the way, and wondered vaguely why I had been taken from school, where I was every day learning something new and interesting, to see these vacuities.

“My guide answered, ‘At the moment of burial the spirit always feels an inarticulate yearning to see its earthly shell and bid it farewell. There is a good reason for this, indeed, several. Besides the mere earthly attachment which all men feel for their bodies, akin to that usually felt by a dog for its master, even when that master was often cruel to it, there are the following: — At burials there are usually certain evil beings who hang round the corpse, hoping against hope, they know not always how, to draw some carnal satisfaction from the corpse, some touch of earthly lusts which still haunt it.’

“Occasionally, under exceptional circumstances, they may try, and even succeed, in drawing a kind of material body from the dead corpse by means of which to clothe their naked souls. This can only happen in the case of men who have lived evil lives. From this shame you are free; nevertheless, you and I go to see that nothing of evil shall approach what once held you.’

“Further, it is right that you should follow to its last resting-place a friend with whom you have been associated for so long.’

“Finally, by showing you the pettiness of the life you have left, to make you the more rejoice in that in which you now are.’

“After this I again returned and sat by my corpse; and presently you entered. I saw you remove the napkin and look at my face, but all the time I was standing opposite to you. I saw, rather to my surprise, how distressed you were, and tried to attract your attention, saying, ‘I am all right. Don’t you see me?’

“Once I thought you heard me, for you looked straight in my face for a moment; but you did not. Then, replacing the napkin and sheet, you turned and left the room.’

“Soon after, the undertaker’s men entered, and, having screwed down the lid, took the coffin downstairs. I went with the procession to the church.

“After the coffin had been lowered into the grave and you had all gone, I did not follow you, but waited by the grave till it was filled in. This completed, I looked at the marble statue which had once held me — I could, of course, see through the earth perfectly well — and then, turning to my guide, said, ‘Shall we now be going?’

“The thought had hardly been formed when, lo! I was back in the school again, and oh! with what a sigh of relief! I looked round for my guide, but he had gone; but by now I had become accustomed to his strange comings and goings.

“‘Take your place,’ said my master kindly. ‘We have only had one round of questions.’

“‘*Only one round,*’ I thought, ‘yet I was on earth for hours. Indeed, there is no relation between time there and here.’

“My master seemed to divine my thoughts, for he answered at once ‘You ought to know by now that here there is no such thing as time’

“I suppose it was having been back to earth that now made me feel just the least surprised at his answering a *thought* of mine.

“I again looked at the boys, and now realized for the first time how small and immature were the mortals whom I had just seen. These, at any rate, were boys, but they, for the most part, were the merest babes, some hardly born. I realized in particular, with mild surprise how infantile was the spirit in ——— and in———. Yet though both were babes, there was some indescribable difference between them. When I saw you all, I saw your spiritual bodies through a grey sort of shadow — your earthly bodies — and often the largest and finest shadow bodies had the smallest and most misshapen and infantile spirit bodies.

“How glad I was to be back at school, back in the realities of life, away from all pettiness and futilities of what you call life on earth; but at the same time a new desire had come upon me, and that was to let you and others know this fact.

“Rest half an hour. — H. J. L.”

Chapter XII

He Goes to College

H. J. L.'s TENTH LETTER.

*GLEN HOUSE,
8:50 p.m., Feb. 21st, 1914.*

“To resume my narrative.

“After returning to school I felt strongly that I wanted to tell those I had seen what the real conditions over here were like, partly because I saw one or two were grieving rather, but more because they all either did not believe in a future life at all, or else had evidently wrong ideas as to what it was like over here. I have already told you of my fruitless endeavors to reach other members of the family, and how at length I got in touch with you. Now I will explain how I learnt that one could tell those still living. No sooner had the idea, come to me, than my guide entered the classroom.

“‘Your pupil has learnt his lesson so well,’ he said to our master, ‘that he can now leave school. He will go to a university instead.’

“‘He has made splendid progress,’ said my master.

‘Good; go forward, my lad.’

“Class was then dismissed, and all the other boys crowded round me.

“‘You have shot up, ’they said. ’Why, you are nearly a man!’

“Several others, I noticed, were also speaking to their guides, and it was quite a batch of us who said farewell to the building which had now become so familiar to us all.

“My guide then began to speak. ‘You wish to communicate with those still living? Why?’

“I said, ‘to tell them of this life, so that they may try and prepare themselves for it, so that they need not go through the elementary lessons which I had to learn. Many, too, who believe in a future life have no real idea as to what it is like’

“‘But why should you wish to speak to them?’

They will all come to us some day, and then they will *have* to learn.’

“‘Yes, but on earth I neglected these things, and now would make some little amends’

“‘This is a good reason, and truly they do need much light, and by helping them you will help yourself. Lo! You are now in the second instead of the first stage of this realm or set.’

“‘How can I do it?’ I said.

“‘That you must find out for yourself. We tell nothing here. Each soul must strive to answer his own questions, and if he really strives he will succeed.’

“Soon I found myself without my guide among a crowd of young men. We seemed to be in some university town. Several of the men drifted towards me, and, without the usual hesitation which I should have felt on earth, I asked what I could do to tell those on earth of this life.

“One of them replied, ‘We, too, are trying to find out how to do that very thing. Come with us.’

“We now searched throughout that large town, and at last found what we sought. Let me say here that the dominant note of the place was the desire to help others who were already dead. At length we found a lecturer, as he would have been called on earth. But he did not lecture, but asked us questions, as the master had done.

“When we said, ‘How can we tell those still living?’

“He replied, ‘How do you do anything here?’

“‘By thinking about it.’

“‘You are answered.’

“‘We think then,’ I said, ‘that we wish to communicate with the living.’

“‘Naturally; how otherwise?’

“‘And do we think of one person or many?’

“‘Which you please, but which is easier — to think of one person or many persons’

“‘One’ we all cried together.

“‘Are there any other questions’ he asked?

“‘We had none then, so we went together to a sort of private study and there all concentrated our thoughts on this great matter. It sounds very simple to say ‘think of something,’ but in practice we found it terribly hard to concentrate on one sole thought.

Other ideas would come floating in. We seemed to try this for weeks and weeks, but at length one man did get through.

“‘This encouraged us. Another who had been trying for some time said, ‘I wonder if the man I am thinking about is not receptive.’

“‘This started a long discussion, and we all agreed that probably it would be easier to get in touch with those who were not too materialistic. So, as we could not always tell who were the most materialistic, we decided to make such a list, and work through them by degrees. You know the rest. At length I got you. That night I seemed specially drawn towards earth, I think now because it was just a week since I had died.

“‘I gradually became aware of the fact that I was drawing closer to you than I had yet done to the others, but it was not till you went to bed that I really got in touch with you. This taught me how to work, and, once started, things went easier. Finally, I met P., who told me how to try automatic writing. —

Yours, “H. J. L.”

Chapter XIII

Animals on the Spirit Plane

TRANCE VISION OR CONVERSATION DURING NIGHT OF FEB. 23rd

I (J. W.) found myself seated by the edge of a beautiful lake. It reminded me at one time of Coniston, but next moment it seemed more like Lake Lucerne. H. J. L. was by me.

“Do you,” I said, “have houses to live in?”

“Yes,” he replied. “I at present am living in college.”

“Is it like any college which still exists?”

“I think,” he replied, “that it is old Queen’s College, Oxford, which was pulled down to make way for the present classical building.”

J. W. “Did you know of the Requiem Mass which my father held for you on the day of the funeral?”

H. J. L. “Yes, but I did not know that it was on the same day. I knew of it what appeared to be some time before. That service was of far more use to me than the funeral service. It is strange that so many Christians devote all their attention to the body, which knows and cares nothing about what is going on, and entirely neglect the spirit, which is often in great need of help.

“I was going through one of those terrible days (of course they are not days, but I know no other name to give them for you) when my former deeds crowded upon me on every side. These ‘days’ come on me even still; they are part of my punishment, and are sent to enable me to repent. I, of course, could not go to school, and was there overwhelmed with misery, when, lo! a bright flame seemed to force its way through my nightmare visions and dissolve them. Slowly in their place there came a vision of a church with an altar on which were candles and a cross, and before it was a priest. I recognized him as your father and, further, saw you kneeling there. But though you two were the only mortals, you were not alone. Who they were who knelt beside you I cannot say, but certainly the whole church, not merely the side chapel, was full of worshippers who had come from our side.

“No words of mine can express the joy that this sight filled me with. Firstly, I rejoiced that there were at least some on earth who really cared and believed enough to pray for me, and the thought and the words of the service filled me with a wonderful peace.

“But even beyond this came the inspiring thought that hundreds of others who had come here before, had possibly trodden the same hard road as I was treading, were interested in my progress and prayed for me. O Jack, I never knew how much good might be hidden in that wonderful contradictory old national church of ours! Tennyson must have received some inspiration from this side when he retained in his *Morte d’Arthur* those closing lines of Malory, clean contradictory as they must have been to the ideas of the Mid-Victorians

‘Pray for my soul.’ You know the rest, don’t you?”

J. W. “Yes, well. By-the-bye, as animals come here, have you seen anything of old Molly?”

(Carrie’s dog.)

H. J. L. “Oh yes. She often comes to me, as there is no one else here she knows, I think. There she is.”

J. W. “Where? I can’t see her.”

H. J. L. “Here she comes.”

As he spoke. Molly came rushing out of a small wood close by. She looked somewhat younger than when she died and had quite lost her hump, but otherwise there seemed no

change. She jumped and capered about, first round H. J. L. and then round me, wagging her tail and barking with excitement. I made her walk on her hind legs as she used to do.

Presently she curled up beside H. J. L.

“If animals survive in this state,” I asked, “what becomes of them when the frontier of this plane is reached? Do they, too, go on to the fifth plane?”

H. J. L. “That is one of the points we are investigating. I have particularly asked P. to inquire in his division.

“This leads me to try and fix the terms I use for our divisions here. I am afraid they have been a little incoherent. I will therefore use henceforth: —

“*Plane* = the whole of this realm of the spiritual body.

“*Realm* = the divisions of this plane, *e.g.* the realm of half-belief.

“*Division* = the divisions of each realm, *e.g.* the schools or the divisions of Hell.

“*Subdivisions* = the splitting up of the divisions as among the sects in the realm of belief without acts, *e.g.* the Roman Catholics or Baptists.

“*Spheres* = the groups into which we drift during the times we are having recreation. They bring together men in different divisions of the same realm, but not those who are in different realms. Moreover, a man will sometimes be in one sphere and sometimes in another, *e.g.* the sphere of architecture or music.

“Now, as to next Saturday’s work, P. is very anxious to start writing, so I shall let him. He will give an account of his passing on to the realm above. Strictly, I ought to write first an account of the entrance of the officer into our realm as seen by me — it occurred first — and also what I know of P.’s passing, but I will do so after he has written. I will, however, tell you how I met P.

“I had been inquiring about the realm below and that above, and suddenly a man came to me and said: ‘I have been down to Hell on a little missionary work, so perhaps I can give you some information.’

“I was delighted.

“He told me about the divisions of Hell, and that he had been sent to teach the souls in the schools. He was not allowed to go any lower, but even that had retarded his progress. He hoped, however, soon to be allowed to pass on to the realm above us. He said, further, that the souls in Hell were terribly hard to teach, far harder than the worst types of people on earth, and this in spite of the fact that none had reached the seventh division unless they desired to progress.

“‘If you really wish to know about the depths of Hell, I know the man who can tell you,’ P. added. ‘He was an army officer, and I have been teaching him for some time. He will soon be admitted into this realm, and I will introduce him to you and ask him to help you. I was privileged to help him and feel sure he will do what I wish in the matter. He is a man with a tremendous personality, and made good progress. You may still think him a fairly unregenerate blackguard, but I assure you he is enormously improved. When he first came to me, he was by far the worst in the whole school, and I often wondered why he had been admitted, but he rapidly passed all the others’

“‘Are there schools like ours in Hell?’ I said (H. J. L.).

“‘They are almost impossible to compare,’ P. replied. ‘The nearest simile which occurs to me is, as a school for mentally afflicted children is to a first-class secondary school on earth. Even that does not show the full difference.’

“‘The schools for the babies, which I never entered, correspond fairly closely to the kindergartens on earth, though of course different subjects are taught.’

“Many other things P. described to me, and I have given you them from time to time. But I was not long to have the advantage of his company, for soon after the passing up to us of the officer, P.’s guide took him away for his final preparations for his own passing on.

“Before going, he obtained from his guide a promise that he might on occasion return to us, as he had gone down into Hell, to bring us the news we desired.

“Now I have given you enough. Consider me at the university with other students working at this subject which I have chosen, the subject being to discover all I can about the conditions of life here in all the realms, and to transmit this knowledge to you. Consider me surrounded by many fellow-students all working at the same problem, further, as having recreations and amusements approximating to those which are the highest on earth. All these mental amusements are carried on a far higher plane. There are also recreations of which you know nothing on earth.

“Now good-bye for the time being, Jack. Think of me and pray for help for me.

“See, I can fly now.”

He rose in the air and floated away across the lake, and I stood watching the rosy light of the over-setting sun tingeing the waters of the lake. Then I knew no more.

— J. W.

Chapter XIV

Little Blanche Sees H. J. L.

BLANCHE SEES H. J. L.

Feb. 26th.

C. W. and Blanche were in the drawing-room at 7 p.m., and B. wandered up to the window and looked out at the sky from the darkened room. The sky was covered with stars.

She exclaimed, "I see the big granddad crossing the sky! He's got a candle or torch in his hand with a star for the light. He keeps moving backwards and forwards. Now he has gone into a room and is learning something. He has a book."

Immediately after she said, "I can see him coming along again. A little girl is following him — like Betty (a six-year-old cousin), only she has reddish hair.⁷ She has a doll in her hand. Now he's talking to her and holding her hand."

Earlier she said, "He pulled me; I felt him."

Some time later, about 7:45, C. W. and she went out in the garden to see the stars.

She then said, "There is the big granddad; he has picked a bunch of stars. They are flowers to him; he's putting them in a vase."

⁷ (A correct summary. — C. W.)

Chapter XV

How H. J. L. Met "The Officer"

TRANCE VISION AND CONVERSATION

March 2nd, 1914.

*During these I seem to be transferred to another
country or plane of existence.*

I FOUND myself seated by the side of a river, and beside me was H. J. L.

"Carrie wants to know," I began, "whether you can take off the clothes and, laying them aside, get into others? Do you understand my meaning? "

"Of course I perceive the idea in your mind. The clothes are made into their present form by my will. When I wish them to assume another shape, *e.g.* when I am on the earth plane and wish them to resemble my former earth clothes, they do so. I don't take them off and change them as you do on earth. Our clothes do not wear out, of course. They remain as we think them, and if we want to change them we think the change — and there are the new clothes."

J. W. "Blanche said she saw you picking stars, which were flowers to you. Was this so? "

H. J. L. "I often pick flowers, and I suppose they looked as bright as stars to her, and she mixed them up with the stars, which she saw with her mortal sight, as distinct from her spiritual sight, with which she sees me."

J. W. "Do you know who the little red-beaded girl is?"

H. J. L. "She has just come here, and I happened to see her looking rather lonely, and so began to interest myself in her. She's gone up to the girls' schools here."

J. W. "Oh, then they don't have co-education?"

H. J. L. "Not exclusively, though they have it for some children. You see, here like attracts like."

J. W. "Have you seen many women?"

H. J. L. "Not many as yet. Later we see more of them. Now I'll go on with my narrative."

J. W. "Before you do so, tell me, don't the flowers die when you pick them? "

H. J. L. "Oh no. Why should they? They are forms, and still retain those forms even if picked. They are simply transferred from the plant to my vase. But they do not die in the vase any more than when they are on the plant."

J. W. "If you pulled them to pieces, would they perish?"

H. J. L. "We should never do such a thing; we realize that even the flowers have their rights. Nevertheless the separate pieces would still exist, and would reunite.

"Now for my narrative. A few days after I had met P., my guide took me to see the passing up to us of a soul from Hell, and his guide went with me, and we found it was the officer.

"I find it hard to make you understand how we got there, but suddenly we were at the edge of Hell. We seemed to be on a dry, barren, rocky edge. Behind us were black rocks and hard, stony ground. The ground, which sloped up towards us from behind, in front of us broke off abruptly.

"Now this terrible precipice was made far more awful by the fact that at its edge all light ceased. The light seemed to become tiny particles of mist, and at the very edge these seemed to pile themselves up into a great wall against the darkness. There was no intermingling of light and dark, as on earth, simply this awful darkness, which seemed as if it were a solid curtain, or even a wall against which the light piled itself up but could not penetrate.

"My guide spoke 'Go to the uttermost edge of that rocky cliff and stretch out your hand into the darkness'

“I went to the edge, and as I did so I felt the hand of my guide resting on my shoulder from behind to steady me.

“My hand went into the darkness and was immediately lost to sight. I could see my arm as far as the part where it entered the darkness, but beyond I could see nothing. Nor could I feel any sensation in the hand, save only at the place where it entered the darkness. It was more than the darkness which can be felt; it was the darkness which destroys feeling.

“At the part where my arm entered the darkness I felt a narrow band of intense cold, numbing and yet burning.

“‘May I withdraw my arm?’ I asked my guide.

“‘Yes’

“I promptly withdrew it, and was really thankful to find it was undamaged.

“‘Why this darkness and cold?’ I inquired.

“My guide replied, ‘The light of faith does not exist here, and there is also no love of God.

“‘As you are now a spirit, you need the spiritual light and warmth, just as on earth you needed physical warmth and light.’

“Slowly the wall of darkness began to sway to and fro. As it advanced towards the light in one place it receded in another, and the light pressed in and out. There was no interpenetration, simply an undulating line instead of a straight one. As this movement grew more and more violent I sprang back from the cliff, fearing that a fold of darkness might engulf me.

“But my guide said, ‘stand firm. That darkness cannot reach us; there is too much faith here’ And so it was, for though the folds of darkness several times swept up on to the land on either side of the spot where we were standing, it never engulfed us, and we were able to realize the awful depth of the precipice, which seemed almost unscaleable. But the light gave comparatively little illumination.

“Suddenly out of the darkness beneath us a ball of light began to emerge, and, rapidly mounting, we saw it was a glorious spirit of light. As he rose from the depths the darkness seemed to fall from off him, to use a homely simile, like water from a duck’s back.

“Having, climbed over the edge of the cliff on to its top, he lay down and stretched his arm down into the darkness. It vanished up to the shoulder; but gradually he withdrew it, and soon we saw his hand grasped that of another. The newcomer’s hand was not bright and shining like his, but dark and dirty, with a pallid, unhealthy tinge.

“Soon there struggled up beside him, slowly and painfully, a most miserable object. His eyes were covered with a kind of bandage. He fell to the ground beside his guide, who rose to his feet and gently helped him to rise.

“The newcomer wore a dark grey ragged garment, which was covered with stains, and seemed to have, as it were, patches of darkness still clinging to it. His hands and face were also stained and dirty.

“‘Oh, this terrible light,’ he moaned. ‘I can see it even through this bandage’

(To us it was a very murky light, most like that seen in a London fog.)

“‘How foul his clothes are!’ I said to P.

“‘To us, yes; but if he could see them they would to him appear unwontedly clean,’ said P. ‘I expect to you your clothes appear quite clean?’

“‘Yes’ I replied.

“‘Well, I can see many stains on them, and I have no doubt to *my* guide mine also appear foul.’

“I felt very humbled by this remark and remained silent.

“P. stepped forward and, taking the newcomer by the hand, said, ‘Welcome. I am happy indeed in being allowed to greet you on your entrance into this new realm.’

“‘Is that you, my master?’ said the other. ‘It is indeed good of you to come and welcome me.

But this light is terrible. I long for the darkness again!

“‘Oh, that will soon affect you less. This is a friend at mine who has come to welcome and help you and he signed to me.

‘I took the other hand of the man, whom henceforth I shall call by the name of *The Officer*, by which you already know him.

‘We led him slowly down the slope and then seated ourselves on the ground. Here he told me who he was on earth (which I have repeated to you briefly) and something of his life in Hell. The latter I shall not give you now, as he will give it himself in due course. We stayed like this for a long time; it seemed equal to several days, but at length, when he had told us much about himself, his guide spoke.

“‘By telling your evil life and something of what you have suffered, you have made it possible for your eyes to bear the light without the bandage’

‘He then removed it, and the officer sank to the ground and covered his eyes with his hand.

‘My guide then spoke ‘We must now return.’

“‘What of the officer?’ I inquired.

“‘He will follow us, but more slowly. *He* cannot fly yet, but will have to climb painfully up to us.’

‘We then rose in the air. P. and I, in what seemed no time, were back in these now familiar surroundings. I gather from the officer, who arrived a short time later (it seemed like a few days), that he had had to cross a kind of stony desert which mounted up to a range of hills. When he had climbed to the crest of these, he found they sloped down but slightly towards a plain, and that plain was where we dwell.

‘While crossing this plain, he was haunted by the most awful visions of his former evil life, similar to, but far more intense and terrible than, those I saw and suffered from. His guide came to him but rarely, and though to us we seemed to have parted from him but a few days, as it were, to him it seemed years. The visions haunt him even as they do me, but far more fiercely, and as yet they are still in the nightmare state which I described as assailing me at first. They have not yet sorted themselves out, as they did for me. He has, therefore, of course not yet started going to school. In short, he is only just in our realm.

‘This now enables you to understand the spiritual condition of the three persons who are trying to communicate with you from here. I feel that you cannot realize how intense all these experiences are. For example, the awful horror of that darkness I cannot convey to you, and even if I did, you could not convey it to others on earth. It was a horror which seemed to choke and freeze me. It was awful beyond measure.’”

Chapter XVI

Guardian Angels

H. J. L. (continued). “Now, is there any point you wish to raise? “

J. W. “This is the third time I have seen this landscape, but I have never seen your guide. Is he never with you when I am here? “

H. J. L. ‘Not always, but he is here at times. He is now. — Oh, my guide and friend, open his eyes still wider.’ Then something was placed over my eyes for a moment, and I could see nothing. The “something” was removed, and, behold, I could see more clearly. Behind *H. J. L.* stood a great spirit form made of light. His robes kept changing color and seemed to run through all the colors of the rainbow. He was far taller than *H. J. L.*, and large in proportion, being perfectly made. He was at least three times as large as *H. J. L.*, and his face was more beautiful than any Greek sculpture — strong, noble, well-cut features — there was nothing feminine about it. Yet it was a kind, as well as a strong face. It was a face that was neither old nor young. Nor did it seem to have color (*e.g.* brown hair) as we understand it, but rather to be a figure of golden light. Yet there was both hair on the head and beard, majestic and flowing. No words can describe the majesty and beauty of this being. I can quite understand whence the ancients drew their inspirations for their gods. Then I thought, “This is doubtless an angel,” and I looked instinctively for his wings, but he had none.

“Have I not a guide?” I inquired.

Like the tones of a great bell rang out the word “Behold!” Then I saw that behind me was another great spirit of light. Now, though in general aspect he resembled the guardian angel of *H. J. L.*, I perceived that I knew this spirit. His face seemed hauntingly familiar. Yet it was an extraordinarily mobile face, the same, yet ever-changing, never for an instant exactly the same, and yet always retaining certain characteristics. It was different too, markedly, from the guide of *H. J. L.* I knew this being of light. I felt almost as if I had seen him in my dreams, but that the dreams had been forgotten. He, too, had a beard, but not so long as that of *H. J. L.*’s guide, and, like him, was of far more than human size. Light seemed to emanate from his whole body. He raised his hand, and that same glorious bell like voice spoke.

“Enough! It is not well that you should see more!”

Again the hand (for so I now perceived it to be) was placed over my eyes, and when it was removed I could see only *H. J. L.* and the landscape.

“We must part now,” he said, and, rising, floated away from me. I stood looking at the beautiful landscape, lost in contemplation. Gradually I became aware of a sensation of something pulling me. In spite of strong resistance on my part, I felt myself drawn backwards as if by an invisible cord. Step by step I seemed to move uphill and away from the stream, then there was darkness. When I next became conscious, I was back in my house.

Chapter XVII**Blanche Sees H. J. L. and Molly****CLAIRVOYANT APPEARANCE OF H. J. L. TO BLANCHE
AND J. W. AT 6 P.M., MARCH 3RD**

While at tea Blanche suddenly said, "Why, there's Granddad! "

"Show him to me," I said. "I can't see him."

She went to the dining-room window, the one looking east, and said, "I shan't show him to you, or he'll go away."

While we were talking I began to perceive something some distance away, and soon saw H. J. L. I asked Blanche what she saw, as I saw him. She said he was in a room typing, that Rosy Dawn (the little girl) was playing on the floor.

"Now she's going out at the door carrying her doll. Why, there's a brown poodle with her! "

"Yes," I said, "it's Molly. Don't you recognize her?"

"Yes, it's Molly, mother," she cried. The vision grew faint and faded away. I saw exactly the same as she did, but H. J. L. had his back towards me, and was certainly doing something with his hands, but I don't think it was typewriting. The child had seen her other grandfather typing, and not knowing what H. J. L. was doing, interpreted his action by that of my father's. This vision was different from other appearances to me of H. J. L. It was at a distance, and appeared, as she said, to be in the sky. All others have been near to me. Only on Monday I had said to C. W., "I wish I could be present next time B. says she sees anything." I think this was the answer.

Chapter XVIII

Men Are Self-Judged

TRANCE CONVERSATION WITH H. J. L. DURING
NIGHT OF MARCH 9th

I found myself in a forest glade, and seated beside me was H.J.L. He said:

“I think it would be as well at this point to clear up once and for all the exact relationship of Faith and works.

“Faith must be shown forth in works. If a man really believes the teaching of Christ, for example, he will strive to follow it out in his life.

“A man who says with his lips that he believes that teaching and then goes on day by day breaking all the moral laws that Christianity teaches is simply a humbug.

“I do not mean by this the man who, though he strives, often gives way to temptation. For that man there is the realm which I call the realm of belief without acts; but I do mean the hundreds of professing Christians who make no attempt to carry out Christ’s teaching, the men who go to church regularly on Sunday and spend the week in cheating and lying and so forth.

“These go to Hell. They have not believed, and their evil life proves it.”

J. W. “Wherein, then, does this differ from being judged solely by our acts?”

H. J. L. “Firstly, the word judged is misused. It implies that someone outside ourselves judges us. This is not so; we stand self-condemned. Our spirit cannot rise to higher realms than those for which it has fitted itself. There is no necessity to enforce any law, for the law is self-acting. I shall make this point plain if I answer your question. The difference lies in this. Suppose a complete materialist, one who neither believes in God nor in a future life, and one who does his best to dissuade others from believing in these essentials. This man may be a real philanthropist, actuated by a noble desire to promote the material well-being of his fellow-men. This man dies. How can he come even to the realm of half-belief? His spiritual body has never been developed. He could not bear the light. He must develop this spiritual body and lose the materialistic ideas before he can possibly come to us. No hard judge dooms him to Hell. He goes there naturally of his own accord. Like attracts like. His lack of faith bars him out from all realms in which faith is an essential element of existence.

“He goes therefore to division five of Hell; but, though there was no love of God, there was of his fellow-men, and this will save him from sinking lower and help him to desire to rise.

“Once the desire to progress in spiritual matters does appear, that progress will probably be sure and continuous; but unfortunately the materialistic mind remains materialistic after death. Often it denies that it is dead, and considers its psychic or its spiritual body to be a physical body, so that it is still alive on earth. Even when it realizes it has passed through death, it may still deny there is a God and refuse to listen to any who could teach it. Thus it will remain in Hell.

“Nevertheless the number of good materialists is far smaller than most people would suppose. Even on earth many a man who outwardly poses as a materialist in his heart of hearts really believes and comes to our realm.

“Further, after death such a man usually remains for a considerable time in his psychic body, and the conditions of life on that plane (*i.e.* the astral) soon convinces most men of some at least of the most elementary spiritual truths.

“While on the subject of the psychic body, let me draw your attention to the fact that you have misunderstood the seventh plane in my chart. You have understood it as the earth on which you are now living.”

“It is really the *earth plane*, and can be separated broadly into the division of the incarnate and of the discarnate spirits.

“The former are of course yourselves, the latter the earth-bound, and also a crowd of other organisms, such as elementals, empty psychic bodies, and so forth. The dead man first passes through this stage, and only when he has dropped his psychic body can his spiritual body enter the sixth plane, even Hell.

“I was but a brief space in it, and must have dropped my psychic body almost before I realized I had one. I believe it took place as soon as the bedroom gave way to this beautiful scenery.

“The officer, however, spent a long time in the psychic body, and has a very clear recollection of dropping it.

“I hope I have now made plain the relation between faith and conduct.

“Now go to sleep,” and, standing in front of me (J. W.), he made a number of passes, and I sank into oblivion.

Chapter XIX

The School for the Regenerate in Hell

TRANCE VISION

Monday, March 16th, 1914.

I seemed to be rushing through space at a tremendous speed, and then I found myself standing beside H. J. L. We were standing on a hillside, and below me, among the trees; I saw the towers and roof of a large building. It had quads and open grounds round it like a college.

“What is that building?” I asked.

“That is the college in which I at present live. It is the form of the building which was Queen’s, Oxford, before the present classical building was put up.”

J. W. “Can I go and look over it?”

H. J. L. “Perhaps at another time, but not now. I wish to tell you about my experiences in the schools of Hell.

“I was first taken to the schools of those who have progressed from the lower depths of Hell. You remember my chart?”

J. W. “Yes, I remember there were two divisions of the topmost division, the one you mention and the babes’ school. I have seen a vision of the latter.”

H. J. L. “Well, I went first to the other schools, but have since been to the babes’ school.

“My guide said, ‘It is well that you should go to see the work in the schools’

“Next moment we were standing on the bare rocky ground, as real to us as the earth-world is to you. Again before us rose that terrible wall of darkness; but there was this difference — that at one place a rough track seemed to be worn away which led into the darkness.

“‘How was it,’ I inquired, ‘that the officer did not come out by this route? It is far easier than the way by which he emerged.’

“‘The road into Hell is always easy,’ my guide replied, ‘the road out of Hell is always hard. This you should surely know.’

“‘Shall we have to climb up that awful precipice?’

“‘No, we go down into Hell, but do not become part of Hell. Hell is a state, not a place, and thus, though we perceive others in that state, and perceive also the evil atmosphere they draw around them, we do not ourselves partake of that state. In this world, where thoughts and forms are as real as the physical is on the earth, we can only feel the evil effects of Hell by becoming part of it. That, unfortunately, is possible. Many a soul who has come here with the desire to do good has fallen and become a part of Hell, just as on earth men who go to work among the fallen, alas! may be led astray by those whom they come to save. If that should happen to you, then you would be unable to return by this road, and would have to climb up the precipice!

“I became afraid and cried, ‘Don’t go. Let me not risk it. I am safe where I am.’

“But he answered, ‘Here there is no standing still. You must progress either upwards or downwards, and this journey must be taken. But fear not, am I not with you?’

Moreover, spirits do not fall in this division of Hell. Here the worst is past. It is when they go down to the lower divisions of Hell that the danger arises’

“Thus encouraged, we began to descend the path, and the dread darkness closed over us.

“For a moment I felt appalled, but the firm grip of my guide’s hand gave me strength and encouragement. Then I began to perceive that from him, and to a lesser extent from

me, there flowed out a kind of light which enabled us to proceed along the path, though we were unable to see much on either side at any distance.

“Suddenly we were aware of a great building set right across our path, and we found that the road we were walking upon ran under a doorway into it. There was no way round it, for on either side I found the walls of rock towered up and were absolutely unscalable.

“‘What is this place’ I inquired.

“‘Enter and see’ replied my guide.

“We entered the archway, and it seemed as if our presence was already known, for at once a door opened and we passed into a covered courtyard.

“What a dazzling light! After the awful darkness through which we had passed, I felt dazed for a moment, but soon I was able to realize everything.

“Around me were tall buildings on four sides, rather like a great college quad, except that it was much higher and there was a roof instead of open sky.

“There appeared to be several stories, for there were several rows of windows, and from every one of these a soft light shone. Some light, too, seemed to come from the building itself: I mean from its very walls.

“Then I noticed a spirit standing by the door. I knew at once that he was of the same nature as I myself, though more advanced: I mean he was not like my guide who is far above me.

“I therefore inquired of him, ‘What is this building?’

“He replied, ‘It is a house of refuge, a school and a guard-house combined. One might call it “a missionary clearing house.” To us come down from the realms above spirits who desire to help the unfortunate beings in Hell. Back to us come those messengers of Hope who have been down to Hell. To us come all those who, having begun to progress, need helping upwards; and, finally, hither come those who need only to be taught, that they may leave Hell altogether for the realm above.

“‘Besides these duties, we also bar the way, so that none of the inhabitants of Hell may attempt to reach the realm above save by the hard path which is ordained for them. The road you have trod is for those beings in that realm who desire to do good in Hell, or such as you, who are brought here by their guides to enable them to learn about Hell. There are other rest-houses scattered along the paths which lead out of Hell, to which those who desire to progress may go, but this is the great clearing house, or perhaps I might call it the base of supplies for a large number of these houses of refuge.

Have I made myself dear?’

“‘Perfectly,’ I (H. J. L.) replied. ‘This house sends out men to relieve those in charge of these “houses of rest,” and also those missionaries who try to persuade men to come to these houses. You further act as the final “house of rest” for those who are about to attempt the climb up the precipice. But where do the schools come in?’

“*He.* ‘Your first remarks are quite correct, but the latter are not so plain.’

“‘All in this part have to pass through the school before they can climb the precipice, as otherwise they would be hopelessly lost on reaching the top. But before they can attend the school, they have to be received into the part of the building which is the “house of rest.” Here they gain spiritual strength as distinct from spiritual knowledge.’

“‘Just as on earth you often have to nourish the children’s bodies before you can teach them, so here we have to build up their spiritual strength — one might almost say their spiritual bodies — before attempting to instruct them.’

“‘Compare our work with that of some of the societies on earth who rescue waifs and educate them.

If you add to that the fact that the children are mostly crippled, and also mentally afflicted, you will get a very fair parallel.’

“At times it is almost heart-breaking, far worse than slumming on earth. Oh, how bitterly we blame those who should have done this kind of work on earth! A man is much harder to convert here.’

“Often after a man’s spiritual strength has been developed, we find he is not yet ready to acquire spiritual knowledge in the school. He sometimes runs away, and is only brought back after much search and labor. Often, alas! he sinks back for a time into his old ways, and returns to one of the lower divisions of Hell. Others we have to send out on journeys, and employ them in various ways till they are ready to learn.’

“*H. J. L.* ‘May I go into the House of Rest and see what it is like for myself?’ ‘I inquired.

“My guide replied, instead of the man at the door, ‘Not yet, but you shall at another time. We will now enter the school. You will find it more in consonance with your previous knowledge, as you went to the secondary school in the realm above. The *House of Rest* would be so unlike anything of which you are as yet aware that you would miss many things which would be of value.

“After seeing these schools, and also those for the babes, you will be able to appreciate things more when you come to visit the House of Rest.’

“We passed through a Late Perpendicular archway, and, as we did so, I realized that the place was a castle as much as a college. Indeed, I found that there were no external windows at all, for these would have admitted only darkness, which is here more than the absence of light, being in itself a tangible thing.

“The only window was one which served as a light to guide the wanderers outside to this harbor of refuge. The way this ‘light’ was ‘trimmed’ will astonish you. The room into which it opened was the private chapel of the men and women (for there were women here) who ministered in this place. It was distinct from the chapel for the school or the one for the House of Rest.

“This window was behind the altar, and on earth would have been called the east window. It had, however, no stained, but merely white transparent glass.

“Before this altar the service of the Holy Communion was always being offered up. No sooner was one service ended than a new priest began a new service, and a fresh body of worshippers took up the responses. Thus ever, there goes up prayer for the salvation of those in Hell. Out of the east window, no big one, streams out the light of faith generated by this ceaseless service of prayer, and intercession.

“How it is in the other frontier houses, I cannot say for certain, but I gather that some are in the hands of men who — on earth held other religious views, and in these service of intercession takes other forms than that I witnessed. Like attracts like, you see, and my guide naturally took me to the house in which I should find the system most in consonance with that to which I more or less belonged on earth.

“Similarly, some souls in Hell are drawn towards salvation by the men who belong to this house, while others go to those in which Mohammedanism or Non-conformity is dominant.

“But there is no bitterness here. Each house does its work, and helps other houses when it can. Thus, if a Mohammedan or Nonconformist missionary were to find a man and help him, if he saw that that man’s spiritual development would be quicker if he went to the house belonging to the church people, he would take him there. So, too, with the church missionaries. Moreover, this transference of rescued is constantly taking place.

“We do not worry about our religious — save the word — differences here. They still exist to a limited degree, but we know that as we mount higher all that is false will fade, while only the truth will remain. So we go quietly on our way.

“This light shining from this solitary window at the top of the building is a beacon of hope far down into Hell. All the Houses of Rest, even the little ones scattered lower down in Hell, each has its beacon thus kept ever burning.

“Having entered the building, we passed down a passage and through a door into a classroom. This was filled with light from the teacher; but what shall I say of the pupils? Picture the lowest and most degraded men reduced to the size of tiny children.

Imagine them misshapen and idiots for the most part, with a low, cunning expression on their wizened faces. This will give you but a faint idea of what I saw. They were ever trying to play some stupid trick or other either on their neighbors or on the master. In addition to him, there were two other spirits who stood behind the form while he taught from the front.

“These three were needed, firstly, to keep the room sufficiently light, for from each of the ‘children’ there seemed to exude a kind of darkness which appeared to be burnt up by the light. Further, they were needed to keep the pupils under control. They did this solely by a kind of hypnotic power, by the exercise of their will and of their mentality. If for a moment they relaxed their concentration, at once several of the boys broke out into disorder.

“‘This work must be very wearying’ I said to my guide.

“‘It is,’ he replied. ‘The teachers have to be relieved after a very short spell. That is why so large a number of spirits are needed even in this single institution.’

“‘Are the girls taught separately?’ I inquired.

“‘Yes, nearly always. They need women, and these need men. Further, we do not find it wise to let the sexes mix much here. These are not innocent babes, you must remember. Though they have the spiritual development of children, they have the memories of vicious men and women. In the school for the real babes, women almost always teach and tend them, and we make practically no distinction between the two sexes.’

“Just then three fresh teachers came in and took the place of those who were in the room when we entered.

“We waited for the new lesson to begin. At once a perfect pandemonium broke out, due to the withdrawal of one group of mental influences, but almost at once the newcomers by the simple power of their will had reduced the rebels to submission.

“‘There is no room for weak disciplinarians here,’ I remarked.

“‘You mean for men of weak will. No, and there is very little room for them anywhere over here. If a soul is weak-willed when it comes, it has to develop its will power at once; it will make no real progress till it does. That is one of our most difficult problems in these schools. Most of these fallen ones are pitiably weak-willed, though passionate enough.’

“Then the lesson began. It was similar in its methods to that under which I learnt at my school, but what a difference in the subject matter! The truths their instructor tried to teach them were the simple, elementary, and obvious truths which we learn when we are children on earth. To these unfortunate creatures, however, they seemed terribly hard. Patiently he went over the same things again and again, but many seemed quite unable to grasp any ideas at all.

“‘It must take an endless age to teach some of these,’ I said to my guide.

“‘Almost endless’ he replied. ‘There are some who have been here for thousands of years as you reckon time. They have even lost their memories’

“‘But what good does it do if they are so hopeless as that?’

“‘All the time’ he replied, ‘they are learning discipline, and that is much. Sooner or later they will learn other things. There is always hope; and time — what is it? It is an invention of men on earth which, fortunately, has never reached here. This is some of the finest work done in this *Land of the Undying*, but it is very exacting work.’

“‘We will now visit the girls’ class: really, of course, they are degraded women who are striving to make progress, but they are harder to control than the boys.’

“As he spoke we left the room, and, passing along several long passages, came to another classroom.

“On entering this, I found it was a class of girls, with three women teachers; but I had hardly time to take it all in before a tremendous uproar broke out, and several little girls rushed up to me. Now, although I usually like children, I felt an instinctive shrinking from these vicious women in their immature Bodies. I felt there was nothing really childlike in them.

“I tried to shake them off, but they clung so close that I thought I should never be able to get away from them. But the school-mistresses, having by now reduced the others to order, at length fetched away those who were clinging to me.

“You see how strong still their old vicious habits are, and how weak their wills. Your entrance has completely upset them merely because you are a man.’

“It is terrible,’ I replied. ‘But how do you manage to keep them here at all? Do you do it by force? For their wills are so weak that they cannot possibly keep even to the idea of progressing for long.’

“He replied, ‘No force, as you understand the word, is employed, but, at the same time, we exert all our influence to keep them on the right path. Their very weakness helps us once we have got them here. They find it very difficult to make up their minds to go away, and so remain and learn. Still, of course, some do go back to wallow in the mire.’

“I noticed that the mistress was unable to make much progress owing to our presence, which distracted the little girls’ attention. I was therefore not surprised when my guide said:

“‘We will be going. You have seen enough now.’

“After leaving this classroom, we went up many flights of stairs till we at length reached the top story. Here we entered the chapel, and the light of faith was so intense that I could only bear it for a very short time. As I have already described to you what happens there, I shall not do so again.

“Soon after we left the House of Rest and toiled, slowly up the road by which we had entered Hell.

“Once back on the ground above and out of that horrible darkness, we rested for but a short time, and then seemed to be wafted through the air in an instant back to this part of our realm.

“Now,” said H. J. L., “I must be leaving you.” He rose and floated away, and gradually the landscape became dark and indistinct. Then I sank into oblivion.

Chapter XX

He Visits the School for the Babes Who Knew Not Faith

LETTER FROM H. J. L.

March 21st, 1914.

“A short time after the visit to the school of those who are progressing, I was taken to the school of the babes.

“Again I went down a kind of road with my guide into the darkness, and as before found a building right across it. On entering this I found a courtyard, not so high as the other one, but much larger. In it were all manner of trees and flowers, and a pretty sparkling fountain. Here numbers of children were playing about.

“These were far different from those I had seen before. Their young baby faces corresponded to their immature bodies. They were like earth children for the most part, and — not like those men in the form of children whom I had seen on my last visit to Hell. These were they who had never sinned —, but not having any knowledge of God or Faith, have to learn of these, and as they learn their little spiritual bodies develop until it is time for them to pass on to the realm of half-belief, when they go to the secondary schools. Rosy Dawn is an example, and well known to you.

“Now this school was under the control of Sister Maria, who has often spoken through you, and as she has given you many details, I shall not repeat them, only adding what I consider necessary to complete the picture.

“I should add that I had particularly asked to be taken to this school rather than any other, as Rosy Dawn had come from it, and also Sister Maria.

“On entering one of several doors which opened into the quad, I found we were in a kind of *crèche*, where all the immature and premature children went.

“‘How soon may it be said that a soul comes into existence when a child is conceived?’ I inquired. ‘It is evidently not at birth.’

My guide replied, ‘Even I cannot tell you the precise moment when the soul enters the fleshy home which clothes it, but it is extraordinarily early. As soon as the germ has definitely ceased to be a germ and has begun to grow into a human body, a soul enters it. But we do not know how God performs this wonder. That is hid, even from us to whom much is plain. Of this at least you can be sure — that long before the child “quickens,” a soul has become enshrined in it.’

“I now directed my attention to the scene around me, and saw that the *creche* was full of gentle, sweet-faced women who watched over the little immature atoms. We passed to other rooms, and found that in each new one the babes were more advanced than in the last. At length we reached a long room with a table down the middle. This was the one you saw in the mirror, and I gathered it was the ‘top form’ of the school.

“Here I met Sister Maria, whom I greatly liked, but found she was so much more spiritual than I that it was difficult to keep in touch with her. ‘Do you have a chapel with continuous service?’ I asked.

“‘Oh yes’” she replied... “‘Work and pray.’” You know the old monastic proverb.’

“My guide spoke: ‘There is no arrangement here for the light from the chapel being sent out like a beacon, as in the other house. This is not a House of Refuge, and no lost souls from Hell come here to pollute this happy spot. The children are borne here by their guides or guardian angels, who, though they have no work to do on earth, yet have the same sort of work as any of us here. Generally, if possible, a relative of the “dead” child is brought, if suitable, to mother it; but, alas, many have no such relatives here. They (the relatives) are often too evil to be permitted to help. No evil thing is admitted within these walls, although it stands in Hell.’

“Here, you see, there is no need to have separate religious houses. These children carry no pre-conceived ideas of religion with them, and have nothing to unlearn. This is but one of the many points in which they differ from the others. Hence here we find Roman Catholics, Churchmen, and Nonconformists all joining in the good work.’

I. ‘And who are the women who do this work?’

He. ‘Except those who are related to the children, they are those who, loving children much, yet for some reason had none, or lost them in early childhood.’

‘I perceived that even these children had their little naughty ways as on earth, though to a less degree.

‘My guide said: ‘this must be so. If they were incapable of evil, where would free will be? But it will never develop to any considerable extent here, and soon will vanish as they progress. You, too, can sin after death, but whereas theirs is the seed of evil, yours — is the fruit, and now difficult to destroy. Now let us away.’

‘So again I scaled the path which leads out of Hell.

‘Good-bye! — H. J. L.’

Chapter XXI

He Visits the Great House of Refuge in Hell

TRANCE VISION AND CONVERSATION DURING NIGHT
OF 23RD MARCH 1914

I found myself standing beside H. J. L. on an expanse of open down. He said: _
“I have recently been to see the House of Refuge. You will remember that I was not allowed to see over that at first? “

J. W. “Yes, I remember perfectly.”

H. J. L. “Well, having come down through the darkness by a road such as those I have previously described, but not the same as either, I entered the roofed — in courtyard as before. There was a school here also, but this time I crossed the quad at an angle, and passing under a Classical or Renaissance doorway, entered a passage. I should say that this building was in the Renaissance, not the Perpendicular, style.

“From the passage we passed through a door into a large room which was empty save for a few couches and a table in the centre.

“My guide spoke:

““This room forms the anteroom for the school. Those spirits who are ready to be taken in are admitted here. They are often very weak, and at first are placed under the guidance and control of a special teacher. He or she watches over them for the whole time, and only after awhile are they deemed sufficiently strong to attend the proper classes. They need individual attention at first.”

““Are they kept here for the whole time?”

““No. This is the room which connects up school and refuge home. It’s a sort of isolation ward. After a time, as soon as they are strong enough to get about properly, they are taken to a sort of study, one for each pupil and his teacher. See!”

“He led me out of the room into the corridor and through a doorway opposite. Here I found a much smaller room, and in it was a bright male spirit and on a couch a small misshapen child. The bright spirit was playing on a harp a beautiful soothing hymn.

““Music soothes pain, and that unfortunate one is suffering terrible mental pain,” said my guide.

““We entered another ‘study,’ and here another exhausted spirit was being treated.

““What is he doing?” I asked, indicating the bright spirit who was making signs over the body of the patient.

““My guide replied, ‘He is lending him some of his magnetic fluid. The patient is weak in will-power, and this spirit is treating him. The method is analogous to that of the magnetic-healer on earth.’

““We then returned to the ‘anteroom’ and passed through a door at the opposite end. This led into the House of Refuge proper.

““We found ourselves in a kind of hospital ward. There were no bedclothes on the beds, if so I can call them, and on these lay tiny children. Now the most extraordinary thing about it was that the children who were nearest the door through which we had entered were by far the most active and strong; yet they were the smallest. As we moved towards the opposite end of the dormitory, where there was another door, I noticed that the children grew larger and larger, but at the same time they seemed more flabby, dark, and indistinct.

““My guide said, ‘I will explain this difficulty to you. These spirits when in Hell appeared tall — fixed and strong. The more evil they were the stronger they were. Their spiritual bodies were made of evil and darkness, just as ours are of goodness and light.

When, however, they begin to repent and come here, the evil principle within them grows weaker and weaker, and as it does so the real spiritual body develops slowly.

“Thus at first these rescued spirits grow weaker and weaker, and then they become “as little children” in very truth. Once this has happened, they are able to go on to the school where they begin to grow again, though often very slowly.’

“I asked, ‘But where do they get this element of light from which the spiritual body develops’

“He replied, ‘Even in Hell men retain some little spark of spiritual truth. They cannot help it, for it is implanted by God. It is the Divine element in all, which, however much it may be submerged, can never be quite extinguished. Even in Hell men learn in spite of their evil will. Thus they learn that death does not end life; often they wish it did.’

“Once they begin to grow better, they grow weaker, and so Hell becomes more and more hateful to them. For in Hell the strongest is he who is most wicked and the strongest oppresses and cruelly ill-treats those who are weaker than he, and there is no death to intervene’

“Is there pain, then, in Hell?’ I inquired.

“Yes; only it is mental and spiritual suffering, but to the souls *there* it is as real as physical suffering is on earth, just as here the earth on which we stand, though immaterial to the physical world, seems real and material to us. Yes, they suffer, but no friendly death comes to end the anguish of the wretched victims.

“The old descriptions of Hell, though to the modern world they seem gross and materialistic, in reality were not so very inaccurate. They were rough-hewn and couched in materialistic language, but much of the apparent materialistic detail is due to two facts: firstly, that to the spirit these experiences seem as materialistic as men’s do to them; secondly, many of the finer distinctions made by the spirits have failed to penetrate the medium’s brain, whereas the more materialistic obtained a ready reception.’

“I ‘Then there were mediums long ago through whom spirits in Hell could send messages’

“Certainly. And, further, at times men who were still alive have been able to visit these realms when their bodies were in a trance and carry back some recollection of what goes on here. Dante is perhaps the finest exponent of this kind of revelation.’

“Then Dante’s great work is not the mere figment of his poetic brain based on his own religious views.’

“No, it is a real revelation seen in the trance state, but molded into its present shape by the poetic imagination and slightly colored by the preconceived religious views of the medium. These changes took place when he set to work to put it into literary form. He had no misunderstanding of the facts immediately after he returned to the normal state.’

“He ceased, and we passed out of the room into another.

“Here we found the spirits just as they came in from Hell. Rescuers were constantly arriving, bringing some poor unfortunate being with them. These they handed over to others, who received them kindly, reasoned with them, and urged them to undergo ‘medical treatment.’

“It was not always easy to persuade them to do this, and even while I was there, several went out of the House of Refuge back to Hell. Perfect freedom is the law here, and if a man Wishes to be foul, foul he will be.

“I noticed that the magnetic healing seemed to be very largely employed in this stage, and the whole air seemed filled with particles of darkness given off by the lost spirits undergoing treatment. We passed through another door into a comparatively small anteroom in which various newcomers were waiting, attended by their rescuers, and at the further end was a great door.

“As I approached it I was aware of a living terror, awful, intangible; but real, and knew that it lay beyond that door. As we drew nearer and nearer to it the nameless terror

seemed to grip my soul and numb it. I would have turned and fled, but my guide urged me to go forward.

“Now we stood in front of it, and suddenly it was flung open and a rescuer and his charge sprang in.

“The terror seemed to flow in with the darkness, and I cowered back against my guide. Quickly the door closed to; yet in that brief instant I saw quite plainly that the fugitives had been pursued up to the very door itself, and I heard the wild yell of baffled fury and hate as the pursuers found themselves kept back by the wall of Good Thoughts, which they could not penetrate.

“‘How was it,’ I asked my guide ‘that the pursuers were not able to prevent this man reaching safety?’

“‘Each rescuer carries around him a wall of faith and good thoughts, which these evil spirits cannot penetrate unless he himself makes a breach in it by giving way to any of the temptations with which they will attempt to lure him back. The poor lost soul, if he really desires to progress, can, with the permission of the rescuer, pass within this wall and so be safe. But if the rescuer refuses, he cannot, and if while protected with it he ceases to desire to progress, he will be at once driven out and so fall a victim to his pursuers.

“‘Often and often this does happen, and that is why those who take up this work must be gifted with the greatest patience. After one has striven so hard and risked so much, it is indeed hard to see the fruits of victory torn from our very grasp.’

“We turned, and very thankful was I to escape from the proximity of that nameless terror.

“‘Are there any hospitals similar to this in the realm of half-belief?’ I inquired.

“‘Yes’ my guide answered, ‘but for a different kind of case. Many people who suffered from mind troubles on earth come to that realm. They fall into two divisions: those whose minds were unable to work, owing to some physical defect, and those whose minds themselves were affected.’

“‘The first group also may be subdivided into those whose physical defects, being present from birth, prevented all development, and those whose minds, having developed, were suddenly unhinged by some physical accident. These latter need but little treatment; but the other groups need treatment which, in some cases, measured by earth time, seems very long.

“‘You shall see these hospitals at another time’

“We then quickly passed out of the House of Refuge into the school and on into the courtyard, thence out of the gateway, and through the darkness out of Hell. Thus ended this strange lesson.”

(J. W.). “It was a very extraordinary experience. Do you think that the smaller Houses of Refuge scattered through Hell have such elaborate arrangements?”

H. J. L. “No; they are just temporary receiving rooms where the rescued are ‘patched up’ till they can get to one of these great institutions.

“Now we must part.”

He rose and made a sign over me, and I seemed to fall asleep. — J. W.

Chapter XXII

The Author Visits H. J. L. at College

TRANCE CONVERSATION, ETC.

March 30th, 1914.

I found myself standing on an eminence, and beneath me I could see the towers and roofs of the college where I knew H. J. L. dwelt. H. J. L. was standing beside me, and began:

“Well, Jack, would you like to see over that college?”

“Yes,” I replied.

He began to descend the slope, and as we went I said: “Carrie asked me to ask you whether you could not give her any information concerning the ‘lighter side of life’ on this plane — your recreations and so forth — for I presume you are not always learning lessons.”

H. J. L. “Well, this meeting shall be devoted to that subject. I will show you something, though, of course, only a glimpse of that side of life here.”

We had now reached the college, and paused in front of the gate. This gate was not in the centre, as I expected, but towards the south-east corner. I call it by this name, for I saw the east window of the chapel in the Decorated style over the great gateway and behind the roof of the first line of buildings. This great gate, instead of a tower, had a gable roof with the end of the gable towards the quad and the side where we entered. The roof of the chapel was similarly high-pitched. The east window of the chapel was apparently in the Decorated style, and over the great gateway were three long windows, the centre one having a little tracery and one mullion. The entrance to the hall, instead of being in the middle of the line of buildings, was at the north-west corner. For the rest, I need not go into much detail, as in the main it followed the lines of the usual college building. Having passed through the gate, we crossed the quad at an angle and entered the hall.

Chapter XXIII

Of Their Amusements and How the Spirits Inspire Men on Earth

“This is a sort of club to which I belong,” H. J. L. explained. Here I found a large number of men congregated; some were playing chess, and I sat and watched several most brilliant games played by a man whom H. J. L. stated was Lasker.

“I doubt if I shall remember these games,” I said; “they are extraordinarily brilliant, but almost beyond me — even here — and I am sure they would be quite beyond my comprehension on earth.”

“Don’t worry about that,” he replied. “You are not intended to remember the actual games, but only the fact that we do play.”

After a time we went out and passed through the great gate.

“I am going to show you another amusement I enjoy,” H. J. L. said.

He took me along a regular street into a square which was built in the style of the early Renaissance. Passing through a door, I found we were in — what I can only designate by the name of — an architect’s office. It, however, lacked the general air of untidiness usually prevalent in such places, and I noticed that models seemed to play a more important part in the production of designs here than they do on earth. There were, however, a certain number of drawings to be seen.

“My partner is away learning a new spiritual truth, so I can’t introduce him to you; but he was a Frenchman who lived during the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. He studied, too, in Italy, so you see he knows a fair amount about Renaissance architecture. Still, he’s not quite up to date as to modern requirements, such as drainage arrangements, and that is where I come in. Of course he knows all about design and ornament, but I help with the more practical work.

“Here all the arts have reached a far higher stage of excellence than anything of which you are aware on earth.”

J. W. “But what good are these designs? Do you build houses here?”

H. J. L. “We can and sometimes do, but most often we endeavor to impress our ideas upon living men and get them to build them on the material plane. Let me tell you that all inspiration comes from this side. The works of genius are really the inspirations of the spirits acting through that man who is really mediumistic. This partly explains why so many men of genius are of an erratic temperament, and often of an unsatisfactory moral attitude. Being mediumistic they are liable to fall a victim to undesirable influences — evil spirits, in fact.”

J. W. “Do you mean, then, that no great inventions originate on the earth, or does this statement refer only to artistic inspiration?”

H. J. L. “Art, literature, music, even mechanical inventions, are almost always inspired from this side. Slight improvements and adjustment to enable the great idea to fit the conditions of earth life are the kind of advances which men make on earth. I hesitate to say that no great idea was ever invented on the earth, but I know of none, and am sure that they are very few and far between.

“This explains in part why it is that progress is so slow in the early centuries of life on this planet and of late has proceeded at such a rate.

“Men come over to us with some knowledge and a keen interest in various subjects, and in these more advanced surroundings they discover new laws, and in the light of this new knowledge inspire those who are following in their footsteps.

“All the same, men are often very stupid. We send out a brilliant idea, and the best parts are often misunderstood by, or fail to penetrate, the denser minds of those still on earth. Again and again we see our finest ideas reduced to a miserable travesty of their real

selves. As a man gets older, too, he often seems to grow more material, especially if he has become prosperous. This leads to poorer, or, at any rate, more commonplace work, for the finer ideas are no longer able to penetrate.

“Look at this idea for a church — splendid, isn’t it? Renaissance style, but far finer than anything they’ve got on earth. But my partner had not realized how important heating and lighting are — I’m correcting that. Still, I don’t suppose even a feeble imitation of it will ever be built on earth. It’s such a materialistic age that we simply cannot get our ideas through, and even when we do get a man to produce a colourable imitation of some really fine inspiration, that man seldom gets the opportunity of carrying it out, the people who pay being of course far more materialistic — in art matters — than the artists. That is why the earlier periods, for example, the Middle Ages, were so much finer — they were less materialistic, and so responded more to our inspirations.”

J. W. “Then no man on earth deserves the credit of any great idea? The credit is due to the ‘mighty dead.’”

H. J. L. “On the contrary, they deserve all the credit they can get, for it means that they have preserved and developed their higher and spiritual faculties, at any rate on the artistic or engineering side. This at any rate is something. Even a blackguardly, immoral man, who seems materialistic on most matters, must have developed his spiritual faculties to some extent if he is able to receive and carry out fine inspirations sent from this side.”

J. W. “But you spirits deserve the credit for the ideas themselves. Don’t you feel it a little unjust that you should get no credit for them?”

H. J. L. “Not the slightest. Jealousy, like other mortal sins, is left on the threshold of Hell. We work as an amusement simply for the love of our work. We seek neither fortune nor fame; the joy of producing good work is the only aim — that and the desire to help those still on earth.”

Chapter XXIV

Art and Architecture on the Spirit Plane

“I will now show you some further interests we have here. All the arts flourish here, and most of the sciences, but, of course, on a far more exalted plane. Let us take painting first.”

We stopped in front of a truly splendid building in the Renaissance style; but it would be impossible for me to describe it, it was so different from anything I have ever seen on earth.

H. J. L. “This was designed by my partner. He knew that it would be impossible to get such a brilliant idea carried out on earth, and so raised it here. It is ‘built without hands.’ It is an ‘idea,’ and constructed out of his own ‘mind stuff.’ I’ll explain that a little more fully later.”

We entered, and I found that it corresponded to a picture gallery, only much better arranged than anything we have on earth.

J. W. “If you have picture galleries, I presume you have museums?”

H. J. L. “We have them, but not so many as you would expect. You see, so far as is possible, we put ancient art objects to their original use in their original homes — Egyptian chairs in an Egyptian palace, and Egyptian jewels on their original owners or makers, for example.

“New objects of art, created over here, usually remain attached to their creator. But some spirits invent them for the purpose of being put on exhibition to delight others. For these there are museums. Similarly, ancient art objects are put in a few museums when on earth they have been destroyed, while the building to which they belonged still remains. This only affects objects entirely separate from the building itself: for example, if a fireplace and paneling were removed from their original building, even though the structure of the building and the paneling each continued to survive apart, the original form of the building would have been destroyed on earth and would come here.

“Now look at the pictures. These are ideas which were too exalted to be impressed upon any artist upon earth and are therefore here. The majority of the artists here, however, try to get their ideas — impressed on earthly artists.”

I then began to look at the pictures. I perceived that not only were they far more beautiful than anything I had ever seen on earth, but they differed in many ways difficult to describe. The colors were both more brilliant and yet more harmonious — further, from them issued a kind of light. Then the pictures seemed to be more in the round, figures and features seemed to stand put, distance appeared to be really there, and atmospheric conditions were more truly rendered. There were all kinds of subjects — landscapes, portraits, dramatic pieces, etc. — but the most interesting and best works were those dealing with what, for lack of a better word, I will call the highest emotions.

Thus there was one entitled “The Divine Love.” It depicted a marvelous spirit form, strong, yet gentle, just, yet merciful. It seemed to be watching over a multitude of human beings. Now these human beings were divisible into two main divisions — those still in the flesh, and those who had left their bodies. The difference was clear and unmistakable. Further, every single figure differed in looks. No two were alike, just as no two persons on earth are just alike. But though these things were beautiful, the truly marvelous thing about the whole picture was the expression on the face of the great spirit, and an atmosphere of “Divine love” which it is impossible to describe.

After spending some time looking at these marvelous productions we left the gallery, and passing through a kind of park, entered another gallery.

H. J. L. “This is a sculpture gallery. Just as in architecture and painting, most artists try to get their ideas carried out on earth, but some prefer to produce them here.”

J. W. “Are those figures made of real marble, or whence do you obtain the stone? “

H. J. L. “We mould and make them out of our own ‘mind stuff’ which takes the form of marble or bronze, according as we conceive it. We may be said to build them up like a man does a clay model, but the clay is our own ‘mind stuff.’ I can give you no better word.

“Look at this group. The artist thought it would look best in silver, and so you see it is in that metal.”

We wandered through these galleries filled with the most sublime conceptions, and which, like the pictures, defy description, and ultimately passed into a park which was likewise devoted to the display of sculpture.

Here were placed monumental works into which architecture often entered. Fountains and sculptured arches, besides groups of every description, were placed among the most, ideal surroundings of trees, lawns, and scenery. Water, I particularly noticed, played a large part in producing most beautiful effects.

Chapter XXV

Music and Drama

“Now I will take you to the schools of music,” said H.J.L. In these I saw men composing and playing magnificent symphonies, and one room I entered resembled a concert-hall, on the stage of which a man was singing.

“If you have concert-halls, I suppose you have other places of entertainment?” I inquired.

H.J.L. “Certainly. We have theaters and so forth, only nothing pertaining to evil is acted here—that type of play goes to Hell. Our plays here include all that was best and noblest on earth, together with the production of works composed here. Only good work comes here; the feeble stuff, even when not actively evil, sinks down to the upper divisions of Hell.

“Of course we do not get the most superb spirit productions; these, being too advanced for us, are restricted to the divisions above us, in which, for the most part, they are produced.”

J.W. “But what of works like the plays of Shakespeare?”

These are fine and exalted in many ways, but there are parts which are distinctly coarse and even immoral.”

H.J.L. “That difficulty is met by recasting the offending parts. The author himself in this case, Shakespeare, has recast these parts. In place of the evil parts, passages of far finer poetry and sentiment have been substituted. Indeed, most are agreed that the new parts not only fit into the old most perfectly, but often give a meaning to parts that before were crude or hard to understand.”

J. W. “Then Shakespeare did write the plays?”

It was not Bacon.”

H. J. L. “Of course not; but Shakespeare wrote them under inspiration from a band of spirits, who have since passed on still higher. The very passages of an undesirable nature were those which Shakespeare himself put in to fill blanks where he had failed to grasp the higher inspirations sent him.

“You must understand, however, that it is the portrayal of evil in an attractive light which is impossible here, but when enacted to show its terrible consequences it becomes right, proper, and beneficial. Thus we constantly act *Othello*, and it is only a few coarse phrases which have been deleted. The plot, terrible as it is, yet is a good one, for it teaches a valuable lesson. We do not, however, go to the theater to learn such simple spiritual lessons as that (we have learnt these before we reach this realm), but to see one of the finest plays ever given to the world enacted before our eyes. It also does good in that it reminds us of the temptations which beset our fellow-men on earth, and the terrors of Hell for those who fall.

This latter prepares us for a sense of pity for those unfortunates who languish in Hell. These latter considerations, however, are subsidiary. They are, first and foremost, recreations.”

J. W. “How do you act the women’s parts, for I have seen none here?”

H. J. L. “Oh, there are plenty of women here. Look!”

He led me into a room in which several women were practicing singing in chorus. Very beautifully they sang, but he hurried me away quickly, and we were soon in a kind of park, walking beside a river. He resumed the conversation.

“Yes, there are plenty of women here, but the sexes do not mix much in these realms. At first they are separated almost completely. It is desirable, as far as possible, to eliminate the old ideas of sex, ideas right and necessary on earth, but no longer needed here, otherwise spiritual progress would be rendered almost impossible by the old carnal

feelings. Thus it is, of course, true that here there is *no marrying and giving in marriage*; but, on the other hand, as the last grains of earthly passion are eliminated, the male and female spirits begin to draw together again, for each is the complement of the other spiritually, just as they are on earth physically. The further we progress, the nearer together the two sexes draw, so that we understand ultimately there comes about a mystic union in spirit between one man and woman. This is the real spiritual union of which marriage on earth is a true symbol or sacrament. This consummation, this blending of two spirit entities, so that each becomes part of the other and yet retains its own individuality, cannot be fully understood even by us, much less by you. The earth marriage at its highest and best does give you some faint idea of what we really mean.

“This spiritual marriage, if so I can call it, takes place at a stage far above us — it may be in the fifth plane, or even higher. At least this is certain — it does not take place on our plane. Nevertheless, as we progress, we mingle more and more, first, with members of our own sex, and then with members of the other sex. It does not necessarily follow that we always marry spiritually the same woman as we did on earth, but we do marry someone who is our complement.”

J. W. “Life here seems to be very much like life on earth.”

H. J. L. “Like, yet different; very like earth life at its noblest and best. But here there is no sickness or sin, neither evil nor pain enter here. These are left behind on the threshold of Hell. There is still some sorrow and repentance for sins now past, but sin, as on earth you understand the word, can come to us no more.

“Lack of knowledge there is, and therefore complete satisfaction and rest are — not to be found here, for one must progress. But deliberate opposition to the will of God is a thing of the past.

“Nothing that is ugly or evil; low or false, can survive here. Therefore, if any amusement is founded on evil, be it ever so intellectual, it is not found here. So, too, purely physical amusements cannot be indulged in, since we no longer have physical bodies.”

Chapter XXVI

Introduction to W. A.

“Where are you taking me now? “ I inquired.

H. J. L. “To see my private study and to introduce you to A., who wishes to send a message by you to M., and, after that, to the officer who wishes to go on with his description of what he went through in Hell.”

J. W. “But I have already been here a great while. Surely I ought to be getting back to my body, otherwise Carrie may wake up and find me unable to move.”

H. J. L. “It is perfectly all right. Though you appear to have been here a long time, you must realize that there is no real connection between time on earth and here. I don’t suppose you have been absent from your body for half an hour as you reckon time on earth. I will see that you are sent back in plenty of time.”

We passed beneath the great gate of the college, and, turning to the right, passed through an arch and up a flight of stairs. We entered a room, which I at once recognized as the one in which I had seen H. J. L. when Blanche also saw him. It was very similar to a room in a college. There was no fire, and a strange thought occurred to me.

“Do you have to clean out rooms and dust them here, and, if so, do you have servants to do that sort of work?”

H. J. L. “There is no dirt here, nor do we have any means of producing artificial warmth. The latter would be impossible to produce if we needed it, for heat and cold are of course spiritual, not physical, things here. It follows that there is no need for servants, since there is neither dirt to clear away nor food to prepare, neither do we sleep. All the drudgery of work has vanished with our physical bodies.

“Now let me introduce you to Mr. A.”

I saw what appeared to be a very small boy, but on his shoulders was the head of a grown-up man. It was not that it was large, as on the cartoons one sees, but that it had a moustache and the expression of a man. His face was ruddy, nose rather fleshy at the end, hair ordinary brown. The face was inclined to be broad, and the body was distinctly stout, though not to an inordinate extent.

I had never met A., but we greeted each other with much cordiality, and he said:

“I asked Mr. L. to let me see you next time you came to visit us, as I wished to send a message to M.”

I replied, “I shall be delighted to do my best to give her any message you choose to send. But first tell me how you are getting on here.”

He answered, “Well, I’m making progress, but it’s very slow work. You see, I never developed my spiritual side. I devoted all my attention to my physical and material well-being. Then, too, my friendships with women did not do me any real good, as you can guess.”

He then proceeded to give me certain private messages. (These I have not published.) After giving them, he left us.

When he had gone, I said to H. J. L.:

“He looks just like a child, except for his face. I suppose that is because he did so little to develop his spiritual side.”

H. J. L. “Yes, as I have already explained to you, our spirit bodies grow like our earth bodies, and if we have not developed our spirit bodies on earth we have to do so after we arrive here.”

With some hesitation I inquired, “Is it in my spirit body that I come here?”

“Yes.”

I continued, “Of what size is my body? Is it very small?”

H. J. L. “No, it is very fairly developed. In fact, it appears full grown, about the size of a man of twenty-one, but not matured beyond that age. That is what you ought to be, for the spirit body usually develops more slowly than the physical, and of course often it simply does not develop at all.

“Ah, here comes the officer.”

Chapter XXVII

How the College Is Organised, and of Other Like Institutions

TRANCE VISION ON NIGHT OF APRIL 27th, 1914

I found myself in H. J. L.'s study. He began, "I think I'll tell you a little more about myself."

"Yes, I hope you will; it's quite a long time since you did," I replied.

"Well, it was necessary to get on with the narratives of the others, and, further, I wanted to collect and sift further experiences. It would be no use giving you almost the same experiences over and over again.

"I propose now to tell you something about this college.

"There are all manner of institutions here, and societies of almost every description. Some are devoted to develop one's spiritual nature, others to helping those less fortunate than ourselves. Some, again, are composed of kindred spirits bent on making new discoveries in the same subjects as interested them when on earth, while a fourth group devote their attention to inspiring men with new facts they have discovered or developed here.

"Indeed, I could devote the whole of this meeting to merely mentioning the various types of societies that exist here, but instead I will give you a few details of the four types just mentioned and a fuller description of an actual society, this college, which belongs to one of these types.

"Omitting No. 1 for the moment, as the college and the secondary schools belong to it, I will take Nos. 2, 3, and 4.

"No. 2 includes various societies devoted to rescuing souls in Hell, and also others which endeavor to help men still on earth to keep on the right path.

"The bands of spirits who organize the Houses of Refuge in Hell are a good example of this type.

"No. 3 includes many societies bent on working out scientific laws and principles of art, architecture, medicine, music, and so forth.

"I belong to a society of Renaissance architects who are bent on evolving new ideas without departing too far from the underlying principles of the Renaissance architecture.

"No. 4 is the corollary of No. 3, as No. 2 is of No. 1; but many of the spirits who are in No. 3 do not care about inspiring mortals with their discoveries. Sometimes this is because they are simply no longer interested in the earth, but often it is because they have discovered by painful experience that either their ideas become but the merest travesty of the original when impressed upon the minds of men, or, far worse, they are taken and devoted to evil instead of to useful purposes. Thus good ideas of art are extremely liable to suffer the former fate, while scientific or engineering ideas, being in some measure more mundane, are often properly grasped, but at the same time turned to evil uses by the perverse nature of men.

"Thus it is that a large body of spirits refuse absolutely to pass on their discoveries to men. The result is that many societies belonging to group three impose the rule that no discovery made by any member of the society while a member may be communicated either to a mortal or to any spirit who is a member of any society in group four.

"Not all societies, however, impose this rule, but leave it to the choice of the member whether or not he shall belong to a society in group four. All, however, abstain, as societies, from inspiring men. This work is left in the hands of group four.

"I may as well add that medical societies are particularly numerous in group four."

J. W. "Do you always belong to a society if you wish to inspire? Can't individuals do this work quite as well by themselves?"

H. J. L. “It could be done, but not as well. In practice we find that it is better to have a society, though often quite a small one.

“Now about this college. It is under the control of a ‘Master’ who has a second in command. Then, to assist them, there is a committee with a chairman.”

J. W. “Like a Freemasons’ lodge — a master, senior and junior warden.”

H. J. L. I don’t know much about Freemasons, but that’s rather the idea. The members of this college consist of three divisions, and we are promoted from the first to the second, and from the second to the third, according as we learn the great spiritual truths.

“From the third or highest division the committee is elected. The various officers are chosen by the head of the college from this committee.”

J. W. “It’s really rather like a Freemasons’ lodge with its three degrees, and so on.”

H. J. L. “Very likely. Probably the idea was inspired from this side. Still, it’s a very natural arrangement, and somewhat similar to college on earth with its first-, second-, and third-year men and its fellows.”

J. W. “Have you anything corresponding to an examination?”

H. J. L. “Not really. What happens is that our teachers, when they consider we have learnt all that is to be learnt in that degree, if so you like to call it, send us on to the next set of teachers.

“On entering this new *degree* we are received with a certain amount of ceremony. These divisions, you quite understand, have nothing to do with the divisions of this plane. We are still in the division of half-belief even when in the third degree in our college. That’s why I rather jumped at the word *degree* to avoid confusion.”

J. W. “Which degree are you in?”

H. J. L. “Still in the lowest, but I hope soon to be promoted to the next. Now it is time you returned.”

J. W. “Why, I have only been here quite a short time!”

H. J. L. “Nevertheless, you’ve been here long enough.”

I seemed to be caught up by a whirlwind and to be swept out into space. Everything became black. I appeared to be whirling round in great circles which steadily grew less and less. Then I lost consciousness.

— J. W.

Chapter XXVIII

A Hospital on the Spirit Plane

TRANCE VISION, ETC., MAY 4th, 1914

I found myself in H. J. L.'s room. He began, "I went to see one of our mental hospitals recently."

J. W. "Hospitals! I thought you said there was no pain here. You said it was left on the threshold of Hell."

H. J. L. "Nor is there any pain. Still, some spirits come here whose minds have for long been clouded, and these need treatment.

"Mental cases may be roughly divided on earth as follows: —

"I. **Idiots.**

"II. **Lunatics.**

The latter fall into at least three divisions: —

"1. Lunacy caused by physical defects,

(a) early,

(b) late in life.

"2. Lunacy caused by evil life, or at least evil passions.

"3. Lunacy caused by religious mania and such kindred mental disturbances and lack of balance, *e.g.* excessive sorrow.

"With regard to idiots (No. I). The cause is some kind of physical defect, and its result is that the individual to a greater or less extent comes here ignorant and in need of teaching. The less knowledge they possess, the lower they will start. If they have no knowledge even of God and a future life, they will go to the topmost division of Hell. You remember, however, there is no real suffering there. There they will be taught in special schools, not with either the babes or the evil souls who are progressing.

"Some idiots, however, have been able to acquire some knowledge of God and a future life, and may come to us. Contrariwise, they may have sufficient intelligence to be responsible for turning their back on faith, but these are rare.

"The whole of this group, however, owe their mental difficulty to some physical, not spiritual defect, and therefore, once clear of the physical, need teaching, but not medical treatment in any form.

"Group II, the lunatic, includes (a) and (b). In the case of the former, it all depends what stage of spiritual development they had attained before the physical defect occurred which rendered them insane. In the case of those thus afflicted in early life, it is probable that they will have to go to the 'elementary' schools in the seventh division of Hell, though; of course, they may know enough to enter our realm and go to the secondary schools. In all probability, however, they will not have had time to commit many sins for which they will have to undergo penance.

"Those afflicted later will have had time alike to acquire knowledge and therefore faith, and some time to do evil for which they will have to suffer. Their spiritual development, in short, will be that which they had reached when the insanity came upon them.

"Of course many so-called lunatics, even when lunacy is due solely to a physical defect or injuries, are not completely lacking in responsibility for their deeds. Often only part of the brain is affected, and in that case they may appear normal except on one or two points. These shades of insanity are settled automatically. The spirit feels no need of remorse for offences it had no intention of committing, and for which it cannot be responsible. It, of course, regrets any evil that may have been caused by its being unable to control its body, just as a motorist would grieve if his motor ran away and hurt

someone, but that would not be the sense of moral guilt which would attach to him if the accident was due to his racing.

“Of course there is no possibility of pretence here.

“This type of lunatic takes up his education at the point at which the accident occurred which deprived him of his reason. He will suffer for his misdeeds also up to that point, and after, so far as he was responsible.

“Mental treatment will not be necessary generally in these cases, merely education.

“Before passing to the next group, let me remind you that many so-called maniacs are really unfortunate beings who are obsessed by other spirits. For the crimes committed by these through the maniac’s physical organism the unfortunate man is, of course, not responsible directly. He may, however, have to suffer here for them indirectly, in so far as it was his evil life that allowed an evil spirit to take control.

“When the responsibility goes so far as invoking evil spirits to aid him in his nefarious purposes, as did the ancient wizards, the moral guilt is tremendous. This is indeed one of the worst crimes possible, for which mental derangement is but the commencement of retribution. — This type of obsession naturally leads us to consider the cases 2 and 3.

“2. Lunacy caused by evil life or at least passion. This group very largely goes to Hell, but of course not all. It is these latter who chiefly need treatment in our hospitals as well as ordinary education. Spiritual pride and even commonplace conceit are potent factors for rendering people insane as well as the more obvious vices, such as drink and lust.

“These sufferers must not be confused with the cases of obsession just mentioned.

“No. 3 are often very difficult cases with which to deal. Of course the simpler forms soon right themselves. Thus sorrow soon loses its sting here, and any physical defects caused by it are left behind with the body. Very little treatment would be necessary in such a case. On the other hand, religious mania is often very difficult to eliminate. It is none the easier because such persons are often strong believers, and would ordinarily go to that realm. They have, however, to come to the hospital in our realm and there remain till cured. It would be useless for them to go to the realm of belief without acts, for they would be utterly incapable of seeing any good in any other religion until the religious mania and its attendant evils have been eradicated. Then, of course, they go to their natural realm of existence.

“Without spending any more of your time discussing these matters, I will now proceed to describe one of these hospitals.

“I was taken thither by a man who during life had been a great mental specialist.

“The building was placed amid the most beautiful surroundings, which seemed to breathe an atmosphere of peace and rest.

“I mentioned this impression to my friend the doctor, who replied:

“‘Quite so; quiet, soothing surroundings are the first essentials for dealing with any kind of mental disorder.’

“The gardens surrounding the hospital contained broad stretches of lawn interspersed with beautiful woods, and everywhere the soft notes of rippling or falling water were faintly audible. Ever and anon through the trees I caught the glint of water tinged with the evening glow which is ever present here. Amid these woods, walking about the lawns and boating on the lakes, I saw many of the patients.

“Passing along a handsome avenue, we at length came in sight of the hospital. It was a splendid building in the Renaissance style, with verandahs along the front, and was surrounded upon all sides by velvety lawns and flower-beds. Numerous basins with fountains playing and statues of various kinds decorated the lawns.

“A woman, seated on a low stool, was playing a harp, while reclining on couches round her were many patients of both sexes.

“We passed into the building itself, and I found that in some ways the institution was arranged on similar lines to those of the Houses of Refuge in Hell. Thus there was a secondary school attached, and most of the patients attended the school as part of their course of treatment. Further, there were concert-halls and a theater, chapels for several different religious bodies, an art gallery, and so forth.

“My medical friend explained. ‘One of our chief objects is to divert the mind of the patients from too much concentration upon themselves. Many were very selfish or at any rate self-centered folk. Religious mania or excessive grief is likewise the cause of many of these cases being here. Wholesome, soothing amusements, which will dispel the morbid trait in their characters, are therefore of the greatest value.’

“‘As to direct treatment, we very largely employ suggestion, hypnotism, and magnetism. See!’

“We entered what on earth would have been called an operating theater. Here, two doctors were busy magnetizing a woman patient. She was stretched on a bed, clad in a plain grayish-white robe drawn in at the waist by a girdle, and similar to the costume they all wear here. One doctor was standing behind her with his hand gently resting on her forehead, while the other stood at her feet, but without touching her. Both men seemed to be concentrating their wills on her and gazing into her face. They made no movement or any sign that they were aware of our presence.

“I was able to perceive that from each there appeared to flow out a kind of faint light, and that this light was being focused, as it were, on her head.

“We passed into another room where a violin was being played to soothe the man who was tossing in mental distress upon the bed.

“I said to the doctor, ‘I notice that here the sexes mix much more than they do round where I dwell.’

“‘Not really so. There is very little companionship here between the men and the women. Both, however, are necessary to aid in the work; especially is it found that better results from magnetism are obtained when the operator is of the opposite sex to the patient.’

“We entered a third room and found a hypnotist at work. He was making passes over someone.

“As soon as he saw us he bowed and explained that this patient could not eliminate from his mind the remembrances of a terrible accident for which he was to a certain extent responsible. The remembrance of this had turned his brain on earth, and the ill effects were not yet entirely removed from his mind.

“‘I am hypnotizing him for a time, so as to compel him to forget this terrible experience, and so by degrees we shall restore peace to his troubled mind.’

“Leaving him, we passed into a comparatively small room in which was a patient lying on a couch. My medical friend said: ‘This is a strange case, and shows how strong is the power of the mind and even the remembrance of the body after death.’

“‘This woman’s mental affliction in life took the form of a belief that she was a cripple unable to walk. There was nothing organically wrong, yet by degrees, as this hallucination grew upon her, she became crippled and misshapen even as she is now. Had the disease been a physical one she would have left it behind her at death, but it is purely a mental one, due to a morbid nature which in life seemed to take a perverted joy in gazing at the misshapen and crippled. This she did not from any motive of sorrow or wish to help the sufferers, but out of a morbid curiosity. For the rest, however, she was neither a total unbeliever nor yet evil by nature, few cases such as this come to us here: they are, I understand, more common in Hell.’

“I (H. J. L.) inquired, ‘How do you treat her?’

“‘He. ‘Mainly by magnetism and mental suggestion. We are striving to prove to her that her spiritual body need not reproduce the defects of the physical one. Most spirits

readily grasp that fact, but her mind has become so overclouded that she cannot as yet grasp it. However, even the most obstinate cases soon yield to treatment here. What does seem to take a long time is the education which is afterwards necessary.’

“We passed through other rooms, through long wards and into lecture-rooms where doctors were giving lectures on medical subjects.

“I (H. J. L.) inquired of my friend whether there was not an operating theater as in an earthly hospital.

“‘Oh dear, no!’ he replied. ‘We have got long past those clumsy methods here. Of course, some operations are required on earth owing to the material nature of a physical body, although there are far more operations than are really necessary. Here, however, the spirit body yields to and needs much subtler methods. The only place you find anything approaching an operating theater is in Hell.’

“I shuddered at the horror of the idea underlying those simple words.

“It would take me too long to give you any further details of this wonderful hospital, ‘but perhaps I should say that I was surprised to find how large a part religious services played in the treatment.

“‘We don’t attend religious services to any large extent in this realm — that is our principal duty in the next realm, — but services formed quite a marked feature of the treatment, I perceived, and in this it approximated to the House of Refuge in Hell and to the ordinary course of life in the realm of belief without acts.

“Many of the services, I noticed, had quite an elaborate ritual, and evidently were designed expressly with the object of helping forward the mental healing of the patients who attended. A shadowy prototype on earth was that funny old service of touching and healing in the Prayer Book in the days of Queen Anne.

“Outside in the grounds we separated, and after thanking my medical friend, I returned here.”

Chapter XXIX

**“Neither Will They Be Persuaded Though
One Rose From the Dead”**

J. W. “May we publish the names and details for identification given by *P. re* himself and Barber.”

H. J. L. “With regard to *P.* and Barber, I think there is no harm in giving the details about the latter; it was meant as a piece of conclusive evidence, and I think most would agree it is. With regard to *P.*, matters are a little different. He feels it rather a hindrance already to keep sufficiently in touch with earth matters to send you his experiences, and does not want to do anything which might draw him back still further into earth conditions.

“If the details he has given were published, being a well-known man, you would have a number of carping, or at any rate inquisitive, persons constantly sending tests and expecting them to be answered. If *P.* agreed to answer those tests, he would at once be assailed by further ones. He would be constantly worried by them, and, therefore, dragged back into earth conditions. He wishes to be rid of earth trammels, and, instead, would find he had rebound himself with them. If he refused to answer further tests, people would at once say it was fraud. They would say, ‘Here are communications coming through which purport to be from Mr. *P.*, and yet the entity either will not or cannot answer these simple questions as to his earth life’

“They would refuse to see that it is quite one thing to send a message through dealing with life here and another to put ourselves again in touch with our former earth life.

“You yourself believe us and do not bother us with unnecessary questions. You have not only had dates and other details of the lives of men quite unknown to you, but have also from *W. A.* received details of his private life not merely unknown to you, but in a large measure unintelligible even when given. These details have, however, been perfectly plain to *M.*, and have convinced her of his identity, as she herself told you. It is, therefore, not with any wish to avoid giving evidence when the demand is reasonable that I hesitate to request *P.* to allow the details about him to be published. Talk the matter over with Mr. *K.* and then consult me again. With regard to Barber, the same objections do not arise. He is not communicating through you, nor do we propose to let him. Neither is he interested in doing so, being otherwise engaged.

“If, therefore, anyone wanted to cross-question them, he would fail to get any reply; but this could hardly be taken as disproving the reality of our group of spirits.

“Is the matter now quite plain?”

J. W. “Yes. Still, I am sorry. If *P.* would agree it would once and for all decide the question which still vexes people — whether the identity does survive after death or not. I mean agree to be thoroughly ‘cross-questioned,’ as you call it.”

H. J. L. “Not a bit of it. Plenty of evidence has been sent through to prove that to any reasonable man. Even what we have given should be sufficient, and there have been still more striking examples where spirits have deliberately thrown back their own progress so as to prove even to the most obstinate unbeliever that there is a personal survival after death. But it is selfish and unreasonable to expect us continually to be doing that sort of thing, I mean delaying our own progress.

“No, Jack, many people do believe, but it is still true of many men, ‘Neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.’

“Now it’s time you were off.”

Next instant I sank into oblivion. — *J. W.*

Chapter XXX

The Author's Adventure in the Park on the Spirit Plane

TRANCE VISION, ETC.

May 18th, 1914.

I again saw myself lying asleep on the bed, but this time did not feel nervous. The room seemed to get more and more distant and then grew nebulous. I seemed to be enveloped in a mist, and gradually this mist took shape and form, became solid, and lo! the landscape with which I was now familiar. Before me was stretched a beautiful tract of country bathed in a soft evening light. I floated down on to a grassy hill and saw below me in the valley the town in which H. J. L. now lived. Soon I was able to pick out the roofs of the college and turned my steps in that direction. The route I took led me through a beautiful wood, amid the branches of whose trees birds were singing merrily. As I drew nearer the town I saw the park with statuary and the sculpture gallery which I had seen before. I began to walk through the park, and I noticed how sweetly the flowers smelt. Large numbers of spirits were constantly passing me, and several gazed at me intently, as if they felt I was in some way different.

At length two young men stopped and said, "Who are you, and are you dead? You do not look quite like one of us, and yet if you are not dead how come you here?"

I replied, "No, I'm not dead, but somehow I have developed in such a way recently since my father-in-law died that I am able to come and visit him here and even carry away a remembrance of what I see."

"Well, that's very funny. I wish I'd been able to do that," said one of them, "when I was alive."

"Can you visit any other planes of existence besides these?" the other inquired.

"No," I replied, "but I meet others who have been selected by my father-in-law, and these give me accounts of their experiences in Hell and in the plane above this, and also in the astral plane."

"You're jolly lucky," the taller of the two (who had spoken first) cried. "We know practically nothing of either Hell or the plane above, though, of course, we do know something of the astral plane. You might tell us something about them. Come, let us sit down by this fountain."

I sat down with them and had just begun to relate some of the officer's adventures, when I saw H. J. L. hurrying towards me. He was evidently annoyed, and said, "Really, Jack, you ought to have known better than to sit down here chattering when the officer and I are waiting to get to business."

The two strangers at once apologized and explained that it was their fault.

H. J. L. answered, "That's all very well, and I know you meant no harm, but if you want that sort of information, come to me for it and you shall have it.

My nephew's work is to give it to those who are alive on the earth, not to preach to those who, having died, have come here."

We then parted, and I went with H. J. L. through the streets, which seemed fairly full of people, into the college. In his room I found the officer waiting, who, having shaken hands, remarked, "If you're not careful, you'll get so fond of this country that you'll not wish to return to your own." He then took up the story of his life on this side of the grave.

Chapter XXXI**The Fate of Children**

TRANCE VISION AND CONVERSATION

May 25th, 1914.

As in my last vision, I saw the whole landscape on my way to H. J. L., but this time spoke to no one till I was in H. J. L.'s room. As soon as I saw him, I asked, "What is the age limit at which children can enter Hell? I notice that from the account of the officer there are no children in Hell proper, and yet they are to be found in the seventh division of Hell."

H. J. L. answered, "You cannot, of course, fix any exact age limit. Things work much more reasonably than that. Thus if an infant dies who as yet knows nothing of God, it goes to the infant schools in Hell, as you know. If it has acquired a vague idea of God and a future life, it will come to our secondary schools in the realm of half-belief.

"If it has acquired sufficient knowledge it may go to the college, and, finally, boys and girls who have a real living belief may go direct to the realm above this, or occasionally to the highest plane of all. In these cases they will have to complete their education on the intellectual side, although their spiritual side may be well developed. This is, of course, a reversal of what generally happens here. Usually our intellects have been developed largely at the expense of our spiritual functions.

"Now let us consider the other side.

"When a child reaches a certain stage in its development, roughly from five to seven, it would ordinarily begin to have some general idea as to right and wrong. Now if a child has been badly brought up, or if it inherits a perverse and evil nature from its ancestors, or if obsessed, it may develop very unpleasant characteristics. It may commit serious offences, and in general may begin to develop badly.

"Under these circumstances it is cut off very often at the wish of its guide and transferred to the astral plane. There, clear of many of the surroundings which might have dragged it down, it will have an opportunity of developing and of learning sufficient to enable it on leaving the astral plane to come at least to the realm of half-belief.

"This period of child life stretches roughly from five to twelve, but, of course, may vary at either end.

"The third stage is when they are ceasing to be children and becoming adults, especially in the matter of sex. This is a very critical age, and many children unfortunately choose the downward instead of the upward path.

"The tendency is still, however, for the final decision to be left for the astral plane; and I must remind you that to a certain extent this is always the case. In the case; however, of an adult hardened in sin, the astral simply continues in its new life, repeating the sins of the former; but a youth who has started on the downward path, being less hardened, is more likely to be checked by the shock of death. Further, he is hardly likely to have had time to drive away his guardian angel in the way that a hardened sinner has. Thus even a thoroughly vicious youth will probably see the folly of his ways as soon as he reaches the astral plane, and the vicious habits, not yet being firmly rooted, will be easier to eradicate.

"On the other hand, if he rejects this second chance and falls into the type of sins represented by 'obsessing,' he will sooner or later be hurled out of his astral body into Hell. But when that day comes he or she will no longer be a child, probably not in years, certainly not in spiritual development.

"Thus you see how it comes about that there are no children in Hell."

J. W. "But there are vicious children of five or six."

H. J. L. “Not many. They may be spoiled, thoughtless, and selfish, but there are few who are really vicious. Further, they too will realize the wickedness of their faults on coming over and seeing them visualize, as we all do.

“If not sufficiently spiritual to pass straight on to us, they will remain on the astral plane and there learn wisdom. If, however, they do not learn wisdom, they will learn folly, but even that will take time to work out its full course, and only when they have become too gross and wicked for the astral plane will they drop to Hell. They will have ceased to be children when that happens.

“But it is seldom that a young child does grow worse on the astral plane. They nearly all improve, and, moreover, the bulk of young children are too spiritual to remain even there, but come almost at once either to the elementary schools in the top division of Hell or else to us.

“But here’s the officer.”

Chapter XXXII

Of Animals, and How They Converse with Men

TRANCE VISION AND CONVERSATION

June 1st, 1914.

I found myself floating over my body, and then began to whirl away into space. I seemed to pass through the ceiling into the open air, but yet was able to look right into my bedroom. Then the room became misty and vanished. I seemed to be whirling on and on amid clouds and mists, and it seemed a long journey, but at length the mists began to take form. At first these were fantastic in shape, some like castles and cliffs, others like dragons and monsters, then fairy cities, minarets, and cupolas. At length these vanished, and, as the mists rolled away, I saw a vast landscape stretching away beneath me. First I saw high mountains and arid deserts, and, beyond these, a great wall of darkness. I appeared to be traveling away from this wall of darkness, and gradually the landscape became less forbidding. The rocky mountains became clothed with forests, the deserts covered with grass. By degrees it developed into the beautiful country I now knew so well, bathed in that curious evening glow.

Concentrating my mind on Old Queen's College, I seemed to increase the speed of my flight. Almost for a moment I found myself actually in H. J. L.'s room.

"Oh, Boss," I said, "what do animals, such as fowl (which spend their whole life on earth hunting for food), do on this plane? They can have no occupation!"

He replied, "While they are on the astral plane most animals still endeavor to get food. They go on grubbing about for it, and it is only by degrees that they learn that any food they appear to find is but a delusion, and that, in fact, they do not need it. Once that stage is reached, the animal generally passes on to this plane. Many animals, such as most of the carnivora, seem quite unable to learn this lesson, and remain on the astral plane still hunting astral deer, which they never catch."

J. W. "Are there men who go on hunting animals which they never catch?"

H. J. L. "Yes; there are even fox-hunters, horses and all, but sooner or later they weary of the empty sham, for they never catch anything. Usually, however, the tables are reversed, and the hunter upon earth becomes the hunted there.

"Man is back in the primitive world without the aid of weapons, and again is liable to the life of fear which our early ancestors suffered. Not till he has learnt the great secret, the power of the human will is he again free from that fear. But you must remember that the type of man who runs foul of the astral animals is the man who has hunted them on earth. All men don't have exactly the same experiences on the astral plane, any more than they do on this plane.

"When the animals reach this plane, they have done so because they have other interests besides eating. At times they still cast back and feebly hunt round. I know occasionally Molly misses a bone, just as I do my pipe."

J. W. "Why, there is Molly," and as I spoke Molly emerged from under a sofa and came up to me wagging her tail in quite a friendly way.

H. J. L. continued. "Animals here become far more closely attached to us than they ever do on earth. They certainly understand us better, and this compensates for the loss of more material amusements.

"You see, as we can perceive each other's thoughts, so we can, though to a lesser extent, perceive the animals' thoughts. They, too, visualize, but the difference lies in this: the average animal not having learnt to think clearly, as we have, can only visualize a muddled sort of idea. But they tend to improve.

"Of course their ideas, at the best, are very simple. Still, it creates a bond of sympathy which is largely absent on earth. Now just look at Molly's thought."

I (J. W.) looked intently, but could perceive nothing at first.

“I can’t see anything; perhaps she is not thinking of anything in particular.”

H. J. L. “On the contrary, she is thinking very deeply for a dog. That’s why I thought you’d be able to see it, though, of course, you have not had any practice in developing that faculty. However, try again. Empty your mind of all personal thoughts and concentrate it on Molly. Fix your eyes on the tip of her nose.”

I laughed at the last sentence, but followed all his instructions. After a moment the whole room seemed to fade away, including even the dog herself, and in its place was a kind of light which grew into a picture similar to the clairvoyant pictures one sees in the crystal.

And then I saw Carrie sitting in the boat at Weybridge, and Molly herself seated in the prow. The boat moved out of the boat-house into the river, and Carrie, who was wearing a white jersey, was rowing. There was no one else in the boat. Then the vision changed, and I saw Molly and Carrie seated in the garden at Weybridge. Tea was brought out, and Molly proceeded to lie down for a piece of cake.

Then *H. J. L.*’s voice broke in: “Well, Jack, you could see her thoughts that time?”

J. W. “Yes; but how did you know I could?”

H. J. L. “Because I could see both your thoughts and hers, and they corresponded. We get fairly expert in reading people’s thoughts here, but of course you are new to it.

“Well, I think that answers your question fairly well. You can easily understand that the more closely associated with man an animal is, the more it will develop. The more it develops the more complicated will be the ideas which it will be able to remember or understand, and so communication between men and animals will become easier. For example, that thought of Molly’s was fairly complicated. Many animals would have managed nothing more than a face of their mistress.

“If we wish to communicate an idea to an animal, we have to think of some very simple idea.

“Now watch. I’m going to think of Blanche.”

At once Molly jumped up and wagged her tail, and I perceived she was looking at the Boss. Between both of them appeared a vision of Blanche about two years old, but whereas *H. J. L.* saw her in the garden at L —, Molly only saw B. with no particular background. I knew this because Blanche stood out very clearly, while the garden at L — was much fainter, and I knew, by instinct, that this was because Molly had grasped the idea of Blanche, but not the more complicated idea of “at L —.”

Then it vanished, and *H. J. L.* said, “Yes, she got the first idea all right, but not did grasp that I meant at L —. I daresay if you were to think of her at G — she’d grasp that all right. The remembrance of G — in connection with Blanche would be so much clearer to her.”

I tried, and at once Molly got very excited, jumped up on her hind legs, and began to walk towards me. At the same time I saw the vision of Blanche on the tennis-lawn at G —, and the background was nearly, though not quite, as clear as Blanche. In short, Molly had perceived practically the whole idea I had desired to convey. Then it faded again, and Molly retired once more under the sofa.

H. J. L. “How high the most intelligent animals can travel with us I can’t say, but you will see that there are possibilities of development for them here lacking on earth.

“Of course by telepathy even on earth, animals are often able to read our thoughts to a limited extent, but it is generally in the matter of the cruder passions, such as fear of them or dislike. Further, they are often helped even in these cases by involuntary movements of our own.

“I think, however, that we’ve said enough on this subject for tonight. If you think over carefully what I have just told you, you will realize its importance more fully. If, then, any point requires further elucidation — why, ask me again.”

J. W. “Thanks. By-the-bye, how are we communicating now? We appear to be talking.”

H. J. L. “By telepathy. Our minds, used to the idea of talking, translate it into words, but of course we do not actually use words here. You would perceive the force of this at once if you were communicating with a Frenchman. To him you would appear to be talking in French; to you he would seem to be speaking in English.

“It is only when we get on to the earth plane and try to communicate through a medium that we have to employ actual language. Then, if we wished to speak to foreigners and did not know the language, we should have to learn it. This can be done, but I do not propose to go into exactly how just at the present moment.

“When we perceive each other’s thoughts, our minds turn this perception into sight. Both are related to telepathy, but, for the sake of distinction, we can correlate perception of visions with clairvoyance. We can employ either method for communicating. With men, telepathy is slightly the easier; it seems to require less will exertion.

“With animals, however, I find the vision is the best method, probably because they have never spoken on earth. But of course both methods merge. Even in your own case, when the officer has been telling you his adventures, you have at times not merely heard, but seen what he went through.”

J. W. “Yes, that is so, though, when writing these ‘visits’ down, I had not realized it.”

“Well, you will realize it now. Here comes the officer.”

The officer, having finished his narrative, went out. *H. J. L.* then spoke: “Well, good-bye, Jack, for the time being.”

I then willed that I should return, and as I did so I seemed to rise in the air and pass out through the window. Again I saw beneath me the spirit landscape, with its beautiful meadows and wooded hills and dales. Clouds came drifting by and gradually covered it as by a mist. I could still perceive it for a time through the mist, which, however, grew thicker and thicker, till it appeared almost like layers of cotton-wool. This solid mist gradually became even more solid and began to assume shapes. At first these were vague, indistinct, and colorless, but before long they took the form of moorlands broken into hills and valley. This landscape was far more barren than that which I had seen on the spirit plane, still, it was not without a certain grandeur and beauty. Then by degrees color came into the landscape, though slowly. I seemed to be rushing above this country at a great pace, while at the same time drawing nearer to the earth. Speed! Speed! I noticed that the light was becoming stronger, and gradually I realized I was passing down the Rivelin valley from the direction of the moors. Faster and faster I whirled, and Glen House appeared to spring up and rush to meet me. I seemed to pass clean through the walls of the room and pirouetted round the bed. Then I seemed to strike something with great force and lost consciousness. — *J. W.*

Chapter XXXIII

The Astral and Spirit Planes Compared

TRANCE VISIT

Monday night, June 15th.

As before, I felt myself traveling through space and saw the earth landscape change for that of the spirit realms.

On entering H. J. L.'s room I asked him, "What do you consider is the exact difference between a man on the astral plane and one on the spiritual?"

H. J. L. "I understand what you mean. On the astral plane we are still to a certain extent material. We have, as it were, an etherealized material body. The astral plane consists of particles of, very fine matter, much more etherealized, of course, than the gross atoms of the earth, but still matter. They stand somewhat in the same relations to the ordinary physical world that gases do to solids on earth.

"This material body, being so ethereal, is of course much more completely dominated by the spirit for good or evil.

"It is the same thing with the astral landscape. In the spirit plane, however, matter has, for all intents and purposes, been left behind. It is with our 'forms' that we clothe our souls, and the landscape and the buildings which you see now before you are the 'forms' of those things when on earth.

"Thus it is when we wish to become visible even to the clairvoyant upon earth we usually have to clothe ourselves with a temporary astral form, just as, to make ourselves visible to ordinary folk, we have to materialize a temporary physical body. Mind you, there are clairvoyants who can see into the sixth plane — you are one — but most clairvoyants cannot. Even when a clairvoyant can, better results are often obtained by our clothing ourselves with an astral form."

J. W. "In dreams do we come to the astral or to the spiritual plane, or sometimes to one and sometimes to the other?"

H. J. L. "Dreams are of many orders. Some are purely the invention of the human brain. They may be little more than the thoughts of the day worked over and redigested by the brain at night, or they may be pure fiction, similar to the stories children tell themselves for amusement.

"The very materialistic have dreams of these two orders, and most people at times have some of these, but many persons enter the astral plane in what they think are dreams, and a few, but very few, enter the spirit plane.

"You do so, but the reason is that you are mediumistic, and, still more important, because I call you. Very few have such a privilege, and even those who do seldom bring away so clear a recollection. We help you to remember, but it is true that experiences on the spirit plane, appertaining to the spirit as they do, seem to remain attached to the spirit and are more vivid than those of the astral plane, which, being more akin to earth life, become distorted as the astral reunites with the physical. It is as if the physical brain attempted to explain astral phenomena by physical laws and largely failed, but recognized the hopelessness of trying to do so with the spiritual.

"Far more people get on to the astral plans in their sleep. They come wandering along the fringe of it, as it were, often apparently half dazed, as if their connection with their bodies rendered them only partly conscious of the astral world in which they moved.

"The astral body, of course, is often unable to leave the physical body owing to the gross and material life such people live, and even when it can get out of the physical it cannot or dare not go any distance from it.

"But perhaps you would like to see some of these visitors to the edge of the astral plane?"

J. W. "I should but what of the officer?"

H. J. L. “Oh, I’ll tell him not to come.” He appeared to concentrate his thoughts for a moment, and as I watched him I saw the face of the officer visualize before him and then fade away again.

H. J. L. “Now we will go to the plane where the worlds meet. First I shall have to clothe myself with an astral body, however.”

J. W. “And what of me? Shall I not need an astral body too?”

H. J. L. “Yes. Where did you leave yours?”

J. W. “I don’t know. Do you think it will be with my physical?”

H. J. L. “We had better ask our guardian spirits.”

As he spoke, a light appeared behind him, growing stronger and stronger, till I could hardly bear to look at it. As it grew stronger, it took the form of the glorious spirit I had seen before overshadowing H. J. L. Like a silver trumpet he spoke:

“Return and fetch from your bed your astral body.”

Chapter XXXIV

A Visit with H. J. L. to the Astral Plane. The Dreamers

At once I seemed to be caught up in strong hands and whirled away into space. Once more I stood within my bedroom, but instead of sinking into unconsciousness, I suddenly appeared clothed with a more substantial body than that which a moment before I had possessed. Yet my physical body still lay asleep in bed. I turned at the sound of H. J. L.'s voice, and saw that he too looked different. For one thing, he looked older. In the spirit world he appeared a good deal younger than when on earth; here he looked stronger, but not so very much younger. There was also a more subtle difference, but I do not know how to describe it.

"This is not my own astral body," explained H. J. L.; "that disintegrated almost as soon as I died, as I told you. This is only a temporary body made out of the astral elements which are floating about. I have done my best to impress my form upon it as I remember it upon earth. Now come with me."

I noticed that the room seemed shadowy and semi-transparent; so did my body, which lay on the bed, and so, indeed, did all the earth phenomena. The body I now wore seemed, however, solid and real, and we passed through the shadowy walls without the slightest difficulty. I said to H. J. L., "Earth things and people now look to me as you do when I see you at Mr. K.'s clairvoyantly."

H. J. L. "Yes, I can quite believe that. There are many astral beings who cannot see the physical world for a long time after they have passed over, just as ordinary earth-dwellers cannot see them.

"All the same, this double vision is a bit of a nuisance, so will that you shall see only the astral plane."

I did so, and at once the shadowy house and landscape faded quietly away. H. J. L. took my hands and said, "Quick!" and we seemed to be rushing through space. It seemed neither dark nor light, but betwixt and between, and then we stopped.

"Here come some of the dreamers," said H. J. L., and we waited. Now I could not see the landscape very clearly, for it seemed all grey and shrouded in mist, but I could perceive there were hills and dales and castles and woods, trees and wide expanses of water, but all was indistinct and grey.

"Is it always like this — grey and shadowy?" I inquired.

H. J. L. replied, "Oh dear, no. But you are more used to the spirit realms and so not attuned to these. But to many spirits who know no brighter place, this seems full of colors, but not even to all of them. This is a land of change, a half-way house, as it were, between the physical and the spiritual plane, therefore it seems somewhat unreal and changing to denizens of either plane. So, too, the elements which form it are ever changing, and, being very malleable, often assume forms in consonance with the wills of those who pass through them, even when they are sleepers dreaming. You understand, form which is eternal goes to the spirit plane; hence form here is not stable except where it is the living astral form. I mean the elemental forms have no stable form of their own.

"But see, here come a few of the visitors from earth to us."

As he spoke, I noticed that large bands of spirits were floating towards us. Soon more and more passed swiftly by. Then it grew into a continuous stream. Sometimes there would come a crowd together, but at other times they would be spread out into ones and twos.

Ever and anon across this stream of dreamers would float a real denizen of the astral plane. It was easy to see the difference, but almost impossible to describe it in detail. However, one noticeable difference was that those still living on earth had trailing away behind them a thread of light. These threads, unlike material threads, never became

entangled as the astral beings moved about. It seemed as if each cord was able to pass through any other cord without severing it.

There were many other differences more difficult to describe. When I turned to comparing these with myself, I perceived that many of them had their eyes shut, and with their arms stretched out in front of them they looked like people walking in their sleep. But not all were like this. Some had their eyes wide open, and seemed to be hunting for someone, and a few seemed to be idly wandering through a strange landscape, stopping every now and then to gaze at it.

Such a motley crowd of all ages and conditions, not only men, women, and children, but even animals! I saw a dog among the visitors, who caught sight of a rabbit, and at once gave chase.

“Now look at the dreams these people are dreaming and the friends they are seeking,” said H. J. L.

I noticed a woman; in front of her floated a thought visualization of a little child. The thought seemed to float away from her, and she kept following, crying bitterly. Then suddenly the real astral form of the child came running up, and in a moment the thought child was shattered, but the mother gave a glad cry and flung out her arms towards the astral and took it in her arms. She sat down there and then and hugged the child and talked to it just as she would have done on earth. The child, a boy, appeared to be about six years old.

Then I saw a man about thirty, who came with eyes wide open and evidently expecting to find someone. In a few moments he was met by a young woman.

“Who are these,” I said, “for I can see that they are both alive upon earth.”

H. J. L. replied, “I cannot say who they are, but I can tell you this about them: that man is twin soul to that girl. He has not met her yet on earth, but he has on the astral plane. Whether they will ever meet on earth I do not know, but I hope so. But look at that pair.”

I saw a man and woman approach each other with delight, but floating near the woman was a thought form of an elderly man. By his face I should say he was a Jew, and I knew, as by instinct, that this was the woman’s husband, whom she had married for money, while the younger man, with whom she was now speaking, was the man she really loved, whom she had refused in order to marry the Jew.

“Now look at these,” said H. J. L.

I heard an agonized shriek, and saw one man pursued by another who had a knife in his hand. The hunted man kept looking over his shoulder, and every now and then he gave a piercing shriek. His face was livid, and his whole attitude betokened abject fear.

“What does this mean?” I began.

H. J. L. “It’s fairly obvious that for some reason the dark man considers he has been done a great wrong by the fair man, and when they meet on the astral plane, he acts as he would like to act on earth.”

J. W. “Will they remember this experience when they awake on earth?”

H. J. L. “I can’t say for certain, but I think they will each retain some remembrance, although it will very likely be a distorted one. But look, who is that?”

J. W. “Why, it’s the pater! What on earth is he doing here?”

H. J. L. “Hardly an appropriate exclamation, eh? But why shouldn’t your father come here; he’s just dreaming like everyone else. Perhaps he’ll recognize you.”

But he went past, busily engaged in seeking for someone, and never seemed to see me, and as he passed I saw the thought form of his father floating before him.

“Will he meet his father here?” I inquired.

H. J. L. “Not very likely. Old Horatio is very comfortable in the division of faith without acts and not likely to come out here often.”

My father disappeared among the crowd, and as for a moment there was a lull in the throng that were continually sweeping by us, I turned again to H. J. L. and said:

“Does ‘place’ exist on the astral plane in the same way as it does on earth?”

H. J. L. “To a certain extent, for not only have we, as you see, an astral landscape, but that landscape tends to correlate with the surface of the physical world. Thus, at the present minute we are near London: that is why there is such a crowd of spirits. But though the landscape tends to correlate, our astral bodies are not bounded by time and space in the same way as they are on earth. We can rush from one part of the earth to another in next to no time. Nor do the astral landscapes exactly correspond to landscapes on earth, for there are, as it were, many layers of astral landscape; because the same district at various periods of the earth’s history will present very different aspects, as, for example, the site of London has not only held prehistoric forest, but at times it has been covered by the ocean itself.”

J. W. “This landscape, so far as I can see it, is not the same as the one in which London now stands.”

H. J. L. “Of course, but it is some not very ancient past landscape. But see who comes here.”

J. W. “Why, it’s Carrie. The whole family seems to be here.”

H. J. L. “Oh no, they are not, but all the same a very large number of people do come night after night on to the astral plane. There are some people who have a regular and continuous life here, just as they have on earth, only when they awake, as a rule, they remember nothing of it. The *astral day* ends for them with falling asleep, just as the physical day does, and it is seldom that a very clear recollection of either state is carried into the other. More, however, is remembered by the astral memory than by the physical. Still, there are people who are alive on earth, yet when they are here they have no recollection of it and imagine they live here only. Such people often don’t even know when they die, but are surprised when they don’t fall asleep. Most astrals, however, do keep some remembrance of their earth life, and may come here with fixed recollections of some earth friend whom they desire to find. Many people also occasionally remember in a distorted manner fragments of their experiences here. There are also some who seldom, if ever, come here till death. They are so materialistic that the astral cannot escape from the physical. Gross feeders and heavy drinkers in particular chain their astral bodies to their physical; but I am going to speak to Carrie. See, she is seeking me.”

He made his way through the passing dreamers to where Carrie was standing, looking round as if seeking someone. I could see her thought visualization, and it was of her father as she remembered him sitting in his armchair in the dining-room at L. She herself was clad in a long white dress of simple cut, but not precisely like anything I have ever seen her wear on earth.

As soon as she saw him, she hastened towards him with delight.

“How are you getting on, Boss? It’s such an age since I saw you.”

H. J. L. “Yes, it is. I’m glad you came here tonight. I’m right enough, but what do you think of the revelations we are sending through?”

She looked puzzled and said, “What revelations? I don’t remember any.”

H. J. L. “Oh, nonsense; yes, you do; only you are still half asleep. Wake up! The ones we are sending through by Jack. By-the-bye, here is Jack.”

Carrie then noticed me for the first time. I, though I had seen her from the first, had not obtruded my presence, wishing her to devote her time to H. J. L.

“Why, what are you doing here?” she began.

“Come to that,” I replied, “what are you? But, indeed, in my case it’s my usual Monday night’s excursion, and this time Boss has brought me to see you folk who enter the astral plane. I wonder whether you’ll remember having met me when you awake?”

H. J. L. “It’s not very likely. If she remembers anything at all it will probably be me, as that was the thought visualization which came here with her. Well, Carrie, do you recollect now?”

C. W. “Yes, I do remember vaguely, but like in a dream. But how are you yourself? I have not seen you for a long time.”

H. J. L. “Well, very well, nothing at all wrong. Never better in all my life. I wouldn’t be back on your poky, silly, shadowy earth for anything you could give. I’m hoping, though, that a few old friends will join me soon from your side.”

C. W. “Whose house is that?”

As she spoke I noticed rather a nice house in the late Georgian style. It had a small garden in front, and we found it had a much larger one behind.

H. J. L. “Oh, that’s the astral form of some house which has just been pulled down. It won’t remain long; the astrals of inanimate objects don’t last long unless someone takes possession of them and so links them with his personality. Let us go inside.”

C. W. “Why, it’s completely furnished!” said Carrie as we entered.

H. J. L. “So it is. That’s rather peculiar here, though on the spiritual plane where the forms come it’s the rule rather than the exception. I think it must have been burnt down and everything destroyed. Yes, I’m sure it was, for see, some of the pictures are missing. Look at the blanks on the wall. Why, there is even the cord, too, hanging to the nails from which they hung. Someone evidently slashed through the cords with a knife and carried out a few of the best pictures. They didn’t save much, though.” As he spoke, the Boss sat down in an easy-chair by the fireplace in a room which had evidently been the dining-room.

“A very comfortable house,” he commented; “plain, perhaps, but substantial. If I were still in the astral body I’d take possession of it.”

Carrie. “Let’s go into the garden.” So she and I passed out through a door in the dining-room down a short flight of steps into the garden.

A few moments after the Boss appeared in the doorway, carrying on his shoulder a small leather-covered trunk. On reaching us, he placed it on the ground, raised the lid, and drew out a book.

“There, Carrie, fancy finding that here.”

C. W. “Why, it’s your old book, ‘How to Make a House Healthy and Comfortable.’”

H. J. L. “Yes. I thought the house seemed very well brought up to date. Its owner was evidently a sensible man.”

I (J. W.) was mildly amused at the obvious pleasure H. J. L. felt on discovering that the owner of the house had appreciated his book, but at that moment Carrie broke in, as we re-entered the room, “I’m feeling rather tired, so I will be off to bed.”

I looked in surprise at H. J. L., who, however, appeared to take no notice of my inquiring look, but said, “Well, goodbye, then, for the present. Come again soon. I am always glad to see you, you know, and will take care to be here when you do come.”

Carrie then went out of the room, and as soon as she was out of sight (I noticed that the astral wall completely shut out astral figures) he said, “You were surprised that she said she was tired. What she really felt was the call of her physical to her astral body, but that was the easiest way for her to explain it. To most astrals still living on earth the change back from the astral to physical conditions seems like falling asleep.

“Now it is time you too were returning. See how the crowds who were hurrying outwards are now going back.”

We looked out of the front door, and, sure enough, the dreamers seemed all to be moving back towards the direction from which they had come. Faster and faster they hurried by, and among them my father again repassed me with a disappointed look upon his face. He had not found the one he was seeking. Fewer and fewer they grew, and I noticed the so-called “dead” bidding farewells, often with bitter tears, to those they loved

and who were returning to the waking world. Still fewer and fewer grew the “dreamers,” and in proportion as they grew fewer, the number of real denizens of the astral plane increased.

Not all were pleasant to look at, and H. J. L. again spoke, “It is time for you to return;” and I seemed to fall asleep. — J. W.

Note. — C. W. remembered a considerable part of this meeting, but not all, and thought it was a dream.

Chapter XXXV

The Influence of the War Cloud

TRANCE VISION

July 27th, 1914.

On reaching the college in which H. J. L. lived, I asked him, "Boss, do you think this storm cloud which has arisen in Europe will lead to war? Things begin to look rather black."

H. J. L.: "I am afraid it will. Of course I am not closely in touch with the earth plane, but here men are saying that the astral plane is in a state of absolute chaos. All the evil spirits are crowding up there and are doing their best to precipitate war.

"Here we are beyond all that turmoil, but we are filled with strange forebodings. The next few days will, I think, decide it, but I have never made any pretensions to prophetic powers.

"Our work is drawing rapidly to its close, and it is well, for if there is war our little band of workers will certainly be dispersed. They will have different work to do.

"You are not well yourself. I can see, unless you are better by next week, it would be as well for you not to make any attempt to come here till you are all right again. When in sound health these excursions into the unknown can do you no harm, but when ill you need all your vitality to fight the disease. In any case, you will not be able to do any automatic writing during the month you are lecturing at Cambridge.

"I do not propose that you should have an interview with the officer tonight.

"In the first place, you are not well enough to stand a lengthy stay here, and, secondly, the officer is in a very excited condition owing to the war cloud. He longs to be able to rejoin his old regiment, but several spirits have taken him in hand and are trying to calm him. We don't want all our good work flung away, and in that way he can do no good. There is a field of activity open to him, which we shall point out in due course. Just now, however, he's like a tiger that has scented blood, and it is largely his extraordinary behavior, coupled with what appears to be happening on the astral plane, that makes me fear for the worst.

"Now, goodbye. Take care of yourself and get well as soon as you can. The book must be finished off before you leave for Burma."

So I returned to the earth plane, and noticed how tired I was as I re-entered my body. — J. W.

Note. — I went up to Cambridge on the 3rd, and all through August suffered from a sharp attack of Pleurisy. During the whole of that time I had no visions, nor did I attempt automatic writing. It was not till the 5th of September that I was able to resume automatic writing at Mr. K.'s house.

Chapter XXXVI

The War

LETTER FROM H. J. L.

Sept. 5th, 1914.

“We must get on with the work as quickly as we can. The time lost owing to your illness is to be regretted, but it has at any rate enabled some little order to be restored in the astral plane. But the latter is still in a most chaotic state, and its reaction is beginning to be felt even in our plane.

“Of course the majority of the men who are passing over are young men, and go first to the astral plane. Huge crowds of spirits are pouring over, most of them still convulsed with hate, nearly all having died a violent death, and you can easily imagine the condition there. Many indeed do not even realize that they are dead, but ascribe their changed condition to some wound which has temporarily clouded their brain.

“The chief way, however, in which it affects the spirit plane is that a great call has gone forth for more enlightened spirits to come to the aid of the newcomers, and already countless hosts are pouring down to help. At present most of the helpers come from the two higher divisions of the spirit plane, but it is certain that some will go from our division also.

“As yet I am hardly fitted for such work, but when the call comes for me I shall answer it⁸, though I cannot pretend that I am looking forward to the turmoil of the astral plane after the peace and quiet I have enjoyed here.

“But enough of this subject; we must push on with the book, which I trust you will make every effort to get published, not immediately — of course, that is impossible — but presently, as the opportunity occurs; and we look to you, Mr. K., to write a preface⁹, explaining the circumstances under which these revelations were made.

“The officer will now take control. — H. J. L.”

⁸ *The call came early in May 1916, when I went to him in the spirit plane, and told him my brother, R. L. Ward had been killed in action. At once he went down to help him, and has been with him off and on ever since.*

⁹ *Mr. K. agreed to do this*

Chapter XXXVII

The Band of Spirit Friends is Dispersed. Conclusion

VISION OF H. J. L.

Sept. 14th, 1914.

On arriving at the college in which H. J. L. lived, I found him seated there alone, save for the dog, Molly, who scrambled out from under the sofa to greet me.

H. J. L. then began to speak: "The work is now completed for the time being. Our little band of workers is scattered, and I alone remain amid the old surroundings. Soon you, too, will be undergoing new experiences in the East, which will tend to widen your outlook. You need have no anxiety as to the journey. You will arrive in Burma safely.

"Though for some time I shall not give you any communications of real interest, yet I shall expect you each Monday as usual. The door to this world having once been opened, we must take care that it does not close again, for after awhile I shall hope to start a new series of revelations, though their exact nature is yet unknown to me.

"Go carefully through what you have. You will have time to arrange the various contributions each under their proper headings, and thus you will have a fairly complete and continuous account of life over here.

"Hell, the astral plane, the realms of half belief, of real but narrow belief, and of belief shown forth in a life of good deeds, have all been revealed. Beyond these planes I as yet know nothing, but I do not despair of gaining some knowledge of life in the fifth plane.

"So henceforth consider me, as I know you will, not as sleeping an age-long sleep to be broken ultimately by the trumpets of judgment day, but as a man still much like yourself, but freed at last of the trammels of a body; no longer subject to pain, no longer needing material food or sleep, and therefore as one freed from the drudgery of life, dwelling among pleasant surroundings, with boundless opportunities, not for idle sloth and endless psalm-singing, but to study all subjects in which I am interested and the means to pursue those studies far further than any man can do on earth. Consider me able and anxious to help others, and by so doing preparing myself to, climb higher and higher from division to division, making new friends and learning new truths day by day as time seems to you.

"Consider me happy and contented in a measure, glad to have escaped from the material world, but do not think of me as absolutely happy yet.

"Perfect happiness is a long way off still, and can only be attained by steady effort concentrated by a set and determined will after many ages, during all of which the spirit is undergoing fresh experiences, and learning new truths.

"Think of me thus, at all times, busy alike with work and recreation. The work is that which will help me to climb upward step by step, the recreation that which on earth I considered as work.

"So bear my greetings to all who will receive them and come to me regularly week by week; and now goodbye for the present, thanking Mr. K., Mrs. K., and all who have assisted me in this work.'

J. W. "Before I go, tell me what J. B. P. and the officer and A. are doing."

H. J. L. "The officer is shortly, after a little more training, to go down to the astral plane to help the thousands who are being hurled into the new life they will find there; and badly they will need all the help they can get, cut off thus in the prime of life. But help they will receive.

"J. B. P. has already gone down again into Hell. A. is still struggling to learn the simple lessons of the school where I was so long ago."

J. W. "Yes, to you it must seem long; and yet as earth reckons time it is only nine months since you passed over."

H. J. L. “Yes; but time here counts by experience and not by hours, if indeed one can call it time, and even on earth I think by the time Dec. 31st has arrived not only you, but the whole world, will say, ‘this is the longest year we have ever known;’ but now goodbye once again.”

And so we parted. And to and fro since then I have journeyed, and always had a ready welcome, but little of special interest — merely family news and such small-talk — though all the time I know *J. H. L.* was working at various profound subjects. But at length the fatal day came when I sought his aid on behalf of my brother, and that aid was given ungrudgingly. And now my weekly visits are devoted in the main to the astral plane, of which before long I hope to write a fuller account.

PART II

“THE OFFICER”

AUTOMATIC WRITING IN TRANCE STATE BY J. W.
WITNESSED BY MR K.

Chapter I

The First Letter from “The Officer.” His Passing Over

(For an account of his life on earth, see H. J. L., 24th January 1914, p. 14.)

Feb. 7th, 1914.

“I will start by stating a few facts which you must grasp so as to realize what life is like here in Hell.

“Spirits over here fall into the following groups: —

“(1) Spirits of dead men or animals.

“(2) Spirits who have never been incarnated.

“(3) Spirits who come from other planes, etc.

“Of these the discarnate spirits may be divided as follows: —: .

“(1) Elementals — good, bad, or both good and bad,.

“(2) Vices personified,

“(3) Evil spirits created by the thoughts of men, *e.g.* the devils of our childhood days.

“Now the elementals are the most numerous, especially on the astral plane, and most of those that are there are bad. The other non-carnate beings are met with in the higher spheres, and the mixed ones often take an active interest in world affairs. Some are the guardian spirits who watch over great nations, others over societies, and so forth.

“This explains the fact that England as a nation has a distinct personality, quite distinct from that of any or all the separate individuals who form it.

“Now I hope these first remarks will enable you to get some idea of the type of beings other than men we meet here. They are not much in evidence in the set of half belief, but the higher types, of whom I, as yet, alas! know little, reappear in the higher sets. They include some of the angels and teachers; but many of these were men who, having learnt, return to teach. You cannot easily divide and classify the various spirits.

“I will now start an account of my death. I was walking along the Strand when a beastly motorbus knocked me down and ran over me. I should have seen it, only I admit I had been having rather a number of glasses of whisky and was not quite myself. Now the funny part is this, after the accident I got up, felt a little shaken, and, seeing a crowd gathering, decided to hurry on to the office where I was to sign the agreement for that patent.

“When I reached the door of the office I knocked, but to my surprise my hand seemed to go through. No one answered, so I tried to push open the door, and, next moment I found I had gone clean through.

“‘My word!’ I said, ‘I’m more drunk than I thought. Wonder if I had better go on.’ However, seeing a flight of stairs, I went up them and knocked at the office door. Same result. Went through it.

“I found the man waiting at his desk and a clerk at a side table. I took off my hat and bowed, but the ill-mannered swab took no notice. I said, ‘I’ve come to sign that agreement.’ But again he did not answer, and next moment, turning to his clerk, said,

‘If that damned fool doesn’t come in ten minutes I shall go off to that other appointment.’

“‘I’m here, you fool!’ I shouted, but he took no notice, and in spite of everything I could do he at length got up and, after cursing me roundly for not coming, went out.

“‘I swore and cursed too; so at length I went out, saying to myself, ‘He’s more drunk than I am.’

“‘Again I seemed to slip through the door, but as I did so I heard a fiendish chuckle, and, turning round, saw old Billy, a former pal of mine.

“‘Why, Billy,’ I said, ‘thought you were dead.’

“‘So I am,’ he replied; ‘and so are you at last, old sport. You’re dead at last. I thought we were never going to get you.’

“‘You damned liar, I’m not dead; I’m quite alive, only rather drunk.’

“‘Drunk!’ squealed Billy. ‘Even when drunk you can’t walk through doors, and aren’t invisible. Why didn’t that fellow see you if you were only drunk?’

“‘Then suddenly I knew it was true, and immediately I wanted to go in search of my body. We had reached the street, and at that minute Billy saw a nice-looking girl.

“‘See that girl?’ he shouted to me.

“‘Yes’ I replied; ‘but you need not yell so.’

“‘You fool, she can’t hear us. I’m going after her.’

“‘What’s the use?’ I asked. ‘She’s not that sort.’

Chapter II

First Experiences on the Astral Plane. The Drinking Den

SECOND LETTER FROM "THE OFFICER"

"He took me away I know not where, but it was into an awful darkness. Soon I was aware of a vast crowd of other spirits.

"Where am I?" I cried to my guide.

"Where would you like to be?" he asked. "Whatever place you wish to go to you shall."

"I want a drink," I cried.

"Come along," he replied. "We have one here who looks after all who thirst." In a moment I was aware of a howling mob, and over them presided a being. How shall I describe him? He most closely resembled a drunken man, low, bestial, sodden with drink, foul in every way.

"There was nothing grand or majestic about him, nothing of what Milton describes of ruined splendor. The nearest thing you can ever have seen is some drink-sodden wretch thrown out of a 'pub at closing time. He leered, and we all yelled, 'Drink! Give us drink!'

"Come with me" he seemed to say; "but you will have to work first."

"In a moment we were in a large, low drinking den, somewhere, I should think, in the east end of London. It was crowded with low men and women and even children.

"Oh, what a lovely, smell of gin and whisky there was! It is true there was rather too much loaded cheap beer, still, one can't be too particular.

"But when I wanted to get hold of a glass of beer which was standing on the bar I was quite unable to hold it. The desire for it grew stronger and stronger, and I seemed to contort myself with a kind of mad fury. I looked at the drink guide, and he was laughing and jeering and mocking me. At last he said, 'Work, you lazy brute'

"How can I?"

"Look what the others are doing."

"Then I noticed that many of the others were twining themselves round the men and women who were drinking. I cannot exactly describe how they did it, but they seemed to be insinuating themselves into their carcasses.

"Suddenly I saw a man who was already fairly tipsy drop in a kind of drunken stupor. At once a spirit who had been twining round began to fade into him and soon seemed to be absorbed into him. He was gone, and lo! the man staggered to his feet and yelled, 'More beer, you ——!' "I won't say what."

The barmaid gave him some more; but I could see that it was not the drunk man but my spirit companion who was, as it were, shining out of his eyes. He drank and drank and got more and more violent, till at length the chucker-out seized him by the shoulder. He at once seized a quart pot and felled the man. The blow was terrific and split the fellow's skull.

"Then there was pandemonium. Many of the drinkers rushed out shouting 'Murder.' With them in some cases went the spirits who had twined themselves round them, but others seemed to cast them off.

"I noticed for the first time that these spirits were divisible into two groups — those who were obviously men and those who were not. The latter had various forms, all more or less bestial. I cannot describe them. They were foul, misshapen things, not human or animal, sometimes composite, with animal heads and human bodies, some heads only, some foul monstrosities with no shape or form, things one might see in D.T., but nowhere else.

“Meanwhile the drunkard who had felled the chucker-out stood waving his beer pot. Then I heard a fierce, wild yell of laughter, and saw our guide laughing and cheering.

“We all began to cheer too — why, I don’t know.

Then the companion who had taken possession of the drunkard, began to disentangle himself from him as it were. He was out, and lo! the man collapsed in a heap.

“‘He’s dead, I suppose’ I said to a friend — it was old Billy.

“‘Oh no, only drunk, but he’ll swing for it, I expect, so we shall soon have another to join our merry throng.’”

“‘But it was not really he that did it.’

“‘Of course not; but who’s going to tell the jury that? They’ll learn he’s had a grudge against the chucker-out and has several times sworn “to do him in.” Are you going to witness to the truth?’ He laughed, and so did the others.

“Just then a policeman entered, and soon a dozen people were busy explaining what had happened. Several more men in blue entered and picked up the drunken man and carried him out.

“‘Well done!’ said the ‘Grand Master of the Ceremonies’ as Billy facetiously called him. ‘Well, now, you others, go and do likewise.’

“The drinking started again, and after a time I found in some way I could get a sort of satisfaction by twining round a man. It was not exactly drinking, being more akin to the satisfaction one used to get from smelling alcoholic spirits. But it was grand and yet unsatisfactory, a sort of Dead Sea fruit. So we hung round that pub for many a day, and I learnt even to take possession.

“I can’t and won’t describe how we got possession, but it’s something similar to the way in which I am now able to write. You need not fear. I don’t wish to do these things now, and if I did there, is a great guardian spirit who stands by you, not to mention your own father-in-law.

“Now I must give you a rest, as Mr. L. has arranged. Besides, I have told you enough about the drinking den. So rest for half an hour, and we will go one stop further in the next letter.

“This ends letter two by me. — THE OFFICER.”

—

Chapter III

The Denizens of the Astral Plane

STILL CONTROLLED BY "THE OFFICER" (SPOKEN)

"Now I think I had better explain who the drink guide is. He is not an elemental, nor is he the figure conjured up by the thoughts of men. He is created by the lust of all who desire drink, i.e. to excess. If all the world were to cease to desire strong drink tomorrow, he would gradually fade away. Not at once, because we over here would be able to sustain — him for a little, but as we should no longer be able to gratify, even in the shadowy way I have described, our lust for drink, in time he would fade away for want of sustenance. So, too, with all the lusts we know of. The old idea of the seven deadly sins was not so far out, but there are a jolly sight more than seven.

"The demons created by the imagination of men fade as the men who have created them, by thinking of them move, on, but, unfortunately, they are always being re-created by other men. Some parsons do quite a lot towards peopling Hell with devils. While there they torment, as we have been taught to believe they would. Those who have not been taught about them don't see them.'

"The elementals are quite different. They exist of themselves as much as we do; How they originally came into existence I do not know, but you must not suppose they are all bad just because I speak of them as such here. There are blithe, light-hearted spirits who haunt dells and woodland glades — the fairies of our childhood. Innocent children do still occasionally see them, but, as they are laughed at for their pains, they cease to believe in them, and so lose the power.

"There are many types of elementals, spirits who inhabit the winds, and so forth. I shall for the present deal mainly with the evil ones. But even among them, as among men, there are degrees of wickedness. I believe, too, they are capable of progress, but exactly how I cannot say for certain.

"Sometimes a dead man continues to take an interest in his family and tries to watch over it. Sometimes he is able to give it premonitions and warnings.

"But often death warnings are given by elementals who come scenting death. These come hoping to be able to draw some physical substance from the dying person.

"This naturally leads one to the subject of vampirism, which is fortunately rare, though it does occur, not, however, in the crude form usually related in legend.

"This, now, has given a glimpse, a rather horrible one, of some of the beings whom we meet here.

"Thanks awfully for your kindness. I will give you mote information next time. "If it revolts your gentle soul, Mrs. K., forgive me; but I have to give it.

So good-bye, and thank you. — THE OFFICER."

H. J. L. took control; "Thanks for your kindness,

Mr. and Mrs. K., but I consider that what the officer can tell is perhaps almost the most valuable part of all this work.

— H. J. L.

Chapter IV

An Incident in the Life of "The Officer" upon Earth

A VISION SEEN IN A BOTTLE OF WATER BY J. W.
 AT MR K.'s AT 7:40 ON FEB. 10th, 1914.
 FROM NOTES TAKEN DOWN BY MR. K.

"I see clouds of smoke, A spot of light, large flashes of light, a blaze of it absorbing the whole bottle. Grass, miles of it, burnt-up grass, yellow and dry. Great mountains piled high one above the other into the far distance, and some of them crowned with snow. We are in a valley between steep mountains, with a stream running down it. .

"Three men come riding up it dressed in khaki-soldiers. They are riding up a steep path on one side of the valley. The flash of a gun — a man drops — another flash and the horse of the second man drops. The rider of the wounded horse gets up and seizes the bridle of the horse of the wounded man. The third man, who is unwounded, turns and rides for his life, leaving the other two behind.

"The unwounded man, who remains, leans down, and, picking up the injured man, places him on the horse which he has captured, and jumps up behind him.

"Heavy firing all the time; heads appear, some with turbans. One of them hurls a great rock down the side of the hill. The soldier urges his horse forward full gallop, and the rock passes behind him. Another rock rushes past just in front of the horse. More rocks come crashing down, but miss the fugitives. Firing continues. The path goes under the side of an over-hanging rock which shelters them, for the boulders leap clean over them and fall crashing into the valley below.

"They are out of range now. Reach the valley in safety. Here the unwounded man meets the one who ran and hurls his revolver full in his face. The coward falls from his horse stunned.

"The man who rescued the wounded man is very clearly visible. He is about forty-years old, a sallow face much lined, a moustache and dark hair. He has hard blue eyes and an unpleasant mouth, and a rather hooked nose. He looks strong, but hard and ruthless. He rides on and meets a detachment of troops coming up the valley. They help him to dismount, and put the wounded man on a stretcher. Several officers shake hands with him. The troops advance rapidly. He goes with them. They sweep up the valley. A great cloud of dust blots them out. Can see them again. They are storming the hillside. Boulders are hurtling down the slope. Again the dust blots them out. Once more can see them. They are much higher up. They are storming the crest. The hillsmen are mown down by the rifle fire, and drop like rabbits.

"Again a great cloud of dust covers the whole picture and blots it from view. Nothing but dust. The bottle of water begins to reappear.

"That is all."

FOURTH LETTER FROM "THE OFFICER," WRITTEN
 AUTOMATICALLY IN TRANCE, FEB. 10th, 1914,
 AT MR. K.'s HOUSE, 8 P.M.

The Officer. "You must not expect anything very pleasant as yet from me. You want the truth, and you shall have it. It is well that the world should know the truth, and not only the rosy side of it.

"I told you of the drinking den, and before I go on further I had better describe and explain what the vision you saw means.

“It shows an incident in my early life. I rescued a man under fire when a cowardly skunk ran away. That was I. You hear nothing but bad about me, still, I had a few sparks of better things.

“Now to proceed with my story. I need not go through all our life here. Just as we went to a pub, we also went to a bad house.

“The great guide over lust is a spirit like a woman, but foul beyond compare, loathsome in every way. I will not go into details, but, as we could get a Dead Sea fruit satisfaction at the pub, so we can in like manner satisfy almost all our lusts. Satisfy, did I say? No, just the reverse. That is our punishment, the craving for what we want but cannot really attain. Oh, the Hell of it! for all the while we are helping to drag down others.

“Oh, what fools these mortals are! Do you suppose you can give rein to evil and not suffer and not make others suffer?

“I think you had better rest for half an hour.”

Chapter V

A Séance

(LETTER FROM "THE OFFICER")

March 7th.

"After a while I began to find that drink dens bored me a little. Then the dark spirit who acted as my guide said to me 'shall we go to a séance?'"

"What for?" I inquired.

"Well, much fun can be derived from some of them," he answered.

"Nothing else?" I inquired.

"Yes, if you are not careful to maintain the supply of semi-material elements which form this body you wear here, you'll find yourself losing it and dropping down to Hell."

"Am I not in Hell now?"

"No, you are still on the earth plane. You'd quickly feel the difference if you were in Hell, really in Hell."

"I'll do anything to keep this body going," I cried.

"Now explain matters to me. I once went to a séance. I certainly could not account for everything I saw, but put it down to fraud."

"He replied, 'These séances fall into three main divisions, but often there is a good deal of over-lapping:

"(1) Genuine ones where the medium is controlled by a good spirit.

"(2) Genuine cases where the medium is controlled by evil spirits like ourselves.

"(3) Fraud.

"Now, of course, we can't do anything with No. 1, and No. 3 is useless, but No. 2 is different, and often we succeed in leading astray a medium and converting her into No. 2."

"I inquired, 'What is it that enables you to get control?'"

"He answered, 'If the medium uses her power for her own selfish ends, to advance her own fortunes, etc., then we can get control.'

"Do you mean that they may not take money?"

"Oh no, a medium, just like a parson, has to live.

You don't think any the worse of a parson because in time he gets a vicarage with £400 a year. A vicar may become a bishop at £3000, but he does not cease to be a good priest necessarily by that fact. If, however, a parson, instead of trying to help his fellow-men, devotes his whole time to getting on in position and fortune, you would at once say he was not a good priest. So with mediums. It's the motive, and there is no deceiving *us* in that. Once the motive becomes low, then comes *our* chance."

"What good to ourselves do we gain by doing this sort of work?" I asked.

"He leered.' First, you gain material elements for this psychic body. Then you gain power. Power!"

Doesn't that word make you think? Isn't it splendid to be able to lead many people by the nose? Above all' — and here he leered even more villainously than before — 'we can pay off old scores, and even occasionally obtain a temporary incarnation. Now, isn't that worth striving for? Again to walk the earth knowing all you have learnt here — eh?'"

"I seized on the idea, and soon, with a band of other spirits, we congregated in a room where a woman was sitting surrounded by about a dozen men and women. Beside her stood a great spirit of light, the first I had seen, but he was sore beset by a mob of evil spirits. Again and again he hurled us back, but at length one evil spirit obtained control. Then a howl of delight rose from us all, and we rushed round her and began to form a complete ball of spirits round, above, and below her.

"What are we doing?" I asked my evil guide.

“We are insulating her from the influence of her guardian angel. He cannot penetrate this wall of evil, any more than we can penetrate the wall of good which is around the best mediums. Now watch the spirit who has got to work.’

“The medium began to speak. Turning to a middle-aged woman, she said, ‘I am your sister Sally,’ and proceeded to give several pieces of evidence.

“How does he know all these facts’ I asked.

“Easy enough. He’s hung round this medium for years, and learnt all sorts of useful information. Now watch him.’

“A man in the room spoke.

“Can you give me any *useful* information? I mean something of *practical* value?’

“I’ll ask your brother George! the spirit replied, and then, assuming that character, said, ‘On financial matters I wish to give you a useful hint, Henry. Come here, and I’ll whisper it in your ear.’ He gave him some advice on certain stocks that the man held, and the latter seemed pleased.

“You’ll make a pile of money by that,’ the spirit added.

“Is that true?’ I inquired.

“Yes, it is, though often we give false advice to ruin our dupes, but sometimes we give genuine information either so as to lead them on, or else so as to keep them engrossed in earthly matters and so prevent them learning more important spiritual truths. Now watch.’

“The medium approached a young woman.

“I know what is in your mind, my dear. Yes, accept him. He will make you a good husband. Don’t listen to the lies which are told you about him.’

“What is the object of that advice’ I asked.

“My guide replied, ‘The man who has asked her to marry him is a drunken beast, and a blackguard. He’ll drag her down, and then we shall get her.’

“Now see this spirit. He was a jovial hooligan on earth. You’ll see some fun.’

“Sure enough, a new control came and began to play all manner of tricks, some harmless, others distinctly malicious, but none quite so devilishly cunning as those of the other spirit. He moved things about and threw them across the room; he hit several persons sharp blows on the head, and hid various objects. He even stole articles out of the sitters’ pockets without their knowledge. Nearly all these things were done without any visible contact. Finally, he tipped up the table and upset half the audience. Then we departed.

“The beauty of these manifestations is’ said my guide ‘that they are the only sort of proof that some materialistic beings will accept of the spirit power. Thus many good mediums and controls have to exhibit them, and so we get our insidious messages accepted by the audience on the strength of them. Above all, they wreck the medium and give us power, and often incidentally bring discredit on these *séances* generally. We don’t like genuine, good mediums and spiritualism generally. They teach and warn too much.’

“Then we went away, but soon returned, and in my next I will show the result.

“From the above you will doubtless see why I am describing these *séances*; but there are other reasons. All that is put down here is for a reason; it’s all planned out; and if you don’t at first see the reason, why, be patient, and you will learn. — THE OFFICER.”

The officer then spoke.

He said, “I have been down to the very bottommost depth of Hell, impelled largely by that intangible thing — a strong personality. Like a burning fire it drives one on the path one has chosen, and for me there was no hope until that path had been trod.

“The personality made evil by an evil life remains evil after death, and the more probably will it go to the logical conclusion which its evil deeds naturally setup.

“You say, ‘To know all is to forgive all,’ and he who has been to the bottom of Hell may yet rise to the top, and the knowledge so acquired will be of far more value to himself and the world in general than the lesser knowledge acquired by a feebler soul who did no great evil and very little good.”

Being asked whether a soul could ever become annihilated by persistent refusal to repent, he said, “It is obvious that a man could not be punished indefinitely for what took place in a finite period. You mean therefore for faults committed after death, which is infinity? “

Being answered “Yes,” he replied, “What is the soul? “

Mr. K. replied, “A part of God.”

He answered, “Precisely. How, then, can God annihilate even a part of Himself? Sooner or later a soul will turn to God, but it may be countless ages before that happens.” He then ceased.

Chapter VI

He Falls from the Astral Plane into Hell

SECOND LETTER FROM "OFFICER" 9:50 P.M.

(SAME DATE)

"One day, if so I can call it, when we went to one of the *séances*, I suddenly recognized an old enemy of mine. This man I hated. He had helped to bring about an exposure of my methods. I had learnt to control one of these mediums, as described in my last letter.

"As soon as I saw him, a wild desire to be revenged arose in my mind. There were plenty of spirits at hand to suggest methods. One was that I should get hold of some hooligans and make them murder him; another, to wreck him financially; and so forth. But a far more ingenious method occurred after a while to me. I found that he had begun to dabble in the occult. He did not know much about it, and his motives were by no means exalted, being in the main curiosity.

"I haunted him day by day and watched his every movement. Whenever an opportunity occurred, I did him an evil turn. If he played cards, I told his opponent what cards he held, and so he lost money. I put in men's minds a vague sense of suspicion and distrust concerning his most innocent acts. But this sort of thing was not the ultimate aim of my attentions.

"At last my chance came, as I knew it would. He had been endeavoring 'to get outside his body' as he described it. He had no noble aim, and his guide's power had grown weak from various causes, and so when he at length did go out of his body — for about the third time — I came in. 'Ha! Ha!'"

I chuckled, as once more I found a body clothing me: 'This is like old times.' But it wasn't. I found that it was only by the exertion of my will power that I was able to retain control of this borrowed carcass. Anyone with a weaker personality than mine would soon have been compelled to go out again, but I was a far more powerful character than he, and I held it for as long as was necessary. Then I set to work to pay off old scores, and commenced by wrecking his home. I seemed to everyone to be the man himself who all the time was hanging on, still attached by the vital cord to the body, which he nevertheless could not re-enter. I treated his wife so badly that she soon left him in disgust, taking their child with her, and instituted divorce proceedings. I gave rein to all the lusts, such as drink, which could damage his body, and dragged his good name in the gutter by various shady practices. Yet I took care to keep clear of the law.

"But I had to work quickly and soon completed my task thus: I went to a jeweler's shop, stole a quantity of jewels, murdered the man who owned them, and managed to get caught in my enemy's body. I still held on to that body until it had been formally committed on the charge of murder, and then in the cell I left it. As I did so, I jeered at the waiting spirit who hastened to clothe itself again.

"When the case came up for trial, I was there, though invisible. The man maintained that he knew nothing of all the facts stated against him, as of course he didn't. Though he knew it as a spirit, he had not been able to register it on his physical brain. His barrister tried the plea of temporary insanity, but, as the judge said in summing up, 'Some people argue that all sin is insanity, but we cannot accept that. There is far too much method in this madness. The facts borne out by all the witnesses show that this was only the culminating and logical conclusion of those other detestable acts to which even his wife in her separation suit has borne witness.' Then came the usual penalty — death.

"Now my joy was almost complete; but gradually various things intervened to mar it. He still vowed his innocence and this though it made no difference to his ultimate fate. Further, his wife, who, in spite of his genuine faults, loved him still, and of course knew

him well, believed him when he declared that he had no recollection of all his various misdeeds; she accepted the view that he had been temporarily insane.

“This had the effect of softening his rebellious spirit, which at first seemed likely to drag him down at the moment of death and make him join us. The prison chaplain also believed him and consoled him, despite all I could do to prevent it. In short, when we gathered at the execution, expecting an angry and revengeful spirit who would be compelled to join us, and over whom I, having a stronger personality, could dominate, we found quite a band of spirits of light, who surrounded him with a guard and kept us at bay and took him away whither we knew not. These events took place in the United States.

“Suddenly I became aware of the fact that a change was taking place in me. My psychic body seemed to be slipping from me, and, strive as I would, I could not hold it.

“‘Where am I going?’ I cried to the evil guide who haunted me.

“‘To Hell,’ he replied; ‘don’t you think it’s time?’

“‘But you said that by doing these things I should keep nourishing this psychic body?’

“‘For a time, I said; and so you did. Anyway, you are leaving it now.’

“‘What is this other body in which I am clothed?’ I cried despairingly.

“‘Your spiritual body,’ he answered, ‘and in it you will really begin to suffer.’

“And as he spoke I realized how he gloated over me. How I loathed him! But it was so, and was in Hell and not yet at the bottom. That, alas! was still to come. But I have written enough tonight.

“There is a warning in almost every line of this, so do not think these revelations are unnecessary. Study them and think them over. Mr. L. will now take control to close.

“Good-bye for the present. — THE OFFICER.”

Chapter VII

In Hell. The City of Hate (Rome)

LETTER FROM “ THE OFFICER “

March 28th, 1913, 9:30.

The Officer. “When I left off last time, I had told you that I had at length sunk into Hell itself. This was different in many ways from the earth plane. I seemed to be falling through space, black, dark, and horrible. At length I reached what appeared to be firm ground, for I discovered a kind of path, and scrambling on to this made my way along it as best I could. Every now and then I slipped off into the horrible filth. All was utter darkness, and the marvel was that I got along at all. I felt drawn in a certain direction by some strange attraction, and ultimately found myself on a desolate, stony plane which appeared to be covered with ashes. Still drawn on through the darkness, I stumbled and struggled on, longing for some human society, be it never so degraded. Then gradually I began to get a sort of half sight, and by means of it was able dimly to perceive that I was drawing near to some huge mass, which in time grew into the walls and battlements of a great city. Soon I stood before it and saw that it stretched right away as far as I could perceive, though this was not far. There was a gateway, and towards it I turned my steps. No sooner had I come in front of it and noticed that it was built in the manner of a great Roman gateway than what seemed to be doors opened and I passed in: I had hardly done so, when a fiendish yell rang out, and two hideous beings, who apparently acted the part of wardens of the gate, sprang at me.

“Then I knew that all spirits I should meet here would be enemies, and I turned savagely upon them —prepared to battle for life, I was almost going to say, but of course that sounds absurd. Fight, however, I would, and even as I made up my will to do it, the wretched creatures turned and fled. Thus I learnt my first lesson about Hell. There is no law here. The strongest oppresses the weakest, and strength lies in the will and in the intellect.

“I pursued my way unmolested for a time, and found that I could now distinguish the various buildings as through a dense fog. Gradually the idea grew upon me that I recognized this city — it was ancient Rome ! Yes, but far more than that, for to it had been added all the buildings which had been built there since the days of the Caesars; and in time I learnt the truth. This was the spirit city of Rome, and many other cities, built of the buildings in which had been committed all the deeds of cruelty and hate. All the evil emanations which had been thrown off by its former inhabitants had gone to build up this Imperial City of Hell. Its better emanations had gone elsewhere, to the realms above; and this is the fate of every city or building on earth. Its evil side is dragged down to Hell, just as its pure form goes to the realms of half belief or of full belief.

“Here I found was not only Rome, but Venice and Milan, and a thousand other cities in which hate and cruelty had reigned. This vast city is not the only city in Hell. There are countless others. To each of these cities of Hate the damned are drawn, according as the natural laws of attraction act, some to one, some to another. Besides cities of hate, there are many others, such as the cities of lust: Paris and London may be found there. London, or parts of it, may be found in many of these ‘cities’ each part differing; for London at different times has had many different forms.

“Through the dirty, foul, and yet splendid streets I wended my way. Often I met men and women, many of them clad apparently in the kind of clothes they wore on earth. But these robes were foul and torn. Some of them rushed at me to attack me, but each one I was able to repel by means of my will power. Then an idea came to me. Why should I not

attack one of them, make him my slave, and compel him to tell me about this new city in which I had to dwell?

“Acting on this, I sprang at a man, who turned with a shriek and fled. But I willed that he should come to me, and slowly he crawled back, struggling all the while. When I had him, I made him grovel in anguish, just to show him I was master, then bade him rise and show me the sights of the place. Whining, he did so, and led me to various buildings.

“‘Would you like to see a gladiatorial show?’ he inquired.

“‘Yes!’ I cried.

“‘Soon we were in what seemed like the Coliseum, and I saw that the place was full. Seizing a man, I hurled him out; there was a foul-looking woman seated next, and I threw her out also. We two then sat down.

“‘The show had just begun, and I saw that opposite us was a great royal box.

“‘Yonder is the Emperor!’ whispered my slave in an awestruck voice.

“‘Which?’ I inquired.

“‘I don’t know, but he is the Emperor, and he rules this part of the city.’

“‘Are there several Emperors here?’ I inquired.

“‘Yes, many, and kings and generals too.’

“‘Don’t they quarrel?’

“‘Quarrel! Where have you come from, stranger? We all quarrel here. This is the City of Hate and Cruelty. We are constantly fighting against each other, district against district, Emperor against Emperor.’

“‘We have just conquered a district near here, and therefore the Emperor is celebrating his victory by making the prisoners fight with the gladiators. Here they come’

“‘Then began the most ghastly show I have ever witnessed; all the horrors of an ancient gladiatorial show without one redeeming feature were enacted before our eyes. There was no noble martyrdom to relieve the beastliness of the whole show. It was not merely men against men, but men against women, and even against children. Tortures of every description were inflicted, and the wretched victims shrieked and screamed. It was just as if the scene was on earth, save that no death came to release the victims. On and on it went. Now, as I write it and you read it, the effect is to produce a sense of pity and nausea. But at that time the effect was the reverse. It pandered to my worst side and roused a fierce lust of cruelty and hate; and so it did in others’

“‘This was the object of the Emperor. Now farewell.

I will write more another day. — THE OFFICER.”

Chapter VLLI

The Emperor. A Theater In Hell

TRANCE CONVERSATION WITH "THE OFFICER"
THE PRESENCE OF H. J. L.*Match 30th*

The new-comer's face was as I described it when I saw him clairvoyantly. It was a strong face, but not a pleasant one. Nevertheless, I thought it looked much less marked with evil than it had done when last I saw him. I greeted him in a friendly spirit, and he at once took up the thread of his narrative where he had dropped it in his last letter.

The Officer. "At length the show was over", and as we dispersed my slave and I took up our positions near a gateway to watch the egress of the Emperor".

Soon a wild throng appeared around the Emperor's chariot. I noticed many spirits, both male and female, quite naked. —

"I said to my slave 'This is the first time I have seen naked spirits. We always seem to clothe ourselves by instinct.' _ _ _"

"He replied, 'These are compelled to assume this shape by the Emperor to amuse his evil passions.'

The Officer. "It is not possible for them, though, to have relations one with the other, is it?"

Slave. "Surely, master, you must know by now that, having no physical bodies, we cannot enjoy any physical pleasures. We can pretend to do these things, but it is all a hollow sham, a vain pretence. Our passions burn as fiercely as ever, but we have no bodies with which to gratify them.'

"What, are there animals in Hell? 'I cried, as several great hunting-dogs dashed past us.

"He replied, 'No, these are the spirits of men and women whom the Emperor compels to assume this shape, just as the others are compelled to appear naked or as children. He is so powerful that he can compel us to assume any shape he chooses, even that of his furniture. The latter is a favorite amusement of his.'

"The procession passed amid scenes of the wildest debauchery and cruelty. A long shriek of anguish rose as it slowly passed along. Various forms of torture were being inflicted, sometimes on the members of the Imperial *cortège*, and sometimes on the spectators who lined the route. In particular I noticed that the dogs were repeatedly set to worry some of the women and men in the procession, or to drag spectators before the Emperor.

"On he rode in this chariot, the picture of cruelty and pride. His face was so lined by evil that it was almost impossible to realize what his original features had been like. I should think, however, that in his youth on earth he had been a handsome man, but evil had almost obliterated this.

"Who is he?' I inquired. 'Is he Nero?'

"My slave replied, 'No, master. I have forgotten who he was, but I do know he is not Nero. Nero is a slave to this man. Nero is a very feeble being compared with the Emperor, and though he has several times tried to raise rebellion against the Emperor, the latter has always crushed him sooner or later. Still, Nero is very cunning, and often escapes from the vigilance of those who have to guard him. Each time he is caught the Emperor inflicts the most excruciating torments upon him; indeed, torturing Nero is one of the Emperor's favorite amusements.'

"But surely you must know who the Emperor was when alive' I inquired.

"I've forgotten, if I ever knew.'

"You liar, you don't forget. Tell me at once.'

“As I could get nothing out of him, I began to imagine the most horrible torments I could devise, and by willing that he should suffer them, caused him to writhe in anguish.

“As, however, he evidently did not know the name, I at last grew tired of this amusement and bade him rise and show me something else to entertain me.

“‘I will take you to a theater’ he answered.

“‘What sort of performance do you have here?’

“‘Oh, extremely clever and exciting. They deal with all the famous cases of hate and cruelty which have occurred on earth, and if possible our managers try to get the original persons to re-enact the same scenes here as on earth.’

“‘Don’t you have anything dealing with lust or drink?’

“‘They come in as subsidiary parts of the plot; but this is the City of Hate and Cruelty, and, therefore, that is the dominant inspiration of all our plays here. In the cities of lust it is, of course, lust that dominates. Still, as the latter often produces cruelty, we see a fair number of representations of it and of other pleasant vices.’

“‘Are any fresh plays composed here?’

“‘Not many and those are but a re-shuffling of the ideas which have been enacted on earth. However, there are plenty of real dramas of cruelty being enacted on earth every day, so we are never at a loss for a new play.’

“‘Nothing original ever comes out of Hell, I suppose’ I inquired.

“‘Nothing, so far as I know, but plenty of perversions and parodies from elsewhere’

“‘We now stood before the doors of a great theater.

We had walked some distance, and here the buildings seemed fairly modern. The theater certainly was quite modern, but it looked dirty and neglected.

“The latter was, however, certainly not the case. On the contrary, people were hurrying through the doors in considerable numbers. We went with the crowd, and, once through the door, our ears were assailed by a fearful noise, due to the fact that almost everyone was quarrelling with his next-door neighbor, either alleging that he had pushed him or that he had tried to rob him, or for some other pretended reason. At the booking-office a constant wrangle seemed to be in process between the booking-clerk and each person who came demanding a seat.

“Annoyed by the continual row, I called up all my will power and, despite the angry protests of the crowd, forced my way through to the booking-office, dragging my slave with me. The latter, safe under my protection, did his best to hurt several of those we passed, and succeeded in catching a woman by the hair and throwing her on the ground, where the crowd ruthlessly trampled her underfoot.

“We made for the stalls, and on entering the theater proper I perceived that nearly half the audience was engaged in quarrelling and fighting. Close by us in the stalls a man and woman were fighting. They had evidently been people of good social position on earth, and their clothes, though dirty and torn, had at one time been expensive and fashionable. Yet these two fought like any people from the slums might have done, and as we watched, the man, who was evidently the stronger-willed, dashed the woman to the ground between the seats. He deliberately stamped upon her and then sat down on his seat and used her body as a footstool, pounding her every now and then, if she attempted to rise.

“Seeing us, he signaled us to pass him, adding, ‘Don’t mind her; just walk over her. I like to make a carpet of her; it does her good.’ To emphasize this he gave her a savage kick in the jaw.

“We walked across her to some seats beyond him which were vacant. It was a most extraordinary sensation, for her body, felt like real flesh and blood, and she squirmed and shrieked as if alive. Of course, she really did feel sufferings similar to those she would have felt on earth under the circumstances, but though our actions here show forth our wills, it is our wills which inflict the pain.

“Seated next to us were two women. Handsome they must have been at one time but they were rendered hideous by the expression of the most fiendish cruelty which overspread their faces. Their eyes were steel-blue grey, and the hair golden in hue. I surveyed them carefully for a minute or two, and then the one nearest to me (who said her name was

Rose) spoke.

“Well, I seem to fascinate you. What do you think of me?”

“I answered, ‘I think you were handsome once, but your cruelty has spoilt your looks. Still, one can’t be too particular in Hell. You’ll do, and your friend also. I shall take you both.’

“Well, we’ve got to be consulted first,’ she replied, ‘and I don’t intend to go with you.’

“I seized her hands at once. ‘Down on your knees and place your neck beneath my heel,’ I hissed.

“For a brief moment she tried to resist, then fell groaning and sobbing at my feet, and did as I bade her.

“Now sit back in your seat and remember you are my slave’ I said; and then, addressing the other, continued, ‘What’s your name?’

“Violet.’

“Indeed, a pretty name like your companion’s, especially for such a cruel devil as you are. However, I’m more savage still, so you had better obey me at once. Down on your knees and do as Rose did.’

“She did so without a murmur.

“After a little desultory conversation the curtain rose and the noise of quarrelling gradually subsided as the plot unfolded itself.

“I do not propose to give you that plot. It suffices to say that though lust and vice of every description were there enacted in full detail before our eyes, it passed to its culminating point in the torture chamber of the Inquisition.

“My male slave, who had been sitting quietly up to now, here whispered, ‘We had better fly now master. At the end of this scene the Inquisitors invariably raid the audience and carry some of them on to the stage to torture them.’

“Even as he ceased, the Grand Inquisitor stepped forward, and, pointing at him, cried, ‘Come here, wretched man;’ and the miserable creature, with livid terror written on his features, rose, and, as if drawn against his will, began to make his way out of his seat and towards the stage.

“I at once resented this, for he was my slave, and, once taken from me, I might not be able to recover him.

“It was an open assault on my domination, and I could not permit it. I rose at once.

“Let that man alone; he is mine. If you want to torture someone fresh, torture yourself.’

“A low shriek of excitement passed round the theater as the audience scented a fierce battle.

“The Chief Inquisitor glared at me.

“You are evidently a stranger here, or you would not dare to thus openly defy me. Well, it’s time you learnt your first lesson. Come up on to this stage and do battle with me.’

“No, come down here’ I answered; and then began a fierce battle between our wills. I have always had an iron will, and it stood me in good stead that day. The magnetic attraction sent out from the stage was tremendous, but I successfully resisted and willed that he should come to me. For a long time we thus struggled, when suddenly a yell broke from the audience. My enemy had been compelled to move a step forward. Next instant, however, he had sprung back again, and I felt myself jerked forward sharply. The yell

from the audience had made my mind wander for a moment; but at once I redoubled my efforts, and ere long again he stepped towards me. This time, however, there was no return; again another step, and then he began to move slowly towards the edge of the platform. At the edge he hesitated and struggled desperately, then with a wild shriek pitched forward into the orchestra, the members of which scattered in all directions. A wild yell of delight arose from all who saw it,

“Then he rose and crawled slowly towards me, climbing over the stalls; and the audience got out of his way, for they still feared him.

“At length he knelt on the stall in front of me.

Then I spoke: “Go back to the stage, and I will follow.’

“I drove him before me, now completely beaten, vaulted lightly on to the stage, and there made his assistant inquisitors inflict all their most devilish torments upon him. The applause was deafening, and when we had seen enough and I turned to get down from the stage, a great shout arose.

“You shall be our Emperor; raise the standard of revolt against the tyrant.’

“But it did not suit me to enter at once on conflict with that powerful will. I needed to know more about this city before I attempted anything so risky.

At the same time I knew that the conflict was bound to come, and knew also that it would be impossible to hide for long what had happened at the theater.

Once the Emperor knew what had happened, he would scent danger and take measures accordingly.

“I therefore replied, ‘Silence, I have no wish to rule here. So long as I am not attacked by him, I shall remain loyal to the Emperor.’

“At these words a titter ran round the building, and several murmured, ‘He’s afraid.’

“‘Silence, you dogs’ I shouted. ‘If you breathe one word of what has happened here, I will inflict the most horrible tortures on you that it is possible to imagine.’

“‘The Emperor will defend us from you,’ yelled a man in the stalls.

“In an instant I had him on the stage and bade the inquisitors flay him alive. If I use such material language, it is because by no other means can I convey what was done. It looked like flaying to the audience, and felt like it to the man, but of course there was no physical skin to flay. Nevertheless, the result was the same.

“Then I dismissed the spectators, and, calling to me the two women and my slave, myself left the building.

“‘I suppose you can find me a house?’ I inquired of the man.

“‘Yes, master. What of this one? It belongs to a well-known murderer, an Italian of the Renaissance. I think you would find it more convenient than one of the ancient Roman villas.’

“‘This will do,’ I answered.

“We hammered at the door and a man-servant opened it and struck at me. In a moment I had hurled him on the floor.

“‘Stamp on his face’ I cried to my women, and Rose did so with the greatest delight. I rushed up a flight of marble stairs, all cracked and filthy, and into a large salon. Here the master of the house sat surrounded by women. I sprang at him and hurled him out of the window, and appropriated for my own use the house and all it contained, including women and servants.

“Now, I think that is sufficient for this time.”

He rose, but I (J. W.) said, “Please stop a moment. I want to ask you one or two questions.”

H. J. L. thereupon remarked, “You had better be quick, for you have been here long enough.”

I nodded, and asked, “Can you give me any details about the gladiators which are likely to be unknown to the historians of the present day? “

Officer. “I don’t exactly know how much they know, but I expect they are fairly well up in the subject; there is, I believe, a fair amount of evidence about. Perhaps, however, you don’t know this fact: the gladiators advanced on one side in a sort of triangle and on the other in a solid phalanx. As soon as the triangle or point of the wedge struck the phalanx, the latter divided like a pair of scissors and then closed on the sides of the wedge. Do you understand this?”

“Quite,” I (J. W.) replied. “And which is the correct rendering of ‘thumbs reversed?’ Is it up or down to save the man?”

He smiled grimly. “I am afraid I cannot answer that query. No question of saving any gladiator ever arose. Firstly, of course, they can’t die, and, secondly, no one in the city of hate ever desired to save any man from suffering. Half the interest in these shows lay in the fact that the victor tortured his conquered foe.”

“Now,” interposed H. J. L., “you must return.”

Chapter IX

A Visit to the Emperor

TRANCE CONVERSATION, APRIL 6th

The Officer's Narrative Continued.

"I do not think it necessary to give you in detail all that befell me in Hell. I set to work to gather round me a band of adherents. From them I demanded and obtained absolute obedience, but I allowed them to patrol the streets in bands, and attack and ill-treat all and sundry who fell into their hands. Large numbers of former brigands and pirates, together with soldiers of fortune belonging to every age and country, hastened to join my bands. At length the inevitable happened, I received a summons to appear before the Emperor.

"I went, accompanied by a number of my retainers. As soon as we entered the presence chamber, a magnificent but dirty hall, the Emperor rose from his throne. This was raised up on a dais approached by three semicircular steps. He smiled at me in a manner which was meant to be engaging, but of course I could see the hatred and suspicion which was in his heart.

"That is one of the strangest things in that strange land. We still endeavor to deceive each other, and even think we can, although we know that others cannot really deceive us. We see the thoughts of others, and though our reason tells us that similarly others can see ours, yet some instinct still drives us on to attempt to deceive all with whom we come in contact.

"The Emperor spoke 'Friend, you have already achieved much, seeing how short a time you have been in Hell.'

"I bowed. 'Your Majesty has spoken truly, and I hope to achieve even more.'

"'Even my throne' he murmured. 'But I assure you, you will not find it an easy seat. Still, that time has not arrived, and will not. Come, let us be friends, you and I. We will be like David and Jonathan, and between us we will extend the dominions over which I now rule. If needs be, like Anthony and Octavius, we can later fight over the spoils as to who shall own them. For the present, like those wise generals, let us unite our forces and compel the neighboring princes to acknowledge our dominion.

"'Behold, I will make you my general, and you shall begin your career by attacking an upstart fellow called Danton who has terrorized an area near the confines of this city. It formerly belonged to another prince, but this fellow descended into Hell with a large following and carved out this petty kingdom for himself. It is known as Paris of the Revolution.'

"I saw quite plainly what was his real object. He feared to openly cross swords with me, yet felt that my constant presence near him, and yet independent of him, was a danger.

"He foresaw that by this means he would at any rate get me away from the heart of his empire for a time; and he, further, hoped that one of three things would result: either that I should be defeated and made a prisoner by Danton, or that the struggle would result in a draw, whereupon he could intervene and crush us both. Failing either of these, he still considered the third alternative advantageous. This was that I should crush Danton and seize his precarious throne. In that case he believed that I should be fully engaged in retaining control over my new subjects, and so be unable to hurt him. He, on his part, would merely have exchanged one enemy for another, and might even find me so weakened by the conflict that he could attack and crush me easily.

"But though I saw his real intentions, yet it suited me to agree. I, too, feared open struggle with the Emperor. I knew only too well what failure would mean. On the other

hand, I felt confident that I should be able to overthrow Danton, and, having added his adherents to mine, return and attack the Emperor with a far greater likelihood of success.

“I accept with alacrity your Majesty’s gracious offer,’ I cried.

“Thereupon the Emperor ordered a great feast to be prepared, and bade all the court attend.

“At this feast I was the honored guest.

“Wonderful dishes containing all manner of dainties were laid before us, but when we strove to eat them, feeling ravenously hungry and thirsty, there was nothing. The feast of Tantalus was no figment of the poet’s brain, but a grim reality.

“Yet though it was a hollow, sham, the wretched guests were compelled to pretend to enjoy the feast because the Emperor demanded it. He, however, scorning to keep up the pretence which he compelled others to maintain, sat there with a sardonic smile upon his features. I, too, refused to play the game, and watched with grim amusement the efforts of the others to appear gay.

“Everything was but a hollow pretence. There was a large orchestra playing during the feast, but, despite their efforts, they were quite unable to produce any real harmony. It was simply a horrible discord, made all the worse by the fact that the audience were compelled to pretend they enjoyed it.

“After the feast the tables were removed, and gladiators fought before the Emperor. After awhile, female gladiators took their places, and these fought with a ferocity and devilish cruelty which exceeded even that of the men.

“I will not give in detail all the amusements which graced the Emperor’s feast: it will serve no useful purpose. Enough to say that they included every imaginable form of cruelty and lust, and that many of them were perpetrated upon the guests themselves.

Chapter X

The Attack on Danton

“Soon after we had left the feast, I sent out some of my retainers to issue a proclamation calling for volunteers. This brought in a considerable number, and, having mustered these, I commenced a route march through the city towards the district over which Danton was supreme.

“As we marched, thousands flocked to our standards, and at length, reaching an open space which looked like a piece of waste ground, such as one used to see in and near great cities, I halted them and began to divide them into squadrons and companies. Such a motley crowd, men of all ages and dimes, were gathered there: ancient Roman gladiators, Crusaders and robber barons of the Middle Ages, Chinese pirates, English buccaneers, soldiers of fortune from every corner of the earth, Turks, Bulgars — there they stood and yelled in wild excitement, shouting to be led against the enemy. At times they varied this by fighting among themselves.

“Gradually I sorted them into divisions, and placed these under officers. Thus I grouped the mediaeval knights into two huge masses and divided each mass into regiments and companies. Similarly, I organized the gladiators, the buccaneers, and, indeed, all these various constituents, and produced in the end a very serviceable army. Its great fault was an almost utter lack of discipline, but this was replaced by the dominating will of the officers I had appointed. Of course, these were constantly conspiring against me, and I had to be always prepared to crush a mutiny first in one part of the army and then in the other.

“Nevertheless, my will being, as you know, a remarkably strong one, I was able to dominate and lead this large force numbering over a quarter of a million.

“We proceeded on our way, the troops acting, as they went, in the most approved style of the worst kind of soldiery — that is, they broke into the houses as they passed, plundering and ill-treating the inhabitants.

“One peculiar fact which I noticed was that they seemed unable to retain possession of what they had stolen. Once they had got it, it ceased to interest them and was thrown aside almost directly.

“When we reached the confines of the district held by Danton, I sent forward a scouting party, who soon returned, dragging several men with them.

“These wore the costume in vogue at the time of the Revolution, and from them I gathered a great deal of information. Of course, they tried to deceive me, but as I could see their thoughts, it failed, as it always does here in the spirit world.

“These people are those who lived during the Revolution in France. Some of them were the supporters of Danton, others were his opponents.

Their chief amusement is the guillotine, but since the object of that was to produce a quick and comparatively painless death, they have slightly altered the procedure of an execution.

“Of course, there is no death in Hell, and their object is to inflict as much pain as possible. They therefore place the victim on a board and slide that board under the guillotine, the man’s feet, instead of his head, being in front and towards the crowd. The blade rises and falls a dozen times or more and cuts the victim in slices. The man suffers pain similar to that which he would have felt on earth, but the severed parts keep re-uniting. He thus suffers over and over again all the agonies of death, but without the helping hand of that great benefactor who, on earth puts some limit to the pain man can endure.

“How seldom is it that men realize how much more death is a friend than an enemy! How often have I longed for death again to come since that day on which he really came!

“The people in this district also re-enact, so far as they can, the chief episodes in the worst period of the Revolution. In particular, they hold blasphemous parodies of religious services, as they did then, and continually repeat the famous Festival of Reason, bowing down in mock solemnity before the original prostitute who on earth received their plaudits.

“Having obtained this and more information, I drew up my plan of campaign and then advanced into the enemy’s country. As we did so, we endeavored to do as much damage as possible to the houses and people we met. While we tortured and made slaves of the latter, we endeavored to utterly destroy the former. We were able to do this so long as we were near the ‘forms’ of the buildings, but as soon as we moved on to some other area and ceased to be interested, the buildings re-appeared.

“Like ourselves, they are ‘forms’ and so indestructible; they merely seem to disappear, because our wills are stronger than those of the owners, for the time being, but as soon as the stronger person’s will alters, or as soon as it ceases to think about them, they resume their original shape.

It is similar to the fact that the Emperor can compel people to assume the forms of animals. In like manner we compelled these forms to vanish, but as soon as the will that had made them vanish was withdrawn, they resumed their normal shape.

“We thus advanced rapidly into the enemy’s country, and ere long saw the enemy’s forces mustered along a ridge. I should explain that there was some open country between the city in which the Emperor reigned and Paris of the Revolution. It was not really extensive, but was sufficient to act as a barrier between the two spheres of influence. It was created and retained by the determined will of Danton, or otherwise it would have soon been covered with houses.

It is utterly impossible to give you even approximate measurements, as space in your sense does not exist. However, it was large enough to enable two great armies to carry out all the complicated evolutions needed in a battle. The ground itself was the most dreary waste it is possible to imagine.

It was black and burnt up, and, as it were, covered with ashes.

“There were two ranges of hills, and Danton had taken up his position on the further, while we occupied the ridge nearest to the Emperor’s city. Overhead, as it always is in Hell, the air was black and the atmosphere dense as with a fog. We were, however, by now able to perceive each other in spite of the fact that there was no light.

“I grouped my heavy guns in three main divisions.”

J. W. “Guns! Do you mean to say you have artillery in Hell? “

The Officer. “Certainly. Where do you suppose the ‘forms’ of all the weapons of destruction which men are for ever inventing go, if not to Hell? There is no place for them in the realm of Half-belief, and they must go somewhere. Well, they come to Hell.

Now, the really interesting feature about the matter lies in this. Men who on earth have never used rifles or, indeed, any modern weapons, are almost entirely unable to use them. These weapons are ‘forms’ and the pain which they inflict in Hell is mental. It appears very similar to physical pain, for that is the easiest way for us to appreciate it.

“A man who on earth knew nothing of the effects of a rifle wound would here find it next to impossible to imagine it. He could certainly not impose that kind of pain on another, and he would not be easily susceptible to it as imagined by another. A man who on earth has heard how a bullet hurts will be able to impose that type of suffering on another, or realize it when another tries to impose it on him. But the man who can both inflict and suffer most keenly such pain is the man who has on earth actually undergone that particular kind of torment.

“Hence it comes about that often the most fiendish torturers here are those who were tortured on earth. If they die un-forgiving, they are enabled by the very pains they have suffered to retaliate on their old oppressors to a most appalling degree.

“Is this matter quite plain?”

J. W. “Yes, I think so. A parallel case on earth is to be found in hypnotism. I gather that a hypnotist can make his patient suffer sensations and pains according as he wills it. He can make him taste a piece of lemon placed not in his own but in the hypnotist’s mouth. So, too, he can impose pain, especially pain associated with the nerves, and, contrariwise, can take away the pain which the patient is really feeling.”

The Officer. “Precisely, it is of course the same power, but it can only be used on the earth plane to a limited extent, because matter interferes. Still, by careful study and practice much more might be done on those lines than is. I should add, this power can be used both to help and to harm others. Many of the ceremonies of black magic are based on this principle. Thus, the wax doll with pins driven into the spot where the lungs should be was merely utilized as a means by which the magician could concentrate his mind on that of his enemy, and then cause him to suffer the same pain as he had pretended to inflict on the wax doll.

“It was, of course, easier to cause the pain by producing disturbances in the mental, or, at any rate, the nervous system. Still, there have been a few men of transcendent will power who were able to affect matter direct, for at its highest mind is, of course, more powerful than matter. Such cases are rare on the earth plane, but become more general on this plane.

“You will thus realize that each body of troops employed those weapons which were familiar to it, and in like manner, for the most part, those who knew nothing of shot and shell were unhurt by them. The latter rule was not so absolute as the former, for a few men of exceptional will power were able to inflict this type of pain of which they knew upon some of the weaker-willed among those who did not. They were, however, comparatively few.

“Now, though we had cannon we had no horses, for horses are animals with each a separate soul, and not forms only, like inanimate objects.

“That difficulty was partly surmounted by my compelling a large number of spirits to assume the form of horses, some to draw the cannon, others to act as mounts for the cavalry. I was here copying the Emperor’s methods, and found it a most useful move, as it did not occur to Danton. I believe, moreover, his will power was not sufficient to enforce such a command to any considerable extent. There are few things the spirits in Hell hate more than being obliged to lose, even temporarily, their original ‘form.’ To their materialistic minds it seems as if they are losing their identity.”

Chapter XI

A Battle in Hell

“Then the battle began in real earnest. Compared to it, the fighting in the arena had been the innocent make-believe of children. Nearly all these men had been used to fighting all their lives. The battle, to a casual observer, would have appeared much like a battle on earth, save for the curious blend of all kinds of weapons and costumes. The amour-clad knights charged again and again, and were met by solid phalanxes of Republicans armed for the most part with scythes.

“Danton was quite wily enough to know that against men who knew nothing of shot and shell these modern methods of destruction would be comparatively harmless. His scythe-armed rabble, on the other hand, would have been useless against our rifles, for most of them did know something of the pain which a bullet can inflict. Many, indeed, had been shot at various times, though the majority had fallen before the guillotine. Their scythes, on the other hand, were just the sort of weapon with which to meet horsemen.

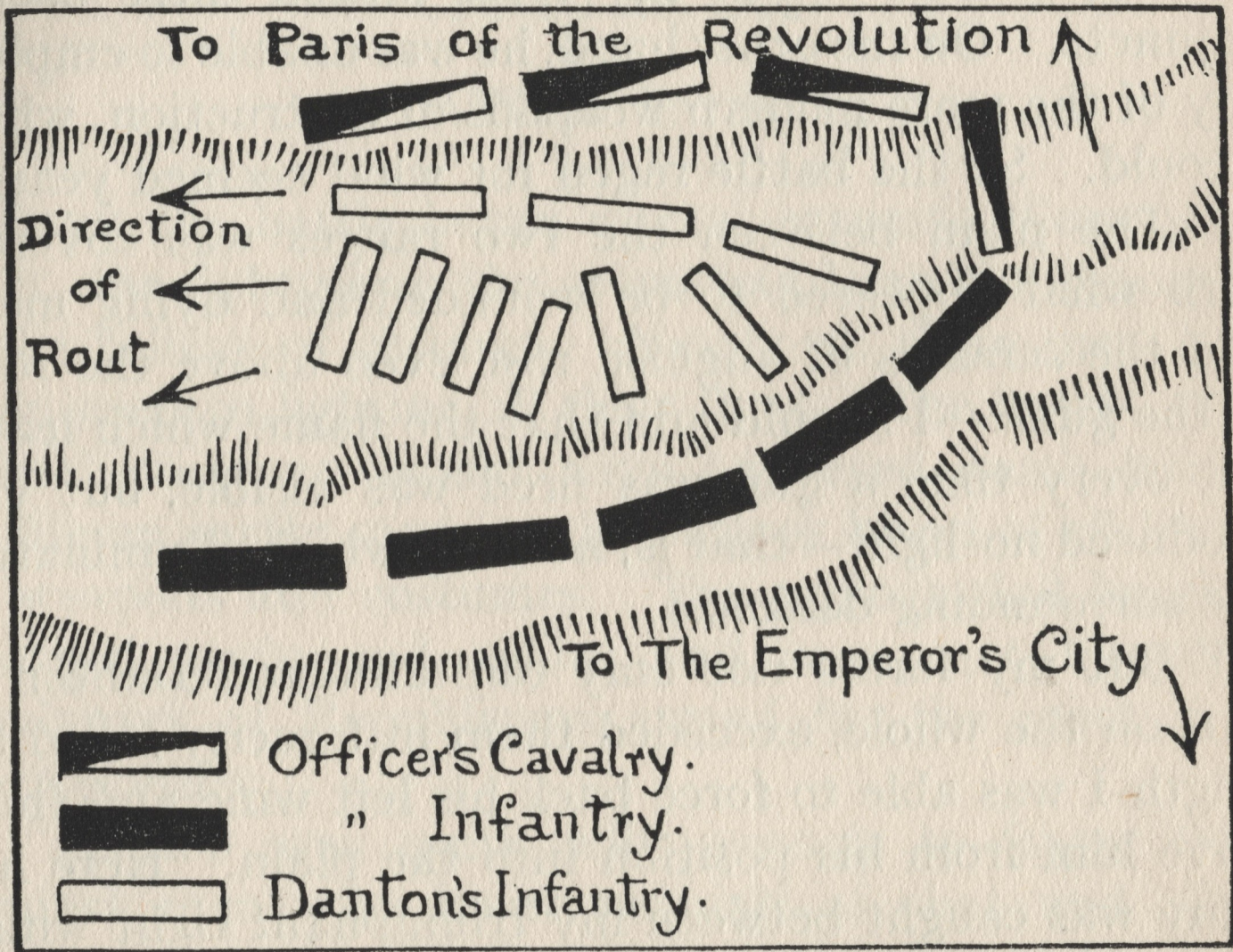
“The Roman gladiators rushed forward in a solid phalanx to meet a regiment who charged up the hill with bayonets fixed. The enemy’s artillery answered our own, but, being almost exclusively of the date of the Revolution, was not as effective as some of our guns. In this, indeed, was alike the strength and the weakness of Danton’s army. It was much more coherent, and was kept together not merely by his dominating will, but by a sympathy of interests and history, and of course my force lacked these useful adjuncts. On the other hand, he was unable to employ any of the more modern weapons of destruction, while I could. So the battle raged for what seemed years.

“The plain between the two ranges was covered with what appeared to be wounded and dying men, and the screams of anguish rose even above the roar of the guns. I should add that the flame which leapt out every time a gun was fired was visible, but yet produced no light — that is, nothing which illuminated the surrounding darkness.

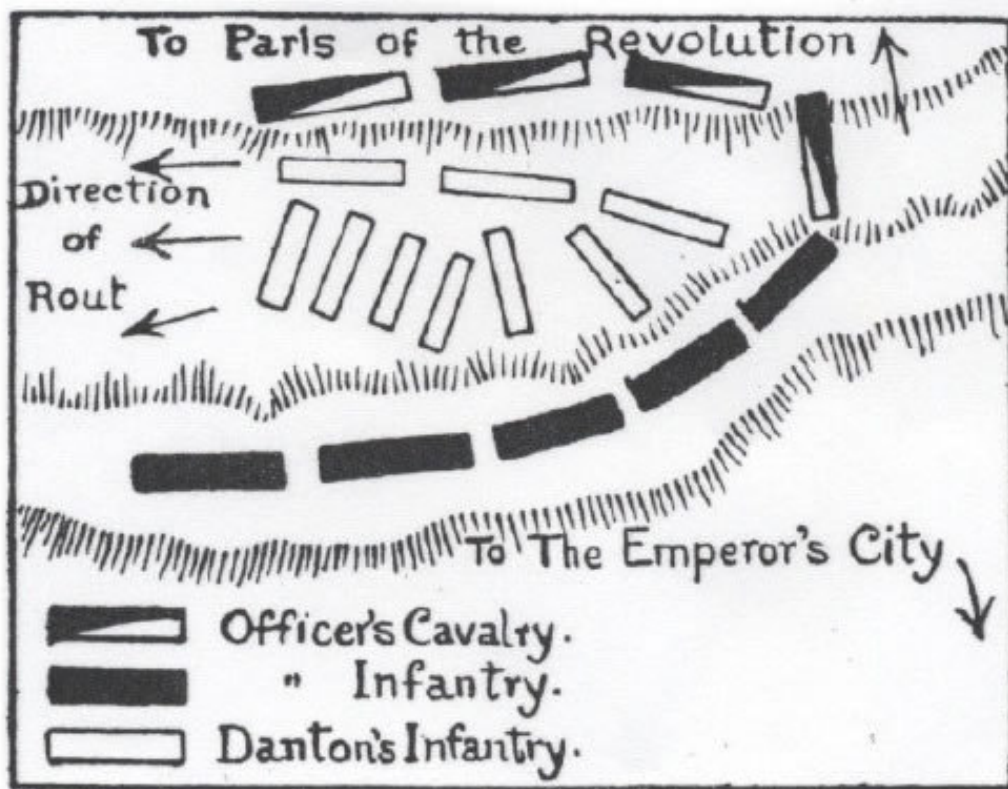
“But my forces not only outnumbered Danton’s, but, on the whole, exceeded them in ferocity; and at length I was able to force back his left wing and then drive him from his position into the plain. Here his army was caught between my triumphant right wing, now occupying their former position on the ridge, and the remainder of my army, which still held the range nearest the emperor’s city.

“Here they were completely shattered, and such as could attempted escape down the valley to our left, the other three sides being closed. This plan shows you the final position.”

He sketched out roughly, as it were with fire, the following plan.



Plan of the Battle.



Plan of the Battle.

“The number of our prisoners was enormous, for very few succeeded in escaping to our left.

“My first act was to compel a large number of them to assume the shape of horses, and so release my own men. I did this not out of consideration for my own men, but because I thus was enabled to make it to the interest of my men to concentrate their will on keeping them prisoners.

“We then hurled ourselves upon the town and stormed it. I should have told you that quite a considerable proportion of Danton’s army consisted of women, and these fought with even greater ferocity than the men. Consequently, when they fell into the hands of my victorious troops, the tortures they inflicted on these women beggar description.

“We, of course, sacked Paris of the Revolution as completely and thoroughly as it was possible for the most savage soldiery to do. We spared the inhabitants no suffering which could be devised. Yet, strange to say, whereas on earth there is some strange satisfaction to savage men in a sack, here there was none. It was all a hollow sham. The goods we plundered were useless to us; the wine we tried to drink made no impression on our ghostly gullets; the whole thing was a fraud. There was not even the satisfaction one gets in a dream, when one appears to taste the food one eats, and so forth. Even in our dreams we are still in touch with our physical bodies, and so can supply the full and proper interpretation.

“In Hell, though we can still suffer pain, yet we cannot enjoy pleasure. That is the first great law in Hell, if I could use the word law in a place which is essentially the negation of all law.

“I then set to work to establish myself on my new throne. I was surprised to find, however, that I had lost a considerable number of Danton’s former subjects. I did not know it at the time, but I learnt afterwards that the overthrow of Danton had enabled some who had been growing weary of the sort of life they led to hope faintly for something

better, and this once done, help was vouchsafed them to escape and begin the first steps towards progress.

“Thus out of the appalling nightmare of that battle arose the possibility of progress for a few. Such is often the case in Hell, showing how wonderfully out of evil God is able even there to bring forth good.

“Now I think you have heard enough, and this will form a convenient place at which to close my narrative for the time being.”

H. J. L. then spoke. “Yes, I think, Jack, it is time you were returning.”

Then I sank into unconsciousness. — J. W.

Chapter XII

A Second Visit to the Emperor

H. J. L. had hardly ceased greeting me when the officer entered the room. He began almost at once:

“Having established myself in my kingdom, I soon began to realize the terrors of kingship. Never for a single moment could I feel at peace. Rest there was none. Ever I had to be on the watch to suppress some revolt or defeat some ingenious plot.

“I felt like a hunted animal at bay, surrounded by a lot of snapping curs who were only watching for their chance when I was off my guard. Every diabolical cruelty I could devise I employed to terrorize my enemies, but it was of no avail. I could not kill them, and the only effect of my tortures was that they hated me the more.

“After a while I received a message from the Emperor congratulating me on my success, and inviting me to visit him. To refuse would have been to acknowledge that I was afraid of the Emperor; at the same time, my absence from the kingdom would be the signal, I knew, for a revolt. However, I decided to risk the latter danger and go and laugh in the Emperor’s face. So I set out with a considerable guard.

“I was received with much pomp and splendor, or at least so it appeared. Really, of course, the whole show was a hollow fraud. The bands which played could only produce a discordant din; the tapestries which adorned the streets were dirty and tattered; the flowers which were strewed in my path were withered, and stank of rotteness; the pretty maids who preceded our procession were rendered hideous by the lines with which cruelty and lust had marked their faces.

“After meeting the Emperor’s procession, we went together to witness a gladiatorial show. This finished, we proceeded to the palace, and there a great feast took place. It was the same empty show as all the rest. There was nothing real except what was vile,

“And how do you like the cares of kingship?” inquired the Emperor. “Uneasy lies the head, eh?”

“I laughed. ‘It’s better than being under your Majesty, anyway.’

“Very likely. Still, I fancy you must get a little bit tired of being ever on the watch. I know I do. When I want a change, I take a spell on earth again. It’s wonderfully restful and refreshing after the strenuous life one has to lead here.’

“For once my curiosity was greater than my wisdom, and I cried, ‘But how do you manage to return to earth? I thought once we had lost our astral bodies —.’

“‘You are still a young man’ he replied, ‘and have much to learn; but I am surprised you do not know that simple fact.’ He looked at me thoughtfully, and then continued: ‘If a spirit in Hell makes an alliance with a mortal on earth, it is possible for the former to acquire, or at any rate borrow, for a short time, a temporary astral body. At times it is even possible for such a spirit to obtain for a short time a material body.

“‘Such men used to be known as wizards, and the women as witches, and the spirits they invoked were always regarded as devils. Of course, many of them were elementals, and a few may have been devils proper, but most of them were just human spirits, and not always bad ones either.

“‘Of course it’s a risky business playing about with sorcerers. They always try to reduce the spirit in partnership with them to the position of their abject slave. Their wills, of course, are strong, and if the spirit be some rather weak, vicious fool, they can reduce him to a position of absolute subservience, at any rate for a time.’

“‘But how can they enforce their commands?’ I cried.

“‘By the same methods by which you and I enforce ours, by the mere force of their wills. Just as we can inflict any kind of pain we choose on our subjects, so can these wizards on their spirit slaves. But, of course, with iron wills such as we have, the end

always is that we can dominate the wizard and make him our slave. Then, indeed, for a short time we can have a glorious time.'

"He rose 'Let us now go and witness the play which is to be performed in the private theater and he referred no more to the subject of magic. But what had been said made a profound impression upon my mind. I was so struck with the idea that I failed to see the danger lurking in it. I have no doubt that the Emperor raised the subject with the object of luring me into this danger, but I did not perceive it.

"I have often wondered how it was that I did not perceive it. It may have been that the Emperor really had a stronger will than I, and so was able by a very strong exercise of that will to prevent me seeing what was passing in his innermost mind. It may have been, however, that I was so struck with the idea that I never strove to get to the bottom of it and find out what his real object was.

"Of course I did not imagine for one moment that he made the suggestion with any other object than that of doing me harm. I thought he foresaw that if I left my dominion to go playing tricks on the earth I should at once be deposed.

"This, indeed, I knew quite well would be the case, but I also felt certain I should find no difficulty in throwing out the usurper when I returned. In reality he knew this too; but he also knew that after a time the effect of this new sin would be to render it impossible for me to return even to that division of Hell. I should, in fact, be compelled to fall still lower. Thus he hoped to be rid of me.

"I did not know this and, being anxious to try the new experience for several reasons, determined to do so. My reasons were, firstly, that I wanted some rest, or at any rate change, from ever standing on guard in Hell; secondly, it would be a new experience, and therefore of interest in itself; thirdly, the possibility of seeing the earth again filled me with a new sensation, which I can only compare with what a boy feels when he is homesick.

"I returned soon after to Paris of the Revolution, and of course found civil war in progress. One section had liberated Danton and placed him on the throne. I soon dealt with the matter, and Danton and the other ringleaders returned to the torture chambers."

Chapter XIII

“The Officer” and the Wizard

“Then I set myself to find a man who, on earth, had been a sorcerer. I discovered a good many; more than I expected, but most of them had only played at the game. The reason, of course, was that those who had really obtained any considerable knowledge in the subject had, on death, fallen even lower in Hell than we were.

“I found one man, however, who had been associated with a far abler man who had fallen lower. The man in my dominion told me all he had learnt from the other, though he had not dared to practice it, and I soon discovered how to get in touch with a magician on earth.

“This ‘student of the occult’ was a German, and lived in Prague, or, rather, on the threshold of that city. He knew a lot about magic, and had already discovered how to ‘raise’ and control the spirits of the dead — in plain English; weak-willed spirits of the astral plane. He could also do something with the elementals. He was now working to raise ‘a real devil from Hell’ and it was I that answered his invocation. I had set the old magician who was in Hell to work before me, in spite of his prayers, for he was afraid. As his incantations rose, they came in contact with those from the man on earth. This stream of incantation soon made itself plain to me, and I was thus informed that there was one on earth who wanted such as I.

“Voluntarily I stepped into the stream of invocation, and joined my will to theirs. At once I seemed to be drawn through space, and found myself before him.

“The student of the occult,’ as he called himself, was standing in the middle of his magic circle, within which were two triangles forming a six-pointed star. All around it were pentagons and a whole host of other mystic signs. A brazier burnt in the room, and from it rose a heavy perfume which filled the room with smoke.

“The room itself was perfectly dark, and appeared to be a cellar with walls of stone, and floor of the same material. There were some cases with mummies along one side of the wall, and a few articles of furniture. But the larger part of the room was completely bare.

“Now, though I could see him, he as yet could not see me, and continued his incantations. I began to will that he should see me; and then I perceived lying outside the circle, and at some little distance from it, a woman. She was not dead, but in a trance, and I knew at once why she was there. She was mediumistic, and from her I could build up for the time being a temporary habitation of some sort.

“I moved towards her, and began to draw from her the more etherealized elements, at the same time exerting my powerful will to the intent that he should see me. Soon he did so. I doubt if, as yet, an ordinary mortal would have been aide to, but he was possessed of clairvoyance, though not in the highest degree.

“As I became visible to him, I perceived that I gave out a kind of lurid red light. It was not much like the brilliant red fire of the opera when Mephistopheles appears, but it is evidently from some such phenomena as I was now producing that the tradition had grown up. I am not quite sure of the reason, whether it was due to the predominance of hatred in my aura, or simply because the wizard expected me to come in that form, but at any rate, if he expected horns and a cloven hoof he did not get them. I could see that he was quaking with fear, but he pulled himself together and cried, ‘Come hither, slave, I command.’

“‘Slave be damned,’ I replied. ‘I’m no one’s slave, if you want my services you’ve got to pay for them.’

“This seemed to disconcert him a little. You see, it did not follow along the traditional lines of evoking evil spirits according to the ancient legends. As a matter of fact, stories

of these sort of things emanated almost solely from the mouth of the magician and were doubtless colored accordingly.

“After a few moments he said, ‘What is it that you demand?’

“Now the correct answer, I suppose, should have been ‘Your immortal soul,’ but I didn’t care a two-penny cuss about his soul. So it was my turn to hesitate. At last I replied, ‘What have you to offer me’

“At once came the answer, ‘My soul.’

“‘That’s no use to me, and in any case it’s damned already. No, I want something which will benefit me personally.’

“‘Well, what if I give you a mortal body so that you walk this earth in the semblance of a man?’

“‘Can you do this, for I have not an astral body?’ I inquired.

“‘Nevertheless I can manufacture one for you and so enable you to obtain control of a physical one.’

“And he spoke the truth, for by his knowledge of the occult he was able to draw round him a host of empty astral shells and of the lighter elementals. Seizing on one of the latter, I molded it into a semblance of my former self and found I had an astral body. Then, going over to the medium, I with his assistance built up a real material body.

“I gave a shout of delight. After all that nightmare of horror I was back on earth again. But even as I did so, I felt that it was but a temporary release.

“‘Can I go outside?’ I inquired.

“‘I doubt it,’ he replied. ‘still, you can try.’

“I climbed up the stone stairs and came out into the broad daylight. The effect was magical as well as unpleasant. I seemed to dissolve — or at least my physical covering did.

“I hurried down into the cellar, and we had to start the materializing again.

“‘Well,’ I said, ‘a body which melts in the sun is not much good. You’ll have to do something better than that.’

“‘You can always’ he whispered, ‘take control of someone, and with care this materialized kind of body will enable you to get about in the dark.’

“In return for this, I agreed to help the magician in his plans.”

Chapter XIV

The Evil that they Wrought

“Gold, power, and revenge were the chief things he desired. At the same time he did not despise lesser advantages. He had about a dozen women over whom he had acquired absolute control, and who were all mediumistic. These he used to help him materialize spirits and produce other phenomena.

“I helped him to acquire much gold. It was a simple process. I could pass through matter in my astral form and dematerialize some of the gold, carry it out into a place of safety, and there it would take up again the material elements, which for a time had been scattered. This process needed expenditure of considerable will power, and an easier method was for me to take control of some denizens of the house in which the gold lay when asleep or in a trance. These would collect as much as they could carry and convey it to some place arranged by the magician and myself. Then they would return, and would have no recollection of what had happened next morning when they awoke.

“Once or twice they were followed and arrested, but though they were punished for theft, no suspicion fell on ‘the student of the occult.’ Of course, when arrested, I cleared out and left the unfortunate spirit to re-enter his body and shoulder the responsibility.

“I was just as useful to my master in carrying out his schemes of revenge, for he had many enemies. He had a particular dislike of all forms of religion, and vented it upon the clergy whenever he got an opportunity.

“At first he contented himself with slight damage. Tricks were played on his victims by elementals. Things were thrown about the room; crockery was smashed; when asleep his victim was awakened by having the clothes pulled off the bed, his face smacked, and his nose tweaked. But as time wore on and he found that he could do these things with impunity, his vicious character developed. Pinching and teasing gave place to physical violence. His victims were beaten black and blue or thrown downstairs, and attempts were made to set the house on fire.

“As the phenomena became more and more malevolent, the elementals for the most part dropped out, and even the spirits of the dead who had served him began to resist. They did not dare openly to defy him, for he had methods of making even them suffer, but they did the work half-heartedly and badly.”

J. W. “But how did he make the spirits suffer? “

“By his will. He, as it were, hypnotized them. This batch were weak-willed folk whom he compelled to do what he liked. He made them suffer, if they resisted, just as we make each other suffer in Hell. He found, however, that though I could not be threatened and bullied, yet I was far more willing than they to inflict suffering upon men.

“Meanwhile I had not neglected my own interests. Besides settling a few old scores and even partaking again, when materialized or controlling, of some of earth’s former pleasures, I had also been building up my influence over my master. Some of the scenes in that old cellar under his house would have filled you with amazement. There would be at least a dozen of his girl mediums, some normal, others in trance, and in addition sometimes as many as a dozen materialized spirits. Except myself, these spirits came from the astral plane, and were constantly changing as one after another hurled themselves out of their astral bodies through one or more of the occult sins. These materialized spirits would stand or sit and talk and even laugh and sing and dance. Nor were these innocent recreations all; but I will draw a veil.

“Sometimes in the best vein of medievalism the wizard would celebrate the black mass, and we were the congregation.

“Meanwhile, however, I found it necessary constantly to renew my astral body. The mere fact that it was not really my own rendered it fragile and liable to disintegrate; and,

further, the evil I was constantly doing hastened the dissolution. The result was that, despite obsessing many people, I was constantly requiring new astral bodies.

“At length my master called upon me to murder a man who had somehow got on the track of some of his deeds. I followed him to his house unseen, and between one and two in the morning set to work. Standing at the foot of his bed, I willed, and as I did so became visible in my astral body. The dull red glow which always seemed to accompany me shed no illumination beyond making me visible.

“I willed still harder, and the wretched man saw all around him a host of evil shapes, bloated monsters, elementals of every form and kind, while besides these were the malevolent faces of evil men and women. They shrieked ‘Death to the traitor; tear him to pieces’ and almost every moment they rushed at him as if about to carry out their threats. They were unable to do so, for it is very difficult for a non-physical being to hurt the body of a mortal unless he has done something to put it in their power. But this wretched victim did not know that, and he was in an agony of terror.

“Then I cried aloud, ‘Have you forgotten Anna? We are here to avenge her. She is now in Hell, and has sent us to bring you there also.’ (As a matter of fact she had not sent us, and we did not know whether she was in Hell or not.)

“He screamed; ‘My God, after all these years must that sin rise up and condemn me.’

“We laughed derisively and went on in chorus, ‘She calls, she calls. Come away, come away!’

“We rushed at him again and again; we cursed him and jeered at him; and so all night long till morning broke we tormented him. The next night it was the same, and again on the third night. And all the while I kept urging him on: ‘Better death; kill yourself; there is no hope. You are going mad. Better kill yourself before you go mad and kill someone else!’

“‘Oh, Anna, can you not forgive me? I was but a young man and did not realize all it meant.’

“Then one of the spirits assumed the shape, of Anna, and, standing at the foot of the bed, cursed him, until, driven desperate, he sprang out of bed and, seizing a razor, cut his throat. —

“My master was delighted by the success of these operations, and I urged him on to attempt something similar against a young priest whom he hated. This man had denounced him as being in league with the Devil, which was largely true, and therefore angered my master the more.

“We plagued him, but though we caused him much annoyance by disturbing his sleep and so forth, we failed to hurt him much. Then I inspired one of the prettiest village maids to fall desperately in love with him. She followed him about for weeks, and finally threw herself on her knees in the church, while pretending to confess, and begged for his love. This refused, I turned her love to anger, and she spread all sorts of ugly rumors concerning him.

“Then we attacked him again more fiercely. We scoffed at his religion and told him it was false, or else the good God would not allow us to come to him. We told him he was about to be disgraced, and we urged him to escape the consequences of his evil life by suicide.

“(The poor devil had had a remarkably innocent life, as a matter of fact, and was not quite such a fool as not to know it.)

“We persecuted him like this for weeks until, at length one night he cried, ‘I believe you are sent by that wretched old man whom I denounced as in league with the Devil. I’ll go and tell him what I think of him now!’

“At once we urged him to do so, for, once there, it would be strange if our master could not finish him off. Seizing a crucifix, he stepped out into the darkness, and we followed him, jeering and threatening him.

“It was a wild night, a fit setting to the tragedy. The wind howled and the rain beat in his face. Overhead the lightning flashed and the thunder roared. I shrieked in his ear, ‘Hark to the voice of God denouncing you! You hypocrite, look at His lightning threatening to blast you! See how the whole face of heaven is black against you! Accursed of God and man, soon will you come to us in Hell.’

“At length he reached the door of my master’s house and knocked. It was opened, and he found himself in a dark passage. No one spoke, and he stumbled forward seeking a door. The first one he reached was locked, and so was the second; for some of us had gone forward to warn the magician. But a door at the end was not fastened.

“He opened this, and, entering, found the magician waiting for him in a dimly lighted study. The priest denounced him fiercely, but the magician answered not a word, but gazed fixedly at him till his denunciation died slowly away, and he stood there silent, a disheveled figure, with a hunted look upon his face.

“At length my master spoke; ‘You fool, what made you come here? Your doom is sealed.’

“He began to chant an invocation, and as he did so we gathered round and recommenced our work of persecuting the poor wretch.

“Again the master spoke: ‘Tomorrow you will be denounced before the whole, of your congregation. I have two women here who will bear witness that you seduced them and were in the habit of visiting them here. I caught you tonight, and it is because I have suspected you for some time and done my best to frustrate your evil designs that you have denounced me as in league with the Evil One.’

“‘It is false,’ he shrieked, ‘and you know it. I will deny it and tell the whole world of the evil spirits who obey your commands.’

“‘And who will believe you? If they don’t consider the story a lie, they will declare it is due to drink or madness. No, my fine fellow, you’re done for; and it will be a nasty blow for religion too.’

“While he was speaking he threw a heavy weight at the priest, which felled him to the ground.

“‘Don’t kill him yet!’ I urged. ‘Wait till he has been thoroughly discredited.’

“‘Not I! he replied. ‘I only intend to obtain some evidence of his guilt — a few trinkets which the two women can produce as evidence. A lock or two of his hair, to begin with, this handkerchief, and this seal from his watch chain.’

“‘Can’t we get him to commit some sin?’ I urged.

“My master jumped at the idea, but, almost at the same moment, we were overwhelmed with a flood of light. It seemed to burn and scorch me, and its whiteness was so intense that no words of mine can describe it. This light came from a gigantic spirit of commanding and awful presence, his guardian angel.

He spoke, and his words rang out like a trumpet: “No man may be tempted beyond that which he is able to resist. Ye have been permitted to tempt and persecute this man that he might come forth from the temptation strengthened by it; but your work is finished. The cup of your iniquities is filled to the brim. Go down to the depth of Hell; and go thither also, thou spirit from Hell; return to a place even lower than that from which thou camest.’

“As he spoke the fire seemed to burn me through and through, and the magician fell dead. His spirit rapidly separated from its body, and then the astral body, exposed to that terrible light, shivered and shattered and fell away. The naked spirit fell with an agonized shriek, and vanished from my sight. At the same instant I felt myself whirling through space down into utter darkness.

“But when I realized I was in Hell, I was not back in my old kingdom or in the City of Hate. I had sunk still lower, and had almost reached the bottom division of Hell. But of what befell me there I will tell you at another time.”

J. W. “Before I go, can you explain why you appeared red when you came back to earth?”

H. J. L. interrupted. “I think it was not only because the sorcerer expected to see him like that, but more because his aura was full of the red rays which represent anger and hate. As you know, our auras change color with the passion that dominates us at the time.”

J. W. “Your story, officer, grows more and more extraordinary as it proceeds. I doubt whether that part about the magician will be believed, though I know you are telling the truth. You see, magic has fallen into such disrepute, hardly anyone believes in it now.”

The Officer. “I don’t care a damn whether they believe it or not. It is true, and only by relating it can I explain what next befell me. I should not have sunk lower if it had not been for that adventure.”

H.J. L. “Good-bye, Jack. You must be off now,” Next moment I lost consciousness. — J. W

Chapter XV

His Punishment. The Second Division. Real Devils

TRANCE VISION

May 18th 1914.

The officer resumed his narrative. "As soon as I realized my position, I began to hunt about, and was not long in discovering that, bad as the division above had been, this was worse. The darkness seemed more intense and the place seemed very empty. But this latter was not for long.

"I heard wild yells of despair, shrieks, and screams, and out of the darkness burst a herd of spirits, and behind them I saw for the first time the real spirits of evil, of which the devils usually described are but shadows.

"I had seen those 'shadows' occasionally on the astral plane. They were the figures formed by the imagination of those who had believed in them; but these were something different. They had not bats' wings, cloven hoofs, or horned heads, as usually depicted, though the devils formed by the imagination of men and found on the astral plane had them. These spirits, who had never been men, were some of the most appalling creatures it is possible to imagine.

"They were driving the herd of spirits before them, lashing at them with what were apparently whips. As they struck they cried out, 'How like you, your Master, the Devil?'

"Then they shouted the most fearful blasphemies, and screamed, 'Blaspheme, you swine, blaspheme! We are the real gods; the things you call gods are but figments of your brains.'

"Even as they were shouting this they reached me, and one struck me across the face. Acting on the principle I had always followed, I turned upon him savagely, but this time it was no use. Again and again I was struck, and knew that at length I had found my master. I fell writhing to the ground beneath these savage blows, but at once someone plunged what appeared to be a goad into me, and I sprang up with a yell and rushed madly forward with the rest of the herd.

"Now began a period of awful terror. On and on we were hunted through these great dark spaces, without stay or intermission, till I began to feel as if all that was really I was being hammered out of me. We could not speak to each other; we simply stumbled and fell, got up again, ran on, heedless of each and all. There were men and women here side by side. Most wore clothes, though a few were stark naked. The clothes were of all ages and countries, and were mostly torn and ragged.

"We were able to perceive each other in the murky air, but we could not see the country through which we ran. We ran out of the darkness into the darkness, knowing nothing, caring nothing, if we could but escape from the whips of our masters. And behind us rose that wild chorus 'How like you, your master? Our burden is heavy, our reward small. On, on forever. There is no hope for you. You are damned for ever. This is the unpardonable sin, for you have worshipped the Devil instead of God.

"No, there is no God. Men do but beguile themselves when they say there is a God. There is no such thing as Good except as the opposite of Evil. Evil really exists, Good does not. There is no such thing as a good man. Christ is a myth. We are the only beings who are real. Despair! Weep! Your good days are over. It were better for you if there had been no such thing as life after death. We served you in the world, now you must serve us in turn.'

"These and constant other taunts and jeers greeted our ears the whole time. Most of what they said was lies, said to reduce us to utter despair, and the more dangerous because there was a certain modicum of truth in it.

“I soon found that I was quite unable to read what was in their minds, as I had been able to do with the men in the division above. They seemed, by the mere exercise of their wills, to be able to build up a wall round their thoughts which I was quite powerless to penetrate.

“At length I cried to one of the devils, ‘Is there no way by which I can become one of the drivers instead of one of the driven?’

“Yes,’ he cried, as he lashed me in the face, ‘yes; if you will go back to the division above and bring down a hundred spirits. It can easily be done. Make them believe in the devils and worship them. Have the Black Mass, and this will soon hurl them down!’

“‘How can I return to that division?’ I inquired.

“‘One of us will quickly show you the way; but think not that you will be able to escape us when there. No, we allow you to go to do our work, and we shall know at once if you try to escape us.’”

Chapter XVI

He Undertakes to Recruit for the Devils

“I was allowed to stop behind while the rest whirled on along their never-ceasing path.

“I looked at this malevolent being who had been deputed to guide me. He was far larger than I, and seemed made of darkness, if you can understand me. Never for two minutes did he look the same; not merely his face, but his whole form seemed to be constantly changing. He was robed in a long flowing robe of black; but even while I looked he became stark naked. Then he changed, and became like a goat, and even while I was struggling with my amazement he became a python.

“He next resumed his man’s shape — man’s, did I say? No; no man, however vile, looked as diabolical as this creature did. The face was hideous in the extreme; the eyes were oblong and glittered like a snake’s, the nose was hooked like an eagle’s beak, the mouth was full and armed with teeth which were pointed and almost like tusks. Malevolence and debauchery seemed stamped on his features, — while his hands were almost like talons, they looked so bony. From his body darkness seemed to ooze. Again he changed and became a column of red flame, which yet gave no light, and from this awful flame came a *voice*, ‘Follow this way.’

“We moved along thus, me and the moving column of flame. Presently out of the gloom I heard the sounds as of discordant chanting, and soon I saw what appeared to be a mountain, and, on approaching nearer, saw there was a cave, and in it many spirits. My guide assumed his semi-human form, and we entered the cave together.

“Here we heard the dang of cymbals and the blare of trumpets, and, the mingling with them of shrieks and cries as well as of discordant singing. Soon we saw a great throne, and in front of it a huge cauldron of what seemed like fire blazed and roared. On the throne was seated a hideous monster, and into the cauldron they were flinging little boys and girls, who screamed as if they were really burning. Of course it felt like burning, you know.

“‘Are those really children?’ I inquired.

“‘No,’ he answered; ‘they are men and women whom the stronger-willed have compelled to assume that form, and then offer up in sacrifice. Every now and then some of the real devils raid the place and throw the whole lot into the furnace. No young children come here. Here are the devils!’

“As he spoke a wild shriek arose from the worshippers, and a band of evil spirits rushed into the temple and drove us all, save my guide, into the great cauldron.

“What it was that burnt, whether it was the will of the evil spirits, I don’t know, but I suffered awful agonies.

“At length the evil spirits disappeared as swiftly as they had come, and we crawled out. The rest resumed their service, and I made my way towards my guide.

“He grinned ferociously and said, ‘Truly my yoke is heavy, is it not? It will be still more so unless you bring us a fine batch of worshippers’

“‘I will, I will,’ I screamed. ‘But why do you want more worshippers? You only torture us when you have us.’

“‘Because we hate you; we hate you with an intensity of which your feeble brains have no comprehension. You think you know how to hate, but it is but a feeble imitation of that which is almost our life to us. We hate you.’

“As he screamed these words he seemed to burst into a raging fire, and it was some time before he resumed his human shape.

“‘Now to your work,’ he cried, and moved swiftly along for some time. Presently we seemed to be climbing, but whether we really did, who can say?

“Suddenly he seized me and sprang with me into space, and next thing I realized was that I was back in the division above. I at once perceived that it was not in the City of Hate that I had been placed.

“My evil guardian cried, “Now remember, you cannot stay here for long. Your body has become too gross even for this division of Hell, and any treachery on your part will be at once punished by the most awful torments. Moreover, I shall immediately fetch you back. I cannot stay here in any comfort but I shall know what you are doing and thinking, so beware!”

“He had gone! With what a sigh of relief I realized it, but I foresaw that any respite would be but short. However, a brilliant idea struck me. If I succeeded in bringing back a good batch it was likely that I should be sent out again, therefore I would try.

“I found that I was in the miser’s country, and the great terror which haunted them was the fear that someone would rob them of their gold. Of course they had no gold, and if they had, it would not have been of the slightest use. But still their old instincts of fear and greed were still all-powerful.

“I soon found that I could work these vices to my advantage. To some I promised that if they would worship the devil he would give them as much gold as they wanted; to the others I promised protection from the tyranny of the rest and the fear of losing all they had. By dint of much hard work I collected a nice little band, who, under my instructions, performed the Black Mass.

“At first the evil spirits seemed to pay but little heed to us, but, after a time, one or two of them appeared. At length, at one of the services, I noticed a sensation of being dragged, and so did all the congregation. I knew at once what it meant, though the others did not. It meant that the spiritual connection had been formed, and we were about to fall to our own place. The feeling of attraction, almost akin to the law of gravity, grew stronger and stronger, and at length we seemed to be falling. The surroundings slipped away past us, the solid ground appeared to give way, and we fell. We had indeed become too gross for even the spiritual elements of Hate to hold us, and the attraction of what we had made our god drew us towards it.”

Chapter XVII

He Falls into the Lowest Depth of Hell

“As soon as we reached the land of those accursed devils we were surrounded by them on every side. I looked now for my promised reward, but instead heard this from one of them:

“‘You have acted the part of a devil and lured men to destruction, but without even the excuse that we have. We are of a different order to men and hate them, but you are of their order and have not the excuse, of hating them. You have betrayed your fellow-men simply for your own selfish ends. It matters nothing to us, but if you imagine you can change a man into a devil simply by aping one, you are a fool as well as a knave. Our nature and yours is different. Back with the others, you cur.’

“I slunk back among my victims, but only for an instant, for they, furious at my treachery, which, of course, they divined, instinctively hurled themselves upon me, and tried to tear me to pieces. Then succeeded a wild nightmare, in which the demons lashed us forward, and my victims strove to tear me to pieces. I suffered the same anguish as if they had succeeded, but still lived on to suffer again and again. At length I shook myself free and fled, and they pursued. What really happened next I cannot truly describe or even remember? Like some frightful nightmare I ran on and on, and, after a time, I appeared to be leaping and falling downwards. At length all deliberate motion on my part ceased, yet still I fell-down, down, down, and it seemed as if I should never reach the bottom.

“After an interminable age my downward course was stayed. I appeared to be completely immersed in some spongy mass; it was neither firm ground nor water nor even marsh. It was something which has no real counterpart on earth. It was the most tangible form of darkness I met with in all Hell. Of course all the darkness of Hell is tangible to spirits from even this plane.

“This spongy fog gradually stopped my downward passage, but I felt no firm ground beneath my feet. The same spongy mass was above and below and around, as solid above my head as below my feet. There was no sound, no sight, nothing, absolute nothingness, solitude intolerable, black despair, misery unspeakable. I felt myself at last an utter outcast; yes, indeed an outcast, cast forth alike from the society of men and devils. This was the end of all my desperate striving against Fate.

“Oh, that ghastly silence! Utter, absolute solitude!”

He ceased.

Chapter XVIII

The Bottomless Pit

LETTER FROM "THE OFFICER"

May 23rd

"How can I convey to you the awful solitude of the lowest depth of Hell? No words of mine can ever make you realize it. Nothing else could ever have broken my proud spirit as that did. Absolutely abandoned, forsaken, alone! neither sight nor sound, not another soul, alone, absolutely alone — with one's own thoughts. They rose before me and gibed and jeered all the evil that I had ever done.

"I did not repent then, I did not even feel remorse, but I felt a wild, hopeless despair. These thoughts seemed to take form and shriek at me 'You are damned. Look at us. We are the things which you have begotten. What right have you for hope? All your life has been given up to evil, till not even the most abandoned will associate with you. We cannot forsake you; we would if we could.'

"Then again came darkness; it seemed almost like annihilation I opened my mouth to scream, but no sound came out. The darkness seemed to flow in and stop it. *Their mouths shall be stopped with dust.* I seemed vaguely to remember the phrase, but where it came from I did not care. Oh, that awful loneliness I would have done anything to get back even to the whips of the evil spirits above, but it was not to be.

"Absolutely crushing silence. I cannot convey to you the awfulness of that solitude. You may think that the pains of the divisions above were worse, but it was not so.

"Ages seemed to pass, and those terrible words came ringing in my mind, *Damned eternally*' 'then again Dante's words, *Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.*

"Yes, all hope. I felt it, and so for what seemed endless ages, I suffered in solitude. Suddenly a phrase came into my mind, and I grasped its full meaning:

"*'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'*

"He who hung upon the cross knew intuitively its awfulness and the despair of those who lay here. *Forsaken of God* : Never till now had I understood the meaning of that sentence. It had seemed to me absurd, but now I saw as by a lightning flash He knew the sufferings of all, even those in the bottommost pit. Think what you please of the story of the Crucifixion, I care not, but this I do know — that He knew of our sufferings and realized it, and He alone of all who trod this earth knew it while on it.

"As this thought sank in I did not at first attach any particular meaning to it, but as time wore on, it came to me that there must be some significance in it. If He intuitively knew our sufferings, He who was All-Merciful must feel some shreds of pity for us. Doubtless He could not help us. *As a tree falls, so shall it lie.* Still, if He still lived anywhere and if I did, surely He would, He must feel pity for me.

"A new sensation grew by degrees. Why had I been such a fool?! Why had I not tried by repentance to get out of Hell? But there, what was the use? I was in Hell and I could not, for Hell is eternal. But I thought and thought. At any rate it was pleasanter to think of Christ than of other things. Why not go on thinking of Him? I cannot say that I felt any genuine regret for my past life, but I began to feel that I had been a fool, I had wasted my chances.

"Well,' I cried, 'I must pay the price. I shan't whine now; I never did on earth, and I'm not going to start now'; but somehow that scene on Calvary seemed to haunt me. It came as a refreshing interlude amid my other thought pictures. Then there came a new thought. I remembered my mother; I wondered where she was. She died when I was quite young, but I remembered her, and could remember how she used to teach me to pray. What was it? I could not remember. Funny I could remember everything else, but not

those prayers. Strange! Well, I'd always heard that the damned could not pray, and I was damned.

"I did not realize it, but in a feeble sort of way I was praying, or at least yearning, after better things.

"This was the turning point. How I got out I will tell you later, but this was the first faint beginning.

"Now I win break off. I wanted to leave you with the tense of hope, not of hopelessness, for though I did not realize it, this was the beginning of better things. I had at last reached the bottom, and soon I would start on the upward path. I had gone the full course and had reached the lowest depths, and yet, *His mighty arm was strong to save*. Glory be to God on high. Indeed, there is no such thing as death, neither of the good nor bad; but perpetual Hell would be death, for it means permanent separation from God. — THE OFFICER."

Witnessed by K.,
May 23rd, 1914.

Chapter XIX

The First Upward Step
TRANCE VISION

May 25th, 1914.

The officer having sat down began at once: "How long I remained in that awful solitude I have no idea, but it seemed like centuries. Anyway, at length an inspiration came to me, sent, I believe, from above in answer to my inarticulate prayers. It was, 'Turn towards God. He can help you, and no one else can!'

"*Turn towards God.* It was a new idea. My whole life had consisted in turning deliberately away from Him. How could I turn towards Him even now? Yet what would I not do to get out of this awful place?

"Again and again my mind reverted to the idea, but how could I go towards Him? How could I get out of this awful spongy darkness? Besides, I was damned.

"Another idea flashed into my mind. Why not pray? I tried the Lord's Prayer, but could not manage it. I had forgotten how to pray.

"At length, like an inspiration, the words suddenly burst from my lips, 'O God, help me!'

"Once spoken they came easier, and I repeated them again and again.

"What followed next, and, indeed, the whole of my process of getting out of this deepest depth, will, I am afraid, be very difficult for you to understand. It is next to impossible to find words adequate to describe these experiences.

"Well, the first effect of this praying was to produce what seemed like a pleasant sensation of warmth, and this warmth grew and grew until it became far too hot. Finally, I seemed to be afire. The more I prayed the more intense grew the heat, till at length I ceased to pray, hoping it might stay the pain. But it still continued.

"Then I became aware of a new sensation. I seemed to be growing lighter, and gradually I realized that I was slowly rising up through the spongy darkness.

"What had happened was, that by praying even so feebly I had begun to burn away a little of the grossest part of my nature which had rendered my spiritual body so heavy. Thus it became too light to remain stuck in that darkness, and gradually rose and rose, till at last I saw jutting out from the darkness what seemed like a black and slippery rock at the edge of some beetling cliffs. Though this phrase would not be adequate, yet if you consider this lowest depth as a deep lake of utter darkness with forbidding cliffs all around, you will get some idea.

"As soon as I saw this black, slippery rock I tried to climb on to it, but slipped off again and again. By this time the burning sensation had ceased, and, encouraged by the evidence I had just received of the benefits of prayer I tried it again.

"'O God, help me to get out of this darkness.'

"I had hardly done so when the lake of darkness (*upon* which I was now floating instead of in it) became agitated. Great waves rose up round me, and seemed as if they would engulf me. Instead, however, I was lifted up and hurled on to the rock. It was as if the dark waters would no longer contain me on their bosom, and therefore cast me ashore.

"I have little doubt that in part this was the case. You see, bad as I still was, I was yet too good to remain there now, and so was cast up on the shore of the second lowest division.

"The darkness was still intense, but not so tangible; but when I commenced to investigate my surroundings, I must admit my heart sank. The rock seemed to jut out like a table from a high cliff, and at first I could find no path by which to climb it. Remembering how useful prayer had been before, I again assayed its benefits.

“For some time nothing happened, and I began to lose heart; but at length my sight seemed to become clearer, for I was able to detect a hole in the cliff a short distance to the left of the flat rock. I found that I could just reach it with one hand, and having tried many parts of the cliff with my foot, at length found a sort of step or hole broken or cut in the cliff, into which I placed my foot. After several more desperate struggles I reached the cave’s entrance, and on climbing into it found that, after running some distance inland, it opened into a kind of narrow gully.

“Now I’m afraid that all this must sound fearfully physical, but you must bear in mind that to us super-physical beings super-physical rock seems almost physical, and, in any case, when describing it to you we cannot convey the finer distinctions for which there are no words or symbols. This fact must be fairly intelligible to you, for look how natural in many ways is this spirit world to which you are permitted to come!

“By means of infinite toil and effort I was able slowly to climb up this gully, and after a while reached a spot some way up the cliff. Here I found a ledge of rock which ran along the side of the cliff for some distance, and followed it.

“In due course this, too, ended, and I almost gave way to despair. Had I struggled so far only to fail at last? I crouched down and thought, but as I could discover no way out, I began to pray again, but without much hope. However, the mere action of praying seemed to soothe my troubled spirit, and at length, encouraged by it, I rose and again searched for a way out.

“Suddenly there was a roar like thunder, and a mass of rock fell forward from the face of the cliff and jammed across the narrow gully close by where the path had broken off. This made a steep, sloping bridge. I could not see from where I stood whether the further end of the bridge led on to another path or ledge, but I felt sure that it had fallen in answer to my prayers. With infinite pains I scrambled on to this rough bridge. Several times I feared that I should pitch into the chasm below, but still I struggled on.

“At length I reached the top of the sloping stone bridge, and found that the chasm wall on the other side was more like scree than a sheer precipice. Up this I painfully struggled, often slipping back, but still persevering. My iron will stood me in good stead in this predicament.

“At length it was done, and I crawled on to comparatively level ground, rough and bouldery though it was, with a sigh of relief. I was back once more in the second division of Hell. At the same time a new fear seized me. Should I again see those devils?

“But nothing happened, no one came, and in time a new terror presented itself to my mind. Had I, after all, not left the lowest depth, was I still in that awful solitude? For a moment despair gripped me. Were all these painful efforts in vain? Were the apparent answers to my prayers a mockery, the scorn of an angry God who would never be appeased?

“But soon other thoughts came. The darkness, though still here, was not the same, it was not tangible; it was the darkness of the second division. So again came hope.

“Now you must leave us.”

Chapter XX

Back in the Second Division

VISION

*"The Officer's Narrative"**June 1st, 1914.*

After greeting me, the officer proceeded at once with his narrative.

"I scrambled painfully over the stony ground without any particular object in view save to get away from the crevasse up which I had crawled. This journey continued for some time, until in the distance I heard a faint sound and made towards it. Presently

I began to recognize the noise. It was the screams of the unfortunate beings flying before the whips of the devils.

"I stopped. What should I do? I had no wish to suffer again that torment, and yet I dreaded solitude. However, I was not left long in doubt, for suddenly a herd of spirits came rushing out of the darkness pursued by their tormentors. Next moment I was caught by the crowd and had to rush with them.

"After being hunted for some time, I began to wonder whether I could not discover some method of escaping from these terrible whips.

"By my side was running a man, and at length I said to him as we stumbled along, 'Look here, can't we get out of this.'

"'I would to God we could,' he moaned.

"'Who's that using the name of God here? Take that, and that,' screamed one of our tormentors, and at each word his fearful whip lashed us both.

"As we still ran on I noticed that the ground seemed not merely rougher, but beyond this rough ground lay high cliffs with clefts and gullies in which we might hide. So we began to edge our way to that side of the herd. Presently I murmured to my companion, 'Now.'

"We raced for the shelter of the rocks, but at once one of the devils started in pursuit. It was a wild, desperate race, but of course we were recaptured.

However, I shouted to my companion, 'Call on God to help us; I find that even here He can.'

"Then suiting my actions to my words I cried, 'O God, help us; help us, for Christ's sake.'

"'Silence!' yelled our captor. 'God cannot help you here. He is just. You have rejected Him, and now He rejects you. Silence! You cannot pray. If you try, He will not hear. He has other things to do than listen to traitors like you. Are there not enough souls not yet damned who need His aid that He should hearken to you? Back to the others.'

"Again and again the terrible whip lashed our bodies. But still I prayed on. Soon, however, my companion lost heart and rushed back to the crowd, hoping amid the others to be partly protected from the blows of the lash.

"Almost at the same moment I perceived that a little nearer the cliffs was a black, shiny pool unutterably filthy. Without an instant's hesitation I plunged straight in.

"Whatever the substance was, it certainly was not the same tangible darkness I had experienced before in the division below; it much more resembled filthy water, thick and greasy with slime and dirt. I endeavored to swim across this, still for a while pursued by my tormentor, who lashed at me if ever I rose above the surface. Still calling upon God for help, I struggled on, and at length reached the further shore.

"At the foot of a high precipice I crouched and prayed desperately. Almost at once I saw a thin cord hanging round my waist. On looking closer I perceived it was a chain with many links, and as I studied them I knew they were the few good deeds I had ever

done. I had never noticed them before, but now, few as they were, they seemed to give me courage.

“An idea came floating into my mind and even as it did so I again felt the lash of the pursuer. However, I paid no heed to it, but quickly unwound the chain, which I discovered was woefully thin, but at the same time much longer than I had expected.

“I formed one end into a noose, and studied the face of the cliff in spite of the blows which were continually being rained upon me. I soon perceived a horn of rock, as it were, which jutted out, and above it appeared to be a narrow ledge.

“After several efforts I succeeded in catching the noose over this horn and then began to climb up the chain, hand over hand. Every moment I feared it would break, but I kept on praying desperately, and it seemed as if the chain grew stouter as I did so. For a while the devil behind still lashed and struck, but after a time I appeared to climb out of his reach, and at length I scrambled on to the ledge, but I could see nothing because of the awful darkness. I looked next for the chain, but this too had vanished.

“For a time I gave myself up to despair; but after a while wiser thoughts prevailed, and instead of despairing, I knelt down and thanked God that He had helped me so far.

“Feeling calmer, I proceeded slowly on my way. The ledge was but narrow, and a false step would have meant a fall clean over the edge of the cliff.

“By degrees it grew a little broader, and soon I was able to walk along in comparative ease. ‘Well, I thought, it just shows what can be done if one only has a strong will. Most men would have given up the task as hopeless, but I’m not of that type. Thank goodness, I have an iron will.’

“This was no sooner thought than, catching my foot on a boulder, I pitched forward over the ledge. Down I fell with a fearful speed, but did not fall far, as I stuck head downwards in a narrow crevasse.

“It was only after many desperate struggles that I succeeded in freeing myself and painfully climbed up to the place from whence I had fallen.

“In a more chastened spirit I continued slowly on my way. At times the route was over bare screens, upon which I slipped and fell, at others over rough boulders and jagged rocks, while again at other times it was along a comparatively easy path.

“At length I came to the entrance of a cave and wafted in. It seemed, strange to say, less dark here than outside. Suddenly, while turning a corner, I was attacked by four men, who knocked me down, and, after hammering me all over, tied me up, a prisoner.

“I should say here that though I struggled to the best of my ability I found I was much weaker than I had been when last in this division. This was due to the fact that there were stirrings of better things, and these, though they helped me to rise higher, yet rendered me weaker in opposing evil to evil and strength to strength.

“I must stop now, but will just add this: I was once more in the third division, and about to suffer some of the pain similar to that which I had formerly inflicted on others.”

The officer rose. “I must be off to school. I find it cursed hard work to learn,” he added, and passed out through the door.

Chapter XXI

In the Third Division. A Library in Hell

"THE OFFICER'S" NARRATIVE

June 8th, 1914.

"The men who had captured me beat me thoroughly 'to show you who is master,' as they said. I remembered how I had often done the same, and tried to resist, but found that some subtle change had come over me. It was not exactly that my will had grown weaker, but that my will to do evil had grown weaker. I was therefore at a great disadvantage in trying to protect myself. The law was of course self-acting, but at the same time it tended to make me progress, for it rendered life very miserable, and begot a longing to escape.

"For a long time I struggled in the grasp of my captors, enduring all manner of tortures, but at length I got my opportunity and escaped. My tormentors started in pursuit, but though my will to do evil was weakened, yet my will to escape was strengthened if anything and I quickly out-distanced them.

"I rushed along in the darkness over a stony plain for what seemed like weeks and weeks, hardly meeting a soul, and those few I met I avoided. At last I stumbled up against what appeared to be a huge building. After a little careful reconnoitering I discovered it was a library. I was at once struck with an idea. There now seemed a hope, faint yet ever present, that I should ultimately escape from Hell. If that were so, I ought in the interest of science to explore it as far as possible. I determined therefore, though not without a great deal of trepidation, to enter the building.

"You have been hearing about libraries in the realm above this, nor was it entirely by accident that P. and I should both speak of similar subjects at about the same time, the one is the natural corollary to the other.

"Having entered the library, I was at once met by an evil-looking old man. You understand he looked old — very old, and very evil.

"I want to look over the library,' I began.

"Certainly, my son!' he replied. 'This library is much patronized by the wise. Those who would triumph in Hell must study even as they do on earth. Is that not so?'

"Of course, of course. Is this library restricted to the subject of hate, or are other subjects such as lust included?'

"*He.* 'Mainly hate and cruelty, though a little lust of course has to be included. But lust as lust goes to its own library near the cities of lust. You should go there and study a little; it's well worth while.'

"We then entered the library. It was an enormous place, and was divided into three sections:

- (1) Book forms;
- (2) Idea books;
- (3) Living thought visualizations.

"Among the 'forms' were all books dealing with cruelty and hate for their own sake. I saw there shelves filled with the records of the Inquisition, books describing methods of poisoning your foes, books relating hideous crimes and savage tortures, histories of torture, so-called medical works, and so on. I looked at one of these 'medical works.'

"What decides whether a book comes to Hell or not? For example, this book is on vivisection. It's a French work. Do all books on that subject come here?'

"He replied, 'No, indeed. It is all a case of the object of the work, and also the results it produces. With all books on vivisection, as with the thing itself, both object and result count. For example, believing he has a cure for some disease, a doctor inoculates some animals with that disease, tries his treatment, and afterwards publishes an account of his

experiments. The sole object of that man has been to improve the well-being of his fellow-men, and his book has that object. In such a case of course we should not get his book. But many men, especially on the Continent, inflict torture on animals simply out of a morbid curiosity to see how pain works. As no useful object is served by these experiments, and the publication of them only incites others to do likewise, the books come here and so naturally do their authors. Again, a scientist may conduct some experiments with a laudable motive, yet it may be extremely foolish or even wrong for him to publish such experiments broadcast. Such a book will often lead others to perform similar experiments out of curiosity or the love of inflicting pain. Such a book comes here.'

"I said, 'Then I take it that most vivisectionists come here?'

"*He.* 'Oh, we get quite a large number, but still not as many as you would expect. A good many of these men, though they seem a bit callous and are so, yet are genuinely moved by laudable, though often mistaken, motives. But still a very large number would come to us if it were not for the time they spend on the astral plane.'

"You see, they usually fall victims to the vengeance of the animals they have tormented, and this and a clearer vision of the truth causes them to regret what they have done, and leads them to strive to make amends.'

"How?'

"Oh, by encouraging men on earth to found societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals and such nonsense. Still, the so-called cause of science sends us many companions.'

"How are the scientists arranged for?'

"Oh, in different ways. Take the doctors, for example. We have a hospital not far from the library.'

"A hospital?" I cried with surprise.

"Yes, but here we don't make any pretence of running it for the good of the patients. It's all done in the interests of science, he! he! he! But you ought to go round and see it for yourself — that is, if you are not afraid of being operated on yourself, he! he! he!'

"We wandered on into the second section, and here I saw the 'idea' books. Each contained pictures instead of writing, and they were similarly devoted to cruelty, hate, and so forth. Every ingenious device for torturing the human body, and even the spiritual body, was displayed. Nor was that all, for there were diabolically clever ways of tormenting the mind.

"But the third section was the worst. Here at the sides of the room were countless 'pictures' in which we could see the anguish of the victim as he was slowly tortured, while at the two ends of the room were stages upon which were enacted various diabolical torments. All these were acted before us.

"The attendant said, 'These rooms are devoted to works which describe the best ways to torture persons and the exact effects of any particular kind of torture, or, as we call it, operation. You see, we cannot here inflict pain unless we understand the effect of that pain. Thus the more fully we understand a particular torment, the easier it is to make another suffer that pain if we are strong-willed enough to subdue him.'

"Among the pictures I perceived many dealing with the vivisection of men, which were too horrible to describe.

"I discovered I was getting a bit squeamish as I looked at the atrocities. Still, it is only fair to say I had never been cruel for cruelty's sake — callous at times, very revengeful and entirely reckless, I certainly was, but not cruel simply for the sake of seeing others suffer."

Chapter XXII

A "Hospital" in Hell

"After a while I left the library, and crossing a barren waste came to the so-called hospital. If the library had been gruesome, this place was a perfect nightmare. I passed through a gateway, and entered a large but dirty hall. 'This is rather different to a hospital on earth!' I thought; 'there they usually carry the case for cleanliness almost too far.'

"The dirty hall led into an operating theater. I entered, and saw that on the 'table' a man was stretched out. He was fastened in such a way that he could not move, but otherwise appeared perfectly normal. The doctor then began some fearfully painful operation on one of the nerve centers. The shrieks of the victim, and the ghoulish delight of the audience, was more than I could stand, hardened sinner as I was. I therefore slipped out and found myself in the dissecting-room.

"Here living men, yes, and women were being dissected. As soon as one mangled body was left, it began to assume its original form again, and as soon as this was noticed, another operator would begin upon it once more.

"I noticed a woman who was being dissected by a young-looking 'doctor' pleading desperately with him to let her go. He hesitated for a moment, but a sharp word of reproof from an older man who was at work on a neighboring table hardened his heart, and he recommenced his work.

"I stepped up to him. 'Who is this woman, and why do you torture her so? Has she done you some wrong?'

"He replied, 'I know nothing about her or why she is here. You can ask her yourself if you like.'

"So I turned to her, and she, reprieved for the moment, said, 'My name was Nini, and I lived in Paris. I was a demimondaine, and was for three years the mistress of a Jew. One day he caught me in an intrigue with a young actor, and there and then turned me out of the house, beating me black and blue.

"I was furious, and swore I would be revenged both on him and on my cowardly lover, who, instead of defending me, had run like a rabbit.

"It was not long before I got my opportunity. I fell in with the leader of a band of Apaches. He was rather a handsome, gentlemanly man in looks, and did not belong to the class of the ordinary Apache. He was an awfully cunning rascal, and absolutely ruthless. I told him the Jew had a lot of money hidden in the house, and egged him on to break in.

One night the band did so, and I went with them. The Jew was rather an old miser, and only had one servant, a man who slept in, besides a woman who came in each day.

"The house was a decayed place in one of the suburbs of Paris.

"One of the band knocked the manservant senseless, and then we rushed into the Jew's bedroom and tied and gagged him.

"Now I was almost sure that the Jew kept practically all his money at the bank, but I wanted my revenge, so I swore to my new lover that it was hidden somewhere in the house. 'You must make him tell you,' I cried, and shook my fist in the old Jew's face.

"They pulled the gag out of his mouth, and someone put a dagger against his throat. 'Tell us where your gold is hidden,' hissed Gaston.

"It's all in the bank except two hundred francs, which are in the top drawer of the bureau downstairs.'

"Liar!" cried I; "you know there is over twenty-five thousand francs hidden in the house.'

"My God, is that you, Nini?'

"It is, you pig," I replied, "and I'm here to have my revenge, so you had better tell us where the money is at once, or you'll be sorry you ever met me.'

“I am that now,’ he began, but I interrupted:

“‘You beast, take that,’ and scratched his face as hard as I could. He began to yell, and Gaston at once plugged his mouth.

“‘We’ve wasted enough time,’ he said; ‘bring up that charcoal fire.’

“Several of the band, including myself, seized him and pushed his naked feet into the hot embers. Some held them firmly there, while others blew the charcoal till it burnt like a furnace.

“‘The Jew writhed and struggled, but no sound came from his lips, he was far too securely gagged. At length Gaston said, ‘Now we will try again,’ his feet being taken from the fire and the gag from his mouth.

“‘The treasure,’ said Gaston. ‘Quick, where is it?’

“‘In the bank. I wish to Heaven it were here, and then you would not torture me. For God’s sake let me go,’ he moaned feebly; but Gaston, more furious than ever, pushed the gag back, and then turned to me.

“‘Do you think he’s speaking the truth?’

“‘No, lies,’ I shrieked.

“‘Back then to the fire,’ and the torture recommenced. Suddenly one of the band who had been watching to see we were not disturbed rushed into the room.

“‘Quick, someone has given the alarm.’

“‘There was a stampede, some going through the door, others out of the window and down a pipe.

I seized Gaston’s arm.

“‘You fool!’ I shouted, ‘Are you going to leave the Jew alive to give evidence? We shall be caught if you do.’

“‘You’re right, my dear,’ he replied, and turning back cut his throat.

“‘We escaped; but not long after Gaston knifed me one night when he was drunk, and in due course I arrived here. Now you understand why I’m in this awful room.’

“‘Aren’t you sorry for what you did to the Jew?’

“‘Sorry! Not I. It’s the one thing that consoles me. But I wish to Hell I could get out of this place.’

“I turned to the young doctor. ‘But what pleasure do you find in torturing her? It’s true she’s ugly now, her wickedness has made her so; still — she is a woman, and has done you personally no harm. Why do you do it?’

“He replied, ‘Will you take her place?’

“‘Not I! But still that’s rather different from torturing her when she’s done you no harm. What pleasure do you get out of it?’

“‘Pleasure! I don’t get any pleasure out of it. At first we do feel a kind of fiendish pleasure in seeing others suffer. Moreover, for a time the more wretched we grow the more we like to compel others to feel wretched. But after a time this mockery of a pleasure ceases, and we go on doing this sort of thing mechanically. We don’t feel any pity or sorrow for our victims; such feelings were dead in our hearts years before we died, and, moreover, they don’t deserve pity — they have all been about as cruel as we. But we feel no pleasure in doing it. It’s a hollow, joyless world here, whatever you try to do to pass the time. Time! Damn it, there is no such thing as time.’

“As he spoke, he turned away from me and savagely plunged a scalpel into the poor wretch who lay on the slab before him.

“I began to walk out of the room, but almost at once I was seized by three or four scientists. ‘This fellow will do in place of the one that’s escaped,’ shouted one.

“‘No, you don’t!’ I cried out, but in spite of my desperate endeavors they dragged me to the slab and fastened me down as they had formerly fastened him who escaped. Then I underwent the most fearful torture, but all the while I kept my wits about me and watched for an opportunity to get away.

“Before long it came. Two of the doctors started quarrelling. While their attention was thus diverted I sprang to the floor. I called to God for help, and made a dash for the door.

“One or two tried to stop me, but most paid no heed, such scenes were constantly occurring. Soon I was through the door, and out again on the desolate plain, running for all I was worth.

“After a while, as I found I was not pursued, I slackened my speed, and began to think over my experiences. One point especially struck me then, and has impressed me ever since, and that was that in Hell it is extremely difficult to get spirits to combine and work together for any common object — at any rate for any considerable period. Had there been any effectual combination among the doctors I could never have escaped. It seemed quite easy for a few of them to unite for a moment to make me prisoner, but this done, most forgot all about me, and started on something else. They were continually quarrelling among themselves, and even while I was there I saw more than one scientist placed on the dissecting slab by some of his companions. Indeed, the only times when effective, united action was possible was in such cases as my own conquest of Paris of the Revolution, where a man with an iron will was able to dominate and force a large number of others to obey him.

“Yes, the entire absence of the power of voluntary combination for any object is one of the characteristics of Hell.

“Well, now I must leave.”

Getting up, he walked out of the room. I followed his example, and, saying good-bye to H. J. L. willed that I should return.

Chapter XXIII

Chaka. Athens

LETTER FROM "THE OFFICER"

June 13th, 1914.

"After my experience in the hospital I was more than ever anxious to get out of that division, but for a long time could find no way in which to do so. I kept away as much as possible from the City of Hate, or, indeed, all cities, for they all partook of the same nature.

"On one occasion I blundered suddenly into what seemed like a *kaffir kraal*. It was a fairly large one, and I soon discovered it was ruled over by the redoubtable Chaka. He seemed to be living very much the same sort of life there that he had lived on earth.

"One of his favorite amusements was to set his tribe to dig a huge pit, and when it was finished he would surround them with his imps, and order the latter to charge down upon them from all sides and hurl them into the pit. At other times he would order an expedition against a neighboring kraal, for there were many such kraals around, storm it, and drag off a large number of people as slaves. He had many other pleasant little devices for amusing himself in a way similar to that which he had done on earth.

"In short, I found that even in Hell like tends to attract like, and the niggers still tend to act like niggers and settle together, harking back to their old institutions. I had rather a rough time there, for I was of course soon spotted and dragged before Chaka, who declared I must be either a missionary or a trader. In either case I was an enemy, so he ordered me to be flung into a bonfire, which was specially made for me. Of course you are used to these material descriptions, and understand that that means really that their wills imposed the idea of a bonfire on mine.

"Well, I suffered rather badly, but not so badly as I should have done had I fallen into the hands of civilized men; for these savages, as a rule, don't understand how to visualize and impose such visualizations on others as well as do the more civilized spirits. I managed to escape out of the fire, and though flung back again and again several times, at length succeeded in getting clear. This was due to the fact that news arrived that a neighboring chief was marching on the kraal at the head of quite a large army. Chaka was at once so busy organizing his forces, that I slipped away almost unnoticed.

"But just before I got quite clear I noticed a man rush at Chaka and try to stab him. It was, I learnt, a brother of his, and amid the confusion I bolted.

"At another time I found myself in Athens. I had always thought of it as a beautiful city of dazzling whiteness, with splendid sculptures. It may be so in the realms of faith, but down there in Hell I think it was one of the most dreary places I have ever seen. The very remnants of its beauty still visible through the ruin were the more pitiable. Its temples were broken and ruinous with wrecked pediments and fallen columns, and filth and slime were present everywhere. Its statues were mutilated, and, worse, transformed from the beautiful to the vile. Even what once must have been fine now appeared distorted. The faces seemed full of evil, repulsive, vicious, and hideous.

"It was as if the low vices and evil lives of the people who dwell there and their bad motives had entered into the statues and transformed them from things of beauty to monuments of iniquity.

"I got a bad reception there. A common informer at once raised the cry, 'A spy, seize him!' I was dragged into what seemed like a market-place, and at once tried. It was of course a perfect mockery of a trial, as you will readily guess. I was convicted and condemned to drink hemlock. I did so; I had no alternative; besides, I knew it was all a hollow sham — I could not die. The effect was peculiar. I grew stone cold at the feet, and

gradually that coldness reached up and up till it touched the place where, had I been still a man, my heart would have been. I seemed to collapse on the floor, and at once the spectators cried, 'He's dead!'

"So they picked me up and carried me out through the city gates, threw me down, and went away. Of course I was not really dead, but for some time I was unable to do anything, so strong was the spell, as it were, that they had imposed upon me, to the effect that I was dead. However, before long they found something else to think about, and forgot me.

'At once I found myself becoming normal, and rising up, hurried from the place.'

Chapter XXIV

The First Messenger of Light

“By now I was about as sick of the division of hate as anyone could possibly be, and determined to make an effort to get out. I therefore knelt down on the stony ground and prayed. My God, how I prayed! At length an answer came, and in an unexpected manner.

I saw coming towards me a light, yes, a real light! — not the horrible red glow which passes for fire down here, and has all the unpleasant effects without the pleasant ones. No, this was a real light, silvery, clear and pure, come down from the realms above. It drew nearer and nearer, and by degrees I perceived that the light came from a man — or was it an angel? Yes, I felt sure it must be an angel. I stretched forth my hands in longing prayer. But as he came nearer and nearer I felt an intense pain. It was the light, and it seemed to be eating into my soul. At length I could bear it no nearer, and cried out in agony, ‘Stop! Stop! for the love of God, stop! It burns ! It burns.’

“Then came an answer like the notes of a silver trumpet: ‘You have called for help, and I have come to give it. But all progress entails a price, and the price you must pay is the burning away of the filth which encumbers your soul. If you remain here, you will suffer and keep on suffering till you do come. If you go with me, you will suffer only for a little while and will be progressing, and that means you will be going away from suffering, slowly, perhaps, but surely.’

“‘I’ll come, I’ll come,’ I sobbed: ‘I’m inured to pain by now; lead on, and I will follow as well as I am able. O God, help Thou my stumbling steps.’

“‘I will come no nearer,’ he answered, ‘but follow me. A light shines in the darkness, and now as then, *the darkness comprehendeth it not.*’

“I will not now describe how he led me out of that division; it would take too long. Good-bye for the present. — The Officer.”

 TRANCE “VISIT”

MONDAY NIGHT, JUNE 22nd, 1914.

As before, I left my body behind, and passing out of the physical landscape entered that of the spiritual plane.

As soon as I reached H. J. L.’s room he said, “The officer is waiting to go on with his narrative.”

The latter at once began: “I followed the messenger at a distance. We climbed up and up, over rugged mountain sides, until on reaching the crest of a line of naked, barren hills I found, stretching before us, a kind of vast marsh. Across the marsh ran a broken path, which every now and then seemed to vanish, only to reappear again. All around was a thick fog, but the fog seemed lightest over the path. The messenger of hope led the way along this quaking path, and I followed at a certain distance because of the intensity of the light which came from him, and which at the same time illuminated the path we were on.

“Suddenly out of the darkness loomed a great figure, terrible and horrible. I knew him at once by instinct as the personification of hate. He barred our way and cried, ‘None who have entered these realms may ever depart. Return the way you came, or I will throw you into the marsh.’

“But my rescuer answered, ‘Out of the way. In this sign I conquer,’ and, raising his hand, he held aloft a cross. As he advanced the great spirit of evil, who was no man, but a being similar to the personification of drink, whom I had seen on the astral plane, shrank away, and at length, being driven off the path, hovered over the marsh.

“As soon as my rescuer had passed him he dived forward towards me, dividing me from my new-found friend.

“In an agony of fear I turned and fled, but my rescuer, seeing what had happened, turned and sprang after me. At once the evil spirit fled away from him into the marsh, while the messenger of light seized me by the arm.

“The pain was intense, for he seemed to be a living fire, yet in reality he was but a man who had come down from the realm of belief to help and save those in Hell.

“After a while the pain grew less as the light burnt away more and more of the evil in my nature. Meanwhile we crossed the marsh unmolested, and found ourselves in front of the gate of a city.

“‘This is the City of Lust,’ he explained; ‘it is part of the division of Hell devoted to the sins of the flesh. The greedy and covetous, thieves, gluttons, and immoral people come there. In this city Lust rules and you must pass through it and resist the temptations to which you will be exposed. If you do not resist them you will have to remain in that division, at any rate for a time; but if you do resist them, you will be able to pass through, but even so you will not climb into the next division unless you help someone else to escape also.

“‘Now I must leave you and return to my work of rescuing souls from the City of Hate.’”

Chapter XXV

The Fourth Division. The Lusts of the Flesh. Corinth

"I passed through the gate, which was guarded by an evil-looking man, who was disporting himself with a woman who at one time had been beautiful, but now looked hideous from the lines vice had imprinted on her face.

"Once inside I gazed round at the place which at first I did not recognize, and so stopped a man in the Greek costume who was hurrying along and asked him, 'What is the name of this city?'

"He stared at me in amazement, and at length said, 'Where have you come from, stranger? The wildest barbarians know of Corinth. Look at the famous Gulf.'

"As he spoke he pointed at the marsh, adding, 'Why, you have just come up from the gate leading to the harbor.'

"'What?!, do you call that filthy marsh the beautiful Gulf of Corinth?' I cried in amazement.

"'Yes, it does seem to be rather dirty, though why I can't understand, and it's very overcast here nowadays'

"'Why, it's because you are in Hell' I began, but he interrupted me.

"'Nonsense; the truth of the matter is that we have displeased the gods by discovering the secret of eternal life. We never die here. I don't know how long I've lived, but it must be for thousands of years. I must admit I sometimes wish I could die; I get weary of it, weary of always trying to do the same things, and when one's done them, what does one get? They call it pleasure — pah!'

"Remembering the advice of my former deliverer I said, 'Why not try and escape? Come with me to a more congenial part.'

"He laughed. 'It's very plain you are a stranger, or you would not suggest such a foolish idea. If I left here I should die, and, after all, I don't want to do that.'

"'But you are dead, and, being dead, how can you die again?'

"'If I were dead, how could I be alive? You're a madman. Keep your mouth shut or the people will cast stones at you.'

"Next moment he had gone, and I began to walk along what approximated to a street. Many of the buildings seemed to have collapsed, and all were filthy, but I could see that once they must have been fine, and were in the ancient Greek style. It's strange. I've seen while on earth many ruins, but they were not disfigured by the sense of squalor and sin which disfigured those in Hell. The nearest thing I ever saw on earth to give one the same idea was certain suburbs which had fallen on evil days, and their fine houses had been turned into tenements for people of shady character.

"While I was cogitating over these matters the street, which had been practically empty, became full of women and men, who came running in a wild bacchanalian rout. On they came, and next moment I was surrounded by them. Two women flung their arms round my neck, while a man filled a cup from a goatskin with what looked like wine and pressed it to my lips. It was ages since I had had any offer of kindness from anyone. In the City of Hate all that each man thought of was how to inflict pain on his neighbors and avoid pain himself. The two women spoke words of endearment to me, and the man pressed me to drink — and I did so.

"At once there were wild shouts of delight, 'He's one of us.'

"The wine seemed sour and unpleasant, and instead of slaking my thirst only increased it.

I drank more and more in a desperate effort to obtain satisfaction, but with no result. Along we went in a wild disorderly throng, and I leave you to guess the scenes which were enacted. Drink and lust reigned here, but not necessarily cruelty. True, occasionally

cruel acts would be done here, and often lust would lead men on to cruelty. But the result of the latter was that the man was driven out by the people of Corinth as a disturber of the public peace, and compelled to go to the cities of hate. Occasional and sporadic acts of cruelty do not bring about exile; it is only when these became a regular part of a man's life that the pleasure-seeking populace becomes annoyed and ostracizes him.

"But though cruelty was not encouraged, drunkenness, gluttony, selfishness, and lust were, above all lust. I will not attempt to describe the abominations I witnessed there, but the whole object of the community was the encouragement of immorality in every form.

"Every woman was what on earth would have been called a prostitute, and every place of amusement harped on the same theme. But I will draw a veil; your imagination must supply what I prefer to leave to it, only I will say that there was no satisfaction in anything we did. We seemed to be driven on by wild desire, but utterly unable to gratify it.

"Well, I drifted with the tide, forgetful in part of the advice of my rescuer, but more because my natural inclinations led me to long for my former amusements. Unsatisfactory as this existence was, it yet came as a great relief after the horrors I had seen and anguish I had suffered in the division below.

"I found that there were many other cities devoted to lust besides this version of Corinth, for, be it understood, there are other and nobler forms of Corinth in these realms of half belief, and even in other divisions of Hell. Of these other cities of lust, I visited a place that seemed like Paris and another like London.

"After a while I blundered into a part of the latter which seemed to be given over to thieves of various sorts. Here they stole from each other, but, strange to say, no sooner had they succeeded in stealing something from their neighbors than the thing stolen turned to dust. More and more weary I grew of this empty world where nothing we did brought any real satisfaction, and real aim in life there was none.

"This division was the first one in which I saw a church. It was run by a man who had started some weird sect on earth with the object of doing himself well at the expense of his dupes. He had made quite a good thing of it at first, but in time his unworthy object, together with his secretly vicious life, had been recognized by most of his followers, who therefore forsook him, but a few fools still continued to follow him.

"After death he had come here, and still tried to gather a congregation by means of his sophistries and extraordinary prophecies. He got one, too — of sorts, consisting in the main of thieves, forgers, bogus company promoters, and such like. I came across several former acquaintances, who seemed quite pleased to see me. The service was the strangest mockery of a service. It was simply a blasphemous parody, yet, strange to say, it was not so intentionally. Both preacher and congregation strove to say a proper service, but whatever they said seemed to become perverted as it was being uttered. The hymns and prayer became blasphemous mockeries or licentious songs.

"More and more weary I grew of the whole place and began to long for a means of escape. At length, as I was walking through a square in 'Paris' I saw a crowd standing round a man, jeering and laughing at him. On approaching him I saw how bright he was, and knew at once by that that he must be one of the messengers. I stood among the jeering crowd and listened. The man was pleading with his hearers to remember how once as little children most of them had thought pure thoughts and dreamt of heaven.

Were they now tired of this wicked, empty life? Why not repent and leave these dark and dismal regions? At this point he was interrupted by a man who cried out, 'Stop those lies; we are all liars here, so what's the use of trying to deceive as like that? The very religion to which you refer tells us that we are damned eternally. What's the use then of trying to repent? We can't, and if we could, it would be useless.'

"Another shouted, 'You are only a more clever fraud than most of the other parsons down here. You look like an angel, but you are simply out to make money out of us like

the rest. Why, only last week a fellow was going round beguiling fools to give him money, promising that, if they would, it would be a proof that they were repentant and he could then get them out. Several fools actually believed him, and of course as soon as he had got the cash he bolted.'

"I knew that this was true, for this artful fraud had tried to swindle me; but having seen a real messenger, I knew the difference and wasn't taken in. But I likewise recognized this man as a genuine messenger, and so, when the crowd dispersed, which it did, jeering as the man ceased, I went up to him."

Chapter XXVI

He is Helped by Another Messenger

“I can see you are genuine,’ I began. ‘Can you get me out of this place? I’m sick of it.’

“If you truly wish to escape, I can,’ he replied.

“I long to do so,’ I replied.

“Kneel down here then and say the Lord’s Prayer. I will say it with you to revive your memory.’

“I looked round and saw that the square was full of people, and for a moment I hesitated. Then I thought of what I had already suffered, and beside it the ridicule of these fools was nothing, so I sank on my knees and slowly repeated the Lord’s Prayer after him.

“When I had finished he cried, ‘Good; now follow me, and do not let them lure you from my side.’

“Quickly we hurried through the city, but we were not to get away without opposition. A couple of men stepped suddenly in front of us as we came in sight of the edge of the town, for in this part there was no wall. The men cried, ‘Here, where are you off to?’

“My rescuer replied, ‘We are going about our business, you go about yours.’

“Thanks, but this is our business. You are one of these pestilent fellows who are ever trying to persuade our friends and boon companions to desert us. We are sick of your pious humbug. Be off and leave him, or you’ll be sorry for it.’

“My rescuer raised his hand threateningly. ‘Begone, you accursed spirits, out of my way!’

“At once the two raised a shout: ‘One of the enemy seize him!’ and immediately a crowd rushed together, which became more and more threatening.

“My rescuer drew himself together, and raising his hand concentrated his will. ‘Out of my way in the name of God most high.’

“As he spoke he strode forward and I followed.

The crowd fell back before us, and though they murmured and threatened, it seemed as if we should pass through without molestation, so greatly they feared the strong will of my rescuer.

“But just as I thought we were safely through, a woman sprang from the crowd and threw her arms round my neck. She was one whom I had ruined when on earth, and she came to claim me as her own. My rescuer seized her arms, untwined them from my neck, and threw her back into the crowd screaming.

“Then one of the two men who had previously barred our way sprang at my throat. I drew my will together and struck him to the ground. He sprang at me again, and this time his companion also followed suit. But my rescuer bent quickly forward and touched each of them on the arm, and they fell back shrieking, with the arm which had been touched withered as if by fire.

“Thoroughly cowed, the mob fell back, and we passed through safely. Soon we were out in the open country. Don’t let there be any misunderstanding, I use the word to distinguish it from the town, but there was nothing country-like save the lack of houses.

There were no trees, no grass, no birds singing, not a flower, nothing but hard rock and sand and stones. On we journeyed, and presently in the distance I saw a faint, star-like light.

“Is that another rescuer?’ I cried.

“No,’ he replied, ‘that is a small mission centre or rest-house, and to it I am taking you. It stands at the edge of the barrier which separates this division from the one above in which are to be found materialists for the most part. There I hope you will be able to

rest for a short season and obtain strength to enable you to pass through the remaining divisions of Hell up to the schools.'

"Slowly the faint star grew stronger, and after a while I found we were following a path, narrow, but well beaten, as if by many passers-by.

"Who has beaten this path?' I inquired.

"The messengers who pass to and fro rescuing the lost. You seem surprised, but for how many countless ages, as men on earth reckon time (and therefore how much longer to us who labor here), have the messengers come seeking the lost? Long before Christ came down to earth there were spirits laboring here.'

"Was the land of After-death organized very much as it is now even before the opening of the Christian era?'

"Yes, save that more spirits as a rule had to pass through Hell. The more primitive a man is at death as a general rule, the less will his spiritual side be developed. The less his spiritual side is developed, the longer he will be on the astral plane, and the more likely to pass for a time into Hell. But there comes a point in the development of man when his intellect becomes developed at the expense of his spiritual side, and then sooner or later the advance of civilization will have a set-back.

"Thus in the days of the Greeks and Romans the intellect outran the spiritual development, and so Hell became crowded with men who refused to believe in God or a future life. The fall of that civilization, though for a time it threw back civilization, made it easier for men in the West to develop their spiritual side. At times I fear that a similar catastrophe may once more be necessary. But God is merciful, and we from this side are anxiously working to infuse new spiritual life into the world without the necessity of such a disaster.

"In early, primitive days the astral plane or Hell held almost all who passed over for a long time.'

"But this seems unjust, for they knew no better,' I said.

"It was not unjust; it was simply a great natural law. Those whose whole lives were devoted to fighting and cruelty would naturally go on acting in the same way for a long time after death. It would only be after a long period spent on this side that they would begin to desire a different kind of life.'

"All those who resisted the temptation to obsess would probably remain on the astral plane till they had developed sufficiently to pass upward to the spiritual plane. At the same time, the tendency to obsess among primitive people is very strong, and therefore many fall to Hell.'

"Is it the whole course of our life that fixes the particular division of Hell into which we finally fall, or is it the type of obsession which we practice?'

"Many old men pass almost at once to Hell. They have, outworn their astral bodies almost as much as they have their physical bodies. These will sink down to the division corresponding with that type of sin which has predominated in their lives — hate, lust, and so forth. But those who pass over in early or middle life have not yet worn out their astral bodies, nor completely developed their character. Their division is that which corresponds with the type of obsession which they have practiced. That is the worst type of obsession.'

"I interrupted, 'I understand. In my own case I obsessed for drink, lust, and finally for revenge. The latter, being a more spiritual sin, dragged me down deeper than would the other two types of obsession.'

"My rescuer continued: 'At the same time, the type of life a man has lived very largely decides the type of obsession which is likely to tempt him most. A lustful man, if he falls into obsessing, will probably do it for the purpose of satisfying his lust, and so will fall ultimately into the division in which lust predominates.

"But see, here is the mission centre or rest-house.'

“As he spoke I saw a building plainly yet strongly built. The door was small, and windows there were none save at the top above the door. From this came the light we had steered by so-far.

“My rescuer hammered at the door, and, as it opened, a flood of light poured out which blinded me for the time. My rescuer seemed to drag me forward, but I could see nothing, only I heard the door crash to behind me.

“Now,” added the officer. “I think it’s time you returned.” – J.W.

Chapter XXVII

He has to Return to Corinth and Rescue Another Soul

TRANCE VISION OF J. W.

June 29th, 1914.

Again I passed through the air from this plane of existence to that of the spirit plane. I found H. J. L. and the officer awaiting me in the room, and almost at once the latter resumed his narrative.

“I have no very clear idea of what took place in that temporary rest-house, the light was so intense that I was practically blind while there. But at the same time I gained some rest. A feeling of peace and hope seemed to fill that building, utterly unlike the atmosphere in any of the ordinary buildings in Hell.

“To me a man used to speak words of comfort and hope, and my spirit seemed to grow more quiet. Day after day I used to hear singing, real singing, sweet and beautiful; oh! how different from the horrible discord I had heretofore heard in Hell designated by the name of singing.

“At length the messenger who had brought me to the house said, ‘Now you must go back strengthened by your rest here to the fourth division. Once there you must get some companion to come with you. When you have done this, return to this rest-house with him, and here you will meet one whom you drove from your side long years ago.’

“So back I went to that city. I must admit the darkness came as a relief after the great light, but otherwise I came back feeling more disgusted than ever with life in Hell.

“Once back in the city I set to work to find someone who would come with me, but it was no easy task. At length, however, I got into conversation with a woman, whom I soon realized was sick of this sort of life.

“‘Why don’t you try and get out of this place?’

I asked her; ‘I can see you are sick of it. There’s nothing here which brings any real pleasure. It’s all an empty show — shadows, just shadows. We gain nothing here by vice. Why not try and get into better surroundings? I’m going to try, so come along with me; it will be less lonely if we go together.’

“‘What’s the use she replied. ‘You know we are in Hell, *where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.*’

“‘The fire mayn’t be quenched, but we can get out of it.’

“‘How can we? We are damned eternally. When I was alive I did not believe in a future life, much less the Hell, so I said, “A short life and a merry one.” I find now I was wrong — I wish to Heaven I had been right. If death only ended all, but it doesn’t! The persons were right after all — there is Hell, and we are in it, and there’s nothing more to be said. Oh that I could die!’

“I said, ‘All the same, though they were right about there being such a place as Hell, they were wrong in saying it was eternal, or, rather, Hell itself may be eternal, but no one need remain in it eternally. I can prove it. Here am I in this division, but I’ve been far lower — I’ve been down to the very bottom of Hell, and since then have been steadily rising!

“‘Are there other places than this in Hell? I had no idea of it!’

“‘Many other depths below, and also divisions above, I believe, through which we shall have to pass.’

“She looked at me intently. ‘Yes, I can see you are speaking the truth, but this is all quite new to me.’

“‘Well, will you come?’

“Yes, I will. If we fail, at any rate we shall have had some excitement. It will be a new sensation, and its ages since I have had one.”

Chapter XXVIII

A Newspaper in Hell. Racing

“So we set out together, making our way cautiously through the city. Every now and then bands of revelers would burst out of houses and taverns. Sometimes they took no notice of us; at others they would call to us to join them. Once or twice they danced round us in a circle, and on one occasion four roisterers seized the woman who was with me and carried her off in spite of her resistance. I went after them, knocked down two, and thereupon the others dropped my companion, whose name, by-the-bye, was Ada, and made off.

“In one place I noticed a band of burglars employed in breaking into a house, while on passing through the market, which was crowded, I saw a man busy making a speech. We stopped to listen, and found that he was trying to promote a company to build a railway from Hell to Heaven.

“Many of his hearers were scornfully declaring there was no such place as Heaven, but others were easily gulled, and began to subscribe eagerly. We passed the offices of a paper — oh yes, we have papers in Hell — just as an edition was being sent out. Obtaining a copy, I found the chief items of interest were these:

“*New Play.* Great success of Mr. Esmond’s work,
‘The Folly of Virtue.’

“*Police Court News.* Arrest of two missionaries
as spies and disturbers of the peace.

“*Local Scandal.*

“*Financial News.* New companies.

“*Racing News.* All the starters.

“*New Arrivals in Hell.* Full list, together with interviews with prominent visitors.

“The only item which filled me with surprise was the racing news.

“‘How do you manage for horses?’ I asked Ada.

“‘Oh, we imagine them. We each think of some famous racehorse we knew of on earth. Then we visualize it as racing along the course and winning. On the day of the race anyone enters any horse he likes and the names are announced. Then each backer imagines that his horse is going to win. The more people there are backing a horse and the stronger their wills, the more likely it is to win. The worst of it is the judge generally declares the horse he favors has won, even when it obviously had not. We see all the horses racing, and we see the one that has the strongest backing gradually pull ahead, but in spite of this the judge often declares that it has fouled another.’

“‘I suppose that’s often true?’

“‘Oh, it usually is. You see some of the backers are sure to devise a cunning underhand trick in their minds whereby they can outdistance other horses. In short, every horse will have fouled somewhere. But there’s always a fearful row after a race, usually culminating in a free fight.’

“We now had left the city behind, and Ada began to be very frightened.

“‘This loneliness is terrible!’ she whispered; ‘it is awful! Let us go back.’

“‘Nonsense,’ I replied, ‘we haven’t dragged so far to chuck up the sponge now. Come along. Look, there is the light.’

“The faint star of light from the rest-house seemed to revive her spirits.

“‘What a lovely star! I’ve never seen a star since I died,’ she murmured in an awestruck voice.

‘How beautiful they were! Yes, let us go nearer to it.’

“So slowly we drew nearer and nearer, and as the light grew, it seemed to bring us strength. At length it began to burn, and again she hesitated.

“This is very painful, and it seems to grow worse as we approach.’

“Do you call this pain? Nonsense! You should go through what I have suffered, and then you’d know what pain is. This light is merely cleansing us, burning a little of the dirt out of our spiritual bodies.’

“My example and my strength of will helped to keep her on the path, until at length we reached the door, and, on knocking, it opened to us.

“The light blinded us, but kind hands, which nevertheless seemed made of fire, helped us in. We were separated, and I found I was in a room which was much darker than the others. I was therefore able to see dimly, and perceived that the darkness was due to the fact that a window had been opened in the wall, and through it came in darkness in waves like the billows of the sea.”

Chapter XXIX

He Meets his Guardian Angel at Last

“Then I heard a voice ringing through the darkness clear and strong. There was a musical note in it which reminded me of a trumpet. It spoke thus: ‘son, I rejoice that at length you are drawing nearer to me. For many years you have driven me from your side, but I have never forgotten you, and I have prayed without ceasing that you should be led to turn towards God. Still for a while you will be unable to see me; the brightness of my visage would be too terrible for you to gaze on in your present state’

“‘Oh, great spirit, is it for this reason that it takes so long to come into the presence of God?’

“‘It is indeed. How could any man pass straight into the presence of God’s brightness? But now let us start upon the journey. Follow my voice, and as you progress gradually I shall become visible to you as you are able to bear the light.’

“Then one of the messengers entered the room and led me through the rooms of light out by another door from that by which I had entered. Then a great distance off I saw a tiny star-like light, and from it seemed to come a voice, ‘Follow me, and I will lead you forth.’

“So I followed that light through the darkness and every now and then my guardian spirit, as I afterwards learnt to call him, spoke words of comfort and encouragement. Slowly and painfully I scaled the precipitous cliffs, often falling and stumbling, but still mounting higher. When I was about half-way up, the path ran along a narrow ledge, and on turning a corner of this I saw a great cave from whose mouth rushed out a band of spirits, but just as they seemed about to hurl me into the depths beneath, the star of light suddenly grew larger and brighter. It advanced towards me, and at once my assailants fled shrieking away.

“Once I was rescued, my guide returned to his original position, and I was glad, as the light had burned me, though to a less degree than it had my enemies.

“Presently I saw a great waterfall, which seemed to break right across my path. It was not beautiful as a waterfall is on earth, but seemed inky black, and the foam only appeared dirty and muddy instead of white.

“At first I despaired of being able to continue on this path, and sought out a track which would lead higher up the side of the cliff, but I could find none. On looking towards my guide I noticed he was standing close up against the edge of the waterfall, and as I watched he seemed to pass through it.

“On approaching nearer I found that the water fell clear of the ledge of rock in a kind of arch and went thundering down into the black chasm below. You may be surprised that there was any sound, since it was not material water. I cannot myself quite explain it, but I think seeing the waterfall I expected to hear the sound, and so imagined it. Anyway, the noise was like thunder as I approached it, and summoning up all my courage I crept along beneath the arch of water until I reached the other side.

“Now the path assumed more and more the shape of flights of steps, and in time it became obvious that these were not natural but built deliberately, and, moreover, that they were kept in constant repair. Till now I had hardly ventured to speak to my guide, but now I inquired; ‘Who is it who has built and kept in repair this path and stairway?’

“He replied, still from a distance, ‘Son, a band of noble spirits who keep a house of refuge whose beacon light is just becoming visible. They hold that house in relays, and while on duty there, one of their chief tasks is to keep guard over this path into the fourth realm of Hell. Many of the spirits below band themselves together with the firm resolve to damage, and if possible destroy the various paths out of Hell which the messengers have made.’

“Are these spirits devils or men, and if the latter, why do they do it?”

“He answered, ‘Just men and women who, like many evil persons on earth, hate to see old companions leave them for the paths of rectitude. The beings you designate as devils are seldom found save in the lowest depth but one of Hell. The vices personified are, however, found in each division to which they are appropriate. These upper realms of Hell are almost entirely occupied by men.’

“Where do suicides go?” I inquired suddenly.

“Usually to the realms of hate, but occasionally it may be to the fourth division. Many, however, expiate their offence on the astral plane.’

“Master . . . !” I began again, ‘. . . the light grows so bright that it begins to cast a faint beam across the path we are treading.’

“Yes, my son, we are gradually approaching it, and, besides, those in the house of refuge know that we are struggling towards them, and therefore are praying for help for us. As they do so, the light, which is in reality simply their faith, grows stronger, and as they pray about us and think of us it is directed towards us.’

“Gradually the light grew stronger and stronger and began to dazzle my eyes, but much of the very worst part of my character must have been burnt away, for I did not suffer so keenly as when approaching the last house.

“Now we stood at the top of the stairs, I, close by the door which barred my way completely. My guide had passed through it without the slightest difficulty.

“Apparently in answer to the message he had taken with him into the house the door was opened, and kind hands led me into a covered courtyard, and thence into the house itself.

“The light of course blinded me now, but I learnt by degrees that this house differed in several particulars from the first one I had entered. It was a good deal larger, and was built round a covered courtyard. Part of its duties was to guard the stairway to prevent it being damaged by the evil ones who dwell below, and also to see that no dwellers in the fifth division inadvertently wandered down into the fourth, for if they did so they could not easily return. It was also a place of refuge and refreshment both for the messengers and for those they rescued. Here let me add that those who grew too evil for the fifth division were hurled over the edge of the precipice by the populace which they had exasperated to fury. The fifth division is on the whole eminently respectable. It rather prides itself on it, though it is not so insistent on this fact as the sixth realm, which makes quite a fetish of it.

“Finally, this gatehouse also protected the head of a bridge, a covered bridge which stretched across an ink-black river, which here plunged over the cliff, and thus formed the great waterfall under which I had passed. The further end of this bridge was likewise held by the brotherhood who were in charge of this house.

“I will stop here, and next time will tell you more about this river.”

Chapter XXX

The Fifth Division. The Blatant Materialists. Churches in Hell

TRANCE VISIT

July 6th, 1914.

On arriving at the place where H. J. L. lived I found "The Officer" waiting with him, who at once took up his narrative: —

"Led by my guide I crossed the bridge, which was entirely covered in, and therefore full of light, and entered the watch-house on the further side of the river. Here we did not stay long, but passed out once more into the fog and gloom. For some time we walked along the bank of a broad and filthy stream which ran into the great river. With the stream on our right hand we journeyed till we reached a huge city. It was a most dismal place — great chimney-stacks everywhere, and factories and warehouses on every side, and between them ran squalid, dirty streets. Filth and grime were everywhere. In and out of the factories moved streams of workmen, and I stopped to inquire what they were doing.

"One replied, 'Working; what do you suppose?'

"But what do you do with the goods?'

"Sell them, of course; but the funny thing is that as soon as they are sold they return to the factory from which they came. That's why it is all the factories have so many huge warehouses. We are constantly building new ones to hold the goods. The whole place seems choked with them — can't get clear of the damned things. The factories are constantly getting jammed up with the things that return, and no matter how we try to get rid of them, they always come back.'

"*The Officer.* 'Why don't you burn them?'

"*The Stranger.* 'Burn them? Why, we've burnt a dozen great warehouses at a time, but there they are again. Simply can't get rid of the beastly rubbish.'

"*The Officer.* 'Why do you go on making the goods then?'

"*The Stranger.* 'We can't help it. We seem driven by some strange force. Compelled to work and work without ceasing. There's no rest. A strange, mad instinct seems to drive us on. When I was on earth I thought of nothing but my work. I worked hard — damned hard — day after day, and this is my reward. On and on and on, doing the same thing over and over again, without rest, for ever and ever and ever. I can't make it out.'

"*The Officer.* 'I suppose you thought of nothing but your material interests when on earth, and so in Hell you still go on in the same way.'

"*The Stranger.* 'Hell! there's no such place, or Heaven either.'

"*The Officer.* 'Where are you, then?'

"*The Stranger.* 'I don't know, and don't care. Why, look what a number of churches and parsons there are here. But I've no time to stop talking to fools like you. I must get back to my work,' and he entered the factory.

"I went on till I came to a large square, in which were no less than three churches. One belonged to the Church of England, another to the Roman Catholics, and a third to one of the Nonconformist bodies. I went into the Anglican Church, and I found a service in full swing. The parson was preaching rather a dry sermon. He harped on two themes by turn:

(1) That people had no business to go to either of the other two churches, and should show more deference to himself as the representative of the National Church;

(2) That they should subscribe more generously to the church and, incidentally, to its vicar, and he glossed these two themes over by platitudes about social reform and helping the material well-being of their fellow-creatures, especially those whom he designated as the lower classes. Somehow this part of his theme rang very hollow.

“I noticed the congregation paid little heed to the sermon. Some were whispering scandal to their next-door neighbors, others, mostly women, were criticizing the clothing of their neighbors. Several men were talking business, and in one corner two men were arguing violently, so much so that they interrupted the preacher, who glared at them angrily.

“I went out and visited the other two churches, and found a similar performance in each.

“We then went on and came to the shopping area. Here we found a similar state of affairs to that in the factories. People came to buy, but the money they gave for the goods returned to them, while the goods returned to the shops almost at once.

“I asked one shopkeeper where he got the things he tried to sell since the factories could not supply him.

“*He*: ‘Oh, they came here with me. They are the things which were in my shop when I died. Here they stick till I’m sick and tired of seeing them.’

“*The Officer*: ‘Why don’t you give up keeping a shop?’

“*He*: ‘What a ridiculous idea! What on earth should I do without my shop? Why, my whole life has been centered in selling things ever since I was a boy.’ He turned away in disgust, and began to serve a lady who wanted to buy a new hat, which returned to the shop a few minutes after she had taken it out.

“Then I went to the council chamber, and found a crowd of men wrangling about improving the town, but after listening for a long time, I came to the conclusion that, though they might talk for ever, nothing would ever be done.

“I passed out of the town and came to open fields. I use the word to describe the place, but it looked more like a piece of waste ground covered with rubbish, and entirely bare of grass.

“Here there was a stand, and around the field was a dense crowd of people watching what appeared to be a football match; but though the players seemed to try and play, no goals were scored, and nothing really happened.

“While I was watching, one man walked off in disgust, and was promptly hooted by the crowd.

“He turned round savagely, and, after using a string of words which I will not repeat, said; ‘What’s the use of playing here?! One never scores a goal, and one does not even enjoy running after the ball as one used to do. I’m fed up with the whole thing.’ As he strode away I saw a bright stranger come up to him, and knew that soon another soul would escape from Hell.”

Chapter XXXI

The Sleepers

“We journeyed for some time till we came to a cave, and here I found quite a number of men fast asleep. Strive as I would, I could not wake them.

“This surprised me, for till then I had never seen anyone asleep in these realms — having no bodies, we do not require sleep.

“I questioned my Guardian Angel, who now had drawn much nearer to me.

“He looked very sad as he replied: “‘Son, these were men who stoutly maintained that after death there was no life. They were strong-willed men who, had they believed, might have done much good; as it is they led many astray, and since they held this view so strongly they have, as it were, self-hypnotized themselves into a state of coma, from which it is very hard to rouse them. Here they lie, age after age, and while men whom the world considered far worse than they, and who had sunk far lower in Hell, have been able to see the error of their ways and progress, they remain unconscious, and cannot learn.’

“*The Officer*: ‘This is truly terrible; is there no way of waking them?’

“*My Guide*: ‘After long ages the spell grows weak, then there come to them great messengers of light, who, after much striving, do succeed in breaking through their sleep and rousing them.’

“At length we reached a place of deep chasms and beetling crags, and after wandering along at the base of a range of these cliffs we came in sight of a narrow, slippery stairway. As we did so suddenly a figure came hurtling through the air and fell to the ground in front of us. It sprang to its feet and fled away into the darkness, and was soon lost to sight among the crags and chasms.

“‘Who was that?’ I inquired of my guide.

“‘Some unfortunate creature who has offended against the traditions of the sixth division. They pride themselves on their respectability there, and those who offend too deeply are hurled forth by the outraged inhabitants. Self-righteousness is the besetting sin there. They love to judge their neighbor and to spread scandal. But look, there is the light of the rest-house, and soon you will be able to judge for yourself what manner of men dwell in the sixth division of Hell.’

“How painful was the climb up that long, long flight of steps. But ever the beacon light grew stronger, till soon it illumined a path. Though the light hurt, yet I bore it stoically, and soon we entered the haven of refuge.

“Here I must stop, for it is time for you (J. W.) to return.”

So having said goodbye to both, I (J. W.) returned to earth.

Chapter XXXII

The Sixth Division. A Church and its Vicar

LETTER FROM "THE OFFICER"

Sept. 5th, 1914.

"We stayed but a short time in this rest-house, which was a large one, before continuing our journey. Once more the fog engulfed us, and we seemed to turn to the right, and soon I saw the grey mass of a city. This city had a high wall on the side overlooking the great precipice, and it was from one of the towers of the wall that the man we saw fall into the fifth division of Hell had been cast.

"The town consisted for the most part of modern-looking houses of the dreary, respectable type that one sees in many of the London suburbs. Some attempt was evidently made to keep the place moderately dean, and this was the first division in which this had been attempted.

"Seeing a theater, and asking my guide if I might enter it, he permitted me to do so, himself waiting outside. As I entered I saw one of the inhabitants of the city and spoke to him. He seemed slightly taken aback, and said:

"We've not been introduced!"

"Oh, damn it, what does that matter?!" I replied.

"Please do not swear!" he answered.

"I apologized, and then asked him what sort of plays were shown in this city."

"All sorts, so long as they are not improper. We will not permit any suggestion of impropriety here. Nothing vulgar or immoral is permitted. All our plays and music-halls are conducted on the best principles."

"I. 'That's the first time since I've been in Hell that I've heard people object to impropriety.'"

"He looked pained.

"I wish you would not use that word. There is no such place as Hell, and certainly we are not in it."

"Oh, Don't talk nonsense ...," I began. "All this realm is Hell, so what's the use of pretending it isn't. I've been long enough in Hell to know that."

"Stranger," he replied, "who are you, and from where do you come?"

"So I told him briefly my history. As I went on he slowly drew away from me, and at length broke in with 'That's enough, thank you. Either you are a liar or a villain. I know perfectly well I'm not in Hell. I suppose I'm still on earth, but anyway I never have associated with scoundrels, and I am not going to begin now. Good-day, and let me give you a piece of advice, which I do out of the kindness of my heart — I always was a kind-hearted man — Don't tell that story to anyone else here, or they will have you thrown over the battlements,' and he made off.

"I went into the theater. A musical comedy was being performed. A poorer show I've hardly ever seen. The music was not absolutely discordant, as it is in the other divisions of Hell, but it was feeble stuff. The very worst kind of so-called popular music. Plot there was none, and the whole show was so banal and trashy, that I cleared out at the end of the first scene. I noticed that the audience seemed as bored as I was, but nevertheless they stayed on.

"Next I tried a music-hall which advertised outside that its show was 'A most Refined entertainment. Funny without being Vulgar.' It certainly wasn't funny, and it certainly was, to my thinking, intensely vulgar — not indecent, but just vulgar. Low comedians of the worst type, rapid songs, silly aimless tricks — in short, absolute trash.

“On coming out, which I did very quickly, I came to a concert hall. Here at least, I thought, I may see something worth seeing, or at any rate hear it. But no; of all the banal twaddle I think that concert was the worst.

“I left as quickly as I could, and seeing a picture-gallery, entered it without expecting much satisfaction, and was not disappointed. All the rubbishy pictures in the world seemed to have been gathered together and hung on the walls of this ugly, pretentious building.

“I then returned to my guide, who had, as it were, concealed his natural brightness, and, led by him, made my way through mean streets towards the center of the town. Here I entered a very ugly brick church built in the pseudo-Gothic style.

“A service was being conducted by a fat, slimy sort of parson, who seemed to mouth his words in a succulent, unctuous manner which irritated me intensely. The service was not absolutely discordant or blasphemous; it was merely hollow and unreal. The prayers were gabbled off as quickly as possible, and it was obvious that there was no real belief behind it. It was merely a form carried through by priest and people because it was considered the proper thing to do.

“I will give you a few of the phrases which struck me in his sermon:

“Above all, my dear brothers and sisters, you must help to keep this great city clean of every form of vice. Each and every one of you should make it his or her business to watch for evil, to hunt it out and drive it forth. If you suspect that any person is secretly guilty of some vicious practice, do not rest till you discover his or her secret sin. Even if it is someone near and dear to you, it is your duty to denounce it. If you want help or advice in this great work, come to me and tell me what you suspect. Don't wait till the evil thing becomes rampant; strike at once. In me you will always find a ready helper. Do not let any false ideas of honor stand in your way. In searching out evil, you are entitled to use any means.

“Let me give you an example. A friend of yours does not come to church. You suspect her of carrying on an intrigue with someone else's husband. You should pretend to be sympathetic; you should trap her into a confession if possible. You should warn her husband; above all, you should tell me.’

“He went on in this strain for some time, and ended up with, ‘and when guilt is established, no mercy must be shown to the guilty members of society. They must be driven out. They must be hurled from the battlements into the great chasm from which there is no return.’

“In conclusion, he announced there would be a social entertainment next day in order to raise funds for church improvements.

“As I was going out I heard one member of the congregation say to another, both men:

“What I would like to know is what happens to all the money which he is always raising for church improvements.’

“The other replied, ‘I'm sure he pockets it, or at any rate most of it.’

“The first man, ‘Yes, so I think, but what does he spend it on?’

“The second man, ‘I suspect that he leads a double life — has a second home, you know.’

“I heard no more, but I determined to go to the ‘social entertainment.’

“In due course I arrived there, and in a sort of church hall found the vicar and his curate surrounded by a worshipping band of females. They hung on his every word, and when they got a chance poured scandal into his ear. Between times they told spiteful tales about the vicar and various female members of his congregation. At length I got a chance of a few words with the vicar alone, and said:

“Vicar, I'm going to ask you a plain question between man and man, and you can rely on my discretion. Do you believe in the truths of the Christian religion which you

have to teach, or are you, like so many learned divines, personally convinced the whole thing is a myth, and if so, do you really think there is a God, Heaven and Hell, and so forth?’

“He pressed his two hands together and said unctuously:

“A great deal turns on what you mean by believe.

A clergyman has a great responsibility. He must not say anything which may cause a weaker brother to stumble.’

“I pressed him closely on the point, and at length he said:

“Personally I have long thought that the tale of Christ is a myth, a beautiful myth, and I am sure St. Paul thought so. I don’t think the early Christians ever thought otherwise. They regarded it as a symbol which taught a great truth, just as the ancient Egyptians preached of the death and resurrection of Osiris. I don’t imagine for a moment that an educated Egyptian believed that Osiris ever really lived; it was a parable. Unfortunately the ignorant gradually grew to regard the parable as literally true, and during the Middle Ages this belief became universal. Today we are by degrees recovering the truth and clearing away the dross of superstition, but of course we cannot proclaim these facts from the house-tops. Indeed, if we did, we should probably be called agnostics, and turned out of our livings. Still, quietly, we are doing a great work — a great work.’

“I said, ‘If, then, the whole of Christianity is based on a parable, of what use is the Church?’

“*He.* ‘Of the very greatest, my friend. It is a great moral force. That is what it was originally intended to be, and in that sphere it can be of the greatest benefit. Oh, I foresee a long life of useful work for the Church when freed from all the superstitious accretions which have attached themselves to its ancient form. Many men who at present are disgusted at what they rightly regard as puerile fables will rally to it as a great social factor for the moral uplifting of the masses.’

“I think some people are inclined to lay too much stress on its social value, and overlook the importance of its moral influence, but they are materialists; thank Heaven, I am not one of them.’

“*I.* ‘Do you think there are such places as Heaven and Hell, and is there after all such a being as God?’

“*He.* ‘With regard to the last point, I think we are not as yet in a position to give a definite answer. We are at liberty to hold our own views. To some people the conception of a God of some sort is necessary, like the parables of Christ, or they would cease to obey the moral law; but, personally, while I would not be so presumptuous as to say there is no God, I do not consider one is essential. I consider that this world is governed by laws, and the moral law is the highest. Those who break the moral law sooner or later are punished by that law, so that I do not see that an arbitrary Creator is necessary; but, of course, I should not say this to my flock as a whole.’

“I interrupted the flow of eloquence with, ‘Still, it is not necessary to conceive of God as an arbitrary Autocrat. He may be a wise, all-seeing Judge, who co-ordinates His various laws.’

“*He.* ‘He may be; but to turn to the question of Heaven and Hell, I think I may say frankly I don’t believe in either. I consider that each man, roughly speaking, gets his rewards and punishments on this earth either by disease or from his fellow-men. Hell I consider a monstrous idea. For my part I should hesitate of course to say there is no life after death, but I doubt it.’

“I stared at him for a minute, and then said, ‘But how did you get here?’

“*He.* ‘In rather a curious way. I was very ill, and at length became unconscious. While I was in this state I had some most curious and horrible dreams. I won’t trouble to describe them, but then I was evidently delirious. When I recovered I found myself here,

without my wife. No one could tell me exactly how I came here, but being here, and finding that the vicar of this church had just disappeared in a most mysterious way, I took up his cure, and have done his work ever since. Everybody is agreed that he must be dead. That's the curious thing about life here. People don't die. I never have a funeral service.

They just vanish. I can't help thinking the sanitary authorities dispose of the bodies silently, but, after all, I've other things to bother about. My parish is a fashionable one, in the best part of the city, and I have to devote my whole time to it.'

I. 'But you've married again?'

He. Yes. I soon came to the conclusion that while I was ill, my wife must have died, so I had no hesitation in marrying again. Of course I'm too old to need that sort of thing, but my wife is a great help in the parish — a great help. I'm afraid she is not always tactful, but one can't have everything.'

I. 'Then even you do not realize that you are in Hell?'

He. 'What a preposterous question!'

'I then proceeded to give my reasons for knowing we were in Hell, and narrated my adventures since I died. He listened very coldly, and at last broke in with:

“Thank you, I've heard enough. If I were a swearing man I should use strong language, but as it is, I will content myself with saying that I don't believe a word you've told me. I'm sorry I have wasted my time talking to such a man. If you are not a liar, then, by your own showing, you are an unmitigated scoundrel. Good-day, and I should advise you to leave this city as soon as possible, for although I shall not myself denounce you, being a humane man, others will certainly discover your true character, and then you can expect little mercy.'

“He left me, and a moment later began to tell two women who hurried up to him all about me, so I thought it best to depart without undue delay.

Goodbye.”

“I close. — H. J. L.”

Chapter XXXIII

A Debate in Hell as to Whether There is a Life After Death

TRANCE VISION

Sept. 7th, 1914.

As soon as I reached the house in which H. J. L. lived, I found the officer waiting, and he at once continued his story.

“After wandering through the city for some time I saw a building which appeared to be a sort of Institute. On looking in I perceived that there was a kind of debate in progress. It appeared that some missionaries from the higher realms had been holding meetings, and as a result someone had proposed the theme: *Is there a Life after Death?*”

“One man said, ‘there is no evidence that men live after death. Some people I know argue that we have died, and therefore since we are now alive this fact proves that there is a life after death. But this is begging the question. We are alive, and therefore this proves that we have not died. We have all been very ill, and on recovering find the whole earth changed. Look, how grey the sky is, and how dark it is all day!’

“‘Yes! broke in another man, ‘that’s why I’m sure we are dead, and I believe we are in Hell!’

“‘Preposterous’ cried the first speaker.’ We are just as comfortable here as we were before our illness. I don’t believe in Hell, but if, for the sake of argument, we admit that there may be such a place, all will agree that this cannot be Hell. The parsons taught us that Hell is a place of eternal torment, *where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*. Well, there is nothing of that sort here. We are of course all rather bored with the same endless round of petty cares and troubles, but that is what we always find on earth. There is no anguish of the damned any more than we experience the imaginary joys of Heaven. That, to my mind, is one of the strongest proofs possible that we are not dead. If there were such a thing as life after death, it would be entirely different to life on earth. Now this life may differ from life when we were younger, but it is not so entirely different as it would be if we were disembodied spirits. Gentlemen, I move that this house considers that there is no convincing evidence in favor of life after death.’

“I will not detain you with the arguments of his opponent, who maintained that there was life after death. They followed the usual lines which might be expected. The speaker declared that he was sure he had died, and so on. He admitted that he was puzzled where they were, but considered that they were probably in purgatory (indignant protests from several staunch Protestants, who declared this was Pope-ish rot). The chairman intervened, and order was restored.

“I felt, however, he only half believed his own arguments.

“The next man who rose had a really ingenious theory, though it failed to convince many of the audience. He said:

“‘I know I died, and this life I believe is just a dream. I suppose our brains go on working for some little time after life is declared extinct. Having lost all real control of the body, it spends its time weaving wonderful dreams. Of course I know this cannot last long, but when on earth, I have often dreamed long dreams, in which days and weeks seemed to elapse, and found out afterwards that I had not dozed for more than five minutes. You will say at once, ‘Then we are merely the phantoms of our brains.’ You are right. There is no city, no debating hall, no one but myself. I have dreamed you all. Soon my brain will run down, and then the dream will cease. Look how we go on doing exactly the same things as we did on earth over and over again like automatons. No, the only life after Death consists of the dreams of the dying brain; but I waste my time talking to the creations of my own fancy!’ and he sat down with a morose frown.

“A roar of laughter greeted this speech. Then I sprang up.

“Gentlemen, I am but a stranger who has wandered into your city on his journey to another place, but if you will only believe me, I think I can convince you that there is a life after Death, and whether or not there is Heaven, there is certainly Hell, and we are in it. Further, there are lower depths of Hell than this, and in them men suffer torments akin to those which are considered proper to Hell. Listen to my own adventures since I died.’

“But it was no use; before I had nearly finished they shouted me down, and several threatened to haul me off to the battlements. As I went out a man followed me, and as soon as I had got out of sight of the building he came up to me and said:

“Sir, I know you are right, and as you have worked your way up through so many divisions of Hell, you will doubtless escape in the end; may I come with you?’

“Before I could answer his guide became visible, and said, ‘My son, I will guide you out of this realm to a place where loving friends will help you; come, follow me. It was impossible for any to help you till you desired help, but now I may return to you.’ And they went away together.”

Chapter XXXIV

He Reaches the Seventh Division

“So I journeyed on alone, led by my own guide out of that city. We passed other cities and villages all very much alike, till at length we reached a high mountain range. Slowly and painfully up this we climbed, and the higher we went the harder and steeper became the path, till at length we reached the top, and saw a short way in front another rest-house, larger and finer than any I had seen before. High up towered the building, and from the topmost story a great light beamed forth into the darkness.

“But the Powers of Darkness were not going to allow me to escape without one last effort, and suddenly I was surrounded by a howling mob, which tried to drag me back and cast me over the cliff.

“But I had not toiled so hard and suffered so much to lose heart now, and summoning all my will-power to me I hurled my assailants to right and left. Even as I did so my guide stood beside me in all his brightness, and the vile spirits fell back screaming with fear.

“To me the pain was intense, but I bore it, and stumbling forward fell against the door. Instantly it opened, and kind hands drew me in and the door slammed to. As it did so I heard a yell of baffled rage and hate.

“Then I heard my guardian angel’s voice saying, ‘Son, for a while you will not see me, but I shall be always at hand.’

“The strangers whom I could not see because of the light led me away into a darkened room.

“I shall not describe all that happened there. You know already from what J. H. L. has told you.

“For some time I stayed in the hospital undergoing treatment, which was directed to drawing out of my spiritual form all the gross and evil matter it contained. When this work was completed I had shrunk to the size of a tiny baby. Then they began to build up my frame, and after a short while I was able to take my place in the schools.

“Here I met P., who showed me the greatest kindness, and though I was one of the worst ‘boys’ in the school, never ceased trying to help me.

“When he left the school he particularly urged me to try and follow him, and I determined to do so.

“But that must wait till Saturday, for it is time you returned.”

So though I (J. W.) was loath to leave them, I departed.

Chapter XXXV

He Escapes out of Hell at Last

AUTOMATIC LETTER

Sept 12th, 1914.

The officer will take control and complete his narrative. — H. J. L.

The Officer. “When it was time for me to leave the school I must admit that a great dread filled me. I feared the terrible darkness almost more than anything else. But I refused to give way to this feeling, and asked to be shown the way.

“Now we are not permitted to go out of Hell by the road by which H. J. L. visited and returned from the schools in Hell. We have to climb the sides of the precipice, and very hard it is.

“We went out of the same door by which I had entered the rest-house, and turning to the right passed along a broad ledge. One side was the chasm which led down to the sixth division, while on our right hand was a high cliff. The darkness seemed blacker than ever, probably because I had begun to get used to light in the schools.

“We were passing a cave when a huge and hideous form sprang out, crying, ‘Hold, none may escape from Hell I’ But ere he had time to touch me, my guide turned and made the sign of the cross in the direction of the foul creature, who screamed and fled back into his stinking den.

“The next phase will ever remain in my memory as a hideous nightmare. We began to climb the almost precipitous cliff. I kept constantly slipping back. Stones and rubbish slid from beneath my feet, but still on we climbed.

“My guide appeared to float slowly upwards, always a little ahead, and from him the light flowed which lit up my path.

“At length he bade me stay, and I did so thankfully. We had reached a small level platform, and here he bandaged my eyes, saying, ‘To your weak faith, even the dim light of half belief will be for a time too strong.’

“So we continued the upward journey, but at length came to a piece up which I simply could not climb. My guide said, ‘Fear not, I will help you to surmount this last obstacle, for the end of your long journey is almost attained.’

“Next moment I felt his hand in mine, and making a last effort scrambled out on to the level top of the cliff.

“It seemed to be in a blaze of light, like the plains in India at midday. In spite of the bandage the pain was so intense that I rolled on the ground in anguish. The rest of the story you know; how P. was there to greet me and introduce me to H. J. L., and how from him I have learnt how to communicate through you with the earth.

“Now this task is finished, and I am going with a band of other spirits to work on the astral plane. There I hope to help many of the soldiers who are laying down their lives for their country. My knowledge is considerable, both of the astral plane and of Hell, and I hope to be able to guide and save many; among them perhaps I may still find a few of my old comrades in arms.

“P. has gone back to work in — Hell, and the Monk has passed on beyond this realm through the great wall of fire.

“Now farewell all. — The Officer.”

“I close. — H. J. L.”

PART III

W. A.: THE ASTRAL PLANE

Chapter I

W. A. Passes Over

LETTER FROM W. A.

April 11th, 1914.

“I find it difficult to start, but shall do better in a moment. I am W. A. You know the rest.

“When death came upon me I seemed to lose consciousness for a moment, and then I suddenly felt much freer and better.

“I cried out, ‘I’m better, M.’ Then I was aware of a terrible darkness all around me. I could see nothing — and hear nothing. ‘What is it? Is this the beginning of death?’ I inquired.

“I passed my hands over my body, and was thankful to find I had a body and could feel it. Then dimly in the far distance I perceived a faint speck of light. It grew brighter, and seemed to be approaching me.

“Suddenly close by me I was aware of a greater intensity of darkness, and then a sensation of something horrible and evil became evident. I trembled and seemed filled with nausea, and turned towards the distant speck of light. But though I could now see what it really was, I was unable to approach it.

“What I saw was a great and glorious spirit of light, but so far distant that I could form no clear idea of his features and relative size.

“‘Am I dead?’ I shrieked; and an evil voice at my shoulder cried, ‘Yes, but fear not. I will look after you, protect you, and guide you.’

“I shrank from this awful being, nevertheless, and turning to the bright spirit tried to approach him, but could not. Then I tried to find my way out of the room, for I conceived myself still to be in it, but found I could move no great distance from what I ultimately discovered was my body.

“Now to make matters plain to you I should say that I was really in my astral body, but of course did not know it at the time. Further, having done little on earth to develop my spiritual faculties, I was at first as one who is blind.

“After a while I began to be faintly aware of someone weeping. I knew instinctively it was M., and sought her that I might comfort her, but alas! I could not even see her. After what seemed like an endless age I began to see things dimly, like a man looking through a dirty glass, and the things I saw appeared blurred and indistinct.

“In time, let me tell you, we astrals are able to perceive you mortals as clearly as you can each other, yet when we reach the state of the spiritual body we see your bodies much less distinctly, but your souls and your thoughts much more plainly.

“Gradually I became conscious of the fact that I was watching some persons place something in a box, and in time realized it was my coffin. Then I was aware of traveling in a vague, dream-like way, of crossing land and water and land.

“Suddenly I perceived that I was in familiar surroundings. It was P. Then a vague sensation of my funeral, and then, clear and distinct at last, I saw the coffin being lowered into the grave. I followed the mourners back to my house, and by degrees I began to understand more clearly the conditions under which I now lived.

“The first thing that I realized was that I who had always considered myself a business man had failed those I loved best in the very point I should have been most

business-like about. I was present while men whom I had believed to be my friends devised means by which they might take advantage of my carelessness in drawing up my will. I had left my dear ones at their mercy, and mercy they would get none. Oh, how I suffered, and yet even then I realized the justice of my punishment. I had often taken advantage of another man's carelessness to snatch a mean advantage. I called it 'Good business' then, now I saw it in its true light.

"I drifted away, for I found, strive as I would, I could do nothing to influence these harpies, and so fled away dejected and miserable.

"Suddenly I heard a voice strangely familiar to me, and I saw D.

"Why, W. dear, how glad I am to meet you!" she cried.

"I can't say how glad I was to meet at length someone with whom I had been in contact in life.

"It's quite like old times' I cried, 'only, alas! we have no bodies.'

"Don't worry about that, we can manage that," she replied. 'Come with me, dear.'

"We went along hand in hand, and presently we found ourselves in a room. In it were a man and a woman.

"Watch me!" she cried.

"In some strange way she appeared to attach herself to the woman. The effect was magical. She had appeared pale, wan and shadowy, but now before me she grew young, handsome and healthy. She seemed also to become more and more material.

"Splendid!" I cried; 'how do you do it?'

"I suck up the vital energy from this fool and convert it to my own use. You do likewise with that man. Then in a large measure we shall be as we were of old.

"But doesn't it hurt the woman?'

"Of course; it drains away her vitality, and in time will kill her. But what of that?'

"My God, no!" I cried; 'I will never do such a thing. I may have been a blackguard, but I'll never do that. Get away, you wretch!'

"Don't be so silly, dear,' she began, but I was filled with a sudden sense of loathing.

"She turned like a fiend on me and shrieked, 'You shall pay for this. I'll bring someone who will make you suffer for it!'

"Do so!" I cried, and left her.

"Now I will stop for the time being. — W. A."

Chapter II

How Old Friends Behaved on Learning of his Death

TRANCE CONVERSATION

April 13th.

I felt myself whirling through space, and then found myself in H. J. L.'s room. He greeted me with evident pleasure, and then added, "W. A. will be here in a moment, and I think he had better continue the narrative he began in the letter."

The next moment W. A. entered, and almost at once began.

"After leaving D., I wandered about feeling lost and forsaken. Presently I thought of a former friend, and immediately I was standing in a breakfast-room in a large house. The place was quite familiar to me. A man and woman were seated at breakfast, and the former spoke.

"I've just heard that W. A. is dead — died very suddenly in I."

"I (W. A.) watched her closely.

"She turned slightly pale, then said, 'Poor fellow, he was rather a pal of yours, wasn't he? I expect you'll miss him.'

"Yes, I shall; he was a decent sort. Of course, he had his faults, as we all have, but he was a *man*.'

"A few minutes later she slipped out of the room, and I followed her. She entered her bedroom, and I expected to see her throw herself on the bed in a paroxysm of grief, for we had been on the most ultimate terms — you understand me?"

I nodded.

"She did nothing of the sort, but going to a desk opened it. From it she took two packets of letters and my photo. One packet contained my letters to her, the other her letters to me.

"What a blessing I got him to give me back those letters' she murmured. 'It was only last time, too, he brought them. The next lover I have I'll take damned good care I write nothing compromising. If these had been in his possession when he died, I should have never known when I was safe.'

"She went to the empty fireplace and carefully burnt first my letters, then hers. Finally she took my photo in her hands. Anxiously I hung near her, hoping for some sign of grief, or at least regret.

"So, W., you've gone. We have had many jolly days together. I shall have to find someone else to teach me golf now. Yes, I had better burn it. What's the good of being sentimental? If I kept it, it might lead to awkward suspicions if discovered.'

"She pushed the photo into the dying flames, and in a minute it was consumed. She went to her jewel box, and taking out a bracelet looked at it.

"Is she going to destroy that too?' I thought, and remembered that it had cost me £20.

"I began to read her thoughts, and they were these: 'Can I safely keep it, or would it be wise to sell it? If I do the latter, I don't suppose I shall get a third of its value. It's a beauty. I saw one very like it marked £25 only the day before yesterday. After all, I can tell him (she meant her husband) I saved up and bought it second-hand.'

"She turned and left the room, but I did not follow her further. I had had enough. I was never over-sentimental, but the cold-bloodedness of the woman froze me. There was not one genuine feeling of regret for her old lover among all her thoughts.

"Her husband, the very man I had wronged, felt more genuine regard for me than she did.

"This set me visiting my former friends and acquaintances, but I did not obtain much satisfaction from it. For the most part, they dismissed the matter of my death by a formal

expression of regret. Some, however, only looked upon it as an excellent opportunity to obtain some pecuniary advantage for themselves. The very men whom I had regarded most as my friends were the ones generally who set to work to rob those who were left dependent on my estate. There were a few exceptions, and often these were the very men upon whose consideration I had the least call.

“But these kindnesses were few and far between, and I suffered misery unspeakable. I understand that I have never been into Hell proper. In fact, there is no doubt of it. But all the same that period of my existence was a very colorable imitation of it.

“Then I determined to follow up H., more than half fearing to find her playing the same game as the others.

“Thank God she wasn’t. Had she been, I think I should have followed the promptings of that evil spirit who is always at my shoulder to set to work to be avenged on some of them.

“Her example kept me from that fatal sin, the punishment for which is, as you know from the officer, Hell.

Chapter III

Astral Forests. The Hunters and The Hunted

“After a while I began to realize existence on the astral plane much more clearly. I found it was peopled, and had its forests and animal kingdoms, as has the earth. This ushered in a new phase of existence.

“I had just come away from watching some of M.’s struggles, and was feeling dejected and miserable. Out of nowhere in particular appeared two forms, a man’s and a woman’s. I knew the latter. I had met the man before on the earth. She poured out a torrent of abuse, and urged the man to go for me. I closed with him, and we battled like two savages, while she tried to attack me from behind.

“It was soon over. I thrashed him so soundly that he fled away shrieking. Then I turned my attention to her. I did not hesitate, I flogged her. It was in no spirit of revenge, but solely to give her a lesson and compel her to leave me alone in the future. I felt no remorse afterwards and still feel it had to be done.

“After parting from these two I wandered into a strange forest. The trees were in shape very much like giant mare’s-tails, and I knew at once this was the astral body of a great forest of the coal measure.

“At times I was able to get a glimpse of the position on earth which it occupied, faint and fleeting, yet sufficient to let me see that it was situated on what is now the Embankment; but though at times I thus saw, as it were, two planes converge and overlap one another, yet the shape of the astral ground and that of the world as you know it did not correspond.

“These glimpses of two worlds at once were, however, very rare, and usually I was confined to the astral alone.

“It was strange that this forest should be situated on the Embankment where at the present day no coal exists, but I suppose at one time it did exist there. I expected that I should find it was on the Northern or Welsh coal fields; but though I do not doubt there are such astral forests in those places, yet the forest I learnt to know seemed to correspond with the Embankment.

“This forest was a most dreary place, dark, evil-smelling, full of marshes, and, worst of all, of savage animals of former ages. Again and again these weird creatures appeared and attempted to attack me. Often they pursued me for what seemed like hundreds of miles. On and on I fled and they followed, but they never caught me or approached any nearer than they were when the pursuit began. This was not so strange as it seems, for they willed to hunt me and I willed to fly. My will was not sufficiently strong to compel them to cease hunting me, nor was theirs strong enough to hold me rooted to the spot.

“After a time their interest in me weakened, and they turned their attention in other directions. Then I was able to go on my own way for a time unmolested.”

J. W. I quite follow you so far, but what would Have happened if you had stumbled into the clutches one of those monsters unawares? They could not have killed you, of course, but surely they could cause you pain, just as you caused pain (by exercising your will to that intent) on the man who attacked you?”

W. A. “I was always able to ten, as it were by instinct, when I was nearing some of these animals. None of them had sufficient will-power to compel me to come towards them against my wishes.

“Now man has developed his will-power to a much greater extent than the animal and so he can compel them to obey him, and even compel other men to wait and be hurt. Often, too, two men each wish to hurt the other, as in the case you quoted. Then they will go towards each other, and he who had the strongest will usually prevail. A good man, however, could not be attacked by an evil on the astral plane, for his guardian angel could

shield him. I had driven my guardian angel so far away that during my earlier time on the astral plane I had to fend for myself in a large measure.

“Further, most really spiritual souls remain but very short time on the astral plane, and also souls of very old men, or those who had suffered a long or wearing sickness. Of course they may go to Hell, or they may go to any of these divisions in the spirit plane, but they won’t remain long in the astral.

“Young children also are seldom long on the astral plane. They have not had time to take up much earth matter, so to speak.

“To continue. I spent what seemed like an endless age being hunted through these great forests. Sometimes I revisited earth, hoping, so to speak, to break the magic spell, but it was no good. Whenever I left the earth spot I had been haunting, back I was in that damned old forest.

“People often ask two questions:

“(1) ‘Why should ghosts come?’

“(2) ‘Why don’t our dear ones communicate with those they have left behind?’

“Of course there are dozens of answers to both questions, but my experiences will supply at any rate one answer to each.

“We cling to our old surroundings because we are not yet sufficiently clear of the earth dross to leave the astral plane, and yet find that plane very unpleasant. Secondly, being thus like hunted beasts, we have no time for thinking of anyone but ourselves.

“Often when this stage is past we have formed new interests and have new duties to perform, therefore do not trouble. You must remember that it is extremely hard to communicate from here to earth, and the more spiritual we are the harder it is.

“The simplest method is by a medium, and often then the messages we get through arrive warped and twisted. Often therefore we lose heart and give up the attempt. It is only when we get a good medium through whom our messages can reach earth in the form in which they are dispatched that we think it worth while to continue to experiment.

“Well, again I have rather wandered.

“After some time I did get out of this forest, but only to find myself in a more modern type of forest.

“Here I underwent similar experiences with modern animals — lions and tigers, wolves, and so forth. Sometimes these animals would hunt deer and antelopes over hills and dales, but I could never discover that they caught anything.

“After a time I found, however, that there was a difference here. Whether it was that I had developed, or whether it was due to the fact that these creatures had learnt about man on earth and had come to fear him I can’t say, probably it was due to both facts. But I discovered this. If I turned and faced my pursuer, and willed that he should fly from me, at the same time advancing towards him or them, sooner or later the creature would turn and fly.

“At first I only attempted it with solitary beasts, my first adventure being with a large lone wolf. Encouraged by my success I next tackled a lion, and finally succeeded in putting a whole pack of wolves to flight.

“Soon after this I was able to leave the forests and came into new surroundings.”

J. W. “Did you not feel any of your old earth desires? The officer in his account speaks exclusively of them.”

W. A. “Yes. During almost the whole time I was continually desiring to gratify the old lusts of the flesh. Many times when I was haunting the earth I found myself drifting towards places where these abounded. The whole time that cursed devil was urging me to gratify my desires by obsessing someone. Again and again I nearly gave way to the temptation, but each time I heard the warning voice of my guardian angel saying, ‘If you do that, you go to Hell.’

“It was not only that, however, but a feeling that the thing was in itself uncanny and loathsome which helped me to resist the temptation.

“After I had ceased to fear the wild beasts, these desires made a redoubled effort to capture me, but at the same time I found I had drawn a little nearer to my guide.”

Chapter IV

He Determines to Help Men on Earth that he May Escape from the Astral Plane

“Slowly I began to long for some purpose in life. I seemed to be ever drifting about with no object in view. I don’t know how long it was as you reckon time before this idea really took definite shape; to me it seemed after ages of suffering.

“At once there came an answer from my guide, who seemed at the same time to draw much nearer to me.

“‘Why not strive to approach nearer to God, to become more spiritual, and, in time, to leave the astral for the spiritual plane.’

“‘I’d gladly do so if I could!’ I replied. ‘How can I?’

“‘By striving to help someone else. That is the amplest method for you!’

“‘How can I help anyone here? ...’ I began.

“‘That is for you to discover!’ he answered sharply.

“This gave me at any rate an object in life, and I began to think how I could help someone. I am still fearfully ignorant as to the power possessed by spirits, and at that time I knew far less.

“My thought naturally drifted to M., and I soon concentrated my attention on trying to help her, and succeeded.

“I was fearfully pleased at this success, as I knew she would now have a good time on the whole.

“I then noticed that my guardian angel had drawn quite close to me, and the evil spirit had drifted farther away.

“‘You have made a good beginning, but of course this piece of work was easy, for you cared for this woman. Now you must help someone who is nothing to you.’

“This was not so interesting nor so easy. It took me a long time to decide who I would try to help. At last the chance came, and with it the inspiration how to act.

“I was in Southampton — I often go there even still — when I saw a young fellow making up accounts in a large shop. Something drew me towards him, and I at once perceived that he was contemplating falsifying the accounts and pocketing the difference.

“Then the inspiration came. I exerted all my will, desiring that he should both see and hear me.

“Suddenly the young man started up and dropped his pen, which made a blot on the page. I knew he saw me, and raised my arm in a menacing attitude.

“After a moment’s pause I spoke, or, rather, willed that he should hear these words:

“‘Young man, stop before it is too late, I have come back from the grave to warn you. That way leads to disgrace and prison. Be warned in time.’

“He shrieked, and fled cowering into a corner of the place, and began to blabber out that he’d never do it, he promised.

“Seeing my object was attained, and feeling the strain on my will was too great, I willed that I should become invisible, and of course vanished from his sight.

“I saw him stagger to the book and place it quietly on his desk. As he did so he murmured, ‘My God, my God! It was sent as a warning. What a fool I should have been!’

“I left him; feeling convinced that I had been successful.

“I soon perceived my guide, now close beside me.

“‘Well done,’ he said, ‘your second task is accomplished.

There still remains one more. You must now help someone you had cause to hate.’

“I at once thought of D., who had tried to drag me down after death, but my guide said, ‘No, you cannot help her. You must try and help someone still alive.’

“After a lot of thought I remembered a fellow who had swindled me rather badly some time before I died. The details don’t matter. I must admit I didn’t much relish the job; still, I determined to do the best I could.

“I found that one of his partners was intending to cut with a large sum of money, and the result for him would be financial ruin.’

“How to help him was the difficulty. I tried to inspire him to look into certain matters which would have aroused his suspicions, but it was no go; he was so materialistic that I could not make the slightest impression.

“Then I tried to appear to him as a ghost, as in the former case, but it didn’t come off this time. He was far too materialistic to be affected.

“Then I tried his wife, but with the same result.

“At length I hit on the only way. His partner drank. I found him sitting in his office sleeping off the effects of too much whiskey at lunch. My former enemy was seated in *his* office hard at work. They each had a separate office.

“I obtained control of the drunken man for a short time in a similar manner to the way in which I am able to write through you when in trance. Of course, as this was my first experience, and, further, he was not in trance but only sleeping in drink, my control was not very good. However, I made him write this:

“Dear, — This morning I determined to cut to South America with £5,000 in cash, which I drew at midday from our joint account. It practically emptied that account. At the last moment my better self prevailed. I therefore write this to you. I trust that you will not consider it necessary to prosecute, but of course I understand that we shall have to dissolve partnership. — Yours, etc.’

“Then I walked the man into his partner’s office, made him hand him the letter, and then took him back safely to his chair and left him there still asleep. He was not left asleep long though, for my former enemy rushed into the office and woke him up.

“I need not tell you all that passed; sufficient it is to say that the partner had to hand back the cash he had drawn out and dissolve partnership. My former foe did not prosecute, and the business was settled quietly and without anyone getting to know the ins and outs of the case.

“‘You have at length won — your release,’ cried my guide, and as he spoke I saw the evil spirit who had haunted me for so long being rapidly whirled away by some unknown force.

“I will describe how I emerged on to the spirit plane at another time.”

He ceased, and H. J. L. took me out of the room.

“You must return now,” he said; “you have been here quite long enough.”

Next moment I was whirling through space — then oblivion. — J. W.

Chapter V

Types of Beings other than Men. Animal Astrals, Fairies, Elementals

LETTER

At 109 CHARING CROSS ROAD

Saturday, April 18th, 6:45 P.M.

H. J. L. "We shall not write long tonight, as conditions are not very good. W. A. will continue from the place he left off on Monday."

W. A. "My guide said to me, 'Before you leave this plane it would be well for you to learn something about the various types of beings who inhabit it besides men.'

"He pointed to a crowd of hideous beings who appeared to be hovering round a public-house, together with a large number of earth-bound men and women.

"Carefully distinguish between those astrals which are still tenanted by men and those which are merely empty shells.'

"I then perceived that there were several kinds of astrals. Those still inhabited by human spirits seemed to have more life in them than the others. These let us call No. 1. No. 2 group were the empty astral shells from which the spirits had departed. Some seemed shadowy and faint — real ghosts — while others seemed almost as vital as the inhabited astrals.

"My guide explained, 'These are divisible into two groups:

(a) Those astrals that make no effort to prolong their existence once the spirit has fled, and

(b) those that do.'

"The latter suck up the magnetic fluid which is inherent in all living creatures, and in so doing drain it away from its rightful owners. They have no real intellects, such as evil men who obsess have, but have merely a kind of blind instinct akin to that of a plant. They are parasites, and fatten on the life of other creatures.'

"How is it that some of these empty shells desire to prolong this existence while others do not?' I asked.

"He replied, 'It is because they have been inhabited by gross and materialistic spirits, and often by spirits who have started the instinct by obsessing someone. You know that evil woman wished you to obsess that man. Had you done so, in time you would have endeavored not merely to obtain a temporary strengthening of your astral body, which would enable you to enjoy again the lusts of the flesh, but also you would have begun to desire to prolong your existence in this plane, fearing to fall into Hell.

"For a time you would have been able to delay that result by sucking up the magnetic fluid from some weak mortal. In the end you would have been driven from your astral body, and your spirit sunk to Hell, but your astral, having acquired the habit, would continue to hang on to some poor wretch like a leech, and by so doing might have been able to hang about the earth for an indefinite time — possibly hundreds of years.

"Thus obsessing not only hurls the soul to Hell? but, as it were, creates a ghoul which can continue to afflict the living.'

"Thus I learnt that there were at least three definite types of astrals proper:

"(1) those still occupied by the soul.

"(2) those which were real ghosts, and tended rapidly to disintegrate.

"(3) Those which have lost the soul, but yet retain a separate existence by sucking up the vital elements of living mortals.

"Are there any other inhabitants of these realms?' I inquired.

"Many others,' my guide replied; 'but let me first say that animal astrals leave empty shells, and even occasionally these "shells" may be seized on by evil men who have lost their own astral forms, and wish temporarily to possess one. Such spirits, may, further,

endeavor to retain possession and renew their vitality, as in the case of their old astral bodies. This they can seldom do for long, and usually destroy the astral in their endeavors, but occasionally they succeed in starting the vampire habit, and then lose control of the body. The result is that the animal astral, having obtained the vampire instinct, may continue it.'

"Such cases are rare, however, and evil spirits more usually seize the astral shell of some elemental, for they can more easily mould it to their own original shape.'

"The second group are elementals. Now those you saw just now by that low drinking-den are one of the most numerous types. These are formed by the elements of a low and bestial nature thrown off by vicious men, and they therefore take these loathsome shapes. They can obtain a kind of half existence by hanging round the spots on earth where this type of lust is indulged in. By so doing they don't get direct satisfaction from the drunkard, but they do get some materialistic elements which enable them to keep in existence. They have no separate souls, or even intellects.'

"I asked, 'How is it then that they take any forms at all?'

He. 'Elements of the same type attract each other, and the actual form they take is due to the influence of astral currents which flow through this plane in a manner analogous to the currents of the sea. Just as a mass of sawdust thrown into water tends to drift into various rough shapes and forms, so do these. Similarly, these forms are usually short-lived and fleeting. Now look at that group.'

"Why!' I cried, 'Bless my soul! There are fairies then!' For these elementals looked like fairies of one's childhood.

"Yes, there are fairies, and some more substantial than these.' As he spoke I noticed that they had broken up and vanished.

"What are they?' I cried.

"These are elemental astral, atoms thrown off by young children. They naturally drift into these pretty, harmless shapes, influenced to do so by the thoughts and dreams of children. There are fairies of a more real type to which I will return later. There are whole hosts of elementals who are thrown off by men of low spiritual development — savages, and so forth. These are quite distinct from the elementals formed out of the astral elements thrown off by evil men. They include many of the satyrs and wood nymphs of ancient folk tales, but not all.'

"Then I saw the pub again, and, besides the crowd of elementals, astrals, and so forth, I was aware of an awful being who seemed to be ruler and master of them all.

"What is that awful brute?!' I cried.

"That,' my guide answered, 'is a vice personified. Such beings are created by the devotion to any particular lust by all men so afflicted. This drink fiend is something far more real than any ordinary elemental. He is the embodiment not of one man's evil, but of the evil thoughts of thousands. He is not really of this plane, as are the elementals and astral shells, but of Hell itself. He is the embodiment of an "idea."

"In your next stage of development you will see many such "ideas," but, fortunately, they will mostly be good ones. This being belongs properly to Hell, but comes hither to urge on these sots to more evil. He is, as it were, one of the connecting links between the astral plane and Hell, just as I am one of the connecting links with the realms of progress.

"Now besides these elementals there exist a number of spirits who never inhabited a physical body, and yet are real spirits, with intellects of their own. Some of these occupy astral bodies, others do not, and I will deal with them later."

"But I [W. A. — ED.] think we have done enough for tonight. Now good-bye. — W. A."

 TRANCE VISION, ETC.

AT 109 CHARING CROSS ROAD.

Monday, April 20th, 1914.

W. A.'s NARRATIVE.

“My guide further told me concerning the spirits who have astral bodies but have never possessed real physical bodies, as follows:

“These beings may be good or bad or mixed, just as man is mixed. The latter are the largest group, and they are open to the same temptation that besets men here, that is, to try by obsessing to obtain something akin to a physical body.

“If they do so, they sooner or later suffer the fate that befalls men who obsess. They are thrown out of their astral bodies and fall into Hell. They are therefore those who never were men, and yet are in Hell.

“So, too, astrals may progress to the spiritual plane. This is most frequently done by their striving to help mortals on earth, but there are other methods.

“To this group of beings belong most of the so-called fairies who are seen still by a few, and at one time, when men were nearer to the “next world” were often seen on earth. These beings, since they, like men, are often of a mixed disposition, are liable to do foolish or even wicked acts, as well as good and kind ones. Their most noticeable characteristic is irresponsibility, and often indeed mischievousness.

They know little of pain and sorrow, and therefore are less serious than men.

“This is a great hindrance to any progress on their part, but, contrariwise, they are less likely to become tainted with the more deadly spiritual sins, such as cruelty and hate.

“I do not propose to deal any further with these astral creatures, as it would not help your spiritual progress, but it is well that you should realize that man is not the only creature in the astral plane, much less on the spiritual. Man is so egotistical that he is for ever imagining that he is the only being who matters. When on earth he often considers the animals are of no importance. Even when not a materialist, he abrogates to himself the sole possession of a soul, and considers he alone has any possibility of a future life.

In like manner he, knowing nothing about the subject, often declares that there are no spirits in the land beyond the grave except men. Even when dead he often does not realize that there are countless other orders of beings under God’s gracious protection besides men.

“Like attracts like, and it is often the case that a man meets few other beings save men, or, if he does, he fails to see that they were not men once. He sees exalted spirits who were men, and jumps to the conclusion that all exalted spirits were men. He learns that he has an astral body, and at once assumes that every inhabited astral must necessarily possess a human spirit.

“Further, it must be remembered that for the most part it is easier for the spirits who have been men to help or hinder men, for they know far better the trials and difficulties that beset men.

“Finally, it is by no means easy to tell what type of spirit one is dealing with even when one knows that there are many orders of creation. This is especially the case in the lower planes of existence, and it is from these for the most part that earth derives what little information it does possess of *the next world*.’

“‘Were you a man?’ I inquired.

“‘I was’ he replied; ‘and so are most guardian angels, but not all. But enough of these matters. Only beware of jumping to hasty conclusions, especially on negative evidence.

“‘Now it is time for you to leave the astral plane. Kneel and pray.’”

Chapter VI

He Leaves the Astral for the Spirit Plane

"I did so, and repeated the Lord's Prayer.

"As I did this a great weight seemed to crush me down. My surroundings began to blur and quiver. The astral landscape became like a painted canvas, and then this grew thin. It split and rent in a thousand fragments, and dissolved into tatters of mist. These seemed to be whirled away as if by a strong wind, but I felt no breeze.

"The weight grew more and more heavy. I seemed to be enclosed in a coffin of lead. At length I could bear it no longer, and shrieked to my guide

'Help me, for God's sake, to get clear of this weight.'

"He held out his hand to me, and I sprang towards it, and, to my astonishment, found myself free of the weight.

"Then my astral shell was caught by the same wind which was shattering the landscape. It whirled and twisted and grew flimsy. Then it whirled out of sight.

"The mists drifted quickly away and I saw a beautiful landscape, the type of landscape familiar to you by now. I had reached the plane of the spiritual body.

I had hardly time to realize it before, on every side, visions of my former life came crowding upon me in a wild chaos, like a hideous nightmare from which I could not escape.

"I could not see my guide, and called desperately to him, and a voice answered *Pray*.

"Then I prayed, and as I did so the visions ceased to be chaos, and took on a regular sequence. From my earliest childhood up to the hour of my death every act and thought were there shown as a little drama enacted again and again. Not only the evil, but also the good."

Here H. J. L. intervened.

"The rest was practically the same as my own experience, so we won't go over it again. A., just tell Jack about your spiritual body."

He smiled a little sheepishly.

"My present body looks like that of a fairly young boy, but then it was as small as one of eight. I suppose I'm now in size equal to a boy of twelve or thirteen."

J. W. "Yes, not more than thirteen."

W. A. "Well, when I discovered this, I asked my guide, who was leading me to the school to which Mr. L. also went, 'Why have I such a tiny spiritual body?'

"He answered rather sternly, 'Because you did so little to develop your spiritual nature on earth. Indeed, but for your work on the astral plane you could not have come to the spiritual plane yet.'

"That's the worst of it, that's why I'm making such slow progress, that and the fact that I still bother about earth things too much."

H. J. L. rose. "Well, Jack, say goodbye to Mr. A., for you must be going now, and you won't see him again for some little time, as he's done his share for the time being."

So we shook hands, and almost immediately afterwards I seemed to lose consciousness. — *J. W.*

A SUBALTERN IN SPIRIT LAND

A Sequel to "Gone West"

by

J. S. M. WARD, B.A., F.R. Econ. S., F.R.S.

Late scholar and prizeman of Trinity Hall, Cambridge.

PART ONE

(1916)

PSYCHIC BOOK CLUB LTD

144, High Holborn, London, W.C.1

Dedication:

In the name of the dead, undying,

Of the corpses silent lying

Mid the thunderous, battle's roar,

In the name of the mother who bore me,

And the brother who passed before me,

I open the guarded door.



SECOND-LIEUT. R. L. W.

Frontispiece.

INTRODUCTION

In *Gone West* I have explained at some length the manner in which that work was obtained. In this sequel I have abandoned automatic writing, and utilized solely the power I had developed of passing in the trance state to the next plane of existence. The death of my brother created a new link with the Unseen World which is all around us. As he had passed; not to the spirit plane, but to the astral plane, I concentrated my attention on the latter. I did this the more readily as it is to this plane that the great bulk of our soldiers have passed. Naturally, conditions there were abnormal during the war, but these very conditions were the more interesting to all of us whom they have left behind.

Having myself suffered such a loss by the death within the same year of three close relations, I can realise how terribly many another has suffered during these last five years. I have had an advantage denied to most of my readers that of being able to go out there and communicate face to face with those who have passed over. Yet despite this, I felt most bitterly their loss. How much more, then, those who cannot do so!

In giving this narrative to the general public, I have been actuated by the desire to bring comfort to others in a similar position of loss. I knew that the Dead die not long before my brother died, but of the manner in which they live I knew only a little. Except for the brief account of the astral plane by W. A., and another rather specialized account by the Officer, my knowledge related mainly to the spirit plane. Of the astral plane under war conditions I knew nothing.

The interest *Gone West* aroused has been shown not merely by its sales, considerable as these have been, but by the large number of letters I have received, which have been of the greatest encouragement. Those of us who are endeavoring to spread the true knowledge of life beyond the grave, are doing so in the face of opposition alike from the ordinary man of the world and from the ministers of established religions. Sometimes we are laughed at, whilst at other times we are called necromancers. Some of our opponents even go so far as to hint that we are not quite sane but this has always been the way in which new truths are received at first. Nevertheless, it may be of interest to my readers to know that I am a perfectly normal man, one who is earning his living in business and who has every day to deal with complex mundane matters. The fluctuations in the rate of exchange, source of the raw materials of industry, the German methods of trade penetration, and trade statistics are a few of the subjects with which I am concerned, and on all of which I have written articles and issued reports which are readily taken by the trade journals.

I assure my readers that, from the financial point of view, it pays far better for me to write two or three articles on 'Openings for British Trade' in, say, South America, than it does to write such a book as this. I am not a medium, plying for hire, as the daily papers would call it. And if you met me at dinner, unless I spoke of these things, you would find me no different from a hundred other busy men of affairs.

Why, then, should the critics suppose that my ordinary clear business mind fails me when I turn to investigate psychical phenomena, or think I should waste my time practicing a heartless fraud on my readers? After all, those are the alternatives. If I did not feel that the message these pages contain was not merely true, but of vital importance to our sorrow-laden world, be assured that I would not thus publicly reveal much which is absolutely sacred to my personal life.

And, after all, is the picture of life beyond the grave so unnatural? For my part, I consider it absolutely rational and reasonable, and on its own account much more intrinsically probable than the misty and unconvincing stories of Heaven and Hell on which our early years were nurtured. Is the average man at death in a state to appreciate the Heaven as depicted? The Churches can give us no rational account of life beyond the grave. The best attempt is that made by the Roman Catholic Church, and it will be noticed that many of the statements made by that body are borne out by the narratives we are now obtaining. But not all she says is correct. It would appear to the impartial observer as if at one time the Roman Catholic Church at least had kept the doorway open; but at a later date closed it, and since then much which her seers had learned became distorted or misunderstood by a later generation.

For the most part, however, the Churches have utterly failed to answer the agonized question, 'Whither go we?' Long years ago a Christian missionary stood before an Anglo-Saxon king and pleaded his cause. Then arose a priest of Woden, and said, 'O King, the life of man is like a sparrow which flutters into the lighted hall out of the dark and stormy night. For a moment it flies round our hall, lit by the cheerful light of the fire, and then it vanishes once more out into the sleet mid the rain. Such are we. We come out of the dark and into it return, but whence we come, and whither we go, we know not. If these men can tell us ought, then let us follow them, and leave the old gods behind.'

Have the Churches really answered the great question? I, for one, say No! And there are tens of thousands in England to-day who will agree with me. Then let others endeavor to do so. Let us direct the same scientific minds, as have won from Nature her hidden secrets, to demand of Death the greatest secret of all. Let us direct the scientific mind to study the soul and the spirit of man, as it has already studied his body. And this is being done. Each day the number of careful students grows greater. Each day new discoveries are being made and if the Churches will not co-operate, regret it though we may, then we who do know the truth must go on alone.

A new dawn is breaking, and the most priceless kind of knowledge is attainable, and that is not the belief but the certainty of life beyond the grave.

One objection which is often raised to works similar to this is that the life they depict varies in every different work. As a matter of fact, if the critic would read enough other books he would find that certain essential points were in agreement, and that it was only the details which varied.

When one realizes the vastness of the “Unseen World” one can expect no less. After all, if the men of Mars dispatched six messengers to Earth, and instructed them to wireless back a detailed account of its inhabitants, the Martian papers would probably make the same sort of comment.

One article might reasonably begin thus: “The messages purporting to come from the misguided fanatics who set out to reach the Earth are too absurd for words. They absolutely contradict each other in almost every detail. We are told that the world is a sandy desert, with no water; and then that it is a dense and swampy jungle. This is followed by the statement that it is a frozen land, whose inhabitants cover themselves with skins.

“We are told that people are black savages who live in miserable huts; and then we receive a fanciful story of a mighty city, with machinery and mechanical transport. We are told they can fly, yet the next message says that the people are yellow, and though they have cities and some civilisation, yet they have practically no machinery at all. What can we make of it but either fraud or the dreams of madmen?”

And, after all, the explanation would merely be that the messengers had landed in such widely separated areas as the Sahara, London, the Congo, Chicago, and Greenland.

The real introduction to this book is written by R.L.W. himself, whom I asked to dictate to me what he would like to put as a foreword. So closes my share of this talk, only hoping that this true account of the trials and triumphs of a young subaltern will bring hope and peace to many.

J. W.

R.L.W. speaks: “They say, ‘They died that we might live’, and having said so, straightaway they forget us, save the few lonely souls who mourn in secret and find no comfort. As for the others, they turn to quarrelling amongst themselves, as if sufficient ill had not been wrought already upon the groaning earth. Such men as these even pay lip-service to ‘our heroic dead’, and use the catchword to advance their own particular ambitions or social theories.

“But all of these are wrong: those who mourn, and those who have forgotten. We died that Justice, Truth, and Liberty might live. We died, at least I died, that England might be free. For these things we died, and, having died, we live. This is our great reward, and nothing ye earth folk can do can take it from us. Filled with this newfound knowledge, is it strange we burn to tell those we have left behind? Not Death, but the fear of Death appalls. Remove this fear, and life on Earth becomes a life worth living. Nay, more than that, it takes its proper place, and ye will see it as it is, but one short step in the endless chain of life on many different planes.

“To those who mourn us I would say: ‘Rather be glad, for having met the Dweller Of

the Threshold, we have found him to be a friend, and not a foe - a bold knight who comes to break our chains, and not the grim warder who would bind us in his prison. From countless petty toils and ills, at one swift stroke he sets us free, and we are grateful.

“This life, compared with yours, is as the life of some soft June day compared with dark November night, and yet I know that it is but a shadow of that life which lies before us. If I had any fear, it would be that, at some long-distant day, I might be doomed to return once more to Earth and dwell as mortal man. ‘Nay’, ye will say, ‘but parting sure is sad, and we who still remain must grieve for those we loved who now have passed away.’ Yea, parting sure is sad, yet do ye break your hearts when the son leaves England’s shores and settles in some far-distant land? ‘But still he writes to us,’ ye answer, ‘but these, the dead, write unto us no more.’

“Why, every day we write to you, nay, even call upon you. Do we not come to you in your so called ‘dreams’? Can ye not find means by which ye can receive our messages if ye choose? Ye know ye can. Each day the news of our tidings are bruited about. Men speak of strange messages even in the trains by which ye travel to your daily task.

“Rejoice and be glad, for we are free, as ye can never be. The greatest tyrant of all is dead, that tyrant who, with sycophantic gesture, ye laud and worship. For no longer are we slaves unto our physical bodies. No longer are we compelled to toil and struggle at uncongenial tasks that we may earn our dally bread. No man can deprive us of our work, and no man lord it over us. Freer are we than the birds of the air, for even they must seek their daily food and live in fear of man.

“But above all this, we are free of the fleshly habits which warred against the soul. All that was best in earthly life we have, only the worst is lost, and in their place are far more wondrous days.

“Here is set forth some little part of what we know as life. Take comfort, burdened souls, and know that half has not been told. Would ye, then, wish us back on Earth; if so, is this not selfish? Do ye then, find the world so good and pleasant? Is it so happy, and so full of peace?

“Nay, had I one enemy, as I have none, I could wish him no greater ill than that he should live forever in the world.

“Not so. He hath been very gracious in that He ordained that we should be on Earth so short a time. For we lived long enough to know the pettiness of earthly life, and then were transferred to a happier world.

“Mourn not for us. Mourn, if mourn ye must, for those who, having passed through the searing fires of war, return to England to find their high hopes dashed, or even, maybe return so altered by the war that they no longer are the quiet, pleasant boy they were.

“I tell you I am happy, and so are all of us who chose the upward path. Life is full of interest, and the future holds no hidden terror to oppress our waking hours. For, with the passing of the King of Terrors, all fears have passed, and we dwell in perfect confidence, knowing that the future lies before us like a broad, golden path of light, along whose shining path choice flowers of everlasting beauty grow, and every bend revealing some glorious landscape more enchanting than the last. So, onward journeying, we leave behind us the dark gloomy forests of the world, till soon they will appear no more than from an ill dream but half-remembered, and though we do not claim that our joy is perfect, for perfection is still far hence yet, fearing nothing, we press on, find pause but for an instant to send to Earth our message. Follow after, we have blazed the way, and we will receive you all as our friends. For the love that was kindled on Earth burns more brightly here, and the hatreds die away. All that was best we have with us forever and only the worst is left behind.

“We did our work on Earth, and we are striving to do it here.

“Think of us as we are, not of us on Earth as we were. Rejoice with us in our freedom, and till we meet, follow the light that ye have till it shines forth in glory as the Gateway of Death closes firmly behind you.”

R.L.W.

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Part I
First Impressions of the Astral Plane
Chapter I
How I Found My Brother

April 29th, 1916.

Dark mists rolling by; flashes of fire. In the distance a continuous roar as of the thunder of many guns. Hosts of spirits rushing to and fro; chaos and gloom. Then I found Rex. He was seated on a bank by the roadside, clad in his uniform, but though I could see his face distinctly, yet his figure seemed rather indistinct.

He was delighted to see me, and said: "I have waited long for you."

"How did you die?" I asked.

"I do not know," he replied; "everything seemed to be in a nightmare state. There seemed to be a blank, and then I went on again, and it was not for some time that I realised that I was among unfamiliar surroundings. Even now I can't arrange things at all in any order, they seem jumbled up together."

J.W.: "Did you see the Requiem we held for you to-day?"

R.L.W.: "Yes, I did. I was jolly glad of it. I seemed to be drawn across this land towards a distant spot, and there saw a beam of light coming up through the ground, and as I stood in front of it, it grew wider and wider, and the ground became transparent, and I looked down into St. Mary's and saw the chapel and father putting my sword on the altar behind the cross, and I perceived then the whole service, I saw father and you and quite a number of others. You who are still of this earth saw, as it were, embedded in a shadowy form, and you yourselves often looked rather different. Do you know what the shadow is?"

J.W.: "Yes, our bodies. Being on the astral plane you see our astral forms, which are often different from our bodies; but our bodies, if you see them at all, you see as a shadow surrounding our astral forms."

R.L.W.: "Well, beside them, the whole church was full of strangers. Some were like you, but without the shadow. These would be people from here, while others again looked different. I can't describe how."

J.W.: "Doubtless they came from the spirit plane."

R.L.W.: "While I was watching all this, several strangers up here drifted up and watched what was going on, but did not speak. The service seemed to soothe me. I felt as though I were hopelessly distraught, and it acted like soothing music might on a person suffering from mental worry, on earth."

J.W.: "Well, old chap, tell me about life here. How do you find it?"

R.L.W.: "Fearfully lonely. As you see, there are heaps of people, but no one I know. I

feel lost in a strange land.”

J.W.: “I’ll ask H.J.L. to come and help you a bit. I feel sure he will. He does not reside on this plane, but on the spirit plane, and he can come down here sometimes and help you. At any rate, he would be a companion.”

R.L.W.: “I wish to goodness you would.”

J.W.: “I shall doubtless see him on Monday.”

R.L.W.: “I wonder how long that will be.”

J.W.: “To-day is Friday.”

R.L.W.: “That conveys nothing here. All time is different; if, indeed, there is such a thing as time.”

J.W.: “Well, it won’t be long, I hope. How did you know that I was ready to do automatic writing on Wednesday?”

R.L.W.: “Don’t know. First my promise came back strongly to me, and then I felt drawn in a certain direction, where I found myself in a shadowy sort a bedroom. I saw you, and heard you speaking to me, and somehow the pencil began to move.”

J.W.: “I must be going now. Good-bye, old chap. You may depend on me to do all I can.”

R.L.W.: “Why must you go?”

J.W.: “I feel it, but I’ll come again next week.”

Even as I spoke, he sprang up and rushed wildly away. The chaos grew greater all around. Clouds of smoke seemed to engulf us all. The earth shook and dissolved. I felt myself falling, falling, falling, while around me thunder and lightning played. These grew more distant. Silence - then, after a pause, I awoke in my bedroom. It was 2:30 on Saturday morning and I could not sleep again till 8 a.m.

J.W.

Saturday April 29th 1916.

Chapter II

H.J.L. Answers the Call

May 2nd, 1916.

I passed into the spirit plane as I had done so often before. Saw the well-known landscape, passed through the park to the college, and so into the room of H.J.L.

“Boss,” I said, “I want you to help my brother Rex. He was killed in action on Good Friday, April 21st, in France. Did you know it?” The Boss held out his hand to me. “No, I did not. As you know by now, we do not know all, and of late I have rather lost touch with the earth plane. For your sake, I am very sorry; but for my own, rejoice

that one of my relations has given up his life for the cause of our country. You, I know, my boy; must miss him terribly, nor will I attempt the usual line of consolation. You know yourself the truth of the axiom that he has but moved from one land to another. Tell me all you can, and as to my help, you may rely on it.”

J.W.: “He was killed by a shell. Around him the trenches were captured by the Germans, but he and his men held on firmly to their piece, so the Germans poured high explosives on it and he was killed instantaneously. His Captain and Adjutant speak highly of his bravery, and say he died holding on in a tight corner, encouraging his men to the last. They buried his body on Easter Day.”

H.J.L.: “Well done, Rex. Fancy that tubby little boy, who used to eat too many sweets, ending so well. Brave lad! What a strange fatality that it should fall out so on Good Friday. If it must be so, I am glad that it should have been on Good Friday. It will comfort his father, for, with all his training in such matters, he cannot fail to read the message of hope therein. To us here that is not a hope but a known reality. For those who have not seen as we have seen, it must still be in part a matter of faith. All is well, and his burial on Easter Day is well, also.

“Come, let us be up and doing. Now I see it plain. I have been waiting for sometime, wondering what my duty was. My course of probation finished some short time back, and I have been waiting, waiting. But always my spirit guide has held me back, saying, ‘Not yet.’ But now I know. See! See, where he stands?!”

As he spoke the golden spirit of light who was ever with him, but veiled as a rule, from my weak eyes, became manifest. All else faded into insignificance. We seemed almost ourselves to be absorbed into him as he spoke.

“Take up thy task. Fear not, neither be disheartened. Cease not thy labours till he has climbed hither. Swift to thy labour, and rejoice therein. For this hast thou laboured here in preparation.”

He covered himself as with a mantle of darkness, and the familiar objects once more appeared before our eyes.

H.J.L.: “Come, Jack, we must assume our astral bodies. At least, you must reenter yours, and I must build up one for myself.”

As he spoke a head appeared from under the sofa, a fawn-coloured poodle’s head, and Mollie came out and behaved as if most excited.

H.J.L.: “Bless me, how excited she is.”

J.W.: “Mollie was rather fond of Rex, and he buried her.”

H.J.L.: “Ah, that will certainly form a connecting link. I wish I knew how she could assume an astral body. I’d take her with me. But perhaps, at first at any rate, it is best to leave her here.”

The dog seemed very dejected at this, but made no attempt to follow us as we passed

out.

Once in the country I parted from H.J.L. and returned to my body. There I saw hanging listlessly on to it a double of myself, but thin and vaporous. Next moment it had vanished, and I felt hampered as one does when, after bathing, one begins to clothe one's naked body. Yet my real body lay there still, and as I gazed at it I thought, "Someday I shall gaze on you thus, and be able to re-enter you no more."

"Well," said H.J.L.: "and then you will be quit of a great many worries, temptations, and trials."

I looked at H.J.L., who had thus made his presence known to me. His astral seemed almost as if it did not truly fit him.

"No, it doesn't," he replied, "but it's the best I can do. It's not a natural astral form. My old one dissolved ages ago.

"Let us be going. I know this is not going to be a pleasant business. I've never been on these lower circles of the astral plane before. I know what they are like, though. However, all the better; the more merit, as your Buddhists would say.

"Now, then, let us will together."

Walls fell away. Darkness enveloped us. A distant rumble grew and grew till it swelled into an awful roar. Lightning flashed around us.

"That's not thunder and lightning," said H.J.L.: "It's the echo on this plane of what's going on on the earth."

J.W.: "Do you mean the fighting in France?"

H.J.L.: "Exactly. You should have guessed if you didn't recognise it at once."

J.W.: "I half suspected."

Great clouds of vapour, and black night lit by the constant flashes. Screams of pain and anger, and then vast crowds of spirits; tens of thousands rushing wildly to and fro. Through these we sped, tossing them aside as a steamer tosses from its prow the waves of an angry sea. Here and there some tried to bar our paths, and others to catch hold of us, but H.J.L., who led the way, hurled them aside. At one spot we passed through a crowd of elementals, hideous and foul, who made a determined rush at me, but I struck angrily at them and several seemed to burst in pieces. For the most part these were bloated things, shapeless abortions, with nightmare faces and long arms, but no distinct bodies. Some, however, were like animals, including fabulous beasts, griffins, and so forth; while others were curious composite creatures, partly animal, partly human. Most were dull grey in colour but a few were angry red or ugly green. We left these behind, and for a moment of time saw a long and desolate country, with broken trees and houses, wire entanglements, trenches, and hosts of men who fought desperately, while the guns rolled and flashed. A battle on the astral plane, true to life, so far as we could judge.

Soon this was left behind, and at last, among a crowd of wanderers, we found Rex.

At once I introduced him to H.J.L., who said: “Do you remember, when you were a naughty boy at Kingston, I threatened to give you in charge of a policeman, and how, after many years, when I asked you if you remembered about it you said. “Yes. I remember somebody bullied me.”

R.L.W.: “Yes, perfectly.”

H.J.L.: “Well, now, you must let me act as the policeman to help and protect you from your enemies here rather than to arrest you. I’m sure everything seems a fearful muddle, and it can help you to get things clear and ultimately to get to a quieter and more comfortable place.”

R.L.W.: “Well, anyway, it is something to meet someone I knew on earth, and if you’ll stay with me a bit it would be awfully decent of you. I’m afraid this isn’t much of a place, though.”

J.W.: “We’ve heard from the Adjutant and Captain, and they speak very highly, old man, of the way you held on in a tight corner, and of your bravery in general, and of how they could always depend on you.”

R.L.W.: “That’s jolly decent of them. I just did my best. Yes, it was a tight corner, the worst I was ever in. What happened after I died? Did the last piece fall also?”

J.W.: “We can’t be sure; but if it did it was recovered, for they recovered your body and buried it behind the lines two days later.”

R.L.W.: “Yes, I’ve some vague recollection of that. Hello! Why are you going?”

J.W.: “My body is calling me back. I leave you with a good friend. Trust him. Good-bye for awhile.”

The ground broke under my feet. I fell - presently I awoke.

Chapter III

A Journey through The Ages

May 6th, 1916.

I found H.J.L. and R.L.W. almost on the same spot as that on which I had left them.

H.J.L. spoke: “Rex is still in rather a disturbed condition of spirit, and I am, therefore, going to take him away into the Land of Utter Silence, so that his troubled spirit may recover its equilibrium.”

J.W.: “What is this Land of Utter Silence?”

H.J.L.: “On the astral plane are to be found all the different stages through which the earth has passed. Thus here one can find the Ice Age, the Carboniferous Age, and so forth. The earliest age of all, the period corresponding geologically with the Achaean

Rocks is an age practically devoid of all life. Not even mollusks are to be found there, and to this waste, barren land I propose to take your brother. There, away from all sight or sound of the Great War, away from every other astral being, he can rest in absolute silence till at length his condition has become normal. Would you like to accompany us a part of the way?"

I agreed, and we started off together. For my part I tried to cheer Rex up for he seemed rather depressed, and also at times his mind seemed to wander vaguely from one subject to another.

After a time we entered a country which closely resembled earth at the present day. Here we skirted several cities, but H.J.L. kept to the country roads as far as possible. Some of these cities and towns had evidently come there recently, and Rex declared he recognised several of the smaller ones as towns and villages from northeast France and Flanders. He particularly pointed out Yprés, with its great cathedral and town hall, the roofs standing out above those of the houses which clustered round them.

After a time we left this region and came to a tract of country, which more nearly resembled England. As we still progressed I recalled that most of the buildings we saw belonged to the eighteenth century, and H.J.L. remarked. "Yes, we are back to the time of the Georges. Look at those men over there."

As he spoke, a group of men and women in the costume of about 1770 passed us. They stared curiously at our little party, but said nothing.

J.W.: "How is it that they have not passed to the Spirit Plane?"

H.J.L.: "Probably because they have never attempted to progress, and on the other hand, have never obsessed, and so have not been pushed down below. It is a curious fact, which I have not yet completely fathomed, that while most astrals remain on this plane for only so long, roughly as they might have lived on earth, in each generation there are a few exceptions, and these seem to hang about for an indefinite period. There are men here who came from the great Ice Age.

"Of course, they are but a very small percentage of the vast hordes which have passed through these regions, but even one per cent would make a considerable number here when you remember that a man dies every minute.

"Some men remain earth-bound for centuries, and continue to haunt their former homes on earth, but every ghost who haunts 'the moated Grange' is not a real astral being; often it is but the empty shell which still hangs round its old haunts, although the spirit has departed long since."

We continued on our journey, and soon entered the Jacobean period, and passed a fine old manor-house in its own grounds. Here we noticed several men and women in the costume of 1630 walking along the avenues.

And so we passed from one period of history to another, till we entered the Classic

period.

H.J.L., who had commented on the various eras through which we had passed, remarked of this one:

“Of course, we are still in England, as you might say, and therefore do not see the Roman period at its finest. Britain was always rather a distant province of the Empire, and retained much of its pre-Roman characteristics. The Romans proper regarded it somewhat as a place of exile to be left as soon as their term of service was completed. Still, that temple is quite a fine one.”

So saying, he pointed to a temple, the portico of which could be seen among the trees on the right.

Just at that moment a man in a Roman toga stopped in front of us, and spoke: “Whence come you, strangers, and whither going?”

I presume he spoke in Latin, but we understood him perfectly.

He was the first denizen of the past who had spoken to us.

H.J.L. replied: “We come from the twentieth century, from the battlefields of Gaul, and are taking this young soldier to a place of Utter Silence, that he may rest. But who are you?”

The Stranger: “I am Claudius, a centurion of the Tenth Legion. Is there then, fighting in Gaul? Have the Gauls risen again, or is it an incursion of the Germans?”

H.J.L.: “The Germans have invaded Gaul, and the men of Britain, of Gaul, and of Italy are holding them back with a wall of steel.”

The Stranger: “Good! And who is now Emperor of Rome? It is long since I had news of earth.”

H.J.L.: “There is no Emperor of Rome to-day.”

The Stranger: “Mock me not! Because I have left the world these many years it ill becomes you to mock at my ignorance. Who is Emperor of Rome?”

H.J.L.: “I speak the truth. There has been no Emperor of Rome for over a hundred years, and even he who was called Emperor of Rome before that time for many hundreds of years had been a German and had no real power. No, not even in Rome itself, for he reigned on the Danube.”

The Stranger: “By the gods! You amaze me. The last Emperors – Germans - and to-day no Emperor at all. Sir, if truth you speak, and I see now you do speak the truth, then mark my words. It was prophesied that when Rome fell the world would fall. If then, there is no Emperor of Rome then the days of the world are numbered. But who reigns at Rome?”

H.J.L.: “There is a King of Italy, and of course, the Pope ruled in Rome, and although he no longer rules it, he still dwells there, and is a most important personage.”

The Stranger: "Sir, I thank you for your news. Much is strange to me, but, indeed, men who entered these regions long after I died have spoken of a Pope, but this is the first time I have heard there was no Emperor.

"But of this war, how goes it?"

H.J.L.: "A fierce and bitter war, in which the Germans have wasted many cities and killed many people, both men and women and little children, without mercy and contrary to all the laws of war."

The Stranger: "The Germans were ever a cruel and treacherous race. False of heart are they, and, when beaten, will swear to a treaty and next summer break it. May the gods smite them down. Farewell!"

So saying, he turned up the road which led to the temple, and we continued our journey.

But ever on we went, and soon all civilisation was left behind. The country became a series of tangled forests with here and there villages of huts, in which we noticed men and women clad in skins.

Rex, who till now had remained very silent, suddenly said:

"This is the era of the Britons, I suppose, and thence we shall pass to the Neolithic Age. This journey is quite interesting. I am learning more real history in thus one journey than I ever learnt from books on earth."

But now I (J.W.) began to feel tired and knew that the earth was calling me, so at length I stopped in a glade in the forest and spoke:

J.W.: "I must return; where shall I find you next time?"

H.J.L.: "You will find us if you simply concentrate your mind on us. As a matter of fact, we shall be in the Land of Utter Silence."

So I said good-bye, and turned back into the jungle, but I was hardly alone when it began to shiver and grow misty. Soon I could see nothing but clouds, and then lost consciousness.

J.W.

Chapter IV

The Utter Silence

May 9th. 1916.

I went out seeking R.L.W. and found him without any difficulty. He was seated in a bare, rocky valley, in which there was no sign of vegetation: all around the earth was a barren waste, broken into hummocks, and with here and there sheer cliffs rising from sand or gravel, and overhead the sky seemed overcast and misty.

H.J.L. was seated near him, and rose to greet me, but R.L.W. hardly moved.

J.W.: “How are you feeling now, Rex?”

R.L.W.: “I am glad you have come, but I am feeling very miserable.”

J. W.: “Why?”

R.L.W.: “I can’t get away from the memory of my past misdeeds.”

J.W.: “So you are seeing the visions of your past life. I suppose?”

H.J.L.: “Not exactly. It is more akin to earthly memory; here they are not pure spirits, and therefore do not as a rule see the forms of their thoughts as we do in the spirit plane. But the memory is strung up to a far higher pitch than it is on earth, and so their past lives pass once more through the brain till it becomes almost overpowered by the mass of details which it has accumulated. Poor boy, he is having rather a bad time but it will pass soon, I hope.”

R.L.W.: “The worst of it is, I seem to remember my misdeeds almost to the exclusion of my good ones. I’m sure I did more good deeds than I can remember, but every fault seems to stand out with startling vividness. What is more, some of them seem to appear before my eyes; not all I admit, but the worst often do.”

H.J.L. patted his arm. “It will pass, Rex, it will pass. I have been through it all. Don’t forget the Bible’s words, ‘though your sins be as scarlet,’ etc. And, after all, you have not lived long enough to pile up a very heavy weight of sin. Fancy what you would have had to face if you had lived to my age.”

R.L.W.: “Then thank God I didn’t, but I might have got better as years went on.

H.J.L.: “You might, or you might not. God only knows. But, anyway, it is ended. Here, if you stick to me, and follow my advice, you need sin no more. Soon this stage will pass.”

We relapsed into silence, till at length I spoke.

J.W.: “There is, then, a marked difference in this matter also between your plane and the astral?”

H.J.L.: “Yes, memory plays its little part here, but not so vividly as on the next plane, where we see in very truth our past life.”

J.W.: “When a soul passes from the astral to the spirit plane, will it once more go through this stage?”

H.J.L.: “To a slight extent, but remember it will see also its life on the astral plane, and if that life has been a good one, it will more than counterbalance the evil that it sees which belonged to its life on earth. W. A. did not pass through this stage on the astral plane and so felt it acutely on the spirit plane. Indeed, even now he feels it at times. But you must remember he was not long on the astral plane, whereas Rex will settle down to a lengthy stay here, at least so I expect.”

Again silence; fell on us, and I felt that it was almost painful. It seemed to eat into my brain.

R.L.W. suddenly spoke: "Yes, it affects me in the same way, but I think it is doing me good."

Then he relapsed into silence.

I made a movement to return after a while, and he spoke again: "How are father and mother?"

J.W.: "Well, I am glad to say, at least so far as mother can ever be said to be well."

R.L.W.: "And C.? And little B., does she still remember me?"

J.W.: "Yes, both are well. B. often speaks of you. She was very unhappy when she heard you were killed. She always remembers you in her prayers."

R.L.W.: "Yes, I know she does. She is a dear little child." Then he relapsed into silence once more, and I turned and left him with a cheery "Good-bye!"

H.J.L. followed me, and said: "I will go a short way with you. Rex will be all right by himself for a short time."

As we walked along, he said: "This is just the worst period. But already I can see an improvement beginning. His mind is becoming clearer, growing attuned to the new conditions."

J.W.: "Well, I must hurry back now. Good-bye!"

So, concentrating my mind on returning to earth, I seemed caught up in a whirlwind, and the landscape vanished. Soon I lost consciousness.

Chapter V

H.J.L. Describes the Rest of the Journey

May 13th, 1916.

Again I found H.J.L. and R.W.L. in the same spot as that on which I had left them on my last visit. R.L.W. was evidently much happier now, and greeted me with pleasure.

R.L.W.: "I am much better now. Uncle's treatment is doing me a lot of good."

J.W.: "How are the memories now?"

R.L.W.: "Not so bad. A great peace has entered in, and though every now and then they break out again, each spell seems shorter than the last. I can't undo what I have done, but I can stop now, and shall stop. How goes the war?"

I told him briefly the news, and then H.J.L. spoke:

"Rex is certainly much better, but we shall stay here a little longer. By the next time you come here he will be ready to return."

J.W.: “After leaving the ancient British area, did any other adventure befall you?”

H.J.L.: “When we entered the Neolithic Age and passed through without any trouble, but while passing through the Paleolithic Age an attack was made on us by a group of savages. We drove them off simply by our will-power. Rex said he wished he had a revolver, so I told him to imagine he was firing one. There was a noise like a sharp report, and one of the savages fell down. The rest bolted. The ‘wounded’ man made a great fuss, but we went on and left him where he was, and when we had gone a short distance we saw him get up and slink off.

“Then we came to a region of sub-tropical vegetation. Here we saw many strange animals, and once or twice creatures which seemed to be half human and half ape. I suppose they were primitive men, but they were evidently very nervous, and kept out of our way. For the most part they seemed to move among the trees.

“Gradually we worked through this age, and so through all the various geological ages. We saw some strange monsters in the Carboniferous Age. Lots of Pterodactyls, some of which attacked us; but we simply willed that they should stop, and they did.

“Some of the earlier animals were very strange indeed. Particularly some of the creatures which lived in a huge marsh. We had considerable difficulty in getting over this. Of course, I could have managed all right. Will is stronger than astral matter, you know, and I would have walked straight over the slime, but Rex had not enough faith and began to flounder. Moreover, he began to get very nervous at the sight of the strange Saurians we saw. Somehow we managed to find a track across which we ventured to go, and ultimately found ourselves on the edge of a vast sea.

“This sea swarmed with strange monsters, the whole place seemed alive with them, Ichthyosaurus, and the old sea-serpent even turned up once. He was being closely pursued by some fierce denizen of the sea.

“Any number of queer shell fish were on the beach and rocks which jutted into the sea and the beach was strewn with empty shells. Many of these vanished into dust as soon as we touched them. Evidently they were worn-out ‘shells’ in the occult sense.

“We did not know how to get across the sea. Of course there were no boats, and I did not know what to do.

“So we worked round to the left for a long time, till at length we came to the mouth of a huge river. Still we could not get across. We went along the bank of the river for a long way, till finally I came across the log of a tree which was floating in the water. We got on this and paddled the blessed thing across the river, and after a considerable time were caught in a current which carried us across to a strip of land. We grounded some way out, and had to wade. We felt drenched when we got ashore, but we soon seemed to dry up and continued our journey. But time is getting short. We were on a hack of land which had but little vegetation; mostly moss and lichen, and the only animals we saw were some curious creatures rather like frogs. I daresay there were other beasts somewhere, but we did not see them. There were no flowers,

and we saw no flying creatures.

“The land became more and more desolate, till at length, after passing through several tracts of country, we came to this land. Here I can trace no sign of life beyond an occasional worm. There are no signs of vegetation, not even moss; no insects, no fish even, so far as I can see. Here the silence is profound and eternal.

“Now, that gives you a brief summary of our journey. I have left out sundry unimportant details.”

J.W.: “Did you see ‘the hairy mammoth’?”

H.J.L.: “Yes, plenty of them; in herds crossing a frozen marsh, and also some of the earlier members of the elephant family.”

R.L.W.: “We saw a herd of jolly little horses being pursued by Paleolithic men. They did not seem to catch any of them, however. By jove, those horses went a fearful pace.”

J.W.: “You have not seen anything of the officer?”

H.J.L.: “No, you see, I have never left Rex.”

So, after a little more conversation on private matters, I left them. I did not attempt to pass through the different ages, and so willed that I should return direct, but even as I was doing so and the darkness was enfolding me, a remembrance of the battlefield floated into my mind. This evidently diverted my course, for I found myself among a mass of warring spirits and heard the roar of the guns. A khaki-Clad soldier seized my arm and said. “Where are we?”

J.W.: “On the astral plane.”

The Soldier: “And where the blazes is that?”

J.W.: “The place where the dead go first of all.”

The Soldier: “Then are we all dead?”

J.W.: “Most of you. I am not; but you are dead:”

The Soldier: “Good God!”

Before I could detain him he sprang away and vanished amid the throng. But by now I could feel the “earth pull” growing stronger, and again, concentrating my mind on my body, found myself next moment in my room, saw my body waiting for me, and lost consciousness.

J.W.

TRANCE VISION, May 16th, 1916.

I again found H.J.L. and R.L.W. in the barren land, and after we had greeted each other, I said, “How are you now, Rex?”

R.L.W.: “Much calmer, and no longer miserable. I have had rather a rotten time, but feel ever so much better now. My mind is quite clear, and the haunting memories no longer trouble me. I don’t mean that I have forgotten them, but they have sorted themselves out into an ordered sequence, and among them I remember the decent things I did, and these counterbalance memories which would otherwise depress me.

“Uncle is now explaining fully the life on the astral plane, and, incidentally, rubbing in the danger of obsession. He has given me such a harrowing narrative of its evil effects that you may be sure I shall keep clear of that sort of thing.” (read *30 Years Among the Dead*)

H.J.L. smiled and said, “I thought we should be ready to return to the astral world of today when you came this time, but I think we had better defer it till your next visit. If you don’t mind, I will proceed with what I was telling Rex just now.”

So I sat down and listened while H.J.L. described the various laws of the astral world and the purpose of life on that plane. At length I rose to go, and after replying to the questions which H.J.L. and R.L.W. put to me about friends still on the earth, and about the war, I left them and returned to earth.

J.W.

Chapter VI

The Return Journey

May 26th, 1916.

I saw my body lying fast asleep, and then was whirled away into space. Amid the welts of clouds a new landscape grew into being. Barren hills, stony valleys; here and there a bare precipice. At length I found Rex and H.J.L.

R.L.W. jumped up, delighted to see me, and said, “I was just beginning to wonder when you would arrive.”

H.J.L. then spoke: “Rex is at length ready to start on the return journey, but we thought we would wait till you came before we set out.”

I agreed, and at once we started. After a while, the hill country gave way to a more level stretch. Here were swamps and morasses filled with strange trees, and H.J.L. said: “These are the astral forms of the coal-measure trees. Here we shall probably see some of the monsters that formerly inhabited the earth.”

Even as he spoke, I heard a splashing and gurgling sound, and out of the slime rose a huge beast. It somewhat resembled a crocodile, though not exactly, but hardly had I noticed it when it vanished again beneath the slime. Then a small creature, shaped like a lizard, but with bat-like wings, rushed by with a scream, pursued by a great, ugly thing like the dragon of fable. The latter had huge teeth which it kept gnashing. “A Pterodactyl”, I cried, and H.J.L. nodded.

The jungle on our left parted, and a huge creature standing on its back legs, with a great lizard head, peered out hungrily. As soon as it saw us it dashed forward, and both R.L.W. and I felt rather frightened, but H.J.L. made a movement as if striking or throwing something at it, and cried out angrily, "Go, or I shall kill you."

Immediately it vanished amid the jungle.

Slowly on we passed, and in due course reached more solid ground.

After passing for some time among tall grasses we came to a rocky valley, and in due course this debauched into a level plain.

And so, through limitless plains, over mountains and valleys, skirting lakes and fording rivers, we journey. We passed in time through various ages of the earth's geological history, till all sense of time was lost. At length we entered another plain. Very different was this, however, from those we had previously crossed. Here were short tussocks of grass, powdered over with snow, and here and there frozen puddles. Further off were large expanses of frozen marsh and lake. In the distance was a frozen river, and across it moved a herd of mammoths. Nearer to us were reindeer feeding, and I could see a pack of wolves lurking among some boulders a short way out in the plain.

As we were crossing this plain a band of skin-clad savages suddenly sprang out from among some boulders where they had been hiding and rushed at us.

H.J.L. at once called out to Rex: "Remember what happened last time we were attacked by these savages."

Rex called out, "Charge!" and we went for them as hard as we could, but they did not wait for us to reach them, but fled screaming. Their screams startled some reindeer who, in their turn, stampeded.

We seemed to journey on over this vast frozen marsh for an age, and came at length to more mountains, and amid these sat down for a while.

"Here you will have to leave us, said H.J.L. "We shall press on though the civilized belts towards modern times, but you must now return to earth."

J.W.: "What will be your next plan of action?"

H.J.L.: "Now that Rex's shattered astral nerves have recovered, we are returning, step by step, to present-day conditions. There he must learn to root out earthly passions and strive to do good so that he may progress, and above all, that his spirit may develop, lest, when the time comes for him to leave this plane, he finds that he has but an immature spiritual body."

J.W.: "Just one little point which puzzles me. Why was that Roman centurion who stopped us clad in civilian dress and not in the robes of a Roman soldier?"

H.J.L.: "I can't tell you, my boy but, after all, why shouldn't he be? I have seen lots of British officers in civilian attire. Perhaps he had so dressed before he died. Perhaps

he preferred that costume here. No, you are not going to lead me into a discussion as to whether a centurion corresponds with a sergeant or a sub-lieutenant. It's time you were getting back. Good bye!"

So I began to will that I should return, and clouds enveloped me. The astral plane vanished, and I rushed through space at a tremendous speed till I reached my sleeping body and entering it, awoke on earth.

Chapter VII

R.L.W. Describes his Death

June 9th, 1916.

I found Rex in what looked rather like a French house on a street. It had nothing very striking about it, being such as one sees in Belgium or North France. It had a garden at the back surrounded by a wall and the front of the house came practically straight on to the street.

Inside the furniture was modern and though not ugly nor in bad taste, was not very interesting. There were pictures on the walls, including one or two paintings of scenes in Bruges which interested me, and several large photographs of groups, which did not. Rex and H.J.L. were seated on either side of a table when I entered.

J.W.: "Do you know that your adjutant fell in battle about three weeks after you did?"

R.L.W.: "No. I say, don't you think we could get hold of him? He was rather a decent sort, and I know how rotten one feels when one comes over here, at first, anyway."

H.J.L.: "Yes, Rex, we will. I think that it is the work we've been waiting for, but I think you ought to get in touch with 'the Officer'. He knows these spheres so much better than I, and has already done a good deal of useful work here since the war began."

J.W.: "Rex, can you give me a coherent and connected account yet of your life and adventures here!"

R.L.W.: "Well, we had been shelled for some time, and gradually the bombardment increased in intensity. Then, as you know, they battered in the trenches near us on either side, and finally rushed them. However, we drove them back, and barricaded the ends of our trenches. Then the Boche seemed to get mad, and rained heavy stuff on us. I don't know how long this went on, but our parapets went all to pieces. Suddenly I felt an awful blow and seemed to be falling, falling, falling. I found myself in utter darkness, and my first thought was that the dugout had been blown in and I was entombed alive. I found, however, that I could move about and soon realised that there was something strange in the matter, for I seemed to be able to go about much further than I could have in a dug-out.

"It did not occur to me that I was dead, but I felt dazed and as if everything around

me were unreal. I thought, perhaps I was wounded and felt all over my body, but could find no damage. All the while I heard the roar and crash of the guns. I groped around and then began to call. No one came. I thought, of course, they can't get here during the bombardment, they will have to wait till it's over."

Then I thought 'I'll have a smoke,' but somehow, could not find my things. All the while I felt strangely dazed. Time seemed to drag slowly along. By degrees I began to distinguish new sounds and to perceive things in the darkness.

"I heard voices, and called, but got no answer. Then I distinctly heard German spoken, and kept jolly quiet. I thought perhaps the trenches had been taken at last.

"Soon I heard a savage shout, and it was in English. Then a whirling mass of struggling men, dark and shadowy, swept past me. Then more and more. To and fro the conflict rolled.

"Next moment the tide of battle rolled up and engulfed me. I fired my revolver full into the face of a German, but it seemed to make not the slightest difference.

A Boche drove his bayonet into my chest and I felt the pain for a moment, but still went on fighting, and forgot all about it. I seized a man by the throat and he seized me, and we rolled to the ground together, and were separated by the press of the battle.

"To and fro, up and down in a nightmare struggle, neither side gaining the upper hand, we fought and battled and raged. Age after age, time had no meaning to us. There was nothing even consecutive. Ever and ever doing the same thing. Overhead lightning played and thunder tolled, blended with the flash and roar of the guns. Around us pitch night, moonless and starless. Like a fog it encompassed us, weighed us down and shut us in.

"Amid this ceaseless strife I heard, afar off, the words of the burial service, and the sound of spades digging, digging, digging. But it had no meaning for me. Only I knew I was dreadfully weary of the ceaseless struggle which seemed to lead nowhere, which appeared to have no result, and I longed to shake off the dazed sensation which made everything appear unreal.

"At last I cried to a Boche: 'Why the devil don't you die? I've shot you dead three times!' And he laughed, and though he spoke in German I know, yet I understood his words as if they had been in English.

"You fool! How can I? Don't you yet realise that we are all dead here? Yes, and are in Hell, and forever must go on fighting without rest, for ever and ever,.

"Lies!" I answered. He sprang towards me and drove his bayonet clean through my body. "If you're alive why don't you die now?" he asked, and I knew he spoke the truth.

"So I burst through the mob, and tried to find someplace where I could sit down and rest and think things over. But though I wandered through the murky air for ages

and tried spot after spot, it was no use. Wherever I sat came crowds of straggling spirits, and I was caught up in the conflict.”

“At length, however, I found a stony knoll and sat down there, and suddenly heard you (J.W.) calling and I followed your voice through the black night. Then I saw you faintly in a familiar room and heard you ask me for a sign, and after struggling desperately for a time, seemed to write something. Told you I was here, and then you faded away, and once more I was surrounded by a raging host of fiercely fighting men, and broke from them and fled. Fled wildly across endless stony wastes, over sand-dunes, and across sodden, muddy, heavy fields. Stumbled and fell into pools and quagmires, and sunk down at last by the wayside.

“And again I heard you calling, and rushed blindly through the darkness seeking an old friend through the nightmare, new surroundings, and again I tried to give you a message of cheer, though, God knows, I wanted one myself!”

“Again you faded, and once more I found myself wandering through the darkness, but though the guns played all around, the fighting, struggling spirits were further on.

“I sat down, and painfully tried to piece it all together. Where was I? Dead? Where was I? What was this wild, chaotic nightmare land? And I seemed to remember something that you had told me. The astral plane - that was it! Or was I in Hell? The Boche had said we were, but I remembered you had said that the young, and especially those cut off suddenly passed, at any rate, to the astral plane.

“And then you came. I was aware of a friendly presence stealing slowly through the darkness. How slowly it seemed to come! Then, at length I saw you. You seemed different from the others. Less substantial in some ways, or was it more substantial? I can't say. One thing I did notice, that from you there trailed away a silver cord thin as a hair, but going clean out of sight. None of the others I had seen had that.

“How glad I was to see you, you know, and when you promised to bring H.J.L., I was thankful.

“If, as you doubtless know, the Englishman in the East feels his heart leap up when he hears his mother tongue, how much more so I, when I met at last, after all that age, someone I knew, and heard from him that, for a time at least, I should have a companion to help me on my way.

“When you had gone I felt an awful void, but still, I felt also a new hope and when, after long waiting, you arrived once more with H.J.L., no words can say how thankful I was.”

“Let me tell you that he, too, looks different from us, and also from you. I know that his astral body, which is assumed by him, is only kept together with considerable difficulty, and often he has to go away for a short time to renew it.

“His being here has made an enormous difference to me already. The dazed feeling

has gone, and now I understand both what has happened and also the laws of this new world where, I suppose, I must make up my mind to dwell.”

H.J.L.: “I think we must stop now, for it is time Jack was returning. We can go on again next time.”

So we parted, and I went whirling through space till I found myself looking at my body, and then lost consciousness.

Chapter VIII

R.L.W. Continues his Narrative

June 12th, 1916.

When I came to the house where I had last seen H.J.L. and R.L.W. I found R.L.W. there but not H.J.L., and asked him where the latter was.

R.L.W.: “He is trying to get into touch with the Officer, but has not, as yet found him. He left just after you did, and has not yet returned. I’ve been fearfully lonely without him, and hope he will soon return.”

J.W.: “I hope he will. You might go on with your narrative, and perhaps he’ll come. He has never yet failed to turn up for the interview with me on Monday.” So R.L.W. began:

“After H.J.L. arrived, and you had gone, he started, ‘Now, Rex, you are on the astral plane. You are still partly material, though, as it were, refined matter the same as gas is compared to solid matter. The astral plane impinges on the earth plane, and partakes of its nature far more than the plane of the spirits in which I properly dwell.

“The astral plane corresponds fairly well to the idea of purgation, but the spirit plane contains what you know as Hell, and also part of the lower Heavens, but not the real high Heavens.

“In the astral plane you will find that you are still subject to earth influences. It is usual to speak as if earth influences are all to the bad, but this is not so. Here you can redeem past failings by doing good on the earth plane, and cleanse your spirit of earthly lusts and faults, but also, of course, you can hanker after forbidden earthly pleasures and, in a dim mockery of a way, can enjoy them, but to your bane. Here you can commit further sins, and finally cause your soul to drop down into that part of the spirit plane which is properly called Hell, and from thence it is far harder to climb than from this plane to the happy planes above.

“I said “properly called Hell,” for there are parts of this astral plane which, to the superficial observer, appear very much like Hell. Still, this will hardly surprise you, seeing even on earth itself are to be found very close imitations of Hell. It is natural that where evil people congregate, there a condition will be found which approximates to Hell.

“The thing you have to do is to shun such districts carefully and especially avoid people of an obviously evil nature. Those who suggest obsession and so forth are to be avoided at all costs. You know what obsession is, I perceive?”

“I replied: ‘Yes, Jack explained that to me once rather fully.’

“H.J.L. continued, ‘Unfortunately your guide seems to have drifted rather far from you, but, doubtless, we shall rectify that in time.

“The first thing to do is to give you a chance of settling down among the new surroundings, and above all, to get your thoughts off the battlefield and such-like scenes.

“So now, I’m going to isolate you from all this. Indeed from the present world itself.’

“Then we rose and started on a long and seemingly endless journey, amid a thick fog, and over shadowed by tumult and fear.

“Every now and then I caught a fleeting glimpse of the landscape, which steadily grew wilder and stranger. I passed over what appeared to be great ice-fields and then through primeval forests, across tropic swamps, and on and on till life failed, till even the strange monsters of prehistoric times ceased, and a great Silence settled on all. (But you know this part quite well.)

“Slowly this silence ate into my brain. At times it was almost painful, and acted like a cauteriser, burning away the hideous tangle of shattered nerves.

“After a while this stage passed, and it began to act like a soothing balm. Gradually my whole being seemed to expand and drink it in, and my surroundings grew clearer and plainer. I realised that I was seated in the midst of a stony waste, where perpetual silence reigned.

“But look, here he comes.”

Chapter IX The Officer once More

As R.L.W. spoke, the door opened and H.J.L. entered followed by the Officer. I greeted H.J.L. with delight, but when I saw the Officer I could hardly recognise him. He was so changed. The hard cruel lines round the mouth had almost vanished. His eyes had a new expression, a tender one almost, one might say, but there was no sign of weakness about the strong face.

We shook hands warmly, and he began: “Well, since first we met I have been hard at work, and not without good results. Congenial work it is in a way, but we’ll speak of that another time. Now to business. I am delighted to meet your brother and help him find his Adjutant. I have no doubt we’ll do it, and may as well start at once.

“What do you say to coming with us?”

H.J.L.: “Yes, I think I may as well. I don’t want to leave R. just yet, after all, though I know he’d be in good hands, yet he’d feel a bit lonely. I don’t pretend I’m very keen on the job, but that’s all the better for me. Good-bye, Jack! I’ve hardly seen you this time, but the officer’s always boiling over with energy..

J.W.: “Shall I see you next Friday?”

H.J.L.: “Yes, one of us, though I can’t as yet say which. Probably, in any case, R. will be there.”

R.L.W.: “Well, good-bye, Jack! What are you doing now, by the way?” I told him.

R.L.W.: “Good! Cheer up! You can tell the Pater, if you like that I’m getting on splendidly and ... (private).

J.W.: “Good-bye, all of you,” And they passed out through the door. I was left alone in the empty house, and suddenly felt very tired, so I lay down on a sofa and fell asleep and awoke on earth.

Chapter X

Rex Completes his Narrative

June 16th, 1916.

I felt myself whirling through space, amid clouds and mists, which gradually took the form of a landscape. Here I found myself on solid ground, and passed along a long, straight road running between fields which had no hedges on either side, but here and there a stray tree, generally a poplar, but not always.

The road led me into a small French or Belgian town, and, passing along the high street, I stopped in front of the houses where I had met R.L.W. before.

On entering the house I found it empty and felt rather lost. After waiting some time, as it seemed, I was just about to go out again when R.L.W. came in.

“So you are here,” he said; “I felt sure you were, and therefore returned. We have found the Adjutant, but he is in rather a bad way just now, but soon, I expect, he’ll be better. The Officer and H.J.L. are with him.”

J.W.: “You might resume your narrative where you left off on Monday..

R.L.W.: “Very well but I’ll be quick over it. I told you how, after you had left me, H.J.L. resumed his explanations about this region - life here, or whatever words you choose to employ.

“He went on thus: ‘As you are a young, man, you will probably find that your astral form is a strong one, and will last for a considerable time. Therefore, you must prepare to stay here for a considerable period and, as it were, make it your home. Further, you will find that the “earth pull” is very strong, and you must resist it. Above all, you must resist any temptations to obtain the old pleasures by obsessing,

and so forth. You will come across a fair number of beings who will try to lead you astray in this matter, just as on earth there are always plenty of people ready to show a man the shortest path to destruction; so be wary.

“Again, you have separated your Guardian Spirit from you by a wan of misdeeds, and so forth, and your first work must be to dissolve that barrier by doing good deeds, and especially by helping people both on earth and here on this plane of existence.

“Not that I mean to imply that you have not any good deeds to your account. I know you have a great many, but what we want are more and especially unselfish deeds. I mean that you should do things that you don’t like for the sake of helping others; not merely doing things that your nature inclines you to do. Thus, you are by nature fond of children, and have many meritorious acts recorded on that score in your favour. What you need to do is to make a special effort, as it were, to level up that score in other directions.”

“I (R.L.W.) then asked him (H.J.L.) to explain the geography of the place.

“He replied, ‘All things that have material form have an astral form. To this plane come the astral forms.’

“R.L.W.: ‘What, do you mean that if I made a toy, and it was destroyed, I should find its astral form here?’

“H.J.L.: ‘Yes, and when you came on to the plane of pure form in the spirit plane you might find it there also unless, indeed, it was so ugly or so badly made that it had gone to Hell.’

“R.L.W.: ‘Then we are like God, who is said to create things?’

“H.J.L.: ‘Certainly, to create is Godlike. Thus buildings which perish come here, and so to the plane above. Here come animals, and trees and flowers, rocks and landscapes, and so forth.’

“R.L.W.: ‘But what is the difference of the forms or bodies, on the two planes?’

“H.J.L.: ‘It is easy for me to know the difference, but not so easy to explain it, especially in the case of inanimate objects.

“Roughly, the form remains entangled in the astral body for some time after the astral body escapes from the material. This latter process on earth we call death.

“Here, in the astral plane, the astral body goes on, and is inhabited for some time by the soul which is enclosed in the spiritual body or form.

“In time; sooner or later, we ‘shed our astral body.’ That is the best phrase to describe this second death.

“Then, freed from the astral body, the soul rises to the spirit plane, either to enter one of the three divisions of light, or sink to the realms of darkness called Hell.

“From the divisions of light it passes through the ‘great wall of fire,’ and there loses

its mixed form. What happens after that I know not, but that is a long way off for both you and me.

“Now, when the ‘form’ leaves the astral body the latter continues to last often for a while, just as a corpse does. In some cases it breaks up almost at once, particularly in the cases of old men, whose astral bodies have become worn out like their physical ones. I am a case in point. I hardly realised I was on the astral plane before my astral body dissolved and I had passed on to the spirit plane.

“But often, in the case of a young man, he cannot get clear of his astral body.

“If he goes in for obsessing, however, his spiritual body seems to become too gross to remain in the astral body, and shatters it, and he drops down to Hell. On the other hand, if he does a lot of good his spirit form will shake itself clear of the astral body and rise to our plane. Then that astral body, now an empty shell, may dissolve or may drift about aimlessly. I have known cases where a shell has hung around some old haunt of its earth life for several centuries. Many of the famous ghosts which haunt the country houses of Great Britain are of this nature, though not all by any means. But most of those aimless, purposeless ghosts, who simply turn up on certain anniversaries and do nothing in particular, belong to this group.

“As to animals, the highest types of animals, those closely associated with man, often attain to our realms, but the less human ones, as it were; seem to remain more or less permanent on the astral plane, e.g. lions and wolves, and most of the prehistoric creatures.

“I have carefully said “more or less permanently,” as I have not yet solved the problem as to whether, after a while, they return to earth by the road of reincarnation, and so progress. I rather think some of them do, but that was one of the subjects I was studying when I broke it off to come and help you.

“As to the inanimate, as we call it on earth, it is well to realise that everything has life, even to the tiniest atom; taking a house as an example: as soon as destroyed but not before, it comes to the astral plane. Here it remains for a long time, as a rule. So long as there are any astral beings on the astral plane who knew it on earth, and recognise it, there it will remain. When there are no longer any such left, it fades away, and breaks up into astral elements, just as its material elements on earth break up and fall back into the general mass of matter. From these astral elements new astral forms are always being built up.

“This remark would naturally lead me to speak of those astral beings who were never on earth, but I’ve already told Jack about that, and I’ll tell you at another time.

“The form of a building, on the other hand, go straight to the realm of form, and from there, so far as I can discover remains forever. According to its beauty, it will go to the realms of light and to the various divisions of them, or to Hell.

“Even a building partly built will come too that realm. Thus, Westminster Abbey

may be seen in the various stages of its development. Thus also on the astral plane and on the spirit plane, one may see the same building to all appearances; all the astral form is temporary, and the spirit form is fixed and permanent.'

"It's wonderfully interesting," I (R.L.W.) said, "and I can see I have a vast deal to learn."

Then R.L.W. broke off. "See Jack, here's H.J.L.!"

H.J.L. entered and said: "Rex, I think you had better come back with me now and see what can be done with your Adjutant."

"Before you go, Rex," I cried "I want to ask you one or two things about father's dream. He says he saw you with two women, and he asked mother (in the dream) if she saw you, but she said she didn't. He described the chairs and furniture pretty accurately, but I can't square the rest with what I've seen here."

R.L.W.: "Neither can I. He told me he was glad to have found me at last, and would tell mother. What is more, he went and tried to bring mother's astral body here to see me, but could not, because it was too entangled with her physical body. But he came back and said he thought she understood, though he did not suppose she would remember anything when she awoke. As to the two women, H.J.L. was there and spoke to him, but he was so excited at seeing me that he hardly noticed him (H.J.L.)."

H.J.L.: "People carry away fearfully distorted ideas. But now good-bye, Jack." And they faded away in the distance.

J.W.

Chapter XI

My Journey through the Storm

June 19th , 1916.

I saw my body lying fast asleep, and then the room faded, and around me swept chaos. Clouds of darkness seemed to break over me like great, black waves from a stormy sea. I heard the roar of the wind, the crash of the thunder. All around me the lightning played in lurid sheets of flame.

I felt like a piece of thistledown, tossed to and fro, wither and thither.

At times I thought I should never cease falling. At others I was thrown up, up, an immeasurable height. At length I seemed to be cast upon something solid, as it were, and struggled away from the waves of darkness into a district more sheltered, between bare hills.

As I penetrated further into the country, the storm seemed to grow less. My own pace increased. I ceased to walk and began to fly. Gradually the landscape became

less forbidding, and the storm ceased altogether. Soon I saw the village, and then entered the house where Rex dwelt. This time he was there waiting for me.

“What an awful storm, Rex,” I said, “I’ve never been through so bad a one before, never experienced anything like it before on my journeys here. What’s the cause of it?”

H.J.L., who was sitting near Rex, answered for him.

“All the outer edge of the astral plane is in that state now, owing to the fierce fighting that’s going on, especially on the Eastern front. The passions thereby aroused are visible here, and affect the astral fluids and elements among which we are dwelling, just as the winds on earth are caused by fluctuations of heat and cold, and by electric discharges.

“I wonder you haven’t noticed it before.”

J.W.: “Well, of course, when I first came seeking Rex I experienced a kind of storm, but it was rather like a thunder-storm on land, whereas this was like being in a storm at sea and in the water too.”

H.J.L.: “The ‘storm on land,’ as you call it, as I explained was really, in the main, the astral form of the actual fighting which is going on between the astral or if you like, ghostly armies here. The flashes of light were from the astral cannon and the thunder the roar of that cannon; but what you experienced just now were the effects of the fierce storm of hate now raging upon the subtle elements of which the astral plane is composed.

“The thing that puzzles one, though, is why you have never experienced it before.”

H.J.L. remained silent for a moment, as if turning the matter over in his mind. I turned to Rex.

Chapter XII

The Requiem

J.W.: “Can you give me any more of your narrative?”

R.L.W.: “There’s not much more to tell. I told you before that I saw, amid the very battle itself; I mean the astral battle first, a great light like a searchlight coming right up through the ground. It seemed to dissolve the fighting horde and the very ground itself: as if a great funnel had opened down which I could look.

“There I saw the service, you and father, and the people in the church, and also a great crowd of spirit forms, many of them very beautiful, and as if made of light. Strangely enough, the idea that immediately struck me was that here I saw ‘The Communion of Saints.’ Anyway, the service did me more good than any other service I’ve ever attended. It soothed my troubled spirit and gave me hope.

“I wonder how many services ever have any effect anywhere, I mean, how far till they reach even to this plane, much less on to the spirit planes. What do you think, Uncle?”

H.J.L. replied: “Very few, in my opinion get any further than the church they are in. It all turns on the mental efforts of the worshippers, and how far they unite with one common object. Moreover, a short prayer will get through, though the full service does not. I have seen examples of that but I’ve seen very few of such services coming through even as far as us.

“The most usual type is a service for the dead, generally for some special person. See, there’s one coming through now.”

As I watched I saw a beam of light some distance off. It grew and expanded into a great glory! It was of an exquisite golden colour.

“I’m going to investigate,” I cried, and shot through the door. I soon reached the end of the village, and out into the country. Then I stood at the edge of a pit, up which the light came and floating in the mouth of the pit was a French soldier. Beneath him I could see the roof of a church, and in the church a Requiem was being celebrated. Just a priest, a few old folks, that was all, but the spirits of light were there in a great number.

I suddenly felt that I was intruding, and hurried back to H.J.L. and Rex.

Rex continued, quietly. “Well, besides that, I’ve little to tell. You know of our journey back and how we’ve taken up our residence here. H.J.L. has explained and amplified what he had already told me.

“Since we started on our search for my Adjutant, we’ve had little time for talking.

“We found him still fighting fiercely, and you should have seen the look of astonishment on his face when he saw me. It made me laugh for the first time since I died.

“Amid the turmoil, it was impossible to go into things, but after some little difficulty I got him out of the fighting line.

“He thought, at first he would be running away from the battle, and it was only my presence which made him realise that he must be dead. He said, ‘Well, if I can talk with you, I must be dead, for I know quite well you are. But it all seems a fearful jumble up!’

“Somehow, we got him away, and the Officer took him firmly in hand and I and H.J.L. went with him. We took him way behind the fighting line, and there he is now, and we three are doing for him the work that H.J.L. did for me, only we have not, as yet, taken him into the great solitude. I don’t know whether it will be necessary in his case.

“The Officer has a tremendous personality. He simply says a thing, and you feel at

once that he's right; without troubling to analyse it. But we've been away long enough and must go back to him.

"Give my love to Pater and B—. Was she upset when she heard I'd been killed?"

J.W.: "Very." And I told him what she had said.

R.L.W.: "Dear little B! Remember me to C."

H.J.L.: "In which I join. Now we must be off."

We passed out together, but whereas they turned one way, I felt drawn in another.

Again I found myself dropping down, down, through raging storm clouds or waves, until at length I touched ground, and hurrying along, as it were on the bed of the sea, found myself passing along a road near London, and so down the empty Finchly Road, up Willifield Way, straight through, the door of my house. Upstairs I went through the door of the bedroom, stood gazing at my sleeping form, and then lost consciousness.

Chapter XIII

The Adjutant

June 23rd, 1916.

On reaching the now familiar house, I found quite a large party. Besides Rex I found H.J.L., the Officer, and a stranger whom Rex introduced as his Adjutant. The latter at once said:

"Adj. 'Well; this is another surprise. I'm getting them every hour now. To be able to talk to a living man in this land of shadows! How goes the war? Do you know anything of the old Regiment? Has our offensive started?'"

J.W.: "The Russians have completely shattered the southern half of the Austro-German line. They claim to have captured 200,000 prisoners. Czenovitz has fallen. A place called Luck, and practically all Bukovina has been conquered. The Germans to the north made a counterattack to save the situation, but it seems to have failed."

I gave him further details of the position of affairs.

Adj.: "How on earth did they do it?"

J.W.: "They've got a tremendous amount of heavy guns mostly, I believe, from Japan. She's been putting all her energies in to supply Russia with that sort of help."

Adj.: "Excellent! I say, this has cheered me up a lot. When you come back next time, you'll bring me some more news, won't you?"

J.W.: "Of course, I shall be delighted. But while you naturally want to know how England's doing, don't concentrate on that idea too much, or you will become hopelessly earth-bound."

AdJ.: “What does that mean?”

I explained briefly, and then went on to Rex. “How have you been getting on since last I saw you?”

R.L.W.: “Famously. The Officer took the Adjutant away for some time into the place of ‘Utter Silence’. How long you would reckon it I don’t know. Time is measured differently here.

Indeed, if it were not for your periodic visits, I should have by now quite forgotten about earth time. Reckoning by that, I should think he was away for about three days. I called your visits periodic. I do that because you have explained to me that you visit me every Monday and Friday, but the intervals between seem to vary in length enormously.

“While the Officer was away with the Adjutant, H.J.L. went on instructing me. He has been trying to make my mouth water by telling me about the fine plays and splendid concerts they have in his sphere. Also he has explained about the great art and all the rest of it. It all sounds very attractive, but unfortunately, rather a long way off. He does not seem very hopeful about my finding such things here, and is very emphatic that I shan’t find them in the place below. (By this he meant Hell.)

“One thing I don’t much care about is, there don’t seem to be many children in his part.”

Chapter XIV The Fate of the Children

H.J.L. (interrupting) “That is because, being an old man, I have not been associated with children much just before I died. But, all the same, I’ve come across a good number in my division. Furthermore, you must bear in mind that there were children not according to our years but according to our spiritual development. I was quite a small boy when first I started there.

“On the other hand many half-grown children would appear there to be as old, or older, than I did then. A man, if he does not grow, shrinks in spiritual stature.

“If you arrived there now, you would not be a man amusing children, as you imagine, but a very small child yourself, who would have to go to school, and would, I fancy be found a very backward and stupid pupil.

“Then, again, those who are fond of very small children go to the school in Hell and help them there. As Jack has told you, there are two sets of schools in Hell: (A) those for the evil souls who are striving to climb out of Hell, and (B) for the premature children, the tiny infants and neglected children who never had any chance of learning about God or a future life. Since they have no faith they cannot dwell in any division where faith is a necessary condition, any more than a fish could live on dry land. Hence, both these types of schools are in the seventh division - i.e. the highest -

of Hell, but, otherwise, they have nothing in common.”

R.L.W.: “But what of the terrible darkness? It seems very unfair that these innocent children should be plunged into that.”

H.J.L.: “Who said they were in darkness? They have as strong light as they can possibly bear. It is given off by their teachers in the buildings, in which they live, but Jack can explain all this just as well as I, or I could do that another time which is more to the point. If you waste much more of Jack’s time, he’ll have to go before you have told him other matters.”

R.L.W.: “Yes, of course, but couldn’t I do that sort of work? I love children.”

H.J.L.: “Certainly, my boy, and I don’t doubt that will be a most splendid work for you to do, but first you must learn before you can teach. Now, tell Jack about your guide.”

Chapter XV R.L.W. ’s Guide

R.L.W.: “Oh, yes. After we’d sent the Adjutant off, H.J.L. said, ‘Look over there.’ Then the wall of this room, opposite where I was sitting, began to grow indistinct. It became like darkened glass, and as I still gazed I realized that I could see nothing else but that great void. H.J.L. and the room itself had vanished.

“Then, far away in the distance, I saw a faint speck of light. It grew brighter and brighter, as if it were approaching, but I could see no form. Yet I knew at once there was a form, only distant from me an immeasurable space.

“As when seated on a river’s bank some dark night, one gazes down into the black waters and sees just one star reflected there, and the dark waters reflect not only the lone star, but also, in some mysterious way, the vast space which lies between our world and it - so it was now between me and my Guide.

“Then, across the limitless space, came a sound and a voice - like the note of a mighty organ far, far away. It swelled and swelled as it grew nearer, and finally it burst like a tempest upon me. Its music was superb and yet awful. In some such way I could imagine the angel’s trump will sound at the last day. If, indeed, there is a last day. Or is it, that for me this was the ‘last day’, and this the trump of the archangel calling me to judgment?

“I know not. But in that manner I can best describe the effect of that mighty cadence. The music was exquisite, yet the pain was intense.

“It burst on me and over me. It overwhelmed me and shattered me. It beat me to the dust. Yet it was articulate, and the words it spoke were words of comfort and good cheer.

“My son, you have started on the right path. You have broken down the outer

darkness which shuts me away from you. Go on and prosper little by little. I shall draw nearer and remember though you may drive me away from you, yet will I never desert you. I cannot draw any nearer than this lest I overwhelm you utterly. I see how even this first vision of me has shattered and dazed you.

“Grow strong in good works, in loving acts, in unselfish thoughts, and so as you grow more able to bear the sight of the Glory, it shall be revealed to you.’

“Slowly the cadence receded, and a great silence took its place. I gazed on the lone star, and it changed from white to blue and blue to green, and green to orange, and orange to red; and red to purple. The purple grew pale and became like lavender, and the lavender was diffused with pink which flashed into an extraordinary colour which melted into silver.

“Then waves of darkness rolled over my star, fold by fold, I could see it no more. Slowly the wall of the house became visible and then I saw H.J.L.”

He ceased then and after a time, said, “It is impossible to describe that beautiful colour, is it not?” and H.J.L. replied: “Yes, there is no such colour on earth. It cannot be described.”

Again there was a great silence, broken at length by the Adjutant, who said in an awestruck whisper, “Youngster, that was the most wonderful description I’ve ever heard. I felt that I was actually witnessing the episode.”

“So did I,” I cried.

H.J.L. smiled. “So did we all, we saw the forms or his thoughts. It is not so easy here as in the sixth plane, where it is the normal thing, yet here it can be done. Indeed, even on earth it is occasionally done, so it is not surprising that it should be possible here.

“Yes, Jack. Rex, by helping the Adjutant, has helped himself, just as W.A. did. He has drawn a little nearer to his guide. A good start, a good beginning - but there is a long journey - yet and as you also have a long journey, Jack, you’d better start.”

“A nice inhospitable way to treat a visitor from a far land,” I grumbled, but half in jest.

H.J.L.: “All right, stay here. We shall be delighted, but in that case, we shall not get the latest news from the battle front next Monday.”

J.W.: “Good-bye, Boss! Good-bye, Rex! Good-bye, Officer!” The room swayed, grew pale, and vanished, and I lost consciousness.

Chapter XVI

Astral Phantoms

June 26th, 1916.

I again found myself in the house inhabited by R.L.W. and H.J.L.

The Adjutant at once questioned me further about the war. I told him how the Greeks had been blockaded and had given in, also that the Russians were still driving the Austrians before them, and that there were signs that we were beginning to bombard the German lines heavily.

He was much excited, and pressed me for as much news as possible.

Rex then began: "I've been having some experience with these astral beings. I mean the non-human ones.

"I went out by myself and walked out into the country. Suddenly I saw some delightful-looking little elves, just like the fairies of our nursery stories. I was astonished, and stood and watched them gamboling and skipping about. Some had wings like those of a butterfly, and others like those of dragonflies and bats. I even saw one little fellow riding through the air on a broom.

"I was enjoying myself immensely when a huge monster suddenly appeared, and the 'Little People' vanished at once.

"The newcomer was a most repellent creature; it was the sort of thing I imagine drunkards see in D. T. It seemed about ten feet high, and looked like a huge green crocodile in its upper part, but its lower part was that of a naked man. The lower-half was not green, but dark brown.

As soon as it saw me it made straight for me. I had nothing in the shape of a weapon, and I fled. Of course, it was very cowardly of me, but really, the sight of the brute had thrown me completely off my guard.

"I hadn't run far before I saw H.J.L. hurrying towards me. On seeing how the situation was, he rose in the air and shot towards me at a great pace.

"Seizing my arm, he turned me round and said, 'Face it. The creature is less to be feared than the prehistoric monsters you have already seen. They have real souls in them, and this has not. Now, attack it.'

"Even as we rushed at the monster its form began to shake, and suddenly it broke in pieces, and these appeared to be caught in some current of wind, for they floated off in various directions.

"'What was it?' I enquired of H.J.L., who replied: 'These are astral phantoms. They are a common phenomenon here. It is difficult for me to make you understand what exactly they are. The astral plane is full of masses of astral atoms, and any thought form which comes here might attract these astral forms to itself and clothe itself with them. There are numerous other ways in which these creatures come into existence,

but I do not claim to be an expert, nor even very interested in such matters. The thing to remember however is that though, as a rule, these have a very transitory existence, yet there are some which succeed in obtaining a form of life by battenning on real men. They attach themselves to some weak-minded person who is living on earth, and suck up his vitality in a similar way in which an evil person who is on the astral plane may obsess a living man.

“Again, an evil soul which has lost its astral form may seize on one of the astral phantoms and use it for a time as an astral body. It cannot, as a rule, hold it for long, but while it can it may do a great deal of real mischief.’

“R.L.W.: “How can one tell the difference between (a) an astral phantom, (b) a phantom which is battenning on men, and (c) a phantom which is inhabited by a real soul which is not its owner?.

“H.H.L.: ‘Largely by intuition. You would recognise at once there was a difference between them if you saw them, though you might find it harder to describe where the difference lay. Briefly, (c) behave very much in the same way as men in the astral state do, but the astral form is rather obviously a borrowed garment and is always trying to break up and decay. But while it is held this (c) group shows an intellect at work.

“(a) and (b) are both lacking in this, and act by instinct. In the case of (b), however, at times this instinct has developed so far that it most appears to be on a par with the low-cunning of a madman on earth. (a) just drift round aimlessly, act on the slightest impulse, and have no settled purposes. By this latter characteristic they may be distinguished from the empty astral shells of dead men from which the souls of men have passed out. These, so long as they continue to exist alone, tend to repeat over and over certain acts of the former earth life of the spirit which have become firmly imprinted into their very beings. Thus, many so-called family ghosts are merely empty astral shells which continue to act in ‘the haunted chamber’, repeating again and again the murder they there committed, or perhaps the task they used to do there. There is nothing in them by which they can know. That is why, when spoken to, they do not reply. A ghost which can answer is not an empty shell. What it is is another matter, and one we will not now go into.”

R.L.W.: “What were the fairies?”

H.J.L.: “There are many kinds of fairies, but the kind you saw then were the thought forms or dreams of children, which here had clothed themselves with astral atoms. Your monster was of a very different stock; and was essentially evil. It was the wreck of the astral shell of a negro and of a crocodile, which were casually brought together by the astral tides, and, being both still very material, they re-united to form the shape you saw, but, of course, could not survive for long.”

He ceased. Rex turned to me. “Well, you see, I’ve been learning a lot. But don’t you think the Adjutant looks a lot better?”

J.W.: “I do. I hope it will continue, but I feel I must be going. So, having bidden good-bye to all, I walked through the door, and, as it closed behind me I grew dizzy, and lost consciousness.

Chapter XVII

The Officer’s Work

June 30th, 1916.

As soon as I saw them, Rex began: “Well, what’s the latest news?”

I told them various items, and added: “Have I told you about the revolt in Arabia?”

“No!” they replied together.

So I told them about the revolt of the Sheikh of Mecca, and the capture by him of Medina.

The Adjutant seemed especially pleased about it.

I then turned to the Officer. “I have not spoken much to you recently. How are you going on?”

The Officer.: “Well. Very well. Very busy and very happy. Two years ago I would never have thought it possible. In those two years I personally have helped over a hundred souls, all old soldiers. All were men who were far from being saints, yet, of them all, I have lost only six. Not bad, 94 per cent brought safely through the dangerous period when men first start on the astral plane. These numbers don’t include the large number with whom my organisation has dealt.”

J.W.: “What has happened to them? Surely they can’t all have reasons, passed on to the spirit plane?”

The Officer.: “No. Thirty-two have so passed on. Of these, only five were under forty, however. In each of these five, there were special reasons, and only one was below thirty-five.”

J.W.: “What sort of reasons cause men below the age of thirty-five to leave the astral plane?”

The Officer.: “This man was thirty-two when he died. He was terribly anxious to pass on to the next plane, because he longed to find his mother, who was there. As it chanced, I knew her well. To get clear of his astral body he did all sorts of self-sacrificing things. Even went to the length of helping dead Germans, including several who had ill-treated him when he lay dying.

“Finally, a strange thing happened. His guide brought him in contact with a man who had been over here rather a long time. This man was living here with his wife, who was a good deal younger. His time to quit the astral plane had come, but not yet his wife’s time. The pair were both deeply distressed at the prospect of having to

part, and terribly afraid lest they should never meet again. So the soldier and this man made an agreement that the soldier should give the latter his astral body. I don't quite understand how it was done, for, usually, it is not an easy matter to slip out of your astral body before the time has come, but, as the two guides concurred; it was done. So his astral is here, and inhabited, but his soul has passed on to the plane above and joined his mother."

J.W.: "What is your usual modus operandi when helping those who have, fallen in the fight?"

The Officer.: "Very much the same as the methods we used first for your brother and afterwards for his Adjutant.

"Occasionally we don't have to take them away into the great solitude. Sometimes we find they have already fallen into evil hands and are being led astray. This latter has caused us to set pickets round the drink dens and similar resorts. Of course, we do not always succeed in preventing men going to them. Some men are so set on it that it is impossible. When I came over I was that sort. Still, we prevent a good many from being led into them.

"Then, too, we have some spirits set aside to shadow those evil creatures who try to tempt men to obsess. As soon as one of these harpies gets hold of a young fellow, and begins to suggest that he should obtain earthly pleasures by obsessing, our spirit warns him against doing so.

"Then a great part of the work of helping the newly slain is by getting them to help others, like your brother is doing with the Adjutant. So we have an ever-increasing band at work, and by Jove, we need it!"

H.J.L. then spoke. "Yes, we are always sending up requests for more helpers, but, even in the sixth plane, they are hard put to it. Never have so many countless thousands been coming over before. Old habitués tell me that the Franco-Prussian war hardly made any difference, but that this is quite another matter."

R.L.W.: "I have not had any very striking adventures since I saw you last. The Adjutant and I have been out and about several times, but nothing very exciting has occurred."

"I expect soon I shall have to start trying to help."

The Officer.: "Yes, but all in due season. You must learn a little more first."

H.J.L.: "I can feel that the dawn is breaking. So good-bye, Jack."

And, having said good-bye to everyone, I passed through the door into the street. I noticed it was full of visitors, those who were dreaming of those they had lost. They were all hastening away in one direction. I joined the throng. Several were crying out, "Hasten! Hasten! The dawn is breaking. Quickly! Quickly! Or we shall be too late."

We seemed to flow out into a plain and across it like a river. We came to what seemed like a cliff, and passed into a cavern. I heard a roar like the falling of mighty waters. Then I saw why. The cavern broke off, and over its edge the dreamers poured like a river would fall over a waterfall. Down, down they fell, into a vast and limitless darkness.

I perceived that everyone's eyes were shut. So far as I could judge, mine were the only ones that were not.

Now I was poised on the edge. Now I was falling, falling. Hundreds of others were falling around me and over me; still falling. Then I lost consciousness.

Chapter XVIII

The Recruiting Rally

July 3rd, 1916.

As I approached the town in which R.L.W. now dwelt, I perceived that something unusual was in progress. People were standing at the doors of their houses waiting for something.

Then I heard it, the skirl of the bagpipes. There was no mistaking it. I hurried towards the house, and as I did so, the music grew clearer every minute. I found them all standing in the doorway.

“What is it?” I inquired.

The Officer.: “A recruiting march. The idea has spread like wildfire. It's partly due to the news of the great advance, which has already reached us by the path of the newly dead. Someone declared that Englishmen here ought to thrash the Germans as their comrades were doing on earth. He declared that there were thousands who had gone out of the fight, and should be brought back into it, and further, that there were large numbers of men who had never yet taken a hand, but with little training would make useful soldiers.

“As if it makes any difference here who wins a battle on this plane. If we could help our men on earth it would be a different matter. As it is, it will throw back the spiritual progress of thousands. Look at this fellow. See how all my good work is being undone.” (And he looked at the Adjutant in no very friendly manner.)

To tell the truth, the Adjutant was evidently becoming very excited. As the notes of the bagpipes drew nearer and nearer; he became more and more excited. Then they came. Rank after rank, company after company, great lusty fellows. Highland regiment after regiment, thousands and thousands. As they passed they chanted in chorus, ‘Fall in, fall in! Come on, you slackers, come out!’ And as they cried, from every house and street men came hurrying up. They fell in behind the various regiments. Seaforth with Seaforth, Black Watch with Black Watch. On and on with

the skirl of the pipes. Then came cavalry and artillery. Then the sound of a drum and fife band.

“Here come the English regiments!” cried the Adjutant.

“No, they are the Welsh Fusiliers,” cried a soldier in the street, and he was right. Still on they streamed. Soon the Irish regiments were passing, and ever from houses and streets old soldiers came hurrying up. Yes, and recruits began to fall in at the rear, and were promptly taken in hand by busy sergeants, who made them form up in columns of route.

Now some of the Colonial contingents were passing, and, amid ceaseless cheering, some of the Canadians and Anzacs went by. Then the bands swelled into a deeper note and the English regiments of the line began to pass, interspersed with artillery and cavalry.

“Here come the Royal Fusiliers!” cried Rex, and began to get almost as excited as the Adjutant.

H.J.L. placed his hand on his shoulder.

H.J.L.: “Keep calm, my boy. You can do no good now. All this is mere glamour, an empty show. It will be of no help to our country, and will only undo all the good we have done for you. Keep calm.”

The Officer was saying something on the same lines to the Adjutant, but he seemed not to hear him.

Then one of the battalions began to sing, “It’s a long way to Tipperary,” and it went thundering down the line. A belated Scotch regiment began “Scots wha hae wi. Wallace bled.”

More regiments passed, among them the Grenadiers. Suddenly the Adjutant cried, “My God! It’s them.”

As he spoke the York and Lancasters came in sight. What a number they were. It made my heart bleed to think that never more would those fine fellows tread the earth. As they passed a great shout went up, “The Adjutant!”

The Adjutant.: “I’m coming, boys. Come on, W___!. and he rushed down the steps and joined up.

For a moment Rex hesitated. Then he saw something in H.J.L.’s eyes, and turned away, murmuring, “I suppose it is nonsense, but I feel a bit rotten not going with the others.”

Again the Adjutant cried, “Come on, W___.” but R.L.W. went inside

“Quick march!” cried the officer in command, “We’ve no time to wait while he makes up his mind,” and the column swung down the road and was soon out of sight. On and on they came. There were more than thirty thousand, as near as the Officer could judge. It seemed as if it took hours and hours to pass, and every minute it was

growing.

Every regiment had its tail of new recruits now, all in civilian dress. Then came R.A.M.C. and nurses. More men, and still more men.

At last it was finished. "The pity of it" murmured the Officer. "If it were only of the slightest help, but it is not.

"Soon they will be at it again, and no one on earth will be one jot the better for it, and countless souls here will be dragged back again into the whirlpool of passion and retard their progress for years. And yet I cannot help admiring them. After all, though they are wrong and do it from ignorance, the spirit is right.

"I wish I had fallen on the field of battle in this war among my old companions.

"Let us go in. We shall have to work hard to-night to save your brother. He's been in our hands longer than the other fellow, or he'd have gone in too. I wonder if I shall be able to get the Adjutant back again."

I found H.J.L. had already started talking to Rex, proving to him that no good would come of this most recent development. Rex admitted that, but was inclined to argue that, nevertheless, he ought to have gone when his senior officer called him - that they would now think ill of him in his own regiment, possibly even say he was a coward.

H.J.L. replied that it did not matter a scrap what foolish people in their ignorance said. They who had been here longer were wiser and knew different. Finally, that his duty was now to make progress, and that he was now doing, whereas the other line of conduct was actually wrong, because it would throw him back and added, "If, by so doing you could really help your country, we would be the last to oppose it, even although that was the price you must pay, but you will not do the slightest good. There are spirits who can and do help on the war, but they do it by inspiring our generals and organisers with new ideas, not by fighting on the astral plane."

At length he was a little more satisfied. Then I left.

Chapter XIX

Shops on the Astral Plane

July 7th, 1916.

On arriving at the house in which R.L.W. and H.J.L. now lived, I found them there, but no one else. On inquiring where the Adjutant and the Officer were they replied that the Officer had gone to try and bring back the Adjutant, but had not succeeded as yet, and had only once returned, and then only for a short time.

H.J.L.: "There are an enormous number of men coming over just now, but for the most part they are still full of the battle fury and go on fighting. It will take some time for that to wear off."

R.L.W.: “I wanted to go and help try and persuade these men to leave off fighting now that they are dead, and, in short, do the same for them that H.J.L. and the Officer have done for me. But H.J.L. says I’m not strong enough and if I do shall probably relapse under the influence of the excitement and throw away all I’ve gained.”

H.J.L.: “Yes, Rex. But in a little time you will be strong enough to do that work, and then you certainly shall. Indeed, you will hardly be able to make much more progress until you do.”

Soon after this our conversation turned on domestic matters, and time, if I can use that phrase, passed so quickly that I was quite astonished when H.J.L. told me it was time to go. I then said, “We have had a pleasant but not a very instructive time.”

He replied: “Still, a respite is rather good sometimes and indeed to-day, owing to the set-back caused by the return to the front of the Officer, has left us with little fresh to tell you. Still, we have learned a lot from you about the war, private affairs, and so forth, which has greatly interested us.”

Then we parted, and I walked out of the town into the countryside when, lo, a great fog seemed to overwhelm me, and after groping amid the darkness, I lost consciousness.

July 10th, 1916.

On entering the house I met the Officer hurrying out! “Hello” I cried, “won’t you stay.”

The Officer.: “No, I must get back to my work, though just now it’s rather a thankless task, and he disappeared. I went inside and found H.J.L. and R.L.W. there, as usual.

H.J.L.: “I’m teaching Rex chess. He knew just very little more than the moves, but he’s getting on.”

J.W.: “Do you know Burmese chess?”

H.J.L.: “No.”

J.W.: “Would you like to learn?” So there and then I sat down and showed them the game. I noticed the pieces were a rather fine Indian set of carved ivory, and said, “Where did these come from?”

H.J.L.: “Oh, some that have been destroyed lately.”

J.W.: “Yes, but how do you get such things here?”

H.J.L.: “There are places here; you might call them shops, to which the astral forms of destroyed things come. Thus, there are some shops where chessmen come because there are other chessmen there. These I found in a shop full of carved ivory goods. Such a collection of stuff you never saw in your life. There were dozens of incomplete sets, the rest being still on earth. There were all kinds of ivory work and curios of all sorts, some beautiful others positively ugly. An old man was there who,

when on earth, had been a curio dealer. When he died he came here and seeing this old curio shop without an owner, took up his abode there as we have here.”

“He says it is very strange the way all sorts of things suddenly appear there. He never sees them arrive, but just finds them there. But next time, if we are not better employed, I’ll take you round to him, and he shall tell you more about it. You’d find him rather a congenial companion.”

J.W.: “But do you buy things here as on earth?”

H.J.L.: “I didn’t buy these things. I just told the old man I wanted a set, and he showed me several lots and let me choose this set. He said he felt sure he would be having some more in soon, and in any case he had plenty of other sets.

“I believe there are a few people who run shops for the joy of selling and even try to cheat their customers as they used to do on earth. They are preparing themselves thereby for the upper divisions of Hell, into which the materials drift. I’ve never bought anything, however, so don’t know a great deal about it. I’ve never bothered about getting money here, so I should be out of it anyway.”

J.W.: “But can you get money here?”

H.J.L.: “I suppose you can get its astral form just as you can that of other things. Yes, I remember seeing a miser once, sitting in a scrubby little villa, although there were plenty of fine houses standing empty close by. He was counting and recounting his money. I expect he’ll stay there doing that till he falls out of his astral body into Hell.

“I have never hunted for money, but I imagine that by searching round one could find hoards here and there, but you must remember that, when on earth you can melt down a gold pot and turn it into coin, you can’t do that here. Here we have not yet reached the stage of pure form as in the spirit plane, but we have left matter proper behind. Do you follow me?”

J.W.: “Yes, perfectly. Now, when I was in Burma, I often saw the Chinese in their temples burning paper money, clothes, etc., to send to the spirits in the next world. Do you think it would work?”

H.J.L.: “Yes to a limited extent. If the person concentrated his mind sufficiently on the dead person the goods would go to him, but you must distinguish between their astral form and spirit form. The latter, which is form only, would go on to the spirit plane, but, at the same time, would be of little real use except as evidence to the dead man that he was still remembered on earth. That idea would benefit him. For the rest, he would create thought forms of clothes, etc., which would do the work just as well.

“On the other hand, on the astral plane only the astral form of a paper coat or paper money would appear. I doubt if the latter would be recognised by those who keep the shops for business here, except, of course, real paper money, i.e. bank notes. In any case, however, it’s merely playing at things, or else repeating year’s custom from

habit. We have no real needs such as food or new clothes, and things like these chessmen we can always get without giving money for them if only we look around a bit. Yes, the use of money, buying and selling, are merely earth habits which are best shaken off as soon as possible, otherwise they draw men down to the division of the materialists in Hell.

“But you must be off. It’s day in England. See how the dreamers are hurrying back.”

He was right, and I hurried off.

Chapter XX

A Visit to the Battlefield

July 14th, 1916.

I found Rex and H.J.L. together, and with them several other officers and men. R.L.W. said, “We’ve got the Adjutant back and the Officer is here.”

J.W.: “How did you get hold of the Adjutant again?”

The Officer.: “Oh, by hard work. I kept following him about till I was able to persuade him what a complete delusion the whole of the battle was and then he came away. I brought back several others as well.”

Rex then came up and said, “We are going to start on our first expedition. Would you like to come with us?”

J.W.: “Yes, decidedly.”

So H.J.L. and R.L.W., the Officer, and four others beside myself started off together. We seemed to travel swiftly, indeed almost to float over the soil, till presently the noise of the artillery could be heard. It rapidly grew in volume, and the air grew murky and dark. Soon we could see little for the darkness, and a wild tempest seemed to be raging. The wind blew in our faces and beat against us more fiercely every step we took.

The Officer.: “These are the waves of hate and passion set in motion by the struggle. Look, here come some of the dead!”

As he ceased I saw shadows passing, not by ones or twos, but whole companies a couple of hundred strong. Some seemed red, but most were dark grey. Here and there one shone brightly, and these separated themselves quickly from the others and rose faster and faster till they vanished.

The Officer.: “The white ones are very exceptional. They are those whose lives have been remarkably pure, and generally they have given their lives to save another.

“The red are thoroughly evil, or at least dominated by hate. The grey are ordinary folk, neither very good nor very bad.

“See how, even in death, they follow each other like sheep.

“See the battle-line on this plane.”

Now, amid the murk, I perceived lines of wild figures rushing across the broken ground, and these were met by others - Germans. They fought and fell and rose and fought again.

J.W.: “Do you help the Germans?”

The Officer.: “I don’t. Not yet far enough advanced, I suppose, but I can’t forgive the brutes for all they have done. Of course, a lot of their own folk do the work, and spirits who were formerly from neither group of nations.

“There are, too, a fair number of quite advanced spirits from the spirit planes who are directing the work, and to these nationality seems to make no difference. But on the astral plane, and even in the lower division of the spirit plane, it still does influence our feelings, so we should be useless. You can’t act a part here, you know.

“We will draw even nearer to the earth plane, if you like.”

Down we dropped, and seemed to pass through the ground itself. The darkness grew less, and in its place a shadow world arose. Unsubstantial it seemed, very different from the firm landscape to be seen in the astral plane we had just left.

“What is this?” I inquired.

The Officer.: “The world as seen by an astral. Look, there is the river Somme, and those shadows are a line of hills.”

The storm still raged fiercely, but the few trees that I could see appeared to be but little affected.

Of course, these winds were generated by the passions of the combatants and did not affect merely material things.

Small figures advanced and fell, and as they fell the shadows became more substantial and swept past us. Great streams of men seemed to be rising into the dark clouds that hung just above our head.

Gradually, the landscape was blotted out by these clouds which descended and engulfed us, or perhaps, we rose up into them.

We were again back on the astral plane proper.

I sighed. “A curious spot this meeting-place of the world and the astral plane. The effect is rather different from the effect I get when I find myself returning.”

H.J.L. replied: “Yes, but you are abnormal in that you know how to employ your spiritual, astral, and corporeal faculties, and remember experiences in all three. Very few can do that. Further, the condition just now is abnormal owing to the excessive amount of passion being generated at the time of death, and by the great number of vigorous young men who are passing over every moment.”

With this I had to be content, for the Officer now said, “You had better be off, as you

are rather in the way, and we want to begin business.”

So, having said good-bye, I withdrew a short way and watched them go up to various groups of soldiers who were looking on at the fighting and began to talk to them. I noticed Rex talking to a tall young officer who was wearing the badge of the York and Lancasters.

Then I concentrated my thoughts on getting back. Everything faded - then I lost consciousness.

Chapter XXI

A Curio Shop

July 17th, 1916.

When I arrived in the street where Rex lived, I guessed that their efforts must have been fairly successful, as I noticed that several empty houses were now full of soldiers. I also noticed that a great many new houses had appeared.

I even saw one rising slowly before my eyes. It was evidently being destroyed by gunfire. The roof and upper stories began to appear first, suspended as it were in the air, but whether it waited till all the base was destroyed before that appeared, I can't say, but think not for it took shape so rapidly. Anyway there it was.

I entered Rex's house, and H.J.L. said at once:

“You can come round with me to some of the shops, if you like.”

Rex came along with us, and we talked about domestic matters till at length we stopped in front of a shop.

“I thought it would interest you”. H.J.L. said: “Its owner was an old curio dealer in Yprés. He lived a good many years ago, and has here a most marvelous collection of all sorts of curios.”

We entered, and I found a funny, wizened old man. (The spirit in the astral plane inhabits an astral body which is largely molded on the condition of its physical body at death, therein differing very markedly from those on the spiritual plane, whose forms are largely molded by the development of their spiritual faculties.)

The owner of the shop at once spoke to me, but whether in French I didn't know, but I understood him perfectly and replied in English, as it seemed, and he too understood.

“You are, I can see,” he cried, “a lover of the antique and curious. Good; follow me.”

Truly, he had the most marvelous collection of all sorts of stuff. Furniture of every period and country, weapons, armour, china, old glass, Roman gods and Indian idols; there seemed to be no end to the things he had.

When I told him I had recently returned from the East, and told him some of the

things I had obtained there he was greatly interested. He seemed to know a great deal about the East, and this led me to inquire whether he had traveled there when on earth.

“No, alas!” he replied, but since I died I have often been there, and now I know it well. Is this not a splendid Buddha? I have some very fine ones, but I think this fine figure of Shiva is one of my finest works of art. Choice, is it not?”

J. W.: “And how do you get all these things?”

He: “Oh, they seem to come to me. I sometimes think inanimate objects are not inanimate, but have a queer kind of intelligence of their own. I have once or twice picked up something by the roadside, or in an empty house, but not often. They just appear in the shop. Why, look, there’s a fresh grandfather clock!”

He hurried off to look at it and at that moment H.J.L. told me I must be off, and I obeyed.

Chapter XXII

A Lecture by The Officer

July 21st, 1916.

On entering the room where Rex and H.J.L. were, I found the Officer giving a sort of lecture to a large number of soldiers. He was explaining to them what life on the astral plane was like, and why a man must try to shake off the influence of earth passions, especially the desire to continue fighting here. He wore the full dress uniform of a certain famous regiment, but I will not describe it.

“One of the great dangers that besets the new-comer,” he said, “is the desire to continue exactly what he was doing when he died. In the case of a man who has died simply on a sick bed, earth desires and habits have grown weaker, but when a man is cut off in the very act of doing something, his whole mind being fixed on it, a strong tendency arises to continue doing the same thing over here. Often, if this desire is indulged in, the newcomer keeps on repeating it again and again, and even after his spirit has departed from his astral body, this astral body, now nothing but an astral shell, continues mechanically to repeat his former actions. Hence, many ghosts which are seen hunting for something in the haunted room of some old manor-house or aimlessly wandering to and fro, are really the empty astrals of some earth-bound spirit, who continued doing this sort of thing for a long time after death before going on to the next plane of existence. For, remember, that is merely a place of transition. Here you may save your souls or damn them for many an age. Here make amends for your past misdeeds, or add to your sum of evil till you sink under it to Hell!”

A man interrupted here. “I suppose you are one of the ‘pi’ (pious?) sort who has been saved here. Done all sorts of good deeds here and so got quit of all your former sins.”

Another broke in with a sneer: "Oh, no. He is one of those 'stained-glass window saints' who have never done anything wrong."

This seemed to nettle the Officer, who replied sharply, "You talk like a fool of things you know nothing about. It's just because I lived an evil life, died in sin, piled up more evil here, sank into Hell, and, still driven on by evil, sought the lowest depths of Hell, that I now urge you strongly not to do those things which may cause you to suffer as I have suffered."

He then began to relate the course of his life, which has been given elsewhere (*Gone West*), and as he went on, a great silence fell on any who listened. Rex, I noticed, sat there spellbound as the awful story unfolded itself.

On and on he went, sparing himself in no detail. Step by step he traced his downward path through three worlds, and, as I left he was still continuing.

No one except H.J.L. rose as I slipped out, not even Rex; all were too wrapped up in what was being told to them.

For a moment H.J.L. stood on the doorway bidding me good-bye. "Did I not do well in getting him to give us his life story?" he asked. "Indeed you did," I replied, and we both stood silent for a while.

Then I turned away, and began the return journey.

Chapter XXIII

The Real War

July 24th, 1916.

When I began to approach the astral plane on this occasion, I realised at once that something unusual was happening.

The whole atmosphere seemed blood red, and at times it tossed in waves like a sea of fire. It was almost impossible for a while to see anything. For a moment I hesitated to plunge into this seething mass, but an unseen force seemed to whirl me on, and, even as I hesitated, I had passed into it.

Gradually I began to perceive things, and what I saw filled me with dismay. On every side I saw hideous shapes, evil and loathsome. They seemed to stretch in endless phalanx after phalanx, hateful, abhorrent.

I looked round wildly for H.J.L. but could not see him, and suddenly one of them sprang towards me. It was like nothing human nor animal. Its eyes were set obliquely in its face, and were narrow, yellow, and hateful. It constantly changed in colour from grey to brown, and so through a peculiar orange brown to red. It appeared to have countless arms, or, rather, suckers, like those of an octopus. It was huge in size, as large as a house, bloated, and repulsive, and glided towards me with the evident intention of attacking me.

I tried to run away, but it cast out one of its long-arms, which caught me up and held me for an instant, and then I spoke. Up to then I had regarded the creature as the astral of some prehistoric monster, but I now realised it must be an elemental, partaking of the nature of man and beast, and something which was neither.

The thoughts it uttered were these. "Fool I have you. You came here into our realm before your time. You are not even an astral being. In your conceit you have come into a part of this realm which even those who have a right here shun. Here we rule, and destroy all who once lived on earth. Here we make them our slaves. We drain their astral life from them and so strengthen our own. I hate you. I hate all men and all animals. All creatures that have ever had a body or claim to have a soul. I have neither."

I called to R.J.L., but he came not. Instead, a bright white, light began to grow amid the red reek and mist. The monster seemed to shrivel, its arm loosened its grip of me, and still the light grew in strength.

It took form, and a huge figure made of fire appeared beside me and overshadowed me. Majestic, and full of solemn dignity, calm and noble of countenance, it far o'ertopped the monster.

Between the great protagonists I seemed the merest pigmy. No words were spoken, no thought passed that I could follow. Simply a silence, and swiftly beneath the weight of that silence the monster shriveled and wilted, till it vanished entirely.

I knew my rescuer. It was my guardian spirit, but even as I strove to thank him he slowly faded away. Suddenly I realized I was blind. I could see nothing.

Little by little my dazed eyes recovered, and again I saw the red mist all around me, and on every side grinning, mocking faces, which leered and jibbered and threatened me, but drew no nearer.

Amid them I passed, and seemed to get no nearer to my goal. The red waves began to increase their motion, and the elementals, in like manner, appeared to sway to and fro.

Then I perceived I was caught in the midst of a great battle compared to which the astral battle I had seen between the European hosts was nothing. These monstrous creatures were rushing in endless waves against a huge army of spirits of light, and the battle raged with unabating fury.

Sometimes one side, sometimes another, would appear to gain the upper hand, but never for long. I was tossed up and down, to and fro like wreckage on the waves of the sea.

It was not so much a struggle between individuals as between a wall of white fire and a wall of red mist and smoke. Backward and forward the great line swayed. High above and deep down below, it stretched, and far out of sight on every side.

Suddenly the white fire seemed to sweep forward at one spot and catch me in its

grasp, and as it rolled back it carried me with it.

Now I was out of the hateful red mist, and, instead of the hideous monsters, saw noble figures made of fire.

These reminded me of my own guardian spirit, but they were neither so majestic nor so distant from me. They seemed nearer to men, but they were not astral beings.

They paid no heed to me. Indeed, they seemed to have no time to attend to anything but their task of holding back the powers of evil.

At length I left this dreadful battle-ground, and found myself in the village where H.J.L. lived.

As soon as I reached the house I found H.J.L., who was anxiously watching for me.

I told him what had happened, and H.J.L. said:

“The whole astral plane is in a very agitated state. The powers of evil are making a tremendous effort, and have engulfed large areas quite recently.

“Nor is the conflict confined to the earth and the astral planes, but the spirit plane is shaken also. They are pouring up out of Hell itself and trying to penetrate into the Realm of Half-Belief.

“You remember the great wall of darkness where I met the Officer? Well, one who came down here a short time ago told me it has poured forward over a large part of the stony waste and driven back the light. Moreover, some of the Houses of Rest in Hell itself have been stormed, and even some of the ministering spirits who work in Hell have fallen away.

“How far up and how far down the gigantic conflict rages, I do not know, but it shows no sign of abatement as yet. The powers of evil are certainly making a supreme effort. What you have told me about your guardian spirit’s appearance, however, has comforted me greatly. I see that you have advanced far enough to be safe amid these dangers.

“But you have been here long enough, and I hope you will find the way back easier.”

I went out, swept swiftly through the red mist - so swiftly that I hardly saw the elementals - and then found myself beside my own body on earth. Then I lost consciousness.

Chapter XXIV

The Dangers of this Lowest Division

July 28th, 1916.

On entering the astral plane I again found myself amid a thick, red atmosphere, and surrounded by evil-looking elementals.

Several of those creatures attempted to bar my path, and, as before, my guardian spirit had to intervene before I could get clear of them. As soon as he made himself visible they faded and vanished, but, even after this, it took me some time to get through the contending hosts of good and evil spirits into a comparatively tranquil area.

Comparatively, I said, for here the noise of the astral battle between the newly dead filled all surrounding space.

Amid this I struggled for a while and saw hosts of soldiers hurling themselves upon each other and a constant stream of newcomers pouring up from the earth itself as they leapt from their shattered bodies.

At length I had passed through this area and reached the calm and quiet of the house in which Rex and H.J.L. were.

After describing to them what I had experienced, I said: "What would have happened to me if my guide had not come to my aid?"

H.J.L.: "You would never have returned to earth or, in short, you would have died. Several persons have so perished. They came here ill-prepared, and fell victims to these evil elementals.

"Sometimes, however, the result of unwise wandering here is to enable some elemental to obtain an influence over the experimenter, which results in either moral degeneration or else mania.

"More usually, however, the effect is merely a temporary haunting of the experimenter which frightens him so severely that he gives up the experiments and alike avoids the danger and loses the reward of his efforts.

"Just now, conditions are particularly bad over here owing to the mass of evil passions which have been set in motion on the astral plane by the great world conflict, and which have strengthened the powers of evil.

J.W.: "But what of the constant dreamers who come? Are they also exposed to the same danger?"

H.J.L.: "Not to the same extent, though even so, the danger does exist. But still, as they are less conscious of their surroundings, so they seem to be less noticeable to the proper inhabitants of this sphere. Moreover, in some mysterious way which I myself cannot fathom, it does not seem to be always necessary to pass through the strata of evil passions where the great fight between the evil and good elementals is. You yourself have not always done so, and why you should just now be obliged to pass through that strata when you come here I cannot say. I think this has been done by the direction of your guardian spirit for your instruction. Surely, the guardian spirits of less experienced visitors doubtless take them by another route, or perhaps if that is not possible, bear them through these strata of conflict with their eyes closed, as it were. Certainly, this would be possible if a guardian spirit desired it.

“In that condition the astral would know nothing of these regions, and would be protected by its guardian spirit from all harm.

“But nevertheless, the fact must not be overlooked that the numbers of dreamers who come here has markedly decreased due, no doubt, partly to the fact that the struggle between the forces of good and evil is attaining to a state of fury seldom before witnessed by any on this side of the grave.

“I think the Biblical account of ‘and there was war in Heaven,’ must be based on some such scene as you have now witnessed and not have been so much a prophecy of a future battle as the account of a conflict then raging on the astral plane. After all, it was written not so long before the fall of Jerusalem, and may have been connected with that event.

“Any other questions, for it’s about time you were off?”

J.W.: “Why! I’ve only just arrived.”

H.J.L.: “I’m sorry, but you now take a long time getting here and, in any case, if you must go, you must, and there’s an end of it.”

J.W.: “You seemed unable to explain fully one or two points just now. How was that? Usually you know all about things here.”

H.J.L.: “You must remember this is not my plane of existence. I belong to the spirit plane, and further, that conditions are far from normal. Indeed, one might almost say they were unprecedented. When I am not quite certain I think it far better to emphasise my uncertainty lest I should mislead you.”

R.L.W. then asked me a few questions about father, to which I gave suitable replies. I then inquired how the rescue work was going on.

R.L.W.: “Well, we have got quite a nice little band together, but of late, so terrific has been the struggle and storm on the strata nearest the earth that we have practically had to abandon our efforts and concentrate our attention on keeping those we have; not by any means an easy task.”

H.J.L.: ‘Really, Jack, you must return.’”

As he spoke all went black, and I lost consciousness.

It should be noted that I knew nothing of my return journey, and this rather supports the theory of H.J.L. that my guardian spirit deliberately closed my consciousness as to what was happening in the planes through which I passed. Next time I shall inquire whether a similar unconsciousness can be induced on a man who has died, or whether it can only be induced in one still connected with the flesh.

Chapter XXV

The Antechamber of Hell

July 31st, 1916.

Again, as before, I was aware of the hideous conflict of the good and the evil powers. I determined to try and note some of these strange beings, so unlike anything I had ever even dreamed of. I saw a good number of bloated, shapeless monstrosities, with slanting eyes and masses of feelers, more animal than human in shape, such creatures as the foul animal that had barred my path the first time.

There was a creature that looked like a serpent, save that its head was almost human but viler than the most depraved human could be. Another type was of the nature of an enormous bat, but the head was different. These creatures mostly had huge goggling eyes and beak-like mouths. There were quite a number of huge dragons, not unlike the fabled monsters of legend, together with strange creatures like griffins, huge spider-like monstrosities, and curious masses of fungous growth, which moved and floated amid the red waves.

The only thing they had in common was their eyes, which were either large, goggling and globular in shape, or else narrow and slanting. All were yellow or red, and absolutely malevolent in expression.

Here and there I saw creatures which looked like men, and yet were not, and also strange composite creatures, half-human, half-animal.

One of these man-like monsters, huge, in stature, and apparently a leader, barred my path.

Enormous he was, and his shape, though blurred and indistinct, took the form of a naked man, with huge, distorted, and misshapen limbs. His face was black, save for the eyes; no nose and mouth at all, just two long, narrow, slit-like eyes, set at a curious angle, the top reaching towards the ears, the bottom almost joining just below where the mouth should have been.

Yet the thing could speak, or, rather, deliver its thoughts, for it cried out, "I have heard of your coming and going thus unmolested through our ranks, but this time they shall end. Stay!"

And I stayed. Cold dread seized hold of me. My heart seemed to stand still, but, of course, I had no such organ, yet such is the force of habit that I experienced just this feeling. I cried on my guide for help as the evil monster rushed on me; and my angelic guide came.

But though the other creatures fell away before the rays of blinding light which poured from him, yet the leader moved not. Instead, he seemed to pour forth in answer from his whole body clouds of dull brown smoke. A kind of darkness which beat up against the light and held it there, while from under the shadow of the darkness his followers gathered and shrieked defiance at my guide.

Fiercer and fiercer grew the light, and denser grew the mass of brown-black smoke.

Then I perceived that we were moving. I sensed it, as it were, for I could see nothing but a ring of darkness around the spot of intense light in which I stood, and which burnt me fiercely.

On we moved, and suddenly the wall of darkness shivered, and I perceived why. We had reached the spot where the powers of light came up against the powers of darkness, and their light had joined hands with that of my guardian spirit.

Then it faded away, and on I went through similar scenes to those described before till I came to H.J.L. and R.L.W. in their house. Here I told them of my adventures on the way, and inquired: "Do you think that this power of my guide's to make me unaware of what is happening would be effective if I were dead, or do all who die have to pass through that field of struggling spirits?"

R.L.W.: "Well, if it helps to elucidate that point, I've never passed through it, but I've seen quite a number of elementals on different occasions."

H.J.L.: "Let us ask my guide."

Slowly the great white figure appeared, and, as its whiteness grew in intensity, R.L.W. covered his eyes with his hand, and then sank to the ground. The sight of the majestic figure almost blinded me, but I was just able to bear it. Then the bell-like voice pealed out:

"Those who deserve to be hurled into such surroundings will see them, and, since they must be very evil to go there, their guides will long since have fled from them, therefore no help will reach them. This is the antechamber of Hell. Though it is on the astral plane, seldom, if ever, does a man escape there from. Thence the road lies, through the valleys of Hell, and so to the hill which leads to redemption.

"It is well that you should see these places, for they are springs from which flow so much that is evil both on earth and on this plane. As much as you can bear is revealed to you, and no more.

"The ordinary mortal passes through the earth plane even as your brother did, and there sees the newly slain still fighting as on earth, but the region where the evil powers well up is the antechamber of Hell, and only after a time does the hardened sinner sink there.

"Just as those who grow better weary of the strife between man and man and wander away into the regions where you now are, so those who grow more and more evil sink away from the conflict with men into the conflict of the powers of evil, where these destroy their astral bodies and hurl them into that part of the spirit plane which you call Hell."

The voice ceased and he vanished, and after a while Rex recovered. Then I spoke to H.J.L.

“What of those who wander away from the fight, yet after a while fall into the sin of obsession and so sink to Hell?”

H.J.L.: “There are many roads to Hell, just as there are many roads to the realms above. The regions of hate are the planes where the conflict between the powers is raging. Most of the sins of obsession fall under other headings, and so to Hell, when the sinner has destroyed his astral body, but it would be quite possible to work back to that very strata via the road of obsession. There are many such cases where an astral obsesses a man to murder or worse. That astral will pass through the same red sea to Hell.

“Remember however, conditions are abnormal just now. Hate has seldom been so powerful or so active. Hence, though the Officer passed into Hell via that gateway, it left very little impression on his mind.

“But again we must separate after a few words of general conversation with Rex.

I told H.J.L. about Aunt. He expressed his concern and added, “I wonder where she will go? To the Realm of Belief without Acts, I expect. Probably she will join company with H.”

“I must try and help her on her way, but I don’t suppose she’ll remain any time on the astral plane, and I can’t go to the plane above my own. I’m rather afraid; however, she’ll vegetate in the division of Faith without Acts. That is the great difficulty there.

The besetting sin of our sphere is Ignorance; of the one above, Self-complacency. We do not suffer from self-complacency, so, once we are sufficiently developed to pass on, we go through the plane above fairly quickly. Belief, with acts, needs a lot of self-sacrifice.

Yes, I’m rather afraid she’ll stagnate for a time, partly because she’ll be quite content to remain there.

“Well, you really must be off!”

So I went, and as before, lost consciousness.

Chapter XXVI

Women on the Astral Plane

August 4th, 1916.

On entering the room where R.L.W. and H.J.L. were, the former asked me, “Did you see any of those horrors you saw last time?”

I replied I had not; I had merely passed through clouds and mists till I found myself in the street near the house in which they dwelt.

“What do you do all the time?” I asked Rex.

R.L.W.: “Well, at stated intervals, I attend a course of lectures by the Officer on ‘Conditions of Life on this side.’ After he’s finished we usually have a debate and end up by asking him questions, some of which he answers, but not all. Often indeed, he says that we have not developed sufficiently to be able to understand him if he did.

“There is quite a large class, and we use a sort of Town Hall nearby.”

J.W.: “Are there no women here? Plenty must have died lately.”

H.J.L.: “Oh, yes! On the whole, I think the sexes mingle more freely here than on my plane, but I try to keep Rex away from them. I don’t think too much female companionship is good for him just yet.

“Come, we will go out and show you some of the fair sex.”

We all three went out into the street, and in due course came to a kind of small park. Here we saw large numbers of women, with a fair sprinkling of children. For the most part they seemed to be behaving very much as they would have done on earth. The children played about at various earthly games such as “tick” and their mothers sat and chatted.

We noticed one woman who was seated by herself, hugging her child close to her. She seemed spell-bound and gazed vacantly into space. There was a look of terror frozen on her face.

H.J.L. and I both spoke to her, but she seemed not to notice us. Then Rex tried.

She started, and cried wildly, “You are an English soldier! You wish to help us; you are too late. See! The beasts have set fire to the house, and two are waiting to bayonet us when we rush out. They killed my old mother like that, and my boy, but we shall remain here. The fire is more merciful than they. Can you not see them killing her? Oh! It is awful!”

We tried to soothe her, told her that it was all over and done with now, that there was no more death to fear since, having died, she had won the victory over death; but she seemed not to hear us, and at last we gave it up in despair.

We next talked to a couple of women. They told us that they had been killed by a shell. One said; “There was a terrific crash, and then darkness. By degrees we recovered, and called to each other. At first we thought we were unhurt, but entombed. Then we saw other creatures, frightful in shape, and in terror we ran screaming away.

“After a while we saw other people in crowds, and joined some of them. Presently, amid the gloom, we heard someone preaching, as it seemed, and when we got there we found he was telling us that if we would follow him we should come out of this darkness into light, and be among more pleasant surroundings.

“So we, and many others followed him, and he took us a long journey. Often we began to tire of it and wished to turn aside, and indeed, many did; but ever he urged

and prayed us to follow him, and at length he brought us to this town. Here we were lodged in an abbey where I found the abbess was one whom I had known on earth.

“We have dwelt here some time, and are gradually beginning to forget the horror of the last few weeks of our life on earth. They explain a lot of things to us in the nunnery.”

We left them after a few moments more conversation and returned to the house, talking of domestic matters. H.J.L. inquired about Aunt, and I told him she was no worse, at any rate.

I then told Rex and H.J.L. that I was so hard worked just now that, for the present, I thought it would be best if I only came once a week. To this they agreed, and I left them, deciding to keep to Mondays.

Chapter XXVII

A Vampire

August 7th, 1916.

On reaching H.J.L.'s house without any unpleasant adventures, I suggested we should again go out and inquire among the women as to the life here. H.J.L. agreed, and we once more made our way towards the park.

As we passed down a narrow street, two women and a man came out of a house. One of the women promptly grabbed Rex's arm, and said, “Hello, old chap! Come for a walk with me.”

R.L.W. looked somewhat embarrassed, and said, “I don't know you.”

She.: “That does not matter, you soon will (and laughed). It just shows what a lot you've lost. How long have you been here?”

R.L.W. turned to me. “How long is it, Jack?”

J.W.: “About three and a half months.

R.L.W.: “Yes, I suppose it is not more than that, though it seems longer.”

She.: “Oh! You want someone to show you round the place? I am here twenty years, and can put you up to a good bit.”

H.J.L. here intervened. “I think, Rex, we must be getting back home.”

She.: “Well, cut off you other two. I didn't invite you but I'm going to do the decent thing by one of our noble defenders. Come along, Lieutenant R.L.W. You see, even if you don't know me, I know you. She smiled wickedly.

H.J.L. took Rex's arm, and said. “Come along, my boy. And Rex, somewhat reluctantly, obeyed.

Safe back in our own house, H.J.L. explained as follows:

“That woman is one of a band of very dangerous vampires, who for years have batted on the living, and have lured many of the dead, to follow their vile example. By means of obsession, they are able to enjoy a kind of ‘dead sea fruit’ pleasure. Later, they will pay for their fleshly joys with much suffering. Already I can see it is difficult for her to keep hold of her astral body. Soon she will sink down into Hell and, my boy (turning to Rex), if you had gone with her, like that man who was with her friend, you would have been fairly started on the downward path.”

So, after a little more conversation, we parted once more.

Chapter XXVIII

R.L.W. brings in a Comrade

August 14th, 1916.

On arriving at the house I found Rex, all on his own, had brought in a man from the battlefield, and the Officer, who was just taking charge of him, was very pleased.

“See!” he cried. “How much nearer your guardian angel has drawn to you. And as he spoke, I became aware of R.L.W.’s guardian angel afar off, but plainly visible.

Rex too, saw him and, though the figure vanished immediately after I could see he was delighted to have caught even so fleeting a glimpse.

The Officer then went out; taking the newcomer with him, but H.J. L. and R.L.W. remained with me.

R.L.W. told me how he had gone down into the region near the fighting line with the Officer, and there persuaded one of the officers of his regiment to come away with him. He admitted he did not like much having to do it, and added, “However, the Officer said I must now help someone who was nothing to me when I was on earth. I had liked the Adjutant; but this chap belonged to a different battalion, though he was a York and Lancaster man. The Officer says I shall have to help someone I hated. I hope it won’t be a German, anyway. The worst of it is, I can’t remember anyone I really hated on earth, except the Germans in general.

“Look, I’ve adopted a poor lost cat I found near a house which was slowly rising from its ruins near the firing line.

J. W.: “I suppose it was really being destroyed on earth by gunfire?”

R.L.W.: “Yes, I suppose so. Well, I found a poor little tabby pussy wandering about as if quite lost. It had evidently just been killed, so I adopted it. See, here it is!”

As he spoke, he pointed to a small tabby cat which jumped down from a sofa and began to rub itself against his leg. I distinctly heard it purr.

H.J.L. then said, “How’s the mater?”

J. W.: “No worse, I think. My father went over to see her recently and told me that

she was not so bad as he feared from what I had told him.

“I feel I ought to be getting back now.”

I then went out of the hall door after saying good-bye, down the street into the country, into a thick fog, and lost consciousness.

Chapter XXIX

Husbands and Wives

August 21st, 1916.

On reaching the house I found Rex and H.J.L. playing chess. I watched the game till it was finished which did not seem to take long and Rex was, of course, beaten. After this we fell to talking of various matters of a private nature.

Rex told me that he had met a number of acquaintances. He added that they mostly seemed to have gone through similar experiences to those he himself had experienced.

He then continued:

“We went to a church the other day. It was a Roman Catholic Church, and was in charge of a delightful old priest. He had a large congregation, and the whole thing was very like a service on earth. H.J.L. then took me on to another church. It was a fine building in its way, and also came from Belgium. But the priest in charge was a very different sort from the last. His congregation consisted largely of women, and with some of them on earth he had been entangled, and still was. Nor did he seem in the least ashamed of it. Stranger still though the women were furiously jealous of each other, they had not a word of reproach for his misconduct. Indeed, they seemed to me to consider it perfectly natural.

“Wherever he went he was followed by a crowd of adoring females whom he bullied at times, but more often encouraged in extreme sentimentality. He was very dogmatic and conceited, so much so that he really, I think, believed he was a pattern and an example for all mankind.

“He quarreled with most of the men he met because they did not pay him sufficient respect and the last I saw of him he was undergoing a good thrashing from a couple of French soldiers.

“After leaving this scene, I saw a man walking along and looking most dejected. He was followed at a short distance by two women who were quarrelling the whole time.

“I got into conversation with him, and he explained that on earth he had married a second time on the death of his first wife.

“His second wife had been killed at the same time as himself by a shell, and his first and second wives had quarreled ever since as each claimed him as her husband and

neither was willing to share him.

“He appealed to us for some solution of the matter, adding that he would gladly be without a wife at all; but this was the point on which they did agree, and when he suggested it, turned their wrath upon him instead of each other for a while.

“We left him, as we could see no remedy except that they should share him, which they did not seem willing to do.

“Then H.J.L. took me to see another case. This man had had no less than three wives, but instead of quarrelling with each other, they had united to keep him in subjection, and seemed like succeeding.

“I then saw another case where a man had married two sisters, and was living quite happily with both.

“Next I was introduced to a man who confessed that, at present, he was quite happy with his first wife, but dreaded the day when his second wife should arrive on the astral plane. ‘For then,’ he said, ‘trouble will begin, I know.’

“After him I met a man who was worried because his only wife had preceded him into the spiritual plane, and, owing to the materialistic life he had lived on earth, he feared he would never be able to ‘catch up’ with her again.

“‘You see,’ he explained, ‘she died twenty years before I did, and was always of a more spiritual type than I, so she had a long start.’

“We also saw a woman who was searching for her husband, but had not yet found him. She confessed that she had heard that he had greatly degenerated since she died, and she feared he had drifted into one of the worst portions of the astral plane.

H.J.L.: “Well then, it’s time you were off, Jack. One gets some curious problems over here does one not?”

J.W.: “Yes, indeed. It reminds me rather of the East. But what about the Biblical saying, ‘They neither marry nor are given in marriage?’”

H.J.L.: “Perfectly correct in the spirit plane, but not entirely so on the astral which, after all, is partly material. But there is no marriage in the grosser sense even here. That is why misguided souls fall into the sin of obsession.

“But now you must be off.” So we parted.

Chapter XXX

News of the Passing of Mrs. H. J. L.

August 28th, 1916.

On reaching the house where Rex lived, I found him alone, and he at once said, “H.J.L. has gone off to the spirit plane to meet Aunt Jane, as she has died.

“He suddenly sensed her presence passing through the astral plane. I saw nothing, but he went out at once, saying, however, that he would return as soon as he could.

“Beyond that, I can tell you nothing. You might give me any details you know.”

I did briefly, and then said good-bye, explaining that I was going to follow him.

I therefore returned to my bed (on earth) and there my astral form seemed to slide away. At once I felt myself delightfully free, and sped upwards through the air. I saw nothing of the astral plane, but almost at once found myself on the familiar hill overlooking the college in which H.J.L. had dwelt on the spirit plane.

I hurried into the college, and entered his rooms, but found no one except Molly (the dog) who welcomed me effusively.

So I sat and waited a long time, till, suddenly, H.J.L. entered.

H.J.L.: “I could feel you calling, so have just come over for a few words, but must return almost at once. Your Aunt passed through the astral plane with hardly a check. She is now, as it were, on the edge of this division and of the one above. There for a minute, she is pausing, and I of course, cannot go on beyond.

She is in a rather dazed state, but she recognised and was glad to see me. Miss E. and H. have come to meet her. As she will soon pass on, I must hurry back to say good-bye. I am sorry I can't go with her, but I expect it is best so. I shan't be entirely cut off from all news of her, as I keep in touch with P___. She has not yet begun to see her whole past life, as I did, but soon will.

“Now, good-bye for the present.”

He went out, and, as there was no further use in my remaining, I returned to earth, and entering my body, lost consciousness.

September 4th, 1916.

I went straight to the astral plane, and found H.J.L. in the house. Rex was out.

H.J.L.: “Yes. I'm back here, as you expected. Your aunt found quite a large number of people she knew on earth, including Old A___. These came to meet her and after saying good-bye to me she passed into the division above mine, and so we parted.

“Old A___ assured me that she was very happy, and wished that I could come too. I felt rather out of it, and indeed glad I couldn't. The people, though they had improved, seemed to me to be very similar to what they were on earth, and the atmosphere was rather uncongenial.

However, it will suit your Aunt splendidly and that is the main thing. She went straight off to a church of which E. is parson; to offer her thanks for her safe passage from your world to ours.

“Since then I've been back with Rex, helping him to help others. He is getting on well.”

We continued to talk about private matters for a short time, and presently Rex entered.

He assured me he was getting down to the life on the astral plane, and then went on:

“We seem to be doing very well on the front, and it’s leading to a tremendous influx of newcomers. The Adjutant has settled down to life here and is one of our band of workers who try to help those who pass over.

“I don’t like a good deal of the work we have to do, but my guide says it is good for me. By the bye, I see my guide fairly regularly now, but I can’t bear his presence for long.”

We talked about various private matters for some while longer, and then parted.

Chapter XXXI

The Ideal Garden

September 12th, 1916.

On arriving at the house they occupied, Rex said, “We are going out for recreation. Like to come too?”

So H.J.L., R.L.W. and I set out together, and, after passing through some pretty country, came to, a beautiful house in a lovely garden. It was set back from the road and in pleasure grounds of considerable extent.

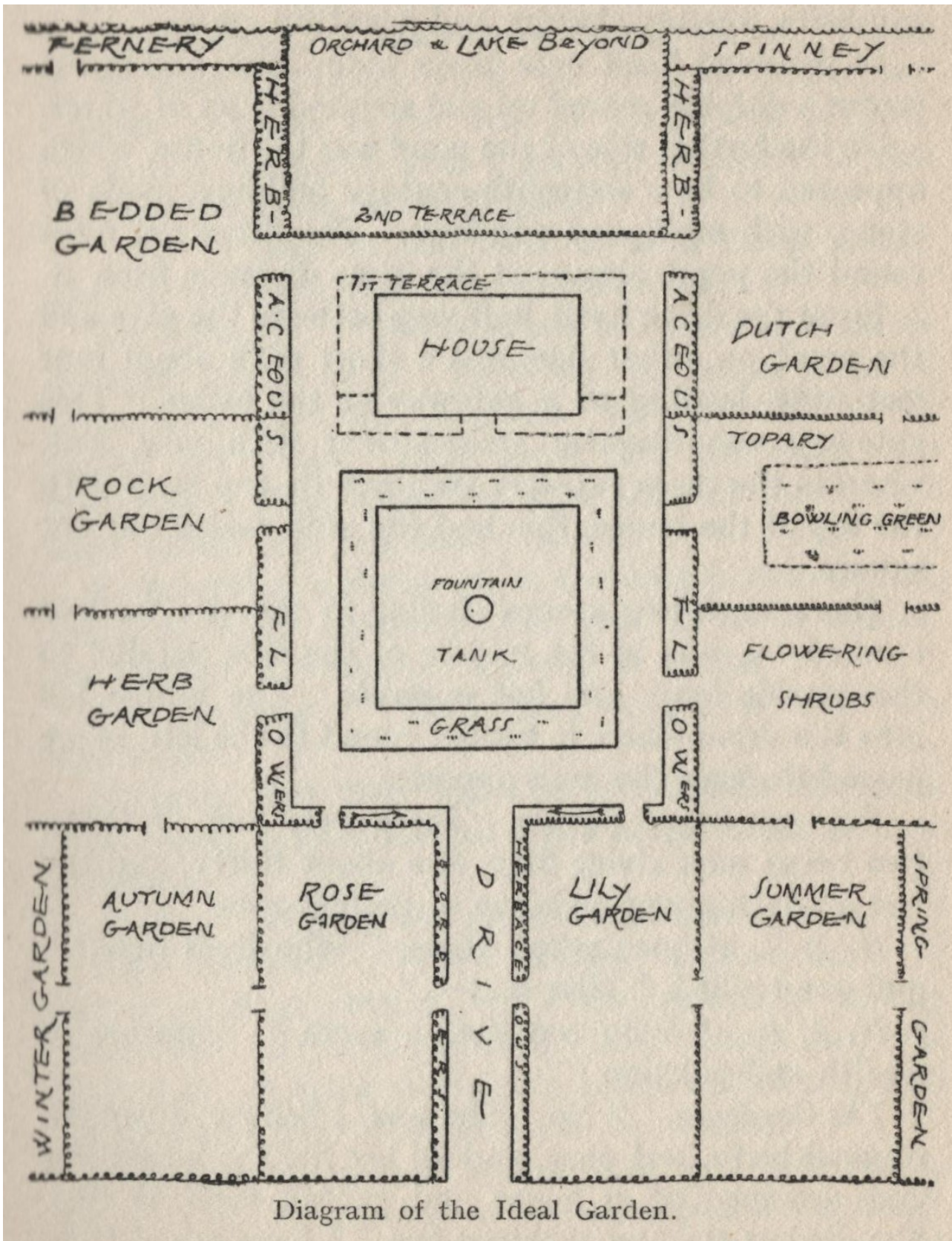
They were surrounded by a hedge of yew, carefully clipped which appeared about eight feet high and completely arched the gateway, which had a gate wide enough for a carriage to pass through.

J.W.: “The gateway is wide enough for a carriage, but the coachman would be knocked off the box.”

H.J.L.: “Yes. I don’t think, however, any carriages ever pass through this way.”

On entering we found broad beds (about ten feet deep) full of lovely flowers of every kind that are found in June in England. They were mostly herbaceous, though a few bush roses were to be seen among them. At the back of the beds, on either side, were yew hedges about six feet high.

This path was about a hundred yards long, and at the further end was a square pond, edged with flat stones. The edge of the stones, which were moss-grown in parts, overhung the walls of the pond by about four inches, and the water was about nine inches below the surface of the ground.



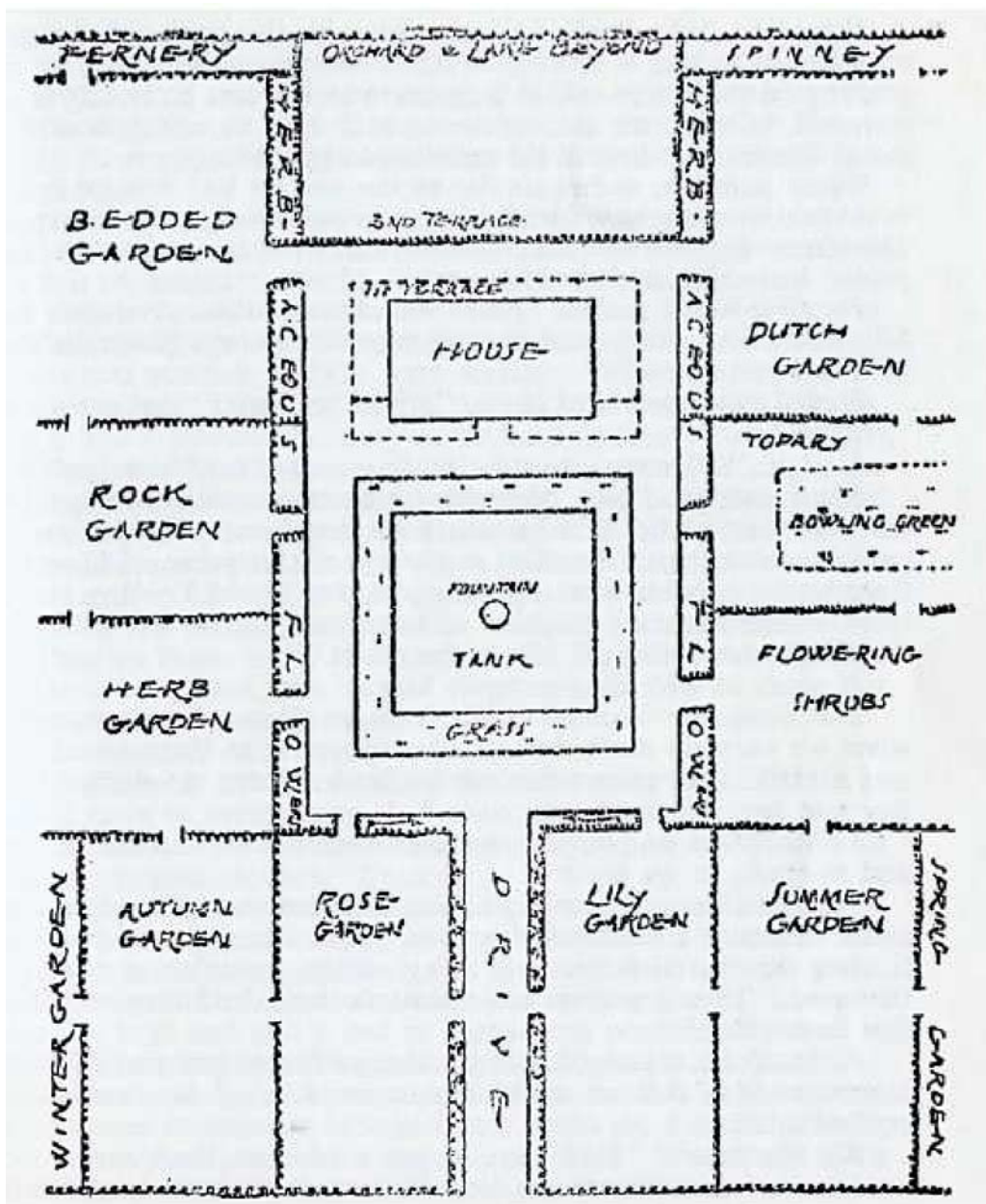


Diagram of the Ideal Garden

The 'drive' turned sharply right and left and ran parallel to the pond at a distance of five yards. Round the pond were clumps of iris and other plants and the rest of the space was filled with turf of an exquisite, velvety texture and beautiful green. In the pond were many water-lilies and in the centre a dolphin reared up and spouted a jet of water.

On the further side of the pond was the house, which appeared to be a sixteenth-century building, made of stone, with mullioned windows. The drive ran right round the pond, always at the same distance from it

From the drive itself, half-way between the gate and the pond on either side, was a short path about four feet wide, leading to a gateway in the hedge. This gateway was likewise arched over with yew but whereas the main gate way arch had its top flush with the top of the hedge, this had the arch raised but cut square.

There were two arches similar to the one we had entered by, one in the middle of the side parallel to the outside road, and one opposite. The former led into the drive where it turned round to the left, so we passed through the arch opposite.

Here we found people. There were four of them, two men about fifty, one about thirty, and the last a youth about eighteen or thereabouts.

H.J.L. at once asked them, "Who lives here?" and one replied, "Miss H."

H.J.L.: "Who was she on earth? Someone of wealth and position?"

The Gardener. "No. She was, I believe, a woman of good birth, but poor, and all her life she longed for and dreamed of a house and garden such as this. She died at the age of thirty five. I have heard from her own lips how, though compelled to live at Tooting, she used to be always planning the kind of house and garden she would have if only she were well off. Now she has it."

H.J.L.: "Why do you work here?"

The Gardener.: "Because we like to do so. Three of us were gardeners when we were on earth, but Charles (pointing to the man of thirty) was a clerk. He always hankered after a garden, so drifted in one day and has remained ever since."

J.W.: "And do you have to tend these plants, and cut the grass and so forth, as on earth?"

The Gardener.: "There is not the same amount of drudgery as on earth. These are the astral forms of plants that have died on earth. In time their astral bodies wilt away. They grow thin and wan, like that rose. Then a puff of wind scatters them, and they vanish into fine dust. See?"

As he spoke, a rose-bush in the rose garden we had just left, which looked so thin that we could almost see through it, vanished in a puff of smoke.

The Gardener.: "We'll have to put a new one there now."

I noticed that there was a large collection of plants lying ready to hand behind a yew hedge which formed a square.

J.W.: "How do the plants come here?"

The Gardner.: "They simply appear here. I never see them coming, but am constantly finding fresh ones, I just plant them where I think they will look best. I think they have a sort of instinct, and come where they will be welcome.

This plant dump was well hidden by a yew hedge, but it was, nevertheless, a beautiful picture in itself, very different from the rubbish heap which would have been similarly placed on earth.

The garden here was full of chrysanthemums and other autumn-flowing plants.

The Gardener broke in with: "Yes. We've a garden for every season of the year, and many other gardens as well. Next to this is the winter garden, though there is no winter here. Miss H. insisted on its being made, as it was always her dream to have a garden for each season."

We passed through another arch, and found a garden with a grass lawn in the centre,

and round the sides, near the hedges, were broad borders full of evergreen shrubs. Many of them had silver and gold foliage. Others had masses of berries which looked like blooms at a short distance, so large and fine were they. I had no idea such a variety of colours was possible.

There were masses of white berries and of yellow ones, scarlet, deep red, purple, blue, and almost black berries.

I asked the Gardener, "Have you tropical gardens here as well?"

The Gardener.: "No. Miss H. says that she wants to keep to a strictly English garden, and I agree with her. Not but these tropical plants are very fine, but I prefer our own plants. They seem more home-like. Have you seen the sweet-herb garden? It smells beautiful."

He pointed to an arch in the top hedge, and we passed through into a garden full of marjoram, thyme, lavender, and countless other herbs. Then we came to the rock garden, and beyond it was a garden with bedded-out plants, but instead of going into this we came out again onto the drive near the house.

"Shall we call?" said Rex.

"Let's glance at the gardens on the other side," said H.J.L. "Jack will have to return soon."

The Gardener.: "All around this house, as you see, are lawns with beds of midsummer flowers. Look!"

We found at the back the house had a terrace with stone balustrades, and three flights of steps leading down to a fine lawn. This also was terraced, and bounded on its lower side by a wall level with the grass, from the crevices of which rock plants and creepers grew. The wall was five feet high and had a bed of herbaceous plants in front of it, and another lawn beyond which had a grass slope. At the foot of all were lovely orchards in full bloom, and from the terrace by the house, where countless wall flowers bloomed, one could see a lake stretching beyond the orchard, and hills beyond the lake. We turned back past the house. On the right of this as one faced it, and therefore corresponding with the bedded garden, was what the Gardener described as the sunk or Dutch garden and next to it opposite the rock garden, was a garden full of quaintly cut yews, and centering round a bowling-green, with an exquisite little summer-house and sundial.

"Here are the flowering trees and shrubs," said the Gardener, and we found ourselves in the garden opposite the herb garden.

Grouped round a circular lawn were flowering trees of every description, while on the lawn itself were dotted about the smaller flowering shrubs.

The air was laden with the scent of the lilac and may, but there were several trees in full flower which on earth would have hardly sown a bud when may trees were in bloom.

The Gardener.: “As I gather you must be returning soon to earth, let me show you the lily garden, and excuse me asking you, but you three gentlemen seem different. You, sir (addressing Rex), appear to be one of us, and as you are a soldier, I presume you are one of those who have fallen in the great war, of which a rumour has reached us even in the peaceful glades.”

Rex nodded, and he went on to me. “You, I think, from what the old gentleman said just now, are still living on earth.”

I hastened to explain my position, and he turned to H.J.L. “But who are you, sir?” H.J.L. told him briefly, and he replied, in a respectful tone, “Then you are one of the Messengers?”

H.J.L.: “Oh, dear no! Only a relation of this young man who has come to this plane to help him. But let us hurry on.”

The gardener then showed us the lily garden, where were growing at once every kind of lily which will grow out of doors in England. But the beds were grouped according to the season, to avoid incongruity so far as possible. We then passed on to see the summer and, finally, the spring garden, in which were all manner of bulbs. At length we returned to the drive, and I said, “I must be going.”

The Gardner replied, “Besides these there are other divisions in these grounds. Thus, beyond the bedded-out garden on the left of the house is the fernery. It is very pretty, and centers round a little stream which falls over a waterfall and then goes into the lake.

“There are several other men at work besides our four selves, and we are always busy, yet never overworked. If you two gentlemen would like to call on Miss H. she would be delighted to meet you, and if you are interested in old furniture, the house is full of it.”

They agreed to do so, and we parted. I went through the gate into the road. The view grew misty, and I lost consciousness.

Chapter XXXII

More About the Garden

September 19th, 1916.

I found R.L.W. and H.J.L. in their house. This visit was devoted mainly to private matters.

After a while, I inquired, “What was the garden like beyond the house?”

R.L.W.: “Lawn after lawn, terraced one below the other, till we reached the river, which here spread out into a lake. Above and below the lake were spinneys and orchards. On the lake were swans and a gondola. The gondolier was there, and good-naturedly offered to take us on the lake. So we went aboard, and as he rowed he sang

a song. I suppose it was in Italian, but we understood it quite easily. It was all about the sunlight on the water.

“We enjoyed it immensely. As we returned we stopped to admire a beautiful fountain on one of the lawns. The jet of water appeared to me about one-hundred feet high.”

J.W.: “Anything more to tell me about that garden?”

R.L.W.: “Not much, except that we found the owner had a large aviary. The birds, however, were not kept in cages, but lived in the woods and garden. The only thing that kept them there was the bond of love for the lady, and therefore hundreds came to her.

“They liked the quiet of the gardens, and the fact that few people came to disturb them.

“She said, for the most part, they made little attempt to hunt for food, and spent most of their time in singing.

“There were countless flocks of butterflies also.

“They likewise appeared drawn to her because she loved them. All manner of butterflies I saw, not merely tortoise-shell and peacock, but rare ones such as the swallow-tail and the large copper and the Camberwell beauty, which are practically extinct in England.

J.W.: “Well, I must be going now.” And so I left them.

September 26th.

I only stayed a few minutes, and told Rex mother was dying, and he said he would go down to earth to meet her.

Chapter XXXIII

My Mother Passes Over

October 2nd, 1916.

On arriving in the room where R.L.W. and H.J.L. lived, Rex said: “I know about mother’s passing over. I went to the Vicarage on the Tuesday that is to say, as soon as you left me.”

“At Charing Cross Road I saw mother lying there unconscious, noticed the picture of Blanche had been placed over the fireplace, and saw Miss H. buzzing about.

“The pater seemed to be there most of the time. Presently I saw you arrive, and thought you could see me, but you did not, nor did you see me once the whole time, which rather surprised me.

“Mother’s astral body was partly out of her physical body, but seemed to be lying supine and unconscious, as it were.

“I saw you come three times on the Wednesday.

“After you had gone, I could see that the astral form was slowly drawing away from her body from the head. Gradually it freed itself and floated above her body, connected only by the silver cord. By degrees this seemed to fray away from the head, like the strands of a rope, till only two or three threads remained.

“One snapped. There was another pause, and then another went, and then the last thread broke, and still the astral floated over her corpse.

“While this was happening, I was aware of a number of astral beings who gathered round. I will tell you more about them at another time. I called mother, but she did not move. Again and again I spoke, hoping to arouse her, but with no result.

Then one of the newcomers spoke. ‘She needs sleep; she will remain like this for some little while, and we have come to look after her. Have no fear. We are a band of spirits who make this our special work. Come with us and see that all is well with her.’

“They lifted her and carried her away, four of them, while two walked beside her. It seemed to me as if the body floated. I leant over and kissed her, but she showed no sign of recognition or consciousness.

“I spoke to the being who was in charge of the party, ‘Who are you?’

He.: “I am a being on the astral plane, as you are. I was a doctor on earth, and so were those three. The two women were nurses. We are taking your mother to a kind of hospital.”

H.J.L. was with me, and said: “On the spirit plane where I dwell I have seen such hospitals, but did not know there were similar institutions here, but of course, I can see that they are probably even more needed here than there.”

The Doctor.: “I noticed you seemed different from most of the denizens of these spheres. I should like to have an opportunity of questioning you about life there.”

H.J.L.: “Yes, certainly, but not just now.”

The Doctor.: “What brought you back here after having once quitted this plane?”

H.J.L. “When I came to help my young nephew, but you must not suppose that I was on this plane before passing on to the spirit plane. I was an old man when I died, and shed my astral body almost as soon as I did my physical one, and so practically saw nothing of this sphere until I assumed an astral body in order to help my nephew.’

The Doctor.: “I wonder which is best? I think, however, I’m glad that I have had some time here first. I feel one’s life experience would not be complete without it. Of course, no man can know all there is to learn, but the more one experiences the better, I fancy.”

R.L.W. continued. “By this time we had drawn near to a high wall, and passing through a gateway, found ourselves in a most exquisite garden. It was very like the

one we all three saw recently.

“There were countless flowers and beautiful lawns, stately trees and flowering shrubs. Here and there fountains played and streams rippled along over their shiny beds. The water looked clear and limpid, and often the streams widened out into large lakes on which I noticed boats. Yes, real boats, which were being rowed and one which was being driven by a sail. Till then I had hardly noticed that there was a soft breeze blowing.

“In these boats were many persons, while members of both sexes walked about the grounds. Overhead birds sang merrily, and butterflies flitted from flower to flower. It seemed very like old mother earth, but yet there was a subtle difference, impossible to describe yet very real.

“Then I saw the hospital. I think it had once been some fine French chateau of the eighteenth century, but if so it must have been remodeled internally either before or after its arrival on the astral plane, for inside it seemed a modern hospital. At the same time, I could not help noticing that it had a greater air of comfort and peaceful calm than the hospitals I saw on earth. It was not so cold and bare as they usually were. I discovered too, that the operating room was replaced by the hypnotising rooms, in which the patients lay on couches while the doctors treated them, either by simple hypnotism or else by various forms of suggestion. Again, crowds of students were not admitted to watch these operations, at most two might come with the doctor, as it was considered that a large number of different types of men with differing magnetic conditions would upset the patients or even the doctor himself when engaged on this delicate task. Therefore, there were many small rooms rather than one big theatre.

“They took mother into a room, where she was laid on a couch by herself, and left in charge of two nurses, still sleeping quietly.

Chapter XXXIV Of Diseases of the Astral Body

As we went out, H.J.L. spoke to the Doctor.

H.J.L.: “Do you get many cases of this kind? I must admit that I have not come across any cases in these spheres or in my own spirit realm before in which the soul lay sleeping like this.”

The Doctor.: “Oh, we get a fair number, but it’s certainly less common than most other forms of diseases here.”

R.L.W.: “What sorts of ‘diseases’ do you get here? I thought disease was left behind with the body?’

The Doctor.: “Merely physical diseases of course are and as the bulk of the ill man is prone to are purely bodily complaints, this is a happier world than the earth. But

even on the material earth the mind has far more to do with physical defects than the average man imagines, and here it is almost entirely a matter of healing the mind and spirit. Typical complaints are:

(1) Religious mania, and let me tell you that is one of the most difficult diseases with which to deal.

(2) Hysteria of different kinds, especially a kind which makes the victim believe that he is crippled. Of course, though normally such physical defects which belonged to the earth life do not remain with the astral body, yet in these cases the mind makes the astral body behave as if it were crippled.

(3) Cases like your mother's, in which the spirit does not awaken to consciousness."

R.L.W.: "But when the body no longer holds the spirit, how can a defect in the brain be carried into the astral plane? Now that my mother no longer suffers from paralysis, how is it that she still appears like a victim with that complaint?"

The Doctor.: "Your mother's illness was partly, though not entirely, due to her soul. It was caused by certain faults of character, of which you are aware, and these have to be dealt with.

"Again, her illness has really been a very exhaustive one and enfeebled her soul, which has tended to atrophy for some years. This was not her fault in the main, but due to some physical defects, and especially to her brain being clouded, which prevented her keeping her astral body fully alive.

"But you must leave us now, as we have much work to do. You can come again." So, after once more kissing mother, H.J.L. and I departed.

J.W.: "How long will she be like that?"

H.J.L.: "The Doctor said it might be a short time, or it might be several months. Six months as earth reckons time."

J.W.: "Did you see anything of the funeral? Of course, mother didn't."

R.L.W.: "Yes, did we not, Boss?"

H.J.L.: "Yes, the Requiem sent up a great shaft of light, which seemed to transfigure the hospital, and mother smiled in her sleep, but otherwise did not stir. I saw right down into the church. Saw you, and B__ and C__. Later, saw the funeral service, and even came to the actual interment."

J.W.: "Did you notice any other people at the services?"

R.L.W.: "Saw C__ and I, and a lot of others, including quite a number of spirits.

"By the by, when at the house I noticed rather a nice Persian kitten. It saw me too, but was rather frightened, arched its back and spat at me. That cat's second sight was better than yours, Jack." And he laughed.

"After we got back here we talked things over, and agreed that though it was a bit

disappointing for me not to be able to greet mother properly, it was probably the best thing under the circumstances.”

H.J.L.: “Yes, I think she would have been rather lost over here if just turned loose, where she had few friends. As it is, she is sure to make some at the hospital, and will be warned of the dangers of this world of which everyone on earth is so ignorant. “But now you had better be off.”

So I returned to earth.

Chapter XXXV

Mother Awakens

October 9th, 1916.

On entering the house of H.J.L., I found him alone there.

H.J.L.: “Rex is with his mother. She has just recovered consciousness, and I am waiting here to take you to the hospital to see her.”

We started at once, and on passing through the gates of the hospital, which was some little way from H.J.L.’s house, I was struck with the beauty of the garden. We entered the hospital, and found ourselves in a kind of waiting-room. This room was comfortably furnished, and looked out over the gardens. We were not long here when a nurse came in and told us to follow her. We entered a large well-lit room and saw mother, with Rex seated beside her.

“Why did you not tell me Rex was dead?” was her first greeting. I endeavoured to pacify her, for she was evidently very annoyed. However, her irritation soon subsided, and she next said, “I can’t understand things. Rex says he is dead, and I am dead, but what are you?”

I then explained, as briefly as I could, how it was that I was privileged to come into these planes. She evidently did not fully grasp it but, at the same time, appeared satisfied. I then introduced her to H.J.L., but she said at once, “Oh, Rex has already done that. And I’m glad Rex brought Mr. L. along with him, we’ve always been good friends.”

I then began. “Do you remember anything of your passing over?”

Mother.: “Most of it seems a blank, but I remember hearing you call me and saw your face, as in a dream. I think I was alive then. If so, that is the last thing I remember till I awoke here, and saw Rex looking at me. I thought I’d been sent to a home and that Rex had returned from France. Even now I can hardly believe I’m dead.

“Indeed, it all seems like a dream. My talking to you seems very much like a dream. You look different from the others, less real.”

She ceased, and the Doctor, who was standing by, said, "You had better leave her for a bit. The spirit is both weak and clouded still. All the same, I am surprised at her waking so soon. Often they sleep for months and months of earth time. How long, exactly, is it since she passed over to us?"

J.W.: "Nearly twelve days."

The Doctor.: "Yes, I consider she is making good progress, but it will be some time before she is really normal. The spirit has been clouded so long, that it will take a considerable time to recover."

Mother interrupted. "How is B___? Is her birthday, soon?"

J.W.: "Yes, in less than a week. She is very well, and was very sorry when you died. She always remembers you and Rex in her prayers."

Mother.: "She's a dear little thing. I wish I could send her a present."

R.L.W.: "I say, suppose you buy her some trifle for mother and for me, and tell her they are from mother and me, with love. She'd understand."

J.W.: "A good idea and I'll do it. There won't be the blank there otherwise would have been."

The Doctor.: "I think you had better go now."

J.W.: "Goodbye mother! Any message for father?"

Mother.: "Give him my love for me."

So I kissed her good-bye, and we all three left. I parted from the other two almost at once, and returned to earth.

Chapter XXXVI

Mother Gets Better

October 16th, 1916.

On entering the astral plane, I went first to the house where H.J.L. and R.L.W. were. They were both there, and Rex said. "We've been waiting for you to join us before visiting mother."

J. W.: "Have you seen her since last I was here?"

R.L.W.: "Yes, several times. She's quite comfortable and going on well."

We started off, and on the way talked of various matters, the war in particular.

On reaching the hospital, we passed into mother's room after a short wait. Mother was very pleased to see us, and promptly asked me how B. was, and whether I had done as she wished with regard to a present. I had already answered the same question asked by Rex but went through it all again, and told her what I had got for her. I further told her how pleased B. was, and that she always prayed for the two

grandmas and uncle Rex.

Mother.: “Was Mrs. L. dead, then?”

J.W.: “Yes.”

Mother.: “Why isn’t she with you others?”

J.W.: “She’s in a higher plane, along with H. and Miss B.”

Mother.: “The same ‘churchy’ lot. Well, I don’t want to go there, anyway.”

J.W.: “I don’t suppose you will. Like attracts like.”

Mother.: “Why am I here? I did think when I died, I would get out of the doctor’s hands, but I seem still to be surrounded by nurses and doctors. Can’t you take me away, Rex?”

R.L.W.: “You’ve got to get well before I can. You’re getting better every day.”

Mother.: “There aren’t any days here. I want to go to a theatre.”

A Nurse.: “So you shall, dear. We’ll put you in a chair; and take you there now.”

Mother.: “I don’t need a chair. I can walk all right.”

She got out of bed, and I noticed she was clad in a long, grayish-white garment, but as soon as she tried to walk she collapsed on the floor. She didn’t hurt herself, however. The nurse and I helped her up, and she sat on the bed. She sat up quite well, did not hunch herself up as she had done on earth.

The Nurse.: “Let me do up your hair.”

Mother.: “Yes and you must dress me properly.”

The Nurse.: “Why you are dressed!”

Mother.: “I call this a nightdress.”

The Nurse.: “Oh no! It’s the dress you’ll wear for some long time yet.”

And turning to us, she added “We’ll be out in the waiting room very shortly.” And she was, with mother in a bath-chair, and accompanied by the Doctor, to whom I spoke quietly.

J.W.: “Doctor, how is it she can’t walk?”

Doctor.: “I thought I explained it all to you last time you were here. Only you mortals are so dense. It’s a case of the mind dominating the body. Her mind, which was very material on earth, reproduces here the most prominent features of her former bodily infirmity. But you notice that the very things which were not selfish and material are the ones on which she is most clear. Thus her love of children, especially of your little girl, she is quite clear about that. Practically no clouding of the intellect at all when she’s talking of her.”

The Nurse.: “Yes, she talks about B. almost all the day. Don’t you, dear?”

Mother.: “She’s a dear little thing. I wish I could see her.” And she began to cry. It took quite a long time for the nurse to comfort her, and she did so mainly by talking about the theatre to which we were going. We went down several passages, and came to a theatre in the building.

The Nurse.: “We run these plays almost exclusively for the benefit of the patients. They are not very ‘high browed’ stuff. Of course, that sort of thing would be beyond most of our patients.”

The theatre was very much like one on earth, except that almost all the stalls and pit were given up to bath-chairs. In the dress circle and upper circle (there was no gallery) those who could walk were seated in ordinary seats.

The play was an innocent farce of a fairly rollicking nature and judged by the roars of laughter that greeted it, it was fully appreciated. Mother enjoyed it hugely, and as she was wheeled back, said, “I haven’t enjoyed myself so much for ages. Be sure to tell H. that they have theatres here and no churches; He won’t believe you.”

J.W.: “Right, I will!”

Mother.: “What is he doing now?”

J.W.: “Staying at M.”

We continued talking like this on various domestic matters till we reached her room, when Rex said to the nurse. “Aren’t there any good plays or concerts here?”

“Rather,” she replied, “didn’t you know of it?” And she told him there was a good theatre and an opera not far away, and added, “We have soothing sorts of concerts here. You’re always welcome. Ask them at the main entrance. But if you want rather stronger meat, you’d better try the opera or the theatre.”

Rex was highly elated at this news and we three parted from mother. Soon after leaving the hospital I felt the call of the world and returned.

Chapter XXXVII

R.L.W. Visits the Opera

October 23rd, 1916.

On arriving at the house where R.L.W. and H.J.L. lived, I found them both waiting for me.

J.W.: “How is mother?”

R.L.W.: “About the same, I think. We’ll go and see her soon.

“I’ve been going to the opera lately. There’s quite a number of good singers here. I heard Faust and Lohengrin and The Huguenots, also a new one composed over here.”

J.W.: “Who by? And what is the name of it?”

R.L.W.: “It was a version of Alkestis, and was by Wagner. He’s not in this plane, he’s higher up, but some of the operatic folk got into communication with him and produced it here. He’s in the sphere of Belief without Acts.

“It was very fine; thoroughly Wagnerian, but of the type of Tannhäuser rather than of Tristan. Still, it was not exactly like any of the work he did on earth. I think it’s better and freer.”

J.W.: “I suppose the singers were from this (astral) plane?”

R.L.W.: “Yes, all of them. There were no very famous people, but the general level was distinctly high, above that of the usual company one saw at Covent Garden though the stars there were better than the people who took the principal parts here.

“Now, let us go on to see mother.”

So we set off for the hospital, and in due course reached it. Here we found her seated in a chair looking out of the window and she was delighted to see us. We talked about domestic matters, and she asked how father was getting on and I told her. She appeared fairly interested.

J. W.: “Have you been to that theatre since I last saw you?”

Mother.: “Yes. By the by, where is Ch___? I thought I’d see him when I got over here. I haven’t seen any of my own family. There doesn’t seem to be any arrangements here for sending letters to one’s friends or even finding out where they are.”

The Nurse.: “When you are better dear, you will be able to find out where most of them are.”

H.J.L.: “I’ll try and find out about your brother.”

So after a little more conversation of a general order, we parted and soon after I returned to earth.

Chapter XXXVIII

A Painful Subject

October 30th, 1916.

I found the Officer with H.J.L. when I arrived.

The Officer.: “I’ve found your Uncle Ch. at H.J.L’s request. I was not allowed to go into Hell myself, but one of the higher messengers who was going down made a special effort at my request. He found him in the sixth division, told him about his sister having died, and urged him to make an effort. He thinks he will, and has gone back to help him. It ought not to be so hard to climb out of the sixth division as it was for me to climb from the very bottom.

The messenger said it's always easier to get hold of the so-called 'lost-soul' if you can bring any personal touch, such as a message from a friend or relation, or even merely information about them; especially if the relation is in a higher sphere than the lost soul. It makes a big difference. I had nothing of that sort to help me."

R.L.W. entered at this moment, and said, "Mother is getting on splendidly. I think soon she will be able to come and live with me here."

J.W.: "Shall you tell her about her brother Ch___?"

H.J.L.: "We shall keep it from her for as long as we can, but as she gets mentally clearer she will learn to read what is in our minds; but, till that time, we shall simply say that he is at present in a different sphere, one of the divisions of the spirit plane."

J.W.: "It's a hard law."

The Officer.: "Justice is always hard, and the price for all things must be paid. I know it well now, but mortals still refuse to believe it."

J.W.: "Still, there were many far worse men than Ch___"

The Officer.: "And they too pay the penalty, be sure of that, although you may not see it, but suicide is a very deadly sin."

He ceased, and R.L.W. said, "Let's go and see mother."

The Officer went back to his work, but we three went to the hospital.

We found mother in a bath chair, and a nurse pushed her while we went with her into the park.

Here we talked about private matters till it was time for me to return.

The next few visits were devoted to the spirit plane, where for a short time, H.J.L. had returned.

Chapter XXXIX

The House in the Garden

November 27th 1916.

I went to the house in which R.L.W. lived. There I found H.J.L. and R.L.W.

H.J.L.: "Yes, I've returned here for a short time."

J.W.: "I never heard what happened when you entered the house in that beautiful old garden which we visited."

R.L.W.: "When we entered we found a lady who appeared to be middle-aged. She seemed very pleased to see us, especially when we said how much we liked her garden.

"She answered, 'Yes, I'm very proud of it, and happy here. I hope, as you like the

garden, you will like the house also.'

"We spent quite a long time there. Jack, you'd have loved to have seen it! She had various rooms furnished in various styles; and each room seemed to belong to the same period as that of the furniture it contained. Thus there were Elizabethan and Jacobean rooms furnished with splendid old oak furniture in the contemporary style.

"There were Charles II and Queen Anne rooms; early Georgian, Chippendale. Sheraton, and so forth.

"She said that she had not troubled about anything later in date than 1815, as the later stuff did not interest her."

He went on enlarging on the various beautiful pieces of furniture, pictures, and so forth, for some time, and then the subject changed.

R.L.W.: "Let's go and see mother. She's beginning to get about a bit now." So we went to the hospital, where mother declared she wanted to go out for a walk.

She started off, and though she walked slowly and at times with difficulty, she succeeded in reaching the park with but little help.

We sat there for some time, and a cat came up and jumped on mother's lap.

Mother.: "She often comes to me, knows I like cats, I suppose."

When we started to return, the cat followed us to the gates of the park, and then sat down and watched us out of sight.

J.W.: "I wonder who the cat belongs to."

Mother.: "To the park-keeper who lives in that cottage. I've often spoken to him. He seems rather a decent sort of man."

Then the conversation turned to personal matters.

After a little more desultory conversation we parted and I returned to earth.

Chapter XL

I Prove my Friends by Means of Another Medium

I went to Mrs. L., the medium, as a test, to satisfy myself as far as possible that the experiences were real, and the people I met the ones I thought them to be.

I had two very successful meetings. In the first she described clairvoyantly H.J.L., R.L.W., my mother, and my great-grandfather. The description of the latter was very accurate; I was surprised at his presence, as I have never met him in the land beyond the grave.

In the first interview she gave me many intimate details of my life at W___ when R.L.W. and I were boys.

In the second interview, by means of table-writing, we obtained details such as names and dates from my mother, R.L.W., and H.J.L. The details given were known only to myself and them and certainly were not known to the medium.

I afterwards questioned H.J.L. and the others, and they declared that they were present, and gave the answers which came through, but they also attempted to get through certain other messages and failed.

Having obtained evidence from an outside source of my communicators I did not continue these séances, as it was evident I could get better messages direct. I consider, however, that the experiment was of real value, for these three reasons:

1. It gave me additional evidence as to the objective reality of the communicators.
2. It proved that such communications could be obtained through this medium. Of this fact I had little doubt but, in view of the recent attacks on all mediums, I thought the experiment desirable.
3. It also showed, to a certain extent, the limitations imposed on this form of intercommunication between the two worlds.

It should, however, be borne in mind that these limitations might (probably would) have disappeared in time as the entities became used to the new medium.

The following visit gives the comments of the spirits themselves upon this experiment. It should be remembered that Mrs. L. had no knowledge of the fact that I possessed mediumistic powers myself.

December 4th, 1916.

As soon as I entered the house where H.J.L. lived on the astral plane, I said, "Did you try to get into touch with me through that medium?"

H.J.L.: "We did, all three of us, and there were others there besides."

R.L.W.: "I found it very difficult to get the ideas through which I wanted. Many failed, I don't know why; still we did not do so badly."

H.J.L.: "That was, of course, largely because R.L.W. has never tried any medium on earth, and I've practically never tried anyone else but you."

R.L.W.: "I was trying to give you proofs that it was I, while not giving the medium more information than I could help. So it was rather like throwing down bits of a jigsaw puzzle which you had to piece together. Moreover, all the pieces did not reach you. However, we did not do so badly."

"Mother insisted on coming, but, of course, she could not do much. Yes, it was B. she was thinking of. It shows how she is improving that she was able to come."

"I notice that when one gets into the denser and more material conditions of the earth plane, one gets fuzzy, as it were."

H.J.L.: "The old gentleman was your great-grandfather. I've never seen him before."

He comes from the division above, i.e. of Faith without Acts.

“He told me he was drawn there by some invisible force. But we had very little conversation.”

J.W.: “Why were you seen as having brown hair? I always see you as white haired?”

H.J.L.: “That is because you expect me to be like that, so I take that form, but usually here I prefer to look a healthy, middle-aged man.”

R.L.W.: “Yes, I’ve noticed that of late, though at first you appeared old.

I then told H.J. L. that during the last few days I had been seized with a desire to do cubist drawings - did he know the explanation?

H.J.L.: “I’ve no doubt that some cubist artist who has been killed lately is trying to continue to work through you. If he finds you a suitable medium, he may be able to achieve something interesting, but I don’t suppose there’s any money in it. Personally I can’t imagine anyone buying a cubist drawing, but there’s no accounting for taste. Anyway, you’ll make the poor fellow happy, and that’s no small feat, after all. So I should let him experiment at it, it won’t do any harm, anyway.

“I have not an idea who it is, and, unfortunately, you’ve nothing by which I can trace him. These realms are fairly wide, you know. However, I’ll be on the lookout.” After a little more conversation we parted.

Note. . This cubist phase soon passed.

Chapter XLI

Food and Sleep Not Necessary

December 11th, 1916.

On my arrival at the house in the astral plane where H.J.L. and L.W. lived, I found mother with them.

R.L.W.: “Yes, mother is so much better that she has come to live with us.”

Mother.: “Yes, Jack, but there is no housekeeping to do here. That seems funny. However, I shall not be dull, for I am just beginning to get about again. This is quite an interesting country. It’s very like the earth, only it’s a great blessing not having to bother about meals.

Meals are a perfect nuisance on earth. Do you know, I met a woman recently who said she missed her meals? Fancy wanting to eat for the sake of eating! Then one does not need any sleep here, though another woman I met told me she came from a district where they used to lie down and go to sleep. Can you make that out?”

H.J.L.: “There is a division very like this in appearance, but nearer the earth plane, and there the astral beings both eat and sleep. At least, so I understand from various people I have met. That division is so like the earth that many astrals refuse to

believe they are dead; others know they do not need food or sleep, but it has become such a habit that they nevertheless continue to do so. Of course there is a danger that after a time astral food and drink will fail to satisfy them, and they may fall into obsessing.

Mother.: “What is obsessing?”

H.J.L. then explained this phenomenon.

Mother.: “What a disgusting idea!”

The conversation then drifted into other channels, mostly of a private nature, and after a while I left.

Chapter XLII

The Officer Describes His Organisation

December 18th, 1916.

As soon as I arrived at R.L.W.’s house, I wished them all a Happy Christmas. Mother promptly inquired about B.

H.J.L. told me that R.L.W. and mother were now settling down to the normal course of life on the astral plane. The Officer was gradually expanding his organisation for helping the soldiers who passed over. The latter entered while he was speaking, and said:

“Yes, it is getting quite a big thing now. I have under me over 5000 astrals working. At the head of all is myself. I have five officers whom I call colonels, each being in charge of 1000 workers. They have two majors; each major has five captains (one of whom is R.L.W.) under him, and these have 100 workers. These workers are divided into sections of nine men and a sergeant. This is the smallest unit we employ, though, of course, sometimes in the course of this work one worker will be attached to one newcomer. Headquarters staff is represented by five colonels and myself. Besides the permanent staff we have a constant stream of new recruits, whom we utilise so far as we are able. Many are useful as messengers, and so forth. After a time those who wish to join our organisation are drafted into new companies, which are officered by men promoted from the old camp.

“Thus, I have just absorbed all Company E. All the sergeants became captains, and most of the privates became sergeants. I retain, however, two or three privates for each section to keep the new recruits straight.

“It’s working very well, I am glad to say, but we need more workers still.”

After a little more conversation, I said to R.L.W., “What work are you undertaking?” R.L.W. looked a bit sheepish and then said, “I can’t help Germans, really, and I am doing a fair amount under the Officer.”

J.W.: “Well, why not set out to take a general survey of the astral plane?”

R.L.W.: “A jolly good idea! I’ll start at once.”

J.W.: “Don’t hurry. I have the original work to deal with first, but meanwhile, just look round. Uncle will you help?”

H.J.L. “Certainly. This place needs a full survey, but it’s a huge task, I warn you.”

The Officer.: “I will give you a helping hand. I get to know many types of men and many different experiences of death.”

So it was agreed, and soon after I returned to earth.

Since then I have visited my friends every Monday night, but although we have much private conversation, I have learned little of general interest. Meanwhile my first work, *Gone West*, was accepted, and when I informed the spirit friends, they began to redouble their investigations. What now follows is the result of their labours.

Chapter XLIII

Two Occult Experiences of B___

September 6th, 1917.

(A) B.’s Dream of the Millars’ Dog.

B. dreamed she was in the M.’s garden and their dog rose up out of its grave and began to play with her. It was somewhat shadowy; she could see the plants, etc., through it. It romped and played with her for some time and while doing so, she asked it if there were any fairies where it was. It replied, “Thousands!”

After a time it sank back into its grave. J.W.

October 30th, 1917.

(B) B.’s Dream of my Mother.

B. found herself in a tract of rolling down; bare of trees or shrubs, except that here and there were juniper trees. She found herself with the ‘big Grandmamma,’ and talked with her.

She asked her if there were any fairies, and Grandmamma said, “Lots!”

She seemed to be very pleased to see her (B.), but B. could not remember what they talked about.

I checked this last account when next I saw my mother, who confirmed it in every detail. Evidently they met on the ‘Dream Plane’ J. W.

END OF PART I.

Part II

General Survey of the Astral Plane, and Further Accounts of the Work and Life of this Band of Friends thereon.

Related By Lieutenant R. L. W. to J. S. M. Ward.

Chapter I

Describes the Difference between the Spirit and the Astral Planes

Nov. 12th, 1917

As soon as I entered the room where R. L. W. dwells, he began:

H.J.L.: "Well, Jack, shall we start the survey of the astral plane I'm quite ready to begin."

J.W.: "Yes, I am all attention."

H.J.L. then spoke. "Before Rex begins, let me give an introduction.

"The first point you must realize is the great difference between astral and the spirit planes.

"Let us consider the spirit plane first. These differences strike the investigator at once:

1. Matter has vanished entirely.
2. Space is non-existent.
3. Time is nearly non-existent, although there is something akin to chronological order.

"To make my meaning plain, consider Hell. Hell is not a place. It is a condition.

"The evil spirit quits the astral plane - that is to say, he leaves astral body and ceases to be visible to the denizens of the astral. It is quite possible that he is still on the same spot as he was at time before, if you can so use the word, just as a 'dead' man may haunt the earth, invisible to most. I'll prove this statement of mine.

He ceased and suddenly his form grew wan, became thin like paper, tore in shreds, and vanished. Mother shrieked, and R.L.W sat spell-bound and horrorstruck.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated, "I hope he has not left us for good.

J.W. I have never seen him do that before; but I know I can, if I return to earth, leave my astral form here, and go out to the spirit plane."

We were still debating what we should do, when I perceived a mist near where he had sat. It grew thicker and denser. By degrees it became almost a solid mound. Then the mound moved, and began to pulsate. Slowly it changed into the form of a man, and there once more was H.J.L. back amongst us. He was standing a few yards

away from the chair upon which he had been seated. That was the only difference.

Mother.: “I wish you would not play these tricks, they are so startling. You gave me a fearful shock.”

H.J.L. smiled, and said, “I did it to bring home my point. So far as I am aware, I never moved away from this point, yet I vanished, as you saw, and my astral body disintegrated. Of course, I am not a real denizen of this plane, so it’s the easier.”

J.W.: “What landscape did you see?”

H.J.L.: “I found myself seated in my study in the Twilight Land.

“Well, to continue. This evil spirit immediately drifts into the company of other evil spirits of an equally evil nature. Their dominant sin grips them as in a vice, and their chief thoughts run on the lines it has marked out. Take the Officer, whose dominant vices were hate and ruthlessness. He thought hate, that produced an atmosphere of cruelty and hate, and his companions were likewise thinking the same ideas. The sum total of their united ideas formed that division of Hell. Those who were weaker in character, or even in cruelty, had to accept the ideas thrown off by the stronger, and, therefore, the Officer was able to inflict pain and wounds on those whom he crushed.”

J.W.: “It has been suggested that the Officer’s account of Hell is an account of a nightmare dreamed by his sleeping spirit.”

H.J.L.: “That is not a correct summary of the position. Earth folk find it very hard to realize that even on earth the ‘idea’ is everything. They are so used to seeing ideas clothed in matter, that they regard ideas not so clothed as much less important. Now this is incorrect. Let us consider, say, the winged figure of Victory. The idea existed in the mind of its creator before he carved it in marble. The idea would still have existed if he had never carved it. Moreover, he might have made a model of it, and then had a bronze cast there from by someone else. But if he had, the idea would have been his, not the caster’s. Mind, I think he is the better artist, and probably the statue is a better statue, if he does all the work himself, but that does not alter my argument. Well, though on earth ideas, to become visible must, as a rule, be clothed in matter, on the spirit plane the idea itself is perceived by us and takes the form in which we have conceived it. You, Jack, will understand this easily, as you have seen the statues in the galleries on the spirit plane, which is explained in the work we have recently given to the public. (*Gone West*, pub. Wm. Rider & Son.)

“Now, add to that fact the further one that united belief in an abstract idea creates it, as seen in the ‘Forms of the Gods’ which are worshipped in the second division of the spirit plane, and you have all the material for Hell as described by the Officer. So, too, you have the explanation of how the rest houses are set up in Hell by bands of good spirits.

“These phenomena are as objective to us as material phenomena are to earth folk,

and more so for we feel them with our whole being instead of merely perceiving them by means of one of our senses, as, for example, by means of sight.

“Now I object to the ‘dreaming them’ for this reason. In mortal life the dreamer is a passive witness of the scenes which pass through his mind. I do not mean that he does not sometimes appear to play a part in them; of course he does. But there comes a time when he wakes and knows they were a dream. No such thing occurred with the Officer. He did not wake from the nightmare. Rather, his nightmare, by degrees, changed into a pleasanter dream, but if he and I and all we see are dreams, if so whose dreams? Not the Officer’s! No, the way in which a dream could explain the phenomena is not that Hell was a dream of the Officer’s, but that he and I, and R.L.W. and your mother are all dreams - and you are the dreamer. Well, you know that this is absurd, though the outside world may, or may not, think so, but as I am speaking for your satisfaction mostly, I tell you to put that idea away. It won’t enable you to explain the subject. Grasp fully the import of the law that the form and the idea take the place of the physical and the astral body, and much that is difficult to understand becomes plain. For this law governs the spirit plane whether in Hell or in the highest division.

“Therefore, it is true to say that Hell is a condition and not a place.

“The Astral Plane”

“But this statement is not true of the astral plane.

1. The astral plane is semi-material.
2. It has something to akin to space and even position
3. Time does exist, though in a more fluidic form than on earth.

“Now, before enlarging on these points, I want to draw your attention to these characteristics of the astral plane which differentiate it in a marked way from the spirit plane.

“The whole astral plane and its inhabitants are much less fixed than either the earth or the spirit plane. It is a half-way house between the two, and partakes of the nature of both, often with incongruous results.

“Its inhabitants are much less graded and sorted out than those in the spirit plane. You can meet quite evil persons on the sixth division of the astral plane, and quite good ones on the earth plane.

“Again, you find in certain parts of the astral plane life approximating closely to life of the earth, and yet you will find men of several nationalities discussing abstruse problems by means of telepathy, nearly as completely as we do in the spirit plane.

“Let us take point.

“The astral plane may be regarded as the astral body of the earth itself, and just as the astral body spreads its aura or outer fringe beyond our earth body to a distance

of a few inches, so does the world.

“But just as the astral body of a man is within as well as without his physical body, so the astral plane interpenetrates the earth.

“The further one gets from the earth, the finer becomes the matter which still exists, until at length it ceases. Therefore, gross astral beings cannot reach the higher divisions of the astral plane.

“Now, I am trying to keep this as clear as I can so if you can't follow me say so at once and remember that what may seem clear to you may not seem clear to others who have not had your experience.

J.W.: “I follow you quite well.”

H.J.L.: “Yes. With regard to the second point. You will now understand that in a certain sense - you must not be too literal, of course - but in a certain sense there is space, place, and position. In a moment, when I've finished, R.L.W. will show you a diagram of the astral plane.

“The two lowest divisions may be considered as within the earth's crust. Of course, I don't mean that if you dig a big hole you will ever be able to see them with mortal eyes, but yet in a sense that is their position.

“The third division, our earth plane is really the outer crust of the physical earth, as seen by an astral being. Those last few words convey a great deal as Rex will explain later.

“The fourth division or the land of the dreamers is a curious band of country linking up the earth plane and the higher division of the astral plane. Here time begins to play a curious part for here come the astral elements which are being thrown off by all things physical whether ‘animate’ or what you are pleased to call ‘inanimate.’ Here come the dreamers, and here also come many astrals who descend from the higher division to meet those who come seeking them, and at times they stay and talk as your mother did to B., and sometimes they lead the dreamers into the fifth or sixth division of the astral plane as I did when I met C. W. (see *Gone West*).

“This division corresponds largely with the lower atmosphere, and the very finest particles of dust which are made visible to mortals when the sun illuminates them are the grossest form of matter which we can see on that plane.

“Of course, when we are on the earth plane we are brought within the influence of earth conditions, and can see real material objects, but they look different to us from what they do to you.

“The next two divisions are further out in space, i.e. further from the earth, and also the effect of time begins to appear.

“The fifth and sixth divisions mingle in a way which is very difficult to describe which brings home to us more than anything else the curious blend of physical and

spiritual, so characteristic of the astral plane.

“In the fifth division the denizens think they need food and sleep, and so they have astral food, and actually appear to sleep.

“In the sixth division, where we are, all four of us, the denizens know that neither food nor sleep is necessary and therefore do not have them.

“Now, you will perceive at once that this is the law of spiritual condition. It marks one of the earliest stages of the cleansing of the spirit from earth influence.

“But the effect of time is peculiar also, for these two divisions which in outward appearances resemble each other very closely, show all the various stages through which the world has passed. Thus the world which is perishing today under the guns in Italy is speeding over to the fifth and sixth divisions.

“Here also you will find the astral form of the Ice Age or of the coal measures.

“Now, whereas on the physical world the most recent one is beneath your feet, and the Archæan rocks are buried deep down in the bowels of the earth, here you seem to see these ages reflected in a mirror, and so the age of today is in order of space nearest to the earth and each earlier age is further out in the ether.

“To take a homely simile, if the earth were the heart of a bulb the outer husk would be the Archæan rocks, and the intervening layers would represent the coal measures, the Ice Age, the present age, and so forth, of the astral plane.

“But though this is a simple and effective simile, it is not, unfortunately, a completely correct one.

“The position is complicated by the fact that these ‘strata’ here have each two sections - one for those who need food, and one for those who don’t. If I were to merge them into one division, and simply say that those who needed food formed little communities together while those who did not likewise lived apart. It should give you a very fair idea of the truth, but yet I should not be absolutely correct.

“The highest division lies away beyond the sixth division but by the time the astral being reaches that division, his astral body is growing weak. He is losing his grip on locality and coming more under the influence of condition. Most astrals hardly see it, because their astral body wilts away and their spirit soars into the spirit plane.

“Before leaving the subject of place, I should add that there is a strong tendency for the layers which represent say, London in the past to correspond roughly with London of the present on the earth.

“Let us now briefly consider the question of time. We have a very fair chronological order which in our cases, I mean R.L.W. and myself, is aided by the recurrence of your weekly visits. At the same time, as we have no physical sun we have no simple time gauge as earth folk have.”

I (J.W.) started, and said. “But if you have no sun - what is the light I see?”

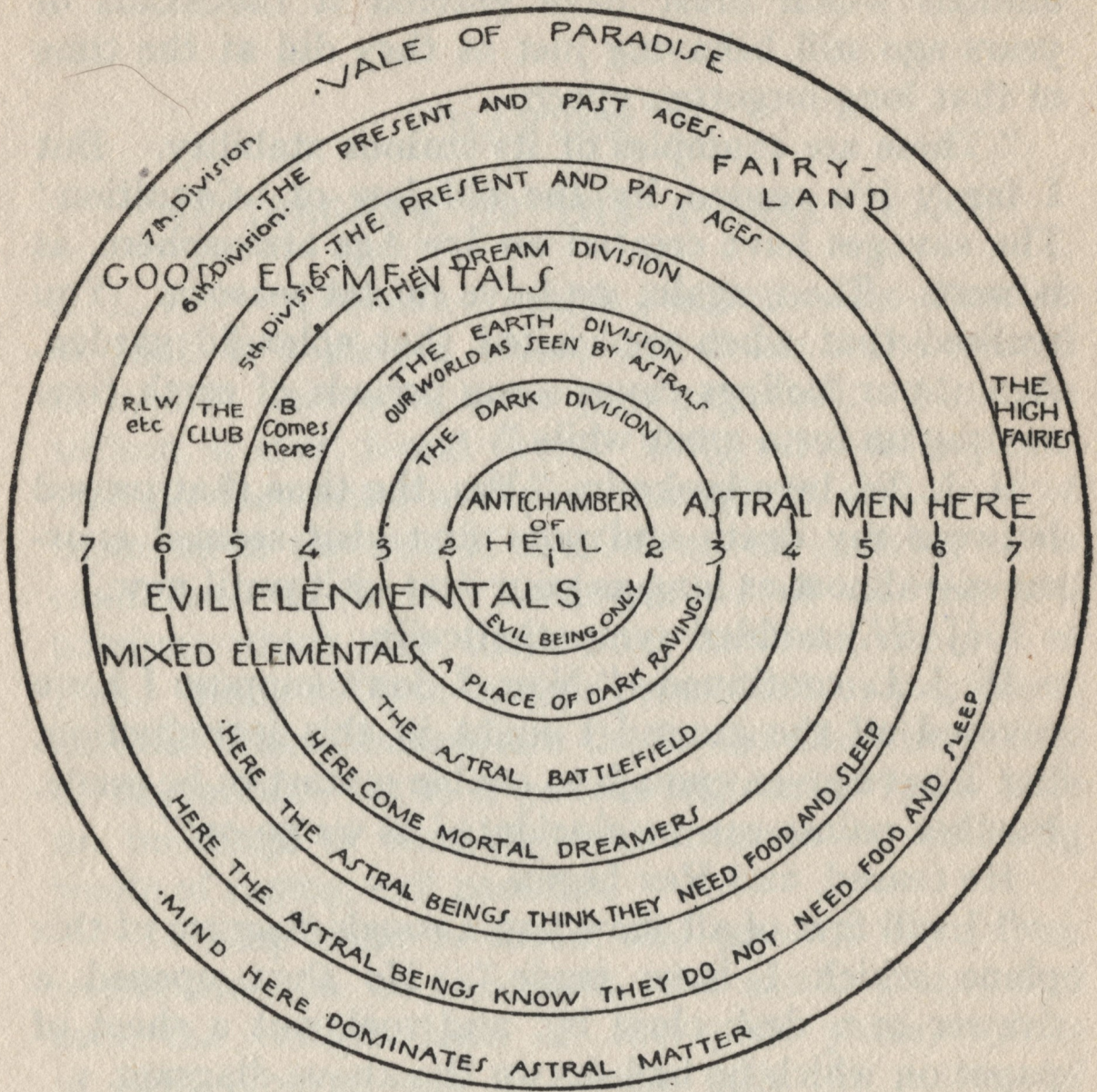


Diagram of the Astral Plane.

H.J.L.: “The astral sun which does not follow exactly the same hours as the physical sun, and the more material the division into which it has to penetrate, the less light is received.

“Thus there is no light in the two lowest divisions which are, as it were, within the earth. Even the third division, which is, remember the earth as seen by the astral being, is comparatively dark. ‘Dreamland’ is inclined to a soft twilight, though some parts, those nearest to the fifth division, are fairly bright.

“When we reach the fifth and sixth divisions we find an abundance of light, and so too in the highest division.

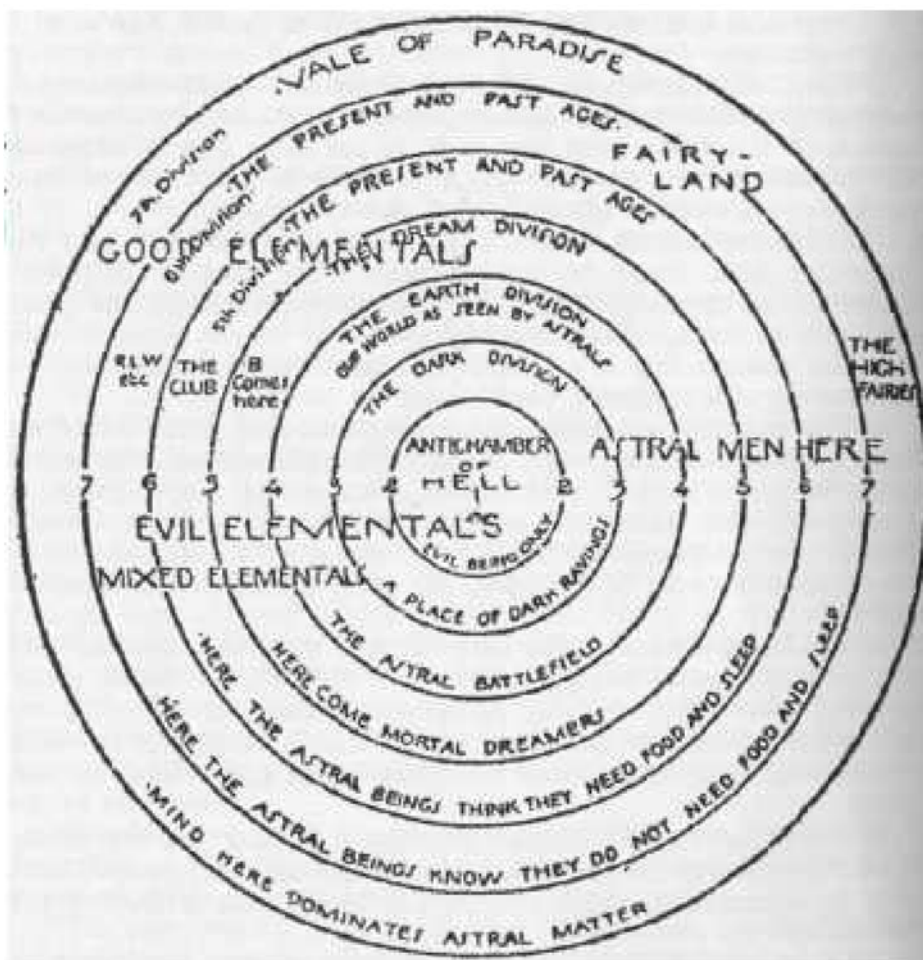


Diagram of the Astral Plane

“When the astral being passes out of his astral body into the spirit plane, he no longer perceives astral sunlight. You know the cause of light there; and how those who have failed to develop their spiritual nature are unable to enter the brighter divisions.

“But to continue about time. It is far more fluidic than it is on earth in one sense, yet in another sense one sometimes is inclined to think that it has stood still in certain

parts of the astral plane. Thus one enters the Ice Age area one finds men and animals which must have entered it thousands of years ago still behaving just as they did at the time of that long forgotten epoch.

“These are examples of its curious stability. But I fancy it’s caused by the old law of ‘Condition.’ The savages have created an Ice Age atmosphere, as it were. Then, again, we have no set seasons. You realized that when we visited that splendid garden. Again, our feelings cause some periods of earth time to drag for a great while.

R.L.W. here broke in, “Yes, the time that passed between my death and your first visit seemed enormous - almost as long as your first visit until now.”

I (J.W.) nodded sympathetically.

H.J.L. continued. “Now, I don’t suppose I have covered all the ground I ought in this introduction, but I have given enough to enable a start to be made. Further points can be elucidated as we go on.”

He ceased, and Rex began: “I will first of all show you a rough diagram of this plane which I have made.” He then opened a drawer in a desk close by, and took out a sheet of paper on which he had drawn the above diagram.

“Where did you get clean paper here?” I inquired.

R.L.W.: “Found it in the drawer. I expect it was destroyed with the house.”

I studied the diagram carefully, and while I did so he emphasized and explained certain features.

Chapter II

The Diagram of the Astral Plane

R.L.W. “Division 1, which I call the ante-chamber of Hell, is a dismal place, and I have not visited it myself, but you have. Men are seldom, if ever, found there. Only when falling into Hell do they enter and pass through it, and most of them, as in the case of the Officer, see nothing of its condition. It is the battle-ground of all the evil passions which sink there from earth or rise out of Hell. Many of them become personified, as you know, and the other denizens are the lowest and vilest form of elementals. It is a perfect nightmare land with no buildings or semi-physical features - a weltering waste of raging, evil passions.

“To keep these in check, and prevent them from overflowing onto the earth, the astral plane, and even the twilight land of the spirit plane, spirits of light descend and do battle with the powers of darkness.

“Its borders are ever fluctuating; the powers of darkness constantly overflow into the second division, and even penetrate through it in places and enter the earth division and the land of the dreamers.

“They never reach the fifth division.”

H.J.L.: “The reaction of the struggle, however, is sometimes felt on the lowest edge of the twilight land, as J. can bear witness.”

R.L.W.: “The second division is the division of evil mortals who sink into the various sins of obsession. It’s a dark and murky air, and is a fair counterpart of Hell on the astral plane.

“There are no buildings on this division, nor any animals.

“The landscape, if so we can call it, consists of great canyons, with high precipices. Amid these canyons lurk degenerate mortals who are fast drifting into Hell. There is a little dirty water in parts, and slime and filth everywhere.

“By means of obsession its inhabitants, do escape on to the earth division and there prey upon human beings who are still in the flesh. Their victims are for the most part drink sodden criminals, and their favorite hunting ground is some slum on earth. They crowd round drinking dens and houses of ill-repute. There they urge on the criminal and debased to fleshly excesses, and entwining themselves with their victims gain a vicarious gratification of their burning desires. There is very little hope for an astral being which has sunk to this state, except via Hell, but there are exceptions, and I have met one or two quite recently. It is from them that I have gained this information.

“Evil elementals abound. I will give you a chapter on elementals later, so we will next turn to division 3.

“This division, as H.J.L. has explained, is really your earth as seen by us astrals.

“It looks rather different. In the main we perceive not so much the physical bodies of men, animals, and inanimate objects as their astral bodies, which, however, closely resemble their physical in general shape.

’We see the astral embedded in a gray, shadowy substance. As a rule, we do not see physical color. We do see another kind of color, however, that of the aura of all living objects.

It will surprise you to know how many things which you call inanimate are really alive. Even things like rocks have their aura. Why, even houses have their kind of aura. Indeed, there are very few things which have not. The deadest thing we see and we see that with difficulty, is something which has once been alive, and is now dead and decaying such as the corpse of a man or animal.

“Auras vary in color, largely according to the feelings of the creature at the moment. Blue or white auras show forth a good or kindly nature; red shows anger; a muddy orange-brown shows a thoroughly malevolent nature.

“Some trees, for example, seem to possess a very unpleasant band of aura, but I will deal fully with this subject later.

“The newly dead, as a rule, see something of this division though often through lack of previous knowledge they are unable to comprehend what they see. Those who die as old men, having worn out their astral bodies on earth, lose it almost at once, and so often see no more of the astral plane than this.”

H.J.L.: “Yes, that was my experience. I saw the room in which I lay, but was there for so short and brief a space that I had little opportunity of gaining any real knowledge of it at the time. When I revisited the earth to see my funeral I descended from the spirit plane, but we won’t deal with that now.”

R.L.W. resumed his narrative:

“Sometimes the astral cannot get free from its corpse, and remain entangled with it for a considerable period. Hence the stories of ghosts in churchyards, though there are other explanations of their appearances.

“This fate befalls those who were very materialistic on earth. Suicides are also similarly afflicted. Sometimes a sudden and violent death may produce the same result, but not for long.

“Sooner or later the spirit gains its freedom, and may wander about the earth plane, as it is often called. This is usually the fate of those whose interests are still centered on earth. In particular, men who have died and left some task undone, or who wish to convey some message, may haunt the site of their former earth life for years. The cause which holds them earth-bound need not always be a bad one, or even merely a materialistic one. Sometimes love for those they have left behind may act as a serious bar to their further progress. Relations should be careful of excessive grief for their loss, for it may draw the astral back to the earth plane, and keep him chained to the earth, to his great detriment.

“Lack of knowledge may also keep a man upon this earth plane, wandering aimlessly and making no effort to progress because he knows not where to go.

“In this condition they are a mark for evil beings who tempt them into obsession.

It is on this division that the newly slain continue the battle in which they fell on earth - as I did for a while. It is chiefly on this division that the Officer carries on his rescue work.

“In division 4 we find a barren ground, with here and there scattered shrubs. It looks somewhat like open down-land. I call this the division of the dreamers, for here come tens of thousands of earth folk. Often they sweep in batches across the countryside, with eyes closed and unable to see anything. But others go with open eyes seeking their lost ones, and often meet them. Others go seeking those who are not on this plane at all - perhaps they are in the spirit realms above, perhaps in Hell.

“Often we astrals come from the fifth and sixth divisions to greet them and lead them to our homes, and you can guess how glad we are of the all too short meetings.”

Mother broke in with, “Yes, it was there that I met little B.”

R.L.W. continued. "I have met father there on several occasions.

But often the visitor when he awakes seems to have no recollection of these visits; why, I cannot understand.

H.J.L.: "Because they have not developed the super physical senses, and so when again clothed in gross matter they are unable to impress these experiences on their physical brains. It is very sad, for otherwise they would learn much that would be a consolation to them in these days when so many are falling for their country."

R.L.W. continued: "In our upward journey we pass through this dreamland. It was there you found me, I think, for it impinges on the earth plane, so that it is hard to distinguish between the two. Indeed, all these divisions blend into each other. It is next door to impossible to say exactly where one ends and the next begins.

"Of course, all astrals do not remember all the divisions through which they pass. Some pass too quickly, others, like mother, are carried by waiting astrals through them in an unconscious state.

"In this division we find animals, though not many of them. They pass from the earth division (or earth plane) on to the fifth division quickly, as a rule.

"Mixed elementals, by which I mean elementals which are neither all good nor all bad, but mixed in disposition, like most men, begin on the earth plane, and are found in the fifth and sixth divisions, but not in the seventh.

"Evil elementals are found on all these divisions up to and including the sixth, but not in the seventh, and only a few are found on, the sixth division.

"The next two divisions are those of chief interest to the ordinary person after death. I shall, therefore, devote rather more time to describing them.

"The fifth and sixth are very much alike in general appearance and we move from one to the other with the utmost ease.

"The fifth division is remarkably like old-mother earth. It falls into layers in which can be seen all the various stages through which the world has passed. The people of various historic periods tend to drift into the appropriate surroundings; but, of course, each period fades imperceptibly into the next, and the inhabitants often stroll from one period into the other.

When H.J.L. took me into the great Land of Silence, I passed through many of these layers, though I do not remember noticing quite all.

"The earlier periods still have examples of primitive man; it is strange that their astral bodies have not long since perished."

H.J.L.: "I think that is due to the fact that for the most part their spiritual nature was so little developed. Still, if you think of the millions who must have lived on the earth, the number of survivors is relatively small. Then too many present-day savages reinforce the old inhabitants. Like attracts like, and they naturally join that

community which is most like the one they left.”

R.L.W.: “The animals likewise find their appropriate setting. Buildings tend to appear in that part of the astral plane which corresponds with the period when they were destroyed, rather than the period when they were built. Thus you will see out of the window a Gothic church from Flanders which was destroyed a few months ago, but most of the houses around it are not earlier than the eighteenth century, and some are quite modern. Of course, the whole of this town has been destroyed during the war.

“The section of the most general interest is that which represents the destroyed buildings of the last hundred years, what we might call the ‘present time’. To this section most of us come, I among others.

“All that I have been saying about the fifth division up to the present is equally applicable to the sixth division, but now to the difference.

“The more materialistic people remain in the fifth division. There they eat astral food and even sleep. They have no real need for either, but they do so from instinct.”

J.W.: “I hardly realized that you could get food here.”

R.L.W.: “If you come to think of it, since even a house has an astral form, food must also, and they eat that.”

J.W.: “But, as a matter of scientific interest, does not the eating and drinking produce similar effects to those it does on earth?”

R.L.W.: “I quite follow you. I determined to sacrifice myself in the interests of science, and obtained the following results:-

1. Once I started to eat, the desire kept on recurring.
2. I found, to put it bluntly, I produced excreta.

H.J.L. foresaw the danger in the former fact, and advised me to give up the dangerous experiment. He said that I should probably become a slave to the habit, and, in time, my appetite would cease to be satisfied with astral food, and would crave for the strong meats of earth, hence would arise the temptation to obtain them by obsessing. So I dropped it. One satisfactory result was that I had no longer any necessity for the other matter which I mentioned.”

(He then gave me certain interesting medical details with regard to the latter, which need not be published here.)

“The people of the fifth division are grosser than those of the sixth, and more often take the downward path. They tend to continue, in a somewhat aimless way, their former earthly pursuits and pleasures.

H.J.L.: “In short, are rather similar in their conduct to the spirits in the sixth division of Hell.” (See *Gone West*.)

R.L.W.: “Though elementals abound, they seldom enter the towns, and so many astrals will deny that they exist. The elementals seem to haunt the country; woods, streams, lakes, and open moors being their favorite places of habitation, just as those who are seen on earth are usually found in these surroundings.

“Our guardian spirits are seldom seen. They appear only when they wish to do so for some special reason.

“In my upward journey I did not pause in the fifth division, but since reaching my present abode I have made excursions into it, for the purpose of gaining material for this work.

“I dwell in the sixth division, as you know, and to it mother was brought by the doctors who received her at death. The hospital to which she was taken is only one of the many institutions which exist on this plane. There are homes for children; although many children spend but a short time here, and there are schools for them. There are colleges and science laboratories, libraries and museums, picture galleries and theatres. In short, all the amenities of life on earth.

“You will readily understand, therefore, that the uninitiated are often puzzled, and even deny that they are dead.

“But these are the superficial folk, for any person who really goes at all deeply into the matter realizes a profound difference, as I told a man the other day who tried to stuff me up that we were not dead. ‘If we are not dead, how is it there are no funerals here?’ He started, ‘I never thought of that, but look here, several men I knew once have disappeared!’”

“Disappeared, yes,” I replied, “but you have never buried them. No, nor even a dead dog! Those you miss have passed on to the spirit plane, but their method of passing is different from that by which we quit the earth. Think it over,” and I left him doing so.

“The seventh division I know less of than any of the other. It is much more ethereal than this division, and is a place of preparation for the next or spirit plane.

“But you must not assume from that that we must all pass through it to get to the next plane of existence, any more than that everyone passes through Twilight Land.

“Many go off straight from this division. I understand that it is a very pleasant place, and the descriptions which I have received are reminiscent of the old stories of the gardens of Paradise, and, indeed, it is usually the resting place of saintly beings whose astral bodies are not yet ready to be discarded. Of course, many really saintly people can discard their astral bodies almost immediately after death, but some are still comparatively young when they die, and these rest for a while in the pleasant valleys of the seventh division.

“The only elementals found there are good ones. Not even the mixed elementals are permitted within its borders.

“Animals are found there, and, owing to the general atmosphere of love, they are, for the most part, on the friendliest relations with man, whereas, on most of the astral plane, this is not so.

“So far as I can discover, there are no carnivore there, nor any unpleasant reptiles or insects.

Flowers are there in abundance, and singing birds and butterflies.

“One fact I must mention, because it shows the great advance the dwellers in this division have made. They are able to construct new buildings out of astral elements. On the sixth division a little of that sort of thing is done, but only a little, for there is such an abundance of astral utensils and buildings that there seems but little necessity. So far as new astral things are made, it is by similar means to that employed on earth - for example, by machines or handicraft, only we employ astral elements instead of physical.

“In the seventh division, however, you find the beginning of the power possessed by all spirits of the spirit plane to create new ideas and make them visible by the power of the will.

But there is this difference: where H.J.L. dwells the artist, for example, by the mere exercise of his will, produces the form of his statue. In the seventh division of the astral plane that is not sufficient. He has to clothe the idea with astral elements, which he draws in some way from the atmosphere. I don't know exactly how it is, but done it is. I think it is analogous to the way in which H.J.L. creates an astral body for himself.”

H.J.L. nodded, and said, “Yes, you are on the right track, and I could do the same in that division, but I could not teach you how to do it. It is a matter of the will, and until you have learnt to control that mighty force and direct it as you wish, you cannot be taught such secrets!”

He paused, and then continued: “But it is time you were returning, Jack. We have had a most interesting evening and I hope your next will be equally profitable.”

So I said good-bye to them all and returned to earth.

Chapter III

Auras

November 20th, 1917

I found R.L.W., H.J.L., and mother awaiting me in their house.

R.L.W.: “What would you like me to deal with this time?”

J.W.: “Auras, I think.”

R.L.W.: “Very well,” and then he began his narrative.

“All things that exist possess an astral form, and this form is often seen even on earth by mortals, and is sometimes called the aura. At the same time there is also a spiritual aura, which may likewise be seen. H.J.L. knows more about that kind of aura than I do.

“The aura is not so much the astral body as an emanation thrown off by it. It is, however, so closely associated with it that it is almost impossible, as a rule, to say definitely what is aura and what is the astral body. The aura may contract within the astral body or expand in such a measure that it extends a kind of fringe beyond both physical and astral bodies. This fringe varies in actual depth while the individual is in the flesh, but, roughly it usually extends about two or three inches beyond the physical body. The aura is not only visible to psychic mortals and to astrals, but it also has definite functions of its own. It is sentient to a very considerable extent.

“To give an example: If you were walking on a dark night along a road, your aura might come in contact with the aura of a tree which, owing, say, to fog, you were quite unable to see.

“If your astral functions were well developed they would be able to give a warning to your physical brain of the proximity of the tree, and you would instinctively stop.”

J.W.: “Yes, I have experienced such incidents.”

R.L.W.: “Good, then you will understand me the better. Well, the example I have given is a simple one, but the aura can detect more subtle dangers than merely physical. It is particularly useful in warning its owner of hostile feelings in another physical being, be that being a man, an animal, or even some so-called inanimate object.

“That much misused word ‘instinct’ covers many of the manifestations of the aura. The more psychic a person is, the better judge he will be of the characters of others, and he does this by means of the impression his aura receives of the aura of the other person. Of course the spiritual aura, which extends to a far greater extent round the physical body than the astral aura, is even more valuable in this matter. But perhaps H.J.L. will say something on that subject.”

H.J.L.: “No, my boy, we are dealing with the astral plane and so I think we had best keep to the astral aura.”

R.L.W.: “Well, this aura, as I said, exists with animals and trees, and, strange to say, some trees appear from their auras to be benevolently inclined towards man, whereas others are distinctly malevolent. The aura varies in color according to the character of the individual, and even varies according to his moods. Thus a red aura denotes anger, and so an aura of which the dominant note is red will denote a being of an angry ill-tempered nature, and probably one in whom hate was the dominant vice.

“The worst auras of all are an ugly orange-brown. These show a malevolent and

grossly material nature, with little of the higher side in evidence. Fortunately, this kind of aura is rare in man. It is common in certain low types of astrals and elementals, and is also characteristic of certain trees.

“Auras vary in brightness and apparent texture according to the physical health of persons in the flesh.

“This is so marked that a person possessing good psychic faculties on earth could tell at a glance the condition of health of any person who came to consult him. More than that, he could tell the spot in the physical body which is causing the illness. Much more might be done on earth in this manner to locate hidden complaints and diseased organs, and so dispense with the necessity of exploratory operations.

“The treatment of such complaints is not a matter on which I care to say anything just now, but in passing I might add that there are distinct affections of the aura which account for such subtle complaints as those described by the phrases, ‘I don’t feel up to form today’. ‘I feel dispirited’.

‘I can’t make out what’s the matter. I’ve nothing physically wrong, but I feel despondent and down in the dumps.’ Usually these are due to some affection of the aura, though at times they may be caused by some undiscovered physical trouble, such as indigestion, or, perhaps on the other hand, to sickness of the spirit. The latter may or may not be an evil conscience.

“When the physical body has an affected organ - for example, congestion of the lungs - the aura, instead of showing a healthy light, white, blue, or greenish, according to temperament, will be greyish over the spot. If examined closely, the aura will be found to consist, apparently, of thousands of minute streamers or hairs of light. In a healthy person, in a calm mood, these ‘hairs’ stream straight out from the body. When mentally agitated they wave in a convulsive manner and if a portion of the body is diseased the aura ‘hairs’ either become tangled and knotted in appearance, or else lie flat like dank seaweed, instead of streaming straight out like seaweed does when under water.

“In cases where the physical body is in good health, but the aura itself is affected, observation will show that it is pale and wan, and of a grayish color. Occasionally it appears to hang down like seaweed left high and dry on the shore.

“Now all these peculiarities of the aura can be seen by us astrals when on the earth plane.

But it is the auras of mortals, not of astrals, of which I have spoken so far. “I will now turn to the aura as seen on this (astral) plane.”

J.W.: “Before doing so, I should like to know what trees you particularly noticed as malignant.”

R.L.W.: “Most alder trees and most ash, particularly the older ones. A few beech trees and pines also had very hateful auras. Most oak trees, on the other hand, were

benevolent, and all fruit trees. The sycamore is always friendly, and I understand the same applies to palms.

“The alder and the ash seem in toto to be hostile to man, but in the case of most other trees it is only individuals which exhibit this trait.

“Sometimes the position is complicated by the fact that an elemental has seized upon the tree, and either absolutely entered in or else has attached itself to it as it might to a mortal whom it was obsessing. In such cases I might see only the aura of the evil elemental - a muddy-brown in color - or I might see the aura of the tree in conflict with the aura of the elemental. In the latter case parts of the aura would be reddish, while the rest would be gray or yellow. It would not be bright and clear, for if completely healthy the tree would not have fallen into the clutches of the elemental. I mean healthy as regards its astral body.

“Turning to the aura as seen on the astral plane we find it is more easily seen than by man on the physical. All the same, in the fifth division it is seldom noticed, but here we can see it if we concentrate our minds on doing so.

“I have little doubt that it could also be seen in the lower divisions if the investigator concentrated enough will power on so doing. But many of the people there are so hidebound by earth traditions that they seldom endeavor to improve their psychic faculties, being content to go on vainly reproducing earth life on this plane. These naturally know little of the aura. As, however; I have gone down into the lower divisions, even to the third or earth plane, and have seen auras there which belonged to astrals, It is evident that others could see them. At the same time I admit that unless one concentrates one’s mind on seeing them, one hardly notices them. As I see ordinary astral phenomena without any such special concentrations of mind I think there must be a subtle difference, and that the aura is rather less material than the astral body.

“Now, I think we have said enough about the aura. It is not a very important subject to the medical profession here, and it is from the doctor who attended mother in the hospital that I have learnt the facts which I have given you, showing the effect of ill-health upon the aura. As, however, we are not particularly interested in medicine ourselves, I suggest we move on to a fresh field of labor.”

J.W.: “Yes, I think so but before doing so I want to ask you one or two questions.”

R.L.W.: “Very well, let’s have them.”

J.W.: “Can you see my aura now?”

R.L.W. concentrated his mind on the subject, and I did likewise. He then spoke: “Yes.”

J.W.: “What color is it?”

R.L.W.: “Mostly blue, with some white, and a little yellow. Can you see mine?”

J.W.: “Yes, yours is largely green, but also has some white in it.”

Suddenly I sprang up, and said, “Something is happening. I must go at once.”

Even as I spoke the room vanished. I seemed to be falling rapidly, and almost immediately awoke with a start. I had evidently been awakened by C.W., who was not very well.

Chapter IV

A Summary of R.L.W.’S Career on the Astral Plane

November 26th - 27th, 1917

As soon as I had arrived at R.L.W.’s house, where I found also my mother and H.J.L., R.L.W. began as follows:-

R.L.W.: “Bearing the map in mind. I will now trace my journey through the different divisions of the astral plane. I have never visited the two lowest. You evidently saw the first, and I have also caught a glimpse of the second. My story therefore begins with division three, often called the earth plane. Immediately after my death I seemed to recover, and went on fighting with my ‘dead’ companions against ‘dead’ Germans. I do not remember seeing any of the living who must, however, have been present. Probably I was not able to distinguish clearly between the two groups. After a while, as I have told you. I grew weary of this mockery, and realized that I was dead. I somehow escaped from the turmoil of the earth plane or third division on to the fourth division or dream plane.

“Here I sat down, feeling utterly miserable, on a hummock in a rather dreary waste. While there I saw the Requiem Mass for my soul, which shone through the ground itself and brought for a while a sense of peace and kindness. When, however; that faded, I again sank into a state of lonely misery. I was aroused from this by your appearance which cheered me greatly, especially when you promised to fetch H.J.L. to my aid. After you had returned to earth, I was again miserable and seemed to feel waves of sorrow coming up from the earth, the grief of my friends, I imagine, which made me feel more unhappy. However, I buoyed myself up with the hope of seeing H.J.L. soon. It seemed a long time before he came, but he did come at last. He proceeded to describe what life was like here, and after a time led me into the fifth and sixth divisions. He led me through various sub-divisions of them into the great silence of the Achaean Age. Here I gradually became attuned to my new condition of life, ceased to be in a muddled state, and began to take an active and intelligent interest in what I saw around me.

“We then, as you know, returned by easy stages to the counterpart of the present-day world and took up our residence in this old Franco-Flemish town.

“Here I have dwelt ever since. As soon as I was ‘acclimatized’, I went back to the earth plane to help the Adjutant and succeeded in getting him away. In spite of

sundry set-backs he is now reconciled to his life here, and is an active agent for helping the soldiers who are passing over.

“Again, under the guidance of the Officer, I returned to the earth plane or division three, and helped English soldiers, strangers, and so fulfilled the second condition which is imposed on those who desire to progress.

“I remember one incident which will serve as an example of many others. Under the charge of the Officer, we descended to the battlefield near Ypres.

“I could see the shadowy ‘still living’ leap from their trenches as the barrage lifted and charge over no-man’s-land towards the Germans. One after another men toppled over. Some lay groaning, but from others a brighter and more substantial form emerged and, with rifle in hand - mark that - followed in the direction the living had gone. Fresh bodies of still-living men surged over no-man’s-land, passing around through the newly dead. The latter paid but little heed to them, but flew at the throats of the astral Germans, and fought like furies. ‘Forward!’ cried the Officer and we rushed in amid the fighters and tried to get some of our men away. I caught hold of the arm of a man called Whiting (I learnt his name afterwards). He cursed me roundly, called me a coward. ‘I am your superior officer,’ I replied. ‘Come with me.’

“‘Superior officer be d___d,’ he replied. ‘You’re not of my regiment, and may be a German dressed up in our togs. I’m not coming out of the fight at your orders. Let go, or I’ll put my bayonet into you.’ He was mad with excitement, of course. ‘Let go, blast you! I knows my duty. It’s to take them trenches. All right, you can have it.’ So saying he rammed the butt of his rifle into my face. It hurt, I can tell you, mental pain, of course, but it felt confoundedly physical at the time. I didn’t let go though.

“‘Look here;’ I said, ‘you are dead, and I am dead, and all these men are dead. You are not helping to win the trench at all. I’ll prove it to you. Drive your bayonet right through my heart, and if I don’t die as I should, it will prove it to you.’

“‘Look here, sir,’ he said, almost kindly, you’re balmy. Had a whack on the head, I expect. You run along to one of the dressing-stations, there’s a sensible chap. Sorry I gave you that biff, but didn’t know you were wrong in the head at the time.’

“‘But I want to prove to you that I am dead,’ I replied, ‘so stab away; it won’t do me any permanent injury.’

“‘No, sir, I’m not going to murder one of our officers just ‘cause he’s light headed. Just let me get on with my job - killing Germans, that’s my job, not Englishmen.’

“I held out my left hand. ‘Stick it through that, then’ I cried.

“‘My! You’re a brainy one. Want to get home to Blighty. It wouldn’t be right if you were not off your chump, though. Still, I reckon it’s the best place for you just now. It’ll hurt though. I’ll give you five seconds, ‘cause I want to be after the others.’

“‘Hurry up,’ I said, ‘only you’ve got to see the result.’ ‘Righto! but don’t cuss me when

it hurts.’

“It did hurt, too, for about a minute. He pulled out his bayonet and grinned at me. Slowly the grin faded from his face, and a look of blank astonishment came instead. ‘My Gawd! it’s healing up.’

“Slowly the gaping wound closed up. You could see the severed edges drawing together. At length not even a scar remained.

“‘Are you satisfied?’ I inquired.

“‘I am dotty, I think,’ he murmured.

“‘No, you’re not; you’re dead. Come a little way out of the scrimmage and you’ll be able to prove it.’

“He followed me for a short way, stopped, and looked back.

“‘Watch that pair,’ I said. A German and an Englishman were fencing with their bayonets, and next minute our man’s blade went clean through the German’s stomach.

“‘Hurrah!’ yelled Whiting, as the Hun slithered to the ground. The Englishman pulled out the blade. Suddenly the Englishman jumped back as the German sprang to his feet and plunged his bayonet into our man’s chest. He fell, and the German wrenched his bayonet out and shouted with glee, only to fall to the ground again as the Englishman leaped up and struck him on the head with the stock.

“‘Damn it,’ said Whiting, ‘the Hun’s been killed twice, and our fellow once already, and there they are at it again.’

“‘Do you believe me now?’ I asked.

“‘Looks as if you were right, sir,’ he replied, ‘but it’s damned easy to die. I thought it was a much harder job than it seems.’ ‘That’s the first smart thing you’ve said today.’ I told him, and then led him away to where the Officer was marshalling other rescues; it was a goodly haul.’

“He then said, ‘All together, the next division.’

“We all thought of the dream plane and the earth plane seemed to jump away behind us. As soon as we reached the fourth division we scattered into little groups of twos and threes. I took my charge to a little valley, where I told him in the simplest words I could muster what life was like on the astral plane.

“The reaction, however, had begun to set in, and he was very miserable, and said, ‘It’s not myself I care about, but the wife and kids. How the devil can they manage on the measly pension the Government allows them? Rotten shame I call it, all these munition blokes’ making five to ten pounds a week, and my missus got to starve and scrape just ’cause I goes and gives my life for my bloomin’ country. Damned shame!’ And he went on like this for some time.

“I did my best to soothe him down, but didn’t seem very successful, when suddenly the Officer came over the top of the hill. ‘Now, what’s all this about?’ he rapped out. The man began at once, but the Officer cut him short with, ‘Quite right! If I was on earth I’d tell them too, but I’m not, and you’re not either. So it’s no use getting ill over it. Now, listen to me, and don’t interrupt, remember who’s speaking.’

“‘I’m sorry, Colonel’, began the man, but the Officer cut him short with, ‘You’ve work to do here, same as I have. The work is to help others as you have been helped, but first you’ve got to settle down here. When you are ready you will be enlisted in one of my corps. You’ll find life is much pleasanter than on earth. You won’t regret coming to us, not a bit. You’re out of the slush and the mud, and the everlasting drudgery of life on earth, and especially of life in the trenches. You’ll find lots of old pals, and (here his voice became strangely gentle and kind) if at times you grieve over those you have left behind, remember this - you won’t help them by so doing, you will only hinder them and make them feel miserable, just as their grief will make you unhappy. Remember, too if you are oppressed by the thought of their struggles on earth, that if life there be too happy, how hard it would seem to have to part from it; if life is hard, then death comes as a glad release, and the life here would be the pleasanter when they attain to it. The world is hard and mean and selfish; but here things, though not perfect, are far happier. No need here to toil noon to night to keep body and soul together. No food is needed, and so the tyranny of work has vanished. We work here at what we wish to do, and not at something we hate because we must earn our bread. So remember, though their lot may be hard, it is not long, and having nothing to lose, they will have nothing to regret when they pass from thence to you.’

“Again his manner changed. ‘But, by the living God, those who are responsible for their sufferings shall have good cause to fear the hour when they must enter these realms. Not from me nor from you shall come the doom, but from themselves. I, who have suffered, know whereof I speak.’

“He ceased, and the man saluted, simply saying ‘Thank you, sir.’

“I then spoke. ‘Colonel, shall I take him to the Land of Eternal Silence?’

“‘No,’ replied the Officer. ‘I have arranged a different system for these. I have taken possession of a great chateau a little way outside the town. We will take them all there. It has fine grounds, and a river running by, and if they wish they can play games there. I daresay they will soon learn that games haven’t the same fascination that they had on earth, but being still partly material, they can get some amusement out of them. Therein they differ from denizens of the spirit plane.’

“So we set out in columns of fours, and as we went someone struck up an old music hall song, ‘Bill Bailey.’ In due course we seemed to pass from the fourth into the fifth division. I’ve never yet been able quite to discover how one does pass from one division to another.

“Many of the men began to complain of being hungry, but the Officer never does things by halves, so he wouldn’t allow them to give way to the temptation. ‘No, boys,’ he said, ‘you’ve no physical bodies, so you don’t need food. On earth we must eat, but here we need not. It’s just a bad habit, and the sooner you get out of it, the better. I’m not going to let you start, as you’ll find it very hard to drop it later.’

“No one dared argue the point, you can’t argue with the Officer. He seems to dominate the whole neighborhood so completely. So we went on till we reached the sixth division and the chateau. It was just the place, and I found it already in the hands of a large number of men belonging to the Officer’s organization. The newcomers, including Whiting, were handed over to them, and they went in meekly enough.

“There they were given a concert straightaway to cheer them up. It wasn’t even a religious concert, but just a jolly little show, with a certain amount of soothing music at first, followed by livelier stuff and ending up with some rollicking songs, in which the ‘newly dead’ joined in heartily.

“As the party came out, Whiting said, with a sheepish smile, ‘Beastly sorry about that whack I gave you, sir.’

“‘That’s all right!’ I replied. ‘How do you like being dead?’ I added.

“‘Darned sight better than being alive,’ he chuckled, and followed the others out into the grounds where a football match was being arranged.

“I turned to the Officer. ‘I can’t see that the footer will do them much good.’

“‘Won’t do them any harm, though,’ he replied; ‘they’ll get sick of it after a time. It’s a sort of habit, like eating, only it will wear off easier than eating or drinking, and there is very little risk of its leading to obsession, whereas drinking often does.

“‘You see, most of these men, though not all, had little opportunity on earth of developing their faculty of appreciating mental amusements, but they will develop it here. Of course, if they don’t they’ll be rather lost when they reach the spirit plane where all amusements are mental. That’s one of the advantages of dying young, my boy,’ and he clapped me on the shoulder, ‘I don’t pity the brave lads who are giving their lives half as much as the elderly man who has toiled all his life to help himself and family. The lads die before they have tasted half the bitterness of life. They come here, and if they fall into good hands they improve their minds, learn to appreciate other than physical pleasures, and so on entering the spirit plane are at no loss for subjects in which they can take an interest. The same men, had they lived to a ripe old age, would never have had time really to develop their minds, and so in the spirit world, without even an astral body, and therefore unable to enjoy any physical amusements, they would slowly and painfully have had to devote themselves to self education.

“‘No, an early death is by no means a hardship in the long run but, of course, it

depends very largely on how a man develops here. If these young fellows had fallen into evil hands, and were to develop badly, an early death would indeed be a curse to them. It would mean attempting to indulge in earth lusts, which lead to obsessing and so to the dark regions and ultimately the gates of Hell, which lie beyond.

“And, by the way, the powers of darkness are organizing a counter blast. My “secret service” informs me that they are laying their plans very carefully. Copying our organization, and intend to make a bold attempt to capture the young men as they enter this world from the battlefields. I am preparing a counter-stroke also.’

“We turned to other matters, but I may as well tell you at once that since then this counter organization has been developed, and of what has since occurred I will tell you later.

“The example I have given you must serve for the time being, as my object tonight is to give you a general summary of my life here.

“Since the date of which I have been speaking, which is about July, 1916, the Officer’s organization has grown to vast dimensions, and new difficulties have arisen which he has met in his characteristic manner. Well, I kept fairly busy at this sort of work for some time.”

Chapter V His Recreations

“I often got short spells of leave, in which I was able to explore the sixth division. On some of these explorations you have already been with me as in the cases you have already described where we visited the curio shop, and also that fine garden. I also spent quite a considerable time in the great library we have in this town. There was quite a good library to begin with, destroyed when the town was destroyed, but an old Frenchman - we call him Pierre, but I believe his full name is Pierre Blanchard - is in charge of it, and has added to it enormously. He has an ex-British soldier, formerly a schoolmaster, as his chief assistant and between them they have built up a huge Anglo-French library. It has overflowed into, about a dozen neighboring houses, and they have now determined to make it international, and are even going to have a German section, if you please. However, that’s a long story, and must wait for another time. Perhaps we can go there together one day.

“There’s a picture gallery, and yes, you’ll be delighted to learn there’s a very good museum. Some enthusiast on zoology tried to start a zoo and it was very funny - the animals refused to be kept in cages, so all they were able to keep were a few semi-tame animals, including three monkeys. The other creatures, as soon as no one was looking, quietly walked through the bars of their cages. There was great excitement when a fine lion escaped. He didn’t do any harm; all he thought about was trying to get back to his native jungle, which he did, but he created quite a panic walking down the High Street of our peaceful little town.”

“Little,’ I (J.W.) said: “but it’s growing quite a large city.”

“Then I go to the theatres, and sometimes attend the lectures. There has sprung up a kind of university here. The best of it is that it does not matter whether it is an Englishman or a Frenchman lecturing, we can understand him perfectly. No, there, are no Germans, they aren’t allowed here - not popular, as you can guess. They live in another town, and everyone sends that town to Coventry. That’s why old Pierre caused a bit of a rumpus when he declared he was going to include German books in his library. He said some of their books were good, and it wasn’t the books’ fault they were written by the swinish Boche. Still, I must not diverge.

“I want to give you a fairly complete idea of my life before mother came to us. After she came, my life had to be altered for a bit, you see.

“Well, I even visited a few churches. Went to Anglican and to Roman Catholic ones, and also to Nonconformist chapels. They were very much like what they were on earth. Some of the parsons were better, I think, but most were the usual sort, and devoted themselves more to the form of religion than to its real fundamentals. I can’t say I learnt enough from them to turn me to a church-goer once more.

“I wonder if there’s anything I have missed. Oh, I visited some factories. They were making not only things very like we make on earth, but also some which have not reached earth. There were even chemical laboratories, where scientists were endeavoring to make new discoveries, but as I am not very interested in that side of life, I won’t worry further about them, but will just say a few words about the arty-crafty folks. There’s quite a colony of them, and they make some really ripping things. I saw some beautiful glass and copper work; it would have made your mouth water; and some really good modern furniture and china too.

“I asked them whether they sold these, but, with the exception of one or two, they repudiated the idea with scorn. They love to furnish empty houses, and even to build artistic houses and furnish them afterwards: Then they hunt round for some kindred soul to inhabit the house. I’ve had three fine houses offered to me, but somehow I prefer to stick to this one. However, I’ve had one or two nice pieces given to me, which I rather hankered after. The maker said he could easily make another, but I don’t believe he did. They hardly ever repeat a successful piece; like to try something a little different.”

R.L.W. took down a waterjug of glass, which looked distinctly Venetian in style, and showed it me with pride. It was a very beautiful piece. The handles were two twisted serpents, and the jug rested on a foot. The stem, which was thick, was carved like a mermaid, and it was her tail which formed the base. The body was powdered with gold, as was the handle, but the jug itself was clear crystal glass with a slightly blue tinge. He next showed me several pieces of china, including two tall vases in mazarin blue, with apple-green reserves containing figures of men and women in the dress of the eighteenth century. A bowl he handed me was chocolate outside and blue and

white within, while two plates were in old rose and matt gold, the centre being white. In the middle was painted a basket full of roses.

He next showed me two tall brass candelabra, but here H.J.L. broke in.

“It’s nearly time Jack returned. Have you any other points you wish to make?” Mother then spoke. “Tell Jack about the theatres.”

R.L.W.: “Oh, yes. As I told you before, there are theatres here but as I only discovered the best ones, including the opera house, after mother joined us, I thought I would keep that for next time.

“One thing I must add. I’ve got quite a nice little garden at the back; just take a peep at it. There’s Tiger under the rose-tree in the central bed. It’s not the Tiger we had at W__. I’ve often wondered what became of him, as I haven’t found him yet. I daresay I shall in time, though. I named this cat in memory of Tiger.”

It was quite a pretty garden, with a high wall all round, and I noticed a number of birds singing in some lilac bushes at the end of the garden.

J.W.: “Does Tiger try to catch the birds?”

R.L.W.: “Yes, especially at first, but he never got any, and he’s rather dropped it lately. I suppose he’s realized that it’s no use.”

J.W.: “Do the flowers follow the seasons?”

R.L.W.: “Well, they don’t really. You remember what the gardener told us when we were going over that fine garden. They remain in their prime till they gradually grow thin and vanish. I suppose they then go to the spirit plane. I notice that almond tree is growing thin. Before long it will probably vanish completely.

“Well, that was the sort of life I led till mother came to join us. Once I had got the hang of this place I joined up and helped the Officer. The worst setback we had in those early days was the great recruiting march, when even the Adjutant broke away but we had similar incidents later. Even now they occur sometimes, but the difficulties we have to meet to-day are more subtly organized.

“H.J.L. often came down to help us on our expeditions to earth, really to help me; he does not come so much now.

“When not helping the Officer, I explored parts of the astral plane, and even began to make investigations on the question of fairies, but I had not got far on that subject when mother came, and I broke off for a time. Recently I have taken up the matter again and will tell you what I have learned in its proper place.”

He ceased and I rose and said, “Well, it’s time I was off.” And so after saying good bye to all three, I willed that I should return, and did so.

Chapter VI

More Details of Mother's Passing Over

December 3rd, 1917

On my arrival at the house where they dwelt, R.L.W. took up his narrative:

“A few days before mother died, I began to feel a strong desire to return to earth. I could not explain why. I told H.J.L., and he said: ‘We will go down together. It is probable that someone there is needing you but, on the other hand, it may be a recrudescence of earth longing. However, if I am with you no harm can happen.’ So we entered the earth plane, and at once found ourselves in mother's room.

“We realized at once that she was dying, so we decided to remain. By degrees others arrived; I mean other super-physical beings. There were several evil-looking elementals, who seemed to be trying to suck up some of the vital fluid which was slowly draining away. There were evil astral humans also, who hung round with a similar purpose. On the other side were a band of astrals led by a doctor, who came to take charge of her when death had freed her from the body, at least so they told me, and subsequent events proved that this was so. Not that I was ever in any doubt. I have not yet found the astral being who could deceive another like men can deceive each other by lying on earth.

“The number of super-physical beings increased on both sides and the drama that was being enacted then almost hid us from the other earthly drama. I will not say anything about the latter, as it is a private matter, and this book is intended for publication.

“These two groups of hostile superphysical beings gathered, the good on her right side and the evil on her left. We stood on the right of course.

“As the hour of her passing drew nearer, a malignant form began to build itself up at the foot of the bed, and as it did so, her guide became manifest at the head. The wall of the room made no difference to him, and he stretched out his hands over her as if to protect her.

“A howl of fury arose from the evil onlookers, but all save he who stood at the foot of the bed fell back, overawed by the majesty of her guardian spirit. This dark spirit spoke, and as he did so clouds of darkness seemed to exude from him.

“‘For every act of wrong I claim my right, and will not go.’

“And the bright spirit answered: “‘For every act of wrong she has paid the price, or shall pay it. But by every kindly deed she wrought, I claim her. Be gone! By the accomplished fact you are defeated. For I hold the mastery, and you can approach no nearer.’

“‘I shall not forget her,’ the other replied grimly.

“‘Nor I,’ replied her guide.

“Then the dark spirit became invisible, and so did her guide.

“But the good friends who had come from our side gathered all round her bed, and the evil faces vanished.

“By degrees a pale light grew about her head, and slowly her astral body emerged, but remained apparently sleeping.

“For a while it lay over her body, and seemed to be about a foot above it. Then the cord of light broke, but the astral body still lay asleep.

“The doctor and his party placed a stretcher - yes, I mean what I say - under it, and four men lifted this stretcher and carried it away. J.L. and I followed with the others.

“As we went along, I said to H.J.L., ‘Surely two would be enough to, carry her?’

“H.J.L.: ‘To carry her, yes; but it is a sound occult law to have someone at each of the four cardinal points to ward off possible danger.

“The room faded, and we passed amid clouds into the dream division. Across this we passed, and one of the nurses began to sing, Lead, Kindly Light.

“The familiar words, gave one a sudden feeling of home-sickness, but I conquered it. Soon we had reached the sixth division, and entered the hospital, which you know so well. Here we left mother in charge of the nurses, in a bed, as you afterwards found her.”

He ceased, and mother spoke. “You made me shiver with your horrible stories of elementals. I never saw anything of them.”

R.L.W.: “No, because you were asleep. He then continued:

“I need not give in detail the story of mother’s treatment at the hospital, for you know it already. You can see for yourself she is completely recovered.

“While her treatment was going on, I was constantly in attendance, and so had little time to devote to my work with the Officer. Towards the end, however, I resumed it, and found that his organization had increased enormously. I will therefore, relate more concerning it.”

Chapter VII Opposition to The Officer

“When I reported to the Officer, he said, ‘I must warn you that the powers of Darkness have organized themselves very much on the same lines as we have done.

“Indeed, there is no doubt that they have deliberately copied our system.

“Their followers dress as much like us as possible; have adopted our system of officers, and endeavor to get hold of the ‘newly slain’ by pretending to be their friends.

“Here is a man whom we have just rescued from their clutches.’

“He indicated a young sub-lieutenant, whose name I won’t give for obvious reasons.

“The Officer said, ‘Just repeat your story, will you?’

“The sub-lieutenant then began:

“I was killed in a charge, shot through the head just as I went over the top. For a short time I must have lost consciousness, but when I came to I felt little worse; thought I had been stunned. Seeing fighting going on, I rushed in to give a help.

“We fought on and on without producing any visible effect, but when I had shot the same man through the head three times, and been bayoneted twice myself, I came to the conclusion that something was wrong.

“I thought, “I am delirious, and this is a bad dream.” I tried to wake, but couldn’t. Then I walked away till I came to a little valley where there was no fighting in progress. Here I sat down, and began to wonder what would happen next. Slowly I began to realize I was dead, and while I was still in this state three soldiers approached me. Two were privates, but the third was a captain. I jumped up and saluted.

“Am I alive or dead?” I inquired.

“The captain replied, “You are dead, as they call it on earth, but don’t let that distress you. Your life here is very similar to life on earth, and if you get in with the right set, you can lead a very jolly life. You can have whatever you like; and you don’t have to pay for it.”

“Anything?” I inquired.

“Yes, anything, absolutely anything; but, of course, you need friends to put you up to a wrinkle or two. That is what we are here for. Lots of poor fellows arrive here, and wander about hopelessly lost. They are like strangers in a new land, without friends and ignorant of the customs and ways of the people. So, a lot of us who have experienced that sort of thing when we arrived determined to start an organization to help our comrades. We don’t pretend to be saints. You’ll find a few psalm-singing humbugs over here, just as you did on earth, but I don’t fancy you want to mix with that sort.”

“Not much!” I answered; and he continued:

“Well, come along with us, and I will take you to our club, where you will probably meet some of your old friends, and certainly make some new ones.

“You’ll get some surprises, I daresay. The parsons stuff people up with a lot of rubbish, so as to make themselves important, but it will take you some time to understand everything here. Don’t jump hastily to conclusions, but just keep your eyes open, and judge for yourself. I tell you this because you have probably got ingrained ideas about right and wrong, which may be a little upset, and I should not

like you to run away with the idea that we are a bad lot because we tell you that a lot of what parsons call sin is not really sinful.

“You can see for yourself that this world beyond the grave does not correspond with the Church’s picture of Heaven or Hell. Similarly, you will find that most of the other stuff they told you was entirely untrue.”

’We started off together. I could tell by instinct that these men were not stained-glass window saints, but neither was I. So we went along quite happily.

’The Captain walked by my side, and the two privates fell in behind.

“He told me a long story about his former life on earth, which interested me so much that I hardly realized where we were going till we pulled up in front of a large building situated in fine grounds. The place was not well kept up, but there seemed to be any number of people about, both men and women.

“This is our club; let me put down your name,” said he.

“What is the subscription?” I began; but he cut me off with, “Youngster, I told you just now that you could get everything for nothing.”

“So we went first to the office, where he put down my name, and got someone else to second it, then said, “Come and have a drink.”

“Can one drink here?” I inquired, in surprise.

“Oh, yes; try a whisky and soda.”

“So I had one. Somehow it did not taste quite right, so I had another, and then a third; but, while they resembled whisky and soda, they seemed to just miss it. I told the captain so, and he answered: “That’s probably because you are not yet used to astral food, but there are other ways of satisfying one’s natural appetite. You will learn about those later.”

’He then introduced me to various men and women, and after a good deal of general conversation, I turned to him and said, “Can anyone become a member of this club?”

“Oh, no,” he replied; “we are fairly Bohemian, but we don’t admit privates. But we have a fine club for them, and all officers who belong to this club are honorary members of their club. It is a fine place, I can assure you, just beyond the trees over there. We are not snobbish, but men are still men, and the privates would be rather uncomfortable here. They can’t forget old instincts, you know.

“One problem has presented considerable difficulty. Owing to conscription, one brother would be an officer and the other a private. Naturally, the officer brother wants his brother to be a member of his club. So, in such case, if the chap is at all possible, we get him promoted to commissioned rank.

“You see, this organization is on military lines, but enlistment is entirely voluntary.”

“How did you get the idea?” I inquired.

“To tell the truth (and you can’t tell lies here even if you try), we took the idea from a fellow who calls himself ‘the Officer.’ “He is a most extraordinary character, and I had better put you on your guard against him at once. He appears to have been an unmitigated blackguard, both while on earth and after. Now, however, he plays the hypocrite, and runs a sort of Y.M.C.A.”

“But,” I broke in, “the Y.M.C.A. do a lot of useful work on the battle front, and you need not pay too much attention to their ‘pi jaw’.”

“He hurriedly answered, “Yes, quite so. I meant really a show like the Salvation Army. His object, I believe, is to obtain unlimited power, and he is fairly sharp. So he started an organization to rescue the newly slain, as he puts it, and to warn them against the dangers of life on this plane. He thunders about Hell, and says people must not do this and must not do that if they want to get to Heaven. In short, takes the same sort of line that a revivalist does on earth. Just as if we have not already proved that all that stuff is moonshine. If the fellow had been some saintly parson on earth, one could understand it, but when you learn what sort of chap he was, you can only stand aghast at such an arrant humbug and amazed at the number of fools whom he has gulled.

“His sole object appears to be to gain unlimited power and influence, and the worst of it is he contrives to render the lives of all his subordinates a dreary Sabbath. He seems to delight in preventing them enjoying any of the joys of life and at turning them from jolly good fellows into a pack of killjoys.

“Some of us, who had learned what life over here really was, determined to take a hand in his game. We copied his organization, but cut out all the ‘pi jaw.’ Mind you, we don’t want blackguards, but we do want men. Everyone is free. If he wants to go to church he can do so, no one will even laugh at him, but we do bar cant and humbug of any sort. Our motto is: Believe what you like and do what you like, so long as you don’t make a nuisance of yourself to the community. If you do we put our foot down without wasting time.”

“And a jolly good motto, too,” I replied, and with that he left me.

“I soon found my feet, and got very pally with a little lady. She told me she had been dead three years. She was married, and hadn’t a very great opinion of her husband who seemed to have been rather a fool, according to her story. I began to make love to her, and she was by no means backwards, I can assure you.

“The club, by the way, was a residential one, and I slept there, had my meals there, and generally made it my headquarters.

‘I learnt various details about their organization, which was copied in almost every detail from the one founded by “the Officer.”

‘Parties went constantly down to the battle-fields to bring in fresh recruits, but I did not make one of them. Truth to tell, I was otherwise occupied. I and the little Lady (I

shall continue to call her by that name) went about together everywhere. We visited theatres and went to soirees, to concerts, balls, and other forms of amusement. The more mental forms of amusements exceeded my expectations; but those which were of a more physical type somehow failed to satisfy.

“At length, I proposed to my friend that we should get married. She laughed; and said, “My dear boy, you have forgotten the old text, ‘They neither marry nor give in marriage,’ but don’t look so glum. It’s not so bad as it sounds.

“If you really wish to have a parson spouting over our heads, you can, but remember as we can’t die here; it might be a bit awkward later. You’ll get tired of me in time, and as we can’t die, we shall have to get divorced. Besides, there is no advantage in being married as we can’t have children. That’s the sole object of a legal marriage on earth. But there, you shall have all the joys of matrimony without its responsibilities.

“But have you had a really decent drink over here one like you used to have on earth?”

“I admitted I had not, and that the drinks one got at the bar simply made one crave for more and brought no real satisfaction.’

“Ah, you haven’t learnt how to drink, and until you know how you won’t possibly understand how to get married here.’

“You trot along to your friend the Captain, and ask him to give you a wrinkle or two.”

“I soon found the Captain, and explained what had happened.

“I’ll soon show you how to get a drink, a proper drink, and the ‘little lady’ can then explain how to get married. Here, T., take our young friend down to earth again, and initiate him.”

“So T. and I went off together.’

“He ceased for a moment, apparently trying to pull himself together to make the further revelations, which he felt to be of a most unpleasant nature.

“The Officer spoke to me (R.L.W.): ‘It’s a devilish clever scheme ... I have known for some time that they were working against us, but this is the best account I have had yet. Note the ingenuity displayed. The real controlling entities keep absolutely in the background. If they dealt with these young fellows direct, their evil natures would be so evident that the youngsters would avoid them like poison. So they get other men, themselves newcomers, and not wholly bad, to do their work. As it is almost impossible for one man to deceive another here, they trade upon their ignorance rather than upon deliberate deception.

“The members of the counter-organization have no real knowledge of the absolute wickedness of obsession, nor of its terrible results. They have a smattering of knowledge about this plane, and none of the spirit plane, and so can genuinely think what they say about me and it.

“It is clever, too, how they utilize the truth about my former evil life, and yet miss its real significance. Then, too, imitation of our organization is absolutely diabolically clever, for it catches the unwary in a trap. Again, the gentle, downward path, at first appearing perfectly innocent, the appeal to the material and earthly instincts of their victims, and the way in which such an attitude is justified by the apparently earthly surroundings in which the newly slain find themselves, shows that there is a master mind at work.

“But the Subaltern wants to continue his narrative:”

Chapter VIII The Subaltern Continues His Story

The latter continued:

“He took me down to the earth plane, where we entered a famous nightclub in the West end. We passed through the walls, which seemed wan and shadowy, into the saloon, where we saw many mortals dancing, and many astrals watching them. From thence we entered a bar where men and women were seated at tables, drinking liqueurs and various other drinks.

“What would you like?” my companion inquired.

“A good stiff whisky and soda,” I replied.

“Do as I do” he remarked, and began to twine himself round one of the drinkers in a most extraordinary manner.

“There were several men drinking really heavily, and I tried each in turn, but could not find out the knack.

“At last, after closely watching several other astrals, I discovered the secret, just as the show was coming to an end. I got my drink, however.

“The effect was extraordinary, and more closely resembled drinking whisky on earth than any of my previous experiences in the astral club.

“But as soon as the mortal threw me off, and staggered out of the room, the craving grew on me and I longed for another.

“T. took me to a large hotel, but owing to the drink restrictions, we found the private bar empty. There were other astrals there already, but I could not restrain my impatience, and going behind the bar tried to pull out the cork of a bottle of brandy. Of course I could affect nothing, so wandered up and down impatiently till at last the doors were opened, and customers began to enter.

‘Most of them were quite moderate drinkers who took a glass or two and then went about their business. We rushed at them, but were quite unable to get hold of them.

‘At length a commercial traveler came in who had already had as much as was good

for him. The landlord eyed him suspiciously, but evidently came to the conclusion that he was not sufficiently far gone to justify a refusal to serve him. There was a rush for this man, and being less cunning than the rest, I was shouldered aside, and had the great mortification of seeing another astral finally obtain control, though not till after a fierce struggle with T. Presently the landlord refused to serve the commercial with any more liquor, and the man went out cursing, and the astral with him still entwined with his body.

“As the day wore on others came in, and at last I got my chance, and attached myself to a cardsharp, through whom I obtained several drinks. At 2:30 we were all turned out, and I stuck like glue to the cardsharp. He had bought a couple of bottles of whisky, and went off with two others to a dingy little office in Pimlico.

“The three men sat round a dusty table, telling yarns and drinking hard till they had finished not only my man’s two bottles; but three others which the other two had bought.

“One of the men collapsed in a drunken stupor, but the other two, though a bit dazed, pulled themselves together and, after being violently sick, started out again.

“While they were feeling sick, I felt the same, and I also felt very stupid. I felt as though I could not leave these two, although I had had enough of the whole business. I had to go with my man, who drifted into a very second-rate ‘pub’ in the Euston Road, and there began to work various card tricks. He drank fairly heavily, and I with him. I found now that I could not get away, try as I would, and began to regret my conduct most bitterly.

“In the midst of one of his cleverest card tricks he was arrested by one of his supposed dupes, who revealed himself as an astute detective, who had been put on his track. His confederate was also arrested, and the pair taken off in custody.

’While in jail he was, of course, unable to obtain any liquor, and by degrees I found the invisible chain which bound him to me growing weaker. At length I shook myself free, and after wandering about the earth plane, succeeded in returning to the club of the astral plane.

“Here I met my lady friend, to whom I described my adventures, but when I went on to say how disgusted I was about the whole business, and how ashamed of myself, she rather laughed at me, and said, “You were new to this business and overdid it. You must be more moderate in future; then you won’t get tied to the mortal.” She then explained that we could get “married” in a similar manner. I was rather afraid of a second experiment after my first, but for fear of being laughed at by her, and called a milksop, I consented.

“I need not go into the whole business. You probably understand the whole beastly affair better than I do, but you have to bear in mind that this was a more complicated business than the last one. There were two of us and two mortals needed to complete the experiment but at length we were successful.

“After a time the vice seemed to grip both us and the mortals in a fiendish grip, and though after a time we tired of each other and of our mortal victims, we were unable to get free.

“At length the man became ill, and this, as in the case of the card sharper’s imprisonment, procured my release. My lady friend also obtained her freedom, but by now she was tired of me, and took up with another astral officer.

“I should doubtless have drifted back into my old ways had it not been for my mother.

“I was startled one day by hearing my Christian name shouted in my ear. I looked round, but there was no one, and again and again my name was called. I seemed to be drawn in the direction from whence it came. As I drew nearer, I recognized my mother’s voice. My pace increased, and I found myself in her room. She was praying. As I heard her prayers, my heart was filled with remorse, and I realized how degraded I was becoming. She was grieving still for me, and I rushed instinctively towards her, but was instantly hurled back by some tremendous power. So I turned and fled in utter misery, not knowing where to go. I would not go back to the club. I felt somehow that it was the cause of all my troubles, so went back to the battle-field, of all unlikely places. It was more by instinct than from any intelligent reason, but I fancy it was because I had made a false start, and wanted to begin all over again.

“Almost at once I was picked up by a man belonging to the Officer’s organization. At first I thought it was one of the old gang and told him to be off, but he stuck tight to me, and after a while he said something about the Officer. At once I remembered the Captain’s attack on the Officer. I promptly said to myself, “That last organization led me astray. It was avowedly a counter-blast to this one. Perhaps, after all; this is a good organization.”

“By now I was feeling desperately lonely, and moreover, the old desires were coming back. I felt that if I did not get with someone who would help me to keep away from these temptations, I should have to give way to them. So I determined to chance it.

“So I told the private to lead me to the Officer himself. He demurred at first, but I insisted, and at length he did so.

“As soon as I saw him I felt the magic of his influence. He seemed to sum me up in a moment. He was strong, and I gained new strength from his proximity, which helped me to resist the terrible temptations which were beginning to worry me once more.

“Now, I’ve told you everything I can remember. I am thoroughly ashamed of myself. This obsessing is a horrible habit. It’s like drug-taking on earth, and once started grows and grows on one till it becomes absolutely one’s master.

“The Officer has been a brick, and without his help I should have given up the struggle.”

When he had finished, the Officer turned to me (R.L.W.) and said, "We'll go into the next room, and talk things over. The subaltern will be all right while Lieutenant C. is about."

"We talked matters over, and the Officer decided to call a general council, and sent out thought messages accordingly. He just called the people he wanted mentally, and they knew, even if they were down on the earth plane.

"But it's time I broke off; this is a suitable moment."

So I (J.W.) said good-bye to all three, and returned to earth.

Chapter IX

The First Act of Open War

December 11th, 1917

I arrived at R.L.W.'s house without any untoward incident, and after greeting all three, R.L.W. continued his narrative.

"The matter of this counter-organization was discussed from every point of view, and we finally determined upon a definite line of action.

"Some of the more hot-headed advocated an attack on the club, but the Officer refused to allow this, although he admitted it had several attractive features.

"Instead, arrangements were made to picket all roads leading to it, and as our organization had grown to a huge concern, we had no difficulty in placing squads of fifty men, under their proper officers, at all important points.

"Groups were also told off to shadow their expeditions, and endeavor to counteract their machinations.

"I was given charge of one of the pickets, which took up its position close to the main gates of the club.

"The Officer warned me that we might be attacked by the members of the club, but he said that this would only happen after they had exhausted all means of persuasion.

"If attacked, I had simply to send out a thought call, and it would be answered by reinforcements.

"Well, we started work at once, and soon were spied from the club. Several girls came out and asked us to come in. Of course, I refused, and the other men ignored their presence.

Other attempts on the part of the fair sex were equally unsuccessful, and in the midst of one of them a party approached the club from the direction of the battlefield.

There were about a dozen newly slain and fifteen of the counter-organization. "I

shall call the latter 'the enemy' henceforward.

"As the newcomers approached, our picket spread out, and intercepted them. "My men at once began to reason with the newly slain, but this naturally did not suit the enemy, who peremptorily ordered the former out of the way.

"We refused to move, and the enemy threatened to use force. The situation was noted by those in the club, and one of their officers led out a company of their men.

"He wasted few words. All he said was, 'Now then, clear out or there will be trouble!'

"I answered, him, 'We won't clear out.'

"I formed my men into a square just in time, and there was a regular rough and tumble. At first they used only their butts, but soon took to the bayonet, and so did we.

"Meanwhile, I was sending out calls for help, and our neighboring pickets broke into the grounds, and running across caught the enemy in the rear. They put up a stiff fight, though, and were constantly being reinforced from the club.

"The struggle grew more bitter. Meanwhile, the newly slain looked on amazed, unable to decide on which side to cast in their lot, though they seemed to be itching for a scrap.

"At length an Irishman called out, 'Begad, I don't know what the row's about, but I'm not going to be out of such a lovely scrap!' So saying, he hit the nearest man on the head with his rifle.

This man happened to be one of the enemy, so they went for him. Several of his friends backed him up, but a Scotsman promptly went on the other side just because he was an Irishman. Soon all were involved except two privates and an officer, who drew out of the press and watched the scrimmage with a puzzled air.

"But my calls for aid had reached the Officer, who came into action with several regiments - at least ten thousand men.

"But what really turned the day, I believe, was his tremendous will. He seemed to dominate the whole situation. I never saw such conclusive proof of the power of the will before in all my life.

"The enemy seemed to lose heart at once. Some surrendered, others broke away and fled.

"When the fight was finished we found we had captured sixty of their men and seven of the newly slain, counting friends and foes. The Scotsman had escaped, and the three neutrals were still looking on."

R.L.W. paused for a moment at this point and said, "You seemed surprised that we nearly all had weapons. Well, we are organized on a military basis, and every soldier gets the idea absolutely drilled into him that he must never be without his rifle. It becomes almost a fetish. What more natural then that he should take one about with

him on the astral plane? It's quite easy to get one, for there are thousands of broken rifles lying about on the battle-fields of earth, and, therefore, their astral forms are ready to hand.

“Again, nearly all the men who belonged to either side in the struggle had fought for a while on the astral plane, and when they left it, brought their weapons with them. Most of the newcomers, for the same reason had rifles with them, and used them.

“The young officer and one of the privates who stood aside during the scrap had not; the other private had. I'll explain why the officer and the first private had no weapons presently. The Scotsman had no weapon to start with, but he tore a rifle out of the grasp of one of my men.

“Cartridges! The same rule applies, but we soon ran out of ammunition. A man does not carry a large quantity of ammunition about with him on earth, but relies on the general supply which is usually brought into the firing line by others who are detailed off for the work.

“Not much damage was caused by the fighting to the grounds. The hedge was broken down a little, and did not recover like the men did. You see ‘inanimate’ objects have little, if any, will of their own. Nothing, at any rate, which can put itself against the will of a man. We willed to destroy it so as to get through during the fighting so it was broken.

“The fighting in general closely resembled the fighting in the great astral battle, so I need not go into it any further, and will continue my narrative.

“The Officer now issued the following commands: ‘We will now blockade this place.’

“R.L.W.: ‘Why not storm the place and drive these swine out.’”

The Officer.: “Because fighting generates evil passions at all times, and would only ‘harden their hearts,’ as the Bible would say. On the other hand, these people have grown to crave for food. It's not necessary for them, but indulgence in this craving has made them gross and material, and inclined to gratify their appetites by even worse methods.

“Deprived of astral food, they will be compelled to realize that they don't need it, and after a while some will begin to lose the craving for it. This will lead to an improvement in their spiritual and even in their mental outlook.

“We shall, therefore, find them easier to reason with when they surrender.

“If we stormed the place they would be angry and rebellious. It's very difficult, if not impossible, to keep beings prisoners against their will for any long time, and I am doubtful whether we should be justified in attempting to do so. You cannot compel a man to be converted. I have, however, no scruples about applying this amount of coercion.’

I (J.W) here interrupted.

“Just a minute. What happens to the astral form of astral food when it is eaten?”

R.L.W.: “Its astral elements are broken up, and take a new astral form, which rapidly breaks up and vanishes. It passes out in just the same way that earthy waste does. But it does not really nourish the astral body. You see, astral food has no will to resist destruction. But we could not capture an animal and kill and cook it, because the animal has a will of its own, and would resist.

J.W.: “What about the astral form of a leg of mutton?”

R.L.W.: “I never saw one. But the only foods I ate when I made my experiment were foods derived from vegetable matter. Cereals, for example, apples, and so forth. If they had any will-power, it’s so weak that it hardly counts.”

H.J.L.: “There is a marked difference in this point between the astral world and the spirit realms. No forms of food come to us. They pass to Hell, and there constitute the menus for the feasts of Tantalus, with which that place abounds. You get the form of your roast leg of mutton there. But though you may carve it up and eat it, not only do you get no satisfaction there from, but you find the leg of mutton appears intact at the end of the banquet - if there is an end.

“All the forms of all the filth of the world go likewise to Hell,” added Rex.

R.L.W. then resumed his story.

“The Officer thought for a moment, and then said, ‘There are about thirteen hundred people in there, including those in the privates’ club. There are about five hundred men on picket duty. If I leave two thousand more, that should be sufficient. You, ‘Adjutant’ (by the way, Jack, he was a Colonel by this time), will take charge with the acting rank of a Brigadier.

“The rest of the force are needed on the battle plane. Our forces are hard pressed, and all sending out S.O.S. calls.

“I think you (Rex) had better take in hand our young friend here, and explain matters to him. Colonel S. will take charge of the prisoners, and return with them to headquarters. We will try what a little reasoning will do before we let the enemy go, and I think some will join us. Hang on to them till I return. The newcomers will present little difficulty, you will find.

He turned to the Adjutant. “Brigadier, you will have to exercise all vigilance. It’s true that about one-third of those in the club are women, but you will find them quite as dangerous as the men. In some cases more dangerous, for our men will not like to use force against them.

“However, no one must leave the club if you can possibly prevent it. Above all, no reinforcements or food must be introduced from outside.

“I leave you in charge with perfect confidence.

In a few moments he was out of sight, taking with him the bulk of the troops. The

Adjutant I left in the middle of his task, and took charge of the three astrals. Colonel S. started off towards headquarters with his prisoners and the rescued. Most of the latter were already on our side, and promptly fell to at the rear of the column.

We walked along with the officer, leaving a sergeant in charge of the two privates, so as to give myself greater freedom with young Captain B. The following is the story of his death, and since it is typical of many men who die of wounds, as distinct from those who are killed instantly, I will give it in detail.”

Chapter X How Captain B. died of his Wounds

“CAPTAIN B. began:

“This seems a funny sort of place. I did think I’d get quit of fighting when I died.’

“Let’s hear about your death,” I (R.L.W.) said.

“I was hit by a piece of shell in the stomach as we were advancing across no-man’s-land. I lay on the ground in agony for hours. Dawn was breaking, and men stumbled over me as succeeding waves of men went forward.

“After a time, loss of blood and pain made me faint. I came to later as the sun was setting. The Huns were shelling our lines and no-man’s-land in front of them. I longed for a shell to hit me and put me out of my agony, but my luck was out.

“Again I fainted, and when I recovered I felt dazed but experienced little pain. I watched in a detached sort of way the pool of blood which lay at one side of me. I made no effort to get up. I felt tired out. I remembered I felt like that once before. I cut my arms when a boy - fell through a cucumber frame and cut my arms rather badly. The loss of blood made me feel faint, but I felt no pain. I remembered the incident quite clearly. Then other incidents passed through my mind. Often trivial matters with no real significance, and mostly drawn from childhood’s experiences.

“Once more I became unconscious, and when I recovered I found myself in complete darkness. I groped round, but could find no familiar object, but I realized that I no longer felt weak and tired. I moved my legs, rose to my feet, and tried to walk about, but soon felt myself held as if by a rope. I hunted for this rope, and found it was attached in some mysterious way to my head.

“I caught hold of it and tugged, but could not loosen it. So I ran my hand downwards till I came to the place where it ended - in nothing. This puzzled me a good deal, and I sat down to think things over.

“After a while I began to get used to the darkness which resembled a dense fog, and perceived amid it darker shadows, some of which flitted to and fro, while others lay still. Suddenly I heard voices close by, even recognized one of them as that of my batman, so I called out to him.

He said, "I am sure I can hear the Captain's voice." I shouted louder than ever. The shadow moved nearer.

"Look out!" I cried, and it walked clean through me.

"It knelt down near a shadowy heap which lay close beside me, and another man knelt also near this heap, and seemed to be doing something to it.

"I was tremendously puzzled, and thought, 'I am evidently delirious, but they have found me. I doubt, however, if they are in time.'"

"But the other man suddenly cried, 'He's gone, poor fellow!'

"My batman replied, 'But, sir, I heard him call.'

"Imagination, my man, or perhaps some other poor fellow. In fact, I can hear someone even now."

"But, sir, I know his voice ... I."

"Rubbish! The man has been dead for two or three hours." "Best take the body back, hadn't we?" inquired another voice." "Yes, you two can manage it. Now, you other men, this way."

"The shadowy form was lifted by the two other shadows, and as it began to move away I felt myself dragged in the same direction. I got up and followed them, puzzling my brains as to what it all meant.

"They stopped. I heard the words of the burial service, then silence. The men turned to go, and for the last time I heard my batman's voice, "It's strange. Harry, but I could swear it was his voice; and what's more, I'm sure I've heard it several times since."

"You're upset, chum," replied the other; "enough to give anyone the jumps." "He was a decent sort"

"I heard no more. I was dead and yet alive. What did it all mean? I passed my hands over my body and face. I had a body, and yet they had buried something. Why could I not get away? I gave a desperate tug. I nearly skipped with joy. I could move. I was free!

"I wandered away into the fog, which by now seemed less dense.

"Presently I saw fighting going on, and watched it curiously.

"These are also dead," I came to the conclusion, for I saw men fall run through and through, yet rise and fight again. "This is absurd." Just at that moment a private saluted and spoke (the chap just behind me now). "Excuse me," he said, "but am I dead or alive?"

"Dead, I think," I replied, "but I am not absolutely sure." "Yes, sir, that's what I says, you see, my right leg was blowed off by a bomb. I know that all right, yet here it's safe and sound, so I reckon I must be dead. Made a fair mess of me, it did, but not a

mark now, so I must have gone west”

“Quite right. I’ve been watching those chaps fighting, and they keep killing each other and getting up and going on again as if nothing had happened.”

“They make a fair row when the bayonet sticks into them, though.” “Yes, so I noticed, but it does not stop their fighting as it would on earth.” “Talking of earth, sir, what are we on now?”

“His question flummoxed me, and I told him so.

“Just then another private came up, and entered into conversation also.

“He’d died of wounds in hospital, he said, and as we were comparing our experiences, up came a captain and several men. “The Captain told us we were dead, which we knew already, and asked us to come along with him, saying, “You feel a bit lost, and we’ll show you round, put you up to all the wrinkles, and generally help you to find your feet. You’ll find life here not half bad. Plenty of fun, and no more fighting or death.”

“You can guess my amazement, therefore, when this recent scrap started.

“As I could not make out the rights and wrongs of the case, I just stood aside, but I’d really like to know, now that you’ve settled the business, what it was all about?” So I went into the matter fully, but before doing so, I told the two privates to walk beside me so that they could follow all I said.

“You see, while they were attending to the sergeant they would probably not have realized what I was saying. It is not distance which prevents one from hearing on this plane, but whether we direct our thoughts in the required direction or not. I felt I could explain matters a little better than the sergeant could.

“When I had finished, they all three had grasped the situation, and said they would join us.

“You can understand now, Jack, why Captain B. had no weapons. His slow death made him realize he was dead. His knowledge of that fact made him realize the futility of the battle on the earth plane, and he therefore did not trouble to acquire a weapon.

“One point still puzzles you, I see. He was attached to his body by the silver cord. The real severance of the astral from the physical body does not always coincide with the heart’s failure.

“It may not take place until the body has actually decayed. Some of the earthbound and suicides are in that unhappy position.”

H.J.L. here broke in. “Captain B., of course, perceived the thoughts of those he heard which coincided with their spoken words. That is easy enough to understand, but evidently the batman was clairaudient. Possibly only temporally, and he perceived the thoughts of his former master. It would be the easier because Captain B. would

be more material at that moment than he was even a few hours later. Doubtless the batman had a real affection for the Captain and this, as it were, sharpened his psychic faculties.”

We nodded, and Rex went on.

“Before leaving the subject I would like to add that I know of the case of a man who was dying on the battlefield and he had a clear recollection of leaving his physical body for a time and finding himself still attached to it, and returning once more to his body to awake to the earth life, only to lose consciousness again and finding himself once more outside his body, where he remained until the cord broke.

H.J.L.: “Another point to note is that Captain B. could feel the cord, but not the body to which it was still attached. But go on with your narrative.”

R.L.W. then continued.

“We had reached headquarters by now, but as we entered, I said to the other private, ‘I understand you died in hospital. I should very much like to hear your experiences if you don’t mind waiting for a short time while we get these other fellows fixed up

“Right, sir” he replied. So we entered our grounds.

Chapter XI At Headquarters

Colonel S. drew up his forces in the big square in front of our buildings, The prisoners were in the middle, and looked as furious as any men could. “Well done, men,” he cried, “a good fight and a fine victory, but now that open war has begun you will have to be on your guard. It’s not so much force as guile which you have to fear.

“Now, I propose to keep these prisoners here surrounded by a wall of men. It’s the only way to hold them, and remember you must keep your minds concentrated on holding them here. The fact that they are disarmed makes little difference. It’s the will that counts. That’s why it’s useless to attempt to lock them up in dungeons. Astral walls cannot hold an astral spirit if he wants to get out, because they have no will to resist him. You understand?”

“Yes, sir,” they shouted.

“Well, remember, if your minds wander they’ll be able to escape. Yes, I know you can’t stay here forever, but I don’t intend you should.” The Officer said, “Keep them here till I return.” He will know what to do with them.

“Meanwhile, I’m going to start addressing them.”

“He tried to do so, but they all shouted different things at once. Most told him to ‘shut up’ as they didn’t want any ‘pi jaw.’ There were a few women among the crowd, and these began to ogle our men.

“I (Lt. L.W.) therefore went up to him and suggested I should ask some of the chief men who were in the building to come out and help and also to bring at least one of our party for each of the enemy.

“He jumped at the idea, and we were soon busy at the job.

“I dodged a golden-haired damsel and button-holed a young private, who I could see was a fairly new arrival, and therefore not hopelessly hardened. I won him over, incidentally.

“While we were in the middle of this job the Officer arrived. “He afterwards told us about his struggle with the enemy on the battle plane. But that must wait. I’ll just tell you he had won.

“He at once dominated the whole of us. He told his old story, which you know so well, of his own fate, and we could see it made a tremendous impression.”

“When he had finished, man after man came up to him and said: ‘Sir, I should like to put myself in your charge for a time, at least. You have given me a bad fright, and I know some of the things you have said about obsession are true. I can see you are telling us the truth about the other matters. I would like to stay with you and learn more. If, after all I decide to go to the devil, it shall be with my eyes open.’ So I put it one way and some another, but those are the words of one man, and they were typical of many.

The enemy captain said, “If I want to go to the devil, I shall go, and no one shall stop me.”

The Officer replied: “Certainly, but you are not going to hang about here dragging others down. I’ll see to that.

“Go down to the second division, and stay there.

“As he spoke the words I could feel the will-power going out. He made mysterious passes, and the man turned and fled. He burst through the ranks of the surrounding troops, and as he went we heard him screaming, “I can’t stop. I must go on.” He disappeared.

“I dared not speak to the Officer for some moments, but at length the set expression on his face vanished, and he turned to me and said, “You have seen me work a spell for the first time. Some might say it was not right. I know it is. He can’t return now. He has made his choice. Let him abide by it.”

“Silence fell on all. It was the first time any of us had seen the Officer in this mood, and we were frightened. Yes, frightened.

“In a flash we realized the tremendous power the man possessed, and the awful strength of his will. It was almost as if the voice of God, or, at least (he added quickly), of a god had spoken. Yet we knew he was but a man, and had once been a thoroughly bad man.

“Still the silence reigned supreme, till it was broken by the voice of a woman crying, ‘O God! If there is a God, what will become of us? I’m afraid.’

“The Officer turned to her quickly. ‘No more of that, madam. You have set yourself to drag men down. If you are penitent, the road to salvation lies open. If not, there lies the road to Hell. Take your choice, and blame no one but yourself.’

“She rushed up to him. ‘What can I do to be saved?’

“The words gave us a strange thrill. Needless to say we recognized them.

“Over there lies the Nunnery of St. Benedict. Go to the Mother Abbess and ask her help. She can show you how to be saved.” “But am I free?” she asked in evident surprise. “Yes, if you wish to return to your evil ways, go and do so. You asked, ‘What can I do to be saved?’ and if you are not, you know now what lies in store.’

“Let me stay with you. You are strong; you can save me.

“That is not my work. I save men, not women. I should be too hard, and you would hinder me. Choose.”

“And she did go straight to the abbey where, for aught I know, she still is.

“And thus he dealt with the remainder, reading their characters to a nicety. Always he sent the women away to the abbey, and kept the men with him.

“But at length there was a residue who showed plainly that they did not wish to be saved, and yet he evidently considered they were not yet sufficiently evil for him to drive down to the second division.

“They took the attitude that they could not help it. They were too much in the clutches of their earth desires to resist. They knew they were fools, but they could not help it. If he would let them go, they would promise not to tempt others, but it was useless to pretend they could give up their evil ways. They hadn’t the will.

“Promise!” he said, with withering scorn: “You promise anything, yes, and mean it at the time, but you have no more will to keep your promise than you have to change your way of living but I will reinforce your will with mine. Go, and never dare to draw near the club, nor to approach the battle plane, nor to speak to any of the newly slain.”

“As he spoke again, we felt the power of his will beating upon the abject creatures who cringed before him. He made strange passes, and again silence fell on all.

“Then, one by one, they crept away, ten men and three women, and as they passed the significance of the number struck me.

“It was all over now, and a sigh of relief broke out from all present, as the last of them disappeared in the distance.

“The gathered troops were dismissed, and the Officer, followed by most of his staff, including myself entered the building. We were all anxious to know what had

happened on the battle plane. But I must stop now. I'll continue next time."

H.J.L.: "Yes, Jack, you must be off at once."

J.W.: "Half a minute. I want you to make inquiries about a certain matter. Recently I read in the Occult Review an article by an airman, who inquired whether anyone knew whether there were occult forces which ruled the air and were hostile to man."

H.J.L.: "The answer is in the affirmative, as they say in Parliament, but we will collect further information on the whole subject, and let you know later."

"Now, good-bye." And I returned to earth.

Chapter XII

I Go Out in Search of F.

December 14th, 1917

When I heard this morning of the death of J.H.F. in action, I blamed myself for not having told him when last I saw him at G__ P__ of what I knew of life on the astral plane. It might have been of such help to him, and now six weeks had elapsed, and in that period he might, through ignorance, have been led astray. Therefore I determined not to wait till Monday, but to go out the same night, seeking him.

As this (Friday, Dec. 14th) was not my usual night I foresaw difficulties I, nevertheless, adopted special steps before lying down to sleep.

Apparently I had little difficulty in getting clear of my physical body, for I soon found myself in front of the house where R.L.W. dwelt. On entering I found there only mother, who said, "What's the matter? I was just going out. Surely this is not your usual night."

"No," I replied, and told her briefly my purpose in coming, inquiring at the same time where H.J.L. and R.L.W. were.

Mother: "H.J.L. is in the spirit plane, and will not return till Monday. Rex is at headquarters attending to some sort of duty. I don't exactly know what it is."

J.W.: "Where is it?"

Mother came to the door, directing me how to proceed, adding, "I believe it is some way off, but it won't take you long, of course. It never does here."

So, I started off on my journey.

I soon left the town behind me, and found myself passing along a road bordered with tall poplars. I passed a small spinney on the right, and over a low hill. I traveled fast, and it did not seem long before I saw R.L.W. coming rapidly towards me.

As soon as we met, he said: "I was surprised to receive your call, but gathered you were seeking a friend who had been killed." I told him what had happened, and he

then said, “You’ve got the number complete?”

So I repeated it. “I want to find Private J.H.F., No. 762128, 1st Artists’ Rifles, D Company, 13 Platoon.”

R.L.W.: “We will go to headquarters and look him up in our books.

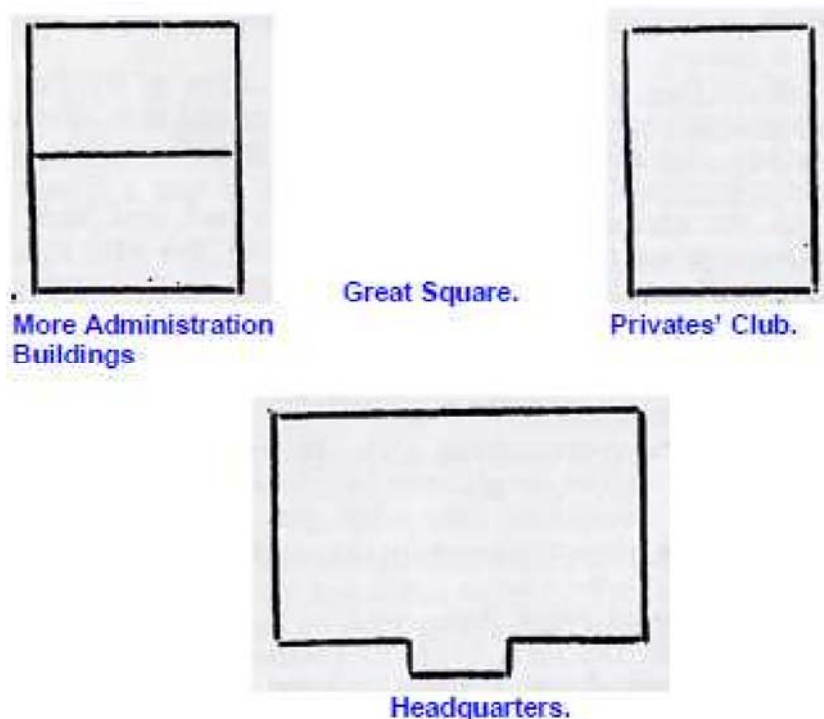
So we continued our journey and soon saw a fine block of buildings in a large park was what on earth must have been a fine French chateau, built in the style of about 1770. A broad flight of steps led up to the main door, which was supported on either side by two great classical columns.

R.L.W.: “Large as this building is, it was not large enough, so you will see on either side are two other chateaux in a somewhat similar style.”

We walked round this huge mass of buildings, and found that these two other chateaux had been placed at right angles behind the first buildings.

We passed through a narrow passage on the right as we faced headquarters, and R.L.W. said, “This building is a club for the privates and ‘non-coms.’ All officers are honorary members, but the whole management is in the hands of a committee elected by the privates and ‘non-coms.’

“It’s a fine place, with every form of mental amusement you can conceive. Officer’s Club, etc.



“The building on the other side of the square is divided into two blocks. The wing on the right (as we face the main building) contains additional administrative quarters, while the other half is the officer’s club.

“This square was the scene of the triumph of the Officer over the enemy, which I described to you on the last occasion.

“We’ll waste no more time, though, but go into the main block.”

J.W.: “Just a moment. How did you get those three buildings together?”

R.L.W.: “Headquarters is the original chateau which, when destroyed, came to this spot, which corresponds with its original site in France. We used it as it stands for some time, merely making a few internal adjustments to suit our present needs.

“As our organization expanded we needed more room. So we moved, piece by piece, these other two from their original location. The men did it themselves, under suitable direction. The methods were very similar to those which would be applied on earth. These buildings were semi-material, you must remember, and not like those in the next plane, where the fortunate inhabitants can construct great buildings out of their mind stuff. They are still working at the officers’ club,” and he pointed to one corner where a large number of men in their shirt sleeves were busy adding, “We have made a very considerable rearrangement of the interior, putting in new walls in some places, and leaving them out in others. But come; let us go back to the front. We can go over the whole block at another time.”

So soon we were passing up the flight of steps which led us into a magnificent central hall.

We turned down a passage on the left and Rex opened a door on the right of this passage and led me into a large room which was evidently a library.

R.L.W.: “This was the library, but many of the books we have handed over to the town library, run by the old man of whom I spoke some time ago. We needed the space for our own books, and particularly for the register.”

He took me into a small room at the end, and here we found a young sergeant at a table, to whom he said, “We wish to trace a man, Artists’ Rifles, name J.H.F. By the way, Jack, I suppose you are sure that was his real name?”

J.W.: “Oh, yes, quite certain of it. What makes you ask?”

R.L.W.: “Sometimes we get men who have enlisted under another name. When they come here they often give their real name. Afterwards they tell us their assumed name, and so we have to cross-reference them.

Sergeant: “About what date, sir?”

R.L.W.: “30th October, 1917, 13 Platoon, D Company.” The sergeant got down a large volume finely bound. It was labeled “Artists’ Rifles, Volume III., August, 1917.”

R.L.W.: “We register them under their regiments but, of course, often we have to have cross references when a man has been transferred from one regiment to another.”

I noticed the book was arranged in alphabetical order, with twenty-three pages index at the front, one letter to each page, except “I” and “J”, “Q” and “R”, “X” and “Z,” which had only one page.

Running through index "F," the sergeant rattled off several names, and then stopped. "F.J.H. This must be the man, sir, page 163. The book has filled up very fast lately."

He turned over the pages rapidly, and then handed the book to Rex, saying, "Here you are, sir."

R.L.W. read as follows: "J.H.P., No. 762128, D Company, 13 Platoon. Killed in action between the dates October 27th and November 3rd (visit of J.W.).' (You see, Jack, we use your visits to help out our chronology, and we find it difficult to be precise in our dates unless a newly slain man is certain, and this chap wasn't, as you will see.)" He continued, "This man was brought in by Privates Simpson and Reid. He appeared very dazed, and could give no clear account of himself. Private Reid reported that he found the newcomer wandering vaguely up and down the earth battle plane and persuaded him to come with him. All they could get out of the newcomer was. 'I want a drink damned badly. I feel beastly queer.'

"He was taken to Captain G., who spoke as follows:

Captain G: "Private F., you have now left the earth for this, the astral plane. You have given your life in a good cause as have all those with whom you are now associated. We are anxious to help you in every way we can. To do so we require all the information you can give us about yourself. Can you tell me how you were killed?"

Private F. "No, sir. There was a hell of a bombardment, but I don't remember what happened till I found myself wandering about in a fog. Don't remember much till these two found me and brought me here. Perhaps if I had a drink, and something to eat, I'd feel clearer."

Captain G: "You don't need either here, and will soon feel better. Can you tell me anything about yourself - who you were on earth, what profession or trade? Been in the East, I think?"

Private F: "Yes, in Burma. Came home to get a commission, and didn't get it. Beastly shame, I call it. But I can't think clearly."

Captain G. then put sundry questions to Private F., but as he could get no clear answer, put down this entry: "Private F. evidently inclined to need drink. This should be guarded against, and I have handed him over to Dr. C."

Private F. was then examined by Dr. C., who reports as follows:- "Private F. of the Artists' Rifles appears to be suffering from death by shell shock. There appear no traces of wounds, but conditions are not clear. I believe killed by a shell, but there appear to be other complications. Condition of death seems to have resulted in soul being in a disturbed and muddled state. He should be watched carefully. Strong tendency to alcoholism: not necessarily chronic. Strong materialistic tendencies. Animal appetites greatly in evidence. Recommend he be placed amid cheerful surroundings. Taken to entertainments. Every endeavor should be made to distract

his attention from (1) his own condition, and (2) earth conditions.”

The report was acted upon, and the above-mentioned privates took Private F. to the privates’ club and watched over him.

Private F., however, proved himself a difficult case. He was unable to shake off the desire for food and drink. At all times exceedingly amiable, he yet displayed an obstinate nature on this subject. He escaped from the club on several occasions, and was persuaded to return only after considerable difficulty.

The latest report is that he recently left the club and was seen in the company of some very undesirable characters. It is doubtful then it will be possible to save this man from his besetting temptation.”

R.L.W. ceased and then said, “Not a very hopeful report. I fear it means that he has gone back to the earth plane with these ‘undesirables,’ and if so, there can be but one end:”

J.W.: “Poor old F. Well, I’m going to make an effort anyway. Do you think we can find him?”

R.L.W.: “Perhaps you can. There is the bond of friendship to help you. We hadn’t that, you see. I’ll come with you.” So we left headquarters and, concentrating my mind on F., I felt myself drawn in a certain direction. We passed rapidly across the astral plane. Thence we descended to the earth plane. On this we passed amid shadowy towns and buildings, and always the atmosphere grew more dark and foggy. At length we came to what must have been London. We paused finally in front of a low drinking den, somewhere in the East End.

“But all ‘pubs’ will be shut at this hour of the night,” I said.

R.L.W.: “Not all. These illicit drinking clubs still survive. Being illicit, only the most hardened reprobates are to be found here.”

The house we entered appeared a dilapidated place, but once inside we found it was lighted up and fairly bright. There seemed a fair number of men and women present, and many astrals battenning upon them, but I hardly had time to notice this before I spied F., and clapped him on the shoulder. “Good God!” he cried; “are you dead too?”

J.W.: “No; I’m not dead, but I’ve just come to find you.”

F. “You’re wrong, W___, you’re dead, and don’t know it. It took me some time to twig that myself; but as I’m dead, you must be.”

I argued the matter with him, and asked him to come away with me, but he said, “Have a drink, old chap! I’ve just discovered how it’s done. It’s taken me a devil of a long time to do so, but thanks to that chap over there. I’ve learnt the trick at last. Come along!”

Then began a strong tussle between our respective will powers, but luckily, he was

evidently not very strong in that faculty, and R.L.W. helped also, so that at length we got him outside. His companions were so busy satisfying their own appetites that they did not worry about him. Once outside, R.L.W. and I painted such a terrible picture of the results which would flow from his proposed action that we frightened him rather badly, and he agreed to come back with us. He seemed also greatly impressed by my coming to help. As I said good bye to R.L.W. I said to him, "Did I interrupt you in any work you were doing?"

R.L.W.: "I should just think you did. I was right in the middle of a lecture to a class of officers when I felt you calling me. I knew you wouldn't be here unless for some good reason, so I got another man to take my place and came straight off to see you.

"But now we must part. Hope to see you all the same on Monday."

So I returned direct to earth.

Chapter XIII

The Rout of the Enemy

December 17th - 18th, 1917

As soon as I entered the room where R.L.W. sat I said: "What has happened to F.?"

R.L.W. replied, "He is still at the club but, of course, I can't say how he will develop. Without allowing any more conversation, he resumed his narrative of the previous week.

"We all gathered in a large room where we usually meet to discuss matters, and as soon as we had taken our places round the table the Officer began: 'When I arrived back on the earth plane I found a regular battle raging between our men and the enemy.

"At first sight it must have been difficult for a newcomer to distinguish it from the other astral battle.

"None of us, however, had any doubt on the matter, and flung ourselves into the fray. As you know, until the fight near the club I have not fought since my great battle in Hell. Now, however, I was on the side of the angels.

"The enemy were endeavoring to drive us clean off the earth plane into the dream plane, and if possible, even out of that. If successful in that it meant that all intercourse between the better astral being and the newly slain would be prevented. The earth folk who wander on to the dream plane would, in like manner find only the more evil astral beings, and I need not dilate on the disastrous results.

"But such a scheme was far too ambitious. The evil powers are always incapable of cooperation or of coordinated effort. To be short, I came into the battle line with 10,000 men, having picked up sundry reinforcements by the way, and as I came I sent out thought messages calling up all who were not already busily engaged.

“On the earth battle-field groups of our party were still at work rescuing the newly slain or beating off isolated attacks but between them and us lay the main body of the enemy.

“Often the swaying battle line seemed to rise in the air, and the tide of the war fluctuated rapidly over the heads of the newly slain who, for the most part, seemed not to perceive us.

“From the further side, or edge of the second division, came out swarms of degraded obsessing spirits who hurled themselves into the fight with the utmost fury. Still our line held, and even pressed them back. But from the lowest division of all the evil elements began to rise.

“In front of them rushed the elementals of the second division, either of their own will or possibly driven forward by the still more evil creatures who now began to appear.

“As these appalling apparitions came in view, the mortal battle which was raging on earth increased in intensity. Similarly the newly slain who fought over the same ground raged even more fiercely, but the worst effect was mainly felt in our struggle. The battle in Hell was nothing compared to it, and it was not surprising that some of my men, struck with terror at the sight of the evil elementals from the gateway of Hell, should fall back a little. I was just on the point of calling in you who were at headquarters, and those blockading the club, in a last desperate endeavor to stay the advance, which was gathering speed every moment, when suddenly a wave of white fire flowed over our heads, followed by another and another.

“As they kept on sweeping down we perceived they were spirits of light, far higher than ourselves, who had come to our aid. Whence they came, I know not. Maybe from the army who are ever battling with the elementals of the gateway of Hell. I think, however, that some, at least, had descended from above, possibly even come from beyond the wall of fire which bounds the spirit plane

“These new reinforcements quickly turned the tide of war. The elementals of the first division were swept from sight, the elementals of the second division followed them. The white spirits also rushed down in pursuit, nor did they appear to attack the evil mortals, being content apparently to leave us to deal with them.

“But heartened by this sight, we rushed in more fiercely and broke through the enemy, and, on seeing this, the astral men of the second division fled back to their own dens.

“We now devoted our attention to shattering the last remnants of the enemy. Immediately their lack of cohesion became manifest. All attempts at a concerted rearguard action were abandoned. They scattered in every direction, some flying on to the dream plane, others attempting to hide among the newly slain, while numbers turned and dashed wildly down from crag to crag into the crevices of the second division.

“Nor did we give them any rest. They had plagued the astral plane and hampered our work too long. Wherever we found them we drove them over the precipices. In and out among the newly slain we dashed, hunting down the enemy, till at length I cried enough!” and we swept back through the plane of the dreamers. Strange to say, the enemy seemed to stand out among the others. One might almost say that they bore the mark of Cain upon them. We passed among the dreamers as we had among the newly slain, hunting only the enemy, and when we found them we drove them across the earth plane into the second division.

“At length I stayed the fight and, on the edge of the earth plane, where it merged into the dream plane I spoke the strong words that bind, and when I had finished I bade all the army repeat these words after me.

“In the name of God Most High, and by the might of Christ and His apostles, by the saints above and the angelic sword, we bid you lie in the realms of night. Lie there and come no more till your astral bodies melt and fall. Then may the Lord remember you.”

“The astral plane is free of them at last. Doubtless there are many who have escaped, and new ones will arise, but for the time their opposition is broken. Remember this, gentlemen, there is a time for mercy and time for justice, and often justice is the greatest mercy. For, as in this case, by dealing out stern justice we save thousands from a like fate. These will tempt no more.’

We were silent for a space, but to some of us it seemed that the Officer was inclined to be ruthless in the extreme. Our hearts sank at the awful doom and gasped at what we almost felt was his presumption. At length one man voiced the feelings of several.

“Sir, I boldly ask, are you justified in such strong measures? It is for God alone to judge and doom men to Hell. For, to be blunt, your spell means that, for if they cannot climb from out the second division, they must fall to Hell. By what authority I ask.”

“The Officer smiled grimly. ‘By the same authority that made me founder of this organization. By the power of my will, and if any wish to strive against it, I challenge him here and now. But if you mean by what right I do this thing, meaning how can I justify myself, I answer this: In every society of men there exists some system of law and order, suited to their condition, and to enforce the laws of the community, penalties exist. Sometimes these are inflicted by one man in the name of all; sometimes the people themselves inflict the penalties.

“Here too, law exists, and evil-doers must be restrained lest the innocent should suffer. As head of this society, who has more right than I to inflict such penalties as are necessary? But further, not every person here knows how to inflict punishment suitable to such offences, for take note, the object of this spell is not so much to punish the wrong-doer as to protect others from him.

“And further, except a man have a strong will, tempered like steel in the fire of

adversity, he cannot impress his will on others, nor even focus the united will of many upon one object, as I did in this case.

“If, then, any man considers I have done wrong, he is free. Let him go where he will, no one shall bid him stay.’

But no one moved, and so the Officer dismissed us.

R.L.W. paused, and then added (answering a thought of mine), “The soldiers had no difficulty in hearing the second spell, if so you like to call it. It was a thought, and as he desired all to know it, they heard it.

“What the first spell was I cannot say, but I presume it was couched in more occult terms than the second one, which was intended to focus the will-power of the whole army upon the object he wished to attain.”

Chapter XIV A Death in Hospital

“As soon as I got outside, I looked up the other private who had told me he had died in hospital. We then went round to a little office I have at headquarters, where he gave me the following narrative:-

“I was struck by a fragment of shrapnel, which cut through into my lung. There were several other pieces in different parts of my body, but they wouldn’t have mattered. I turned queer, and all went black. When I awoke I was in a hospital behind the firing-line. I was in awful pain, and couldn’t help groaning. Doctors and nurses seemed to flit through my dreams, but I have little clear recollection of this period.

“Next thing I remember was being borne into another room, I suppose an operating theatre, where I was chloroformed. Now, strange to say, almost at once my mind grew clearer and, instead of losing complete consciousness, I found myself floating in the air, but fully alive to what was going on. My body was stretched on the operating table, but what interested me far more than the actual operation was the new point of view from which I was able to observe things. Men and inanimate objects looked different from what I remembered them. The men seemed to be double, to have a light figure inside a gray form. Sometimes the light figure shone beyond the gray, but more often it seemed embedded in it. Moreover, these figures varied in color. Some were very beautiful, and seemed to be shot with rays of green and purple, yellow, blue, and pink. Others were a steady yellow, while a few were an ugly orange brown or angry red.

“While I was still speculating on what these changes meant, I heard one of the doctors say, “It’s no use. Better take him back. If we go on he’ll die on the table.”

“Poor fellow! His number’s up,” remarked another man, who seemed to be arranging bandages. I was vaguely conscious that my body was being carried back to the ward, and drifted along by its side. Once back in the ward, they put a screen round my bed,

and everyone except the nurse left me.

“Suddenly I thought, ‘I’ll go back into my body,’ and next moment I felt crushed and pressed by a great weight. I heard a scream. It was my own voice. Consciousness seemed to be slipping from me. Now I realized that I was dying, and I didn’t want to go. My will seemed to gather itself together, and my whole physical body shook with convulsions. An awful pain seemed to rend me, but I distinctly remember struggling up into a sitting position. That must have been my last effort. I seemed to collapse, and lost consciousness. Then once more I found myself floating over my body. Suddenly a strong wind caught me and whirled me round like a bit of thistledown. I thought I was a boat in a raging storm, and even felt the rope which moored me to the shore. The fury of the storm increased, and the cord snapped.

“Instantly I was whirling amid waves of darkness. Up and down, to and fro I danced, till at length daylight appeared. The dark storm-waves seemed to pile up into one huge wave and hurl me on to a rocky shore. As they did so I heard someone reading the funeral service, but I had no time to attend to it. I scrambled quickly to my feet and looked round at the sea, but there was none, simply the same strange ground as that which lay in from of me.

“I was puzzled at the time, and still am, but did not stay still for very long. I remembered the story of Pilgrim’s Progress, and how Pilgrim had to cross a river on the further bank of which lay the New Jerusalem. That was the only bit of information I had about the next world, but I took the hint, and set out to seek it. I am still seeking it.

He paused, and then went on. “I walked straight ahead, and the ground seemed to rise upwards, till by degrees it changed into rolling downs with gorse, juniper, and such small shrubs.”

I (R.L.W.) said, “Oh, the dream plane.”

He took no notice of my remark, but went on. “I was feeling terribly lonely - not a sign of life. Not an animal, much less a man, and I sat down and wept. Yes, I know it sounds womanish, but I wept. And as I sat there weeping, strange forms began to flit across the downs. At first they were dull and shadowy, but by degrees they grew clear and substantial, and suddenly I gave a shout of delight, for there I saw my mother and father. He didn’t see me, strange to say, and floated away in spite of all I could do to detain him, but at my first cry of ‘Mother!’ she turned towards me. For a moment I thought she was blind, for her eyes were shut but in another moment they opened, and we knew each other.

“We had a tremendous lot to say but, strange to relate, we hardly touched on my death. We preferred to talk over old times, especially my boyhood days.

“Suddenly she broke off, and a wail of sorrow rose in the air. ‘I must go!’ she cried, and turned and fled. I screamed, ‘Don’t go yet!’ but rapidly she moved away. I rushed after her, but she went even more swiftly. I stumbled, fell, sprang up, and fell

again. She was gone!

“I rushed on, frantic with grief, heeding nothing, intent only on finding her once more. Darkness had taken the place of the twilight, but in spite of it, my surroundings seemed new and strange. Instead of rocks or downs, trees and buildings loomed up amid the gloom.

“The sound of weeping fell upon my ears. I heard my mother’s voice. I was outside their house. I recognized it, despite the gloom, and the shadowy, unsubstantial form which it now seemed to have.

“I followed her voice, and through the very walls I passed into their room. She was sitting up in bed, calling my name, and crying bitterly. My father was doing his best, in a man’s clumsy way, to comfort her.

“I went to her and put my arm round her neck and kissed her, but she neither saw nor felt.

“Why is it we can see these mortals, but they cannot see or even hear us?”

Without waiting for me (R.L.W.) to reply, he went on.

“After a while I could bear the sight no longer and wandered away.

“Through familiar streets I passed, and slowly I drifted towards what must have been the place where my body lay.

“I found myself within sound of guns. The roar of battle grew around me, and it was there I met the young Officer and the other chap with whom you found me.

“I saw men fighting, but I knew my fighting days were over. Truth to tell for some time I thought they were living - perhaps some were - but by degrees I realized many were just as I was. However, I felt no call to join in, and it was then that a group of soldiers came up and told me about this club. So we agreed to go along with them and soon after we fell in with your band and witnessed the battle between your two parties.

“You know the rest; but now, in return for my death story (he smiled at the phrase), perhaps you’ll explain things to me. Above all, is there a golden city of Zion, or is that a fable?”

So I told him briefly what life on this side was like, and added, “The golden city of Zion I do not know, because I think it is still a long way off but I hope some day to see it. But in the next plane to this - the spirit plane - are many beautiful golden cities, I understand, and if you reach these you will find that they will more than repay you for the arduous journey.”

“So I left him in charge with several men with whom I thought he would be in sympathy.”

Rex stopped for a moment, and H.J.L. spoke. “Time to be off, Jack.” So saying good-bye to all, I returned to earth.

Chapter XV

Christmas Day on the Astral Plane

December 24th - 25th, 1917

As I came to the door of their house I found the three on the doorstep. "A Happy Christmas!" they said together, and R.L.W. added; "It's a good thing you weren't here early, for if you had been you would have found the house empty. We've just come back from church."

We were now in the house, and as we sat down, R.L.W. continued . "Yes, mother wanted to go to church, as it was Christmas Day, so we went to the Midnight Mass in Ypres Cathedral."

Mother. "It was a splendid service, and I enjoyed the singing immensely."

J.W.: "It was choral, then?"

R.L.W.: "Oh, yes, and there was a procession too. The last time I was in that cathedral was when I was on earth. It was a sad picture, I assure you. There was a huge congregation, and, do you know, we felt we were in communion with those on earth; It was a strange sensation, and difficult to describe, but there was no doubt of it."

J.W.: "What time do you follow here?"

R.L.W.: "Greenwich. We are used to it; even French time was only a few minutes different. But it is only on occasions like this that we trouble about time. You see, we desire to synchronize with men on earth, and therefore have to make our time fit theirs. We unite our prayers with earth folk, and so become for a moment caught within the circle of time, but only for a short time so long as we wish to be united with them."

J.W.: "Being Anglican, why did you not go to one of our services? Any special reason?"

R.L.W.: "Mother wanted to see a fine service, and I thought I would like to see Ypres under happier circumstances, and as H.J.L. did not mind one way or the other, we went there."

H.J.L.: "I wonder how many people realize how closely the unseen world is linked with the material. Very few, I expect, despite their constant repetition of the sentence 'the communion of saints.' I think however, they should have written it 'the communion of souls,' for we are mostly far from saints as yet."

We were all silent for a moment, and then I said, "How do you propose to spend, Christmas Day here? Yes, I was a bit late getting off to bed. Christmas presents, etc., you know."

R.L.W.: "Well, this is my programme. There is no Christmas dinner for us here, so our amusements are mostly mental.

“12.45 to 1.30. Midnight Mass.

“Till you leave we shall be together here. Then I shall go to the festivities at headquarters. The soldiers are having various forms of entertainment. There is a popular concert in one room; amateur theatricals in another; dancing in a third. The Officer has allowed invitations to be sent out to members of the women’s organization. Your old friend, Sister Maria, belongs to that, by the way.

“You see, there is a special organization to deal with women. I’ve spoken to you about the Nunnery of St Benedict in one of my recent talks. I must give you a chapter on the subject one day.

“Well, quite a number have accepted and are coming, I understand. As you know, we usually keep our men away from the fair sex, but an occasional meeting will do good rather than harm.

“They have arranged a dance. I suspect it will not be the success they imagine it will be. It’s too physical an amusement. Still, that’s their affair. “Some of the arty-crafty people are coming down and are going to present everyone with gifts of their own handiwork. I shall appreciate that largely, but I’m afraid most of the men will find their things a bit too arty for their tastes. “Then there is a draughts tournament and a chess ditto. H.J.L. is going to that. Rather rough luck on his opponents, isn’t it? There are many other side-shows besides.

“Well, I shall look in at all that’s going on.

“I shall not go to any more services though there are plenty to choose from. “After leaving headquarters I am going to a real miracle play, The Nativity. It is to be given in one of the medieval divisions of this plane, at about 11 a.m. earth time.

It’s in the period of about 1450, I understand, and will be in the open air. Let me finish.

“These plays are fairly long, so I shan’t wait to the end but I shall go and see some Yuletide revels of the seventeenth century - see one of the advantages of being dead, and of knowing your way about here.

“After that I don’t know whether I shall go back to early Saxon pre-Christian times, and see how they kept Yuletide, or whether I shall go to a pantomime. Rather different, eh?

“Anyway, I shall end up at the opera. There is a new one which is to be brought out for the first time tonight.. It’s called ‘The Three Magi’. It deals, of course, with the whole story of the Nativity, but there’s a magical and occult touch which would appeal to you.”

J.W.: “Who’s it by?”

R.L.W.: “Mozart. He’s in the spirit plane, and the opera has already been produced there. One of the spirit beings, who works on this plane like H.J.L. does, brought it

down to us.”

J.W.: “I wish they’d bring it down to earth,”

R.L.W. smiled. “Perhaps they will, some day, and some musician on earth will receive the credit. Well, I hope it will be presented on earth.”

H.J.L.: “Rather beyond most opera-goers on earth, I fancy,”

J.W.: “Probably. Still, there is ‘The Magic Flute.’”

H.J.L.: “True, but I fancy this is much more occult, and even The Magic Flute would hardly be considered a popular opera.”

R.L.W.: “Well, you see what a lot one can do in an earth day here, and yet synchronize one’s time. That’s one of the advantages of needing neither food nor sleep. Of course, on the fifth division people will be having Christmas dinners (of a sort) and sleeping off the effects afterwards. Funny, isn’t it?”

We all laughed, and said, “Well, if it’s any consolation for you to know, we haven’t had any turkey ourselves this Christmas.”

This led to conversation about the war, and mother remarked, “It seems to me the world’s a very uncomfortable place just now. I am glad I have left it.”

R.L.W. then began again. “Last time I concluded the series of chapters dealing with the Officer’s organization. I gave you not only a description of how we work, but also typical cases showing the different kinds of experiences men have at death.

While I won’t say that they cover every case, I do think they cover the majority of men who die in battle. If any striking variants occur to me later, I will give them. At the same time, you might like to glance through them again, and if there are any normal types of men whose death you have not described, mention it and I will find someone who can describe them.”

J.W.: “Of course, most of these were war deaths, but mother shows a long and peculiar illness. Then I have H.J.L., who was a man of middle-age and average type; and the Officer, who was a bad type. You have given one or two women killed during the war, so I don’t think we need worry about any more examples unless something special crops up.”

R.L.W.: “Very good. Now, I have given you the chief crisis in the development of the organization. Since then, though there have been sporadic attempts to organize an opposition, we have never had anything so bad as the great battle in which the spirits of light came to our aid.

“So I shall give you no more about that subject for a while though, if necessary, I can return to it later.”

J. W: “How’s F.?”

R.L.W.: “Still with us. I think we shall hold him now, though he won’t be much use

for a long time.”

J.W.: “What new theme do you propose?”

R.L.W.: “You remember B.’s constant inquiries about fairies; also your own? Well, we have investigated the matter, and I propose to give you several chapters on the subject. Now, very few mortals trouble about the non-mortal beings over here, and so I think you will find that much that I have discovered will be absolutely new to the majority of your readers - if you have any. It would be new to most people, even here.

“Now, as your next visit will usher in a new year, I think it would be a good time to introduce you to a new world - for Fairyland is a new world, differing in many ways from this normal astral world.

H.J.L.: “Well, it’s time you returned.” So having again wished all three a Happy Christmas, and having promised to give similar messages from them to C. and B., I turned to go, when R.L.W. called out, “Tell B. the true history of Fairyland begins in the next chapter.” We all laughed, and I departed.

Chapter XVI

Of the Nature of Fairies

December 31st, 1917 - January 1st, 1918

As soon as I had wished them all a Happy New Year, at which they laughed, H.L.J. spoke: “We laughed at the idea of a New Year but after all I think we laughed too soon. For what you mean surely is: may this period of your life be better than that which went before, and that is well said.”

Then R.L.W. began.

“I will begin your New Year with a subject and its title shall be ‘Fairyland,’ as promised last time.

“Now let me begin by saying that at first I thought the only fairies which really existed were those elementals of whom you already know, such as the astral elements thrown off by children, and which took the forms of fairies because of the dreams of little children; but I find there is another order of beings, but few of the earth folk know anything about them. Before describing to you anything about them, I will give a few general deductions I have drawn from what I saw.

“I think that these beings are souls in the making, spirit beings who have not yet been incarnate on earth. I think when they pass from this plane some, at least, become incarnate in men or animals or flowers. They are of various orders, approximating to the above three types of life on earth but, as the matter will be clearer after you have heard about my adventures I will pass on to another point.

“Their character is very different from ours and yet bears certain traits in common

with our own. They are less serious than men and are very irresponsible as a rule. They seem often to be mischievous rather than wicked, but some are undoubtedly hostile to men and actually malevolently inclined towards us, while others are friendly and sympathetic. They have a culture of their own in some points similar to ours, but in others quite different, but this culture varies considerably among themselves.

“They are seldom serious for long, and are lacking for the most part, in concentration. They combine often in temporary organizations, but quickly forget their original purpose and either scatter again or follow some other whim.

“They pass from the astral plane like we do, but some depart to the spirit plane, and their astral forms vanish, while others descend to the earth with their astral bodies, and become incorporated in the material envelope which transmutes their former fairy body into an astral body suitable for their new life. Once they have left the astral plane for the earth, they do not return at death to Fairyland, but to this portion of the astral plane. Henceforth they are part of the earth and their development, whether as flowers or man, belongs to the history of our world.

“What happens to those who go to the spirit plane I cannot yet say. Perhaps later I shall find out.

“One other point, and then to my narrative. It seems evident that when the fairies become mundane, to a certain extent their progress is thrown back. Probably, however, this is more apparent than real, as it is probable that they acquire new characteristics of which they are in need and in due course develop in a higher degree those faculties which for a time have been overclouded. At the same time, it is evident that to some extent it is a step backward for a flower fairy to become encased permanently in an earthly flower, to lose its form of movement and individual consciousness, to become inarticulate to a great extent, and so forth. You will understand what I mean more fully when I have finished my narrative.

“Now to my adventures in Fairyland.”

Chapter XVII The Search for Fairyland

“Partly because of the constant inquiries of B. about whether there were fairies, and partly because I was myself interested in the subject, I determined to probe the question fully.

“I therefore began to inquire from everyone I met whether there were fairies here. For the most part I was laughed at for my pains and told not to be a fool. One or two, however, said they had seen fairies but on investigation these proved to be only elementals of the type I have spoken of before.”

I (J.W.) then spoke. “Yes, I know the sort you mean. W.A. described them fairly

completely in *Gone West*.”

R.L.W. nodded, and went on. “At length one man said, ‘Don’t be a fool. If you want to play at being a child play with children.’ The idea struck me as being much better than the speaker supposed, so I went into the park where there are always children playing, and began to question all I saw.

“However, for some time I had no better result. Some of the children laughed at me, as their elders had done, while others said they had never seen any fairies, though they would like to do so.

“At length, however, I came across two little girls, who seemed to play mainly by themselves, and took little part in the games of the other children.

“When I asked them my usual question, ‘Do you know if there are any fairies?’ they looked at me shyly, and said, ‘Yes, but you won’t find any here.’

“Where shall I find them?” I said.

“In Fairyland,” they replied.

“Where is Fairyland?”

“We know, but I don’t think the fairies would like us to tell you. It’s a great secret.”

“For some time I could get no more out of them, but I kept coming back to them, and gradually won their confidence by telling them all the fairy tales I knew. Sometimes they would say, ‘Yes, that’s just like the fairies are,’ but often they would say, ‘No, I don’t believe fairies ever did that.’

“So at length they agreed to take me into Fairyland, and we set out together. After a while the town was left behind, and we came into fields, and in due course to a wood, where the children led me to a rock overgrown with bushes. Pushing these aside they showed me the opening of a cave. In the crevices of the rocks were all kinds of ferns.

“Now the names of the children were Beryl and Joyce.

“Beryl said, ‘We go in here.’ So in we crept, and I found myself in a narrow cave which was so low that I had to stoop. In a short time it grew higher and broader so that I was able to walk upright. Strange to say, it was not very dark, so that we were able to see our way quite plainly.

“Presently we came to what appeared to be the end of the passage. I saw in front of us nothing but the rock wall of the cave, but Joyce ran her fingers over the surface, and seemed to pull a knob of rock, whereupon part of the rock swung back and revealed a kind of doorway. Through this we passed, and Beryl pulled another knob of rock, which must have moved a lever, for the door closed behind us.

“We were in quite a large limestone hall, with shining pillars of stalagmite formation. These were white, and the place was lit by a kind of phosphorescent glow.

“Beryl said, ‘Isn’t it lovely!’ but Joyce said, ‘I think the pink hall is prettier.’ I was

delighted, and said so, but Joyce said, ‘There are lots of prettier places, as you’ll see. I think the palace of the Gnome King must be lovely.’

“We passed across the hall, chatting like this, till we came to an archway, which led us into a pink hall. Here the stalagmite pillars were of a soft rose colour, and I quite agreed with Joyce that this was the prettier of the two.

“Thence we passed through a blue hall. The pillars, roof, and walls were of a turquoise blue, and beyond this was a great hall of white quartz.

“‘See the gold?’ said Beryl, and, sure enough, there were veins of gold and other metals running through the quartz.

“Now, the first three halls seemed the work of nature only, but the pillars here had evidently been cut into their present shape by some intelligent agent.

“They were not highly finished, but they were evidently cut square, and not natural.

“On the left was an arched doorway, and Beryl murmured, ‘That door leads to the place where the gnomes and dwarfs live. I’ve never been there.’

‘Why not?’ I inquired. ‘We’re afraid to,’ they answered together; ‘they mightn’t let us out again, you see.’

“‘What do they do?’ I continued.

“‘They get the gold and jewels out of the earth, and make beautiful things. The fairies say they have such lovely palaces in there but we’ve never been there.’ “They seemed rather frightened lest the gnomes should catch them, so we hurried on. Roof, floor, and walls were all of the same material, but it was not always white. Some pillars were pink, and some green or blue.

“At length I saw a star of light, and, as we approached it, the phosphorescent light gave place to daylight.

“As we continued our journey I heard the tinkle of falling water, and presently found a little stream running down one side of the passage near the left-hand wall. At length we saw ferns, and in another moment were out of the cave.

“The little stream fell in a miniature cascade over the rocks into the valley below, where it formed a broad pool in a natural basin made of marble.

“A natural stairway led down into this valley, but before we went down it, we paused to admire the view.

“It was a glorious one; hills and valleys covered with trees, many of them in flower, stretched as far as we could see in every direction. Graceful ferns edged the waterfall, and bulrushes quivered in a slight breeze at the edge of the pool.

“We descended the natural stairway, and the grass was covered with all manner of wild flowers which on earth are found at different seasons of the year. Bushes, covered with wild roses, overhung the pool, and at their feet nestled violets and

primroses. A little further off, under some tall oak trees, were wood anemones and bluebells. Harebells and corn-cockles grew side by side among the tall grass of a rolling meadow, while poppies were everywhere, throwing up by contrast daisies of all descriptions, buttercups, and sharlock.

“I won’t give you a botanical list, for I have given you sufficient to indicate the profusion of blossoms.

“The air was laden with the scent of the honeysuckle and wild thyme, and I bent forward to pluck some of the former, but Joyce screamed out, ‘You mustn’t; it’s the home of a fairy.’

“Even as she was speaking something flew in my face and tweaked my nose viciously. I instinctively put up my hands to brush it off, but it flew out of sight in an instant.

“Next moment I felt a sharp prick in my ankle and then saw a tiny figure dive into a rosebud. I had hardly time to get over my surprise when I felt several sharp tugs at my hair, and next instant my hat went splash into the pool.

“‘The fairies are angry with you,’ said Beryl, ‘for wanting to pluck the flowers.’

“‘How can I quiet them?’ I began, but the rest of my speech was cut off by a fly in my nose. I sneezed, and another tiny creature tumbled to the ground. It seemed none the worse, for it scampered out of sight behind a dock leaf.

“‘Let’s sing to them,’ said Joyce, and they sang, ‘Up the airy mountain, down the rushy glen.’

“As the song proceeded the fairies ceased to plague me, and began to appear in the mouths of the flowers.

“From every harebell little figures dressed in blue appeared. Pink and white fairies nestled amid the leaves of the rosebuds, or swung on the twigs and leaves. A primrose at my feet suddenly became alive with little beings, and even the grasses seemed to have their fairy inhabitants.

“I looked at my cap, and was surprised to see gay little watermen in white and yellow liveries scrambling into it from the water-lilies. They plucked spear-shaped leaves from some of the water plants, in spite of the angry protests of little green fairies who pushed several of them into the water. But the water-lily fairies did not mind in the least. They laughed and gurgled, and climbed back into my hat, and at length, having got a full load, they began to paddle it about the pond like a boat. Perhaps it was too heavy for them, for they soon got tired of this amusement, and abandoned it when it bumped into a small rock near one side of the pool.

“I recovered it; little the worse for its strange adventure, and am not surprised that they found it difficult to manage, for they had to get on the top of the sides to ply their tiny oars, and usually fell off in the process. They were too small to see over the sides if they stood up in the bottom of the cap.

“The fairies were of almost every type and were more or less human in shape, but of the tiniest size. Some had wings, but many had not. All were dressed in a colour derived from the flowers they inhabited but often they had a little green about them, corresponding to the shade of the green of the leaves of the plant to which they belonged.

“Some, I said just now, had wings, and these were of almost every conceivable shape. Some were shaped like those of butterflies, the colouring being similar to that of their dress. Others had semi-transparent wings, like dragon-flies, which sparkled like gems, some opalescent, others silver white, red, blue or green.

“Another group were more like different kinds of flies, and later I came across the larger fairies with bat-like wings, these too being coloured red, green, and blue, and so forth, not dull brown-black, as bats’ wings are on earth.

“The forms of their bodies likewise varied enormously, although all the flower fairies were distinctly human in shape, but while some were dainty, slender, graceful little creatures, others were short and fat with rather ugly, comical faces, just like the brownies of the nursery books.

“Their clothes puzzled me a good deal, for they seemed to be partly themselves and also partook of the nature of the flowers they inhabited. But at the same time they were not part of their bodies, like the fur of an animal is, but real garments. For example, many of them had queer little caps on their heads.

“One other point. The prettier fairies were those who lived in the prettier flowers, such as the rose, while the funny little brownies belonged to the humbler weeds and grasses as a rule.

“Well, by the time the children had finished their song, the fairies had quite forgotten their earlier animosity to me, and seemed to ignore me altogether, but some had made a big ring round Beryl and Joyce, and began to dance round them, singing a pretty little song in their shrill, tiny voices, which reminded me irresistibly of the chirping of insects. But they never finished it, for suddenly three brownies came with a hop, skip and jump into the circle, and next minute there was a perfect scrimmage, which ended almost as soon as it had begun, and then the whole party dashed down to the pond and began to get into leaves and into acorn cups, in which they paddled about by means of paddles made from the leaves of couch-grass.

“Joyce shook her finger at me, ‘Don’t you ever do that again,’ meaning try to pick the flowers, and I promised humbly to remember.

“We walked towards the wood, and, as we went, my ear caught the sound of someone weeping. Looking down, I saw a violet fairy shedding bitter tears.

“Beryl said to the poor little thing, ‘What’s the matter, then?’ and the little creature answered, ‘My sister’s dead. See how still she lies.’

“We looked, but could see nothing but a dead violet.

“‘But,’ I said, ‘I can see no fairy, only a dead violet.’

“‘Yes, but the violet is dead because my sister has gone.’

“‘Can you not fetch her back?’ I asked soothingly.

“‘She gazed open-eyed at me for a moment, and then said, ‘You stupid thing! The flower is dead, so how can I fetch her back. She would have no home if I could, and, of course, I cannot.’ and at once she fell to weeping again. One or two fairies glanced at her for a moment, but none stopped to try and comfort her, they were too busy about their own amusements, and, as we could say nothing to console her, we stole quietly away on tip-toes.

‘Poor little violet!’ said Beryl, ‘I wonder where the spirits of the fairies go.’

“‘And I answered, ‘I, too, wonder.’”

He paused for a moment and then said: “Well Jack, I think I’ll break off there, for we next entered the wood which led into a regular forest, and many of the fairies there were different from the flower fairies, but you see even in Fairyland there is some sorrow.”

J.W.: “But for the most part, I imagine, they spend their time happily enough.”

R.L.W.: “Yes, in laughter and jest - irresponsible little people as a rule, and I think when they grow serious and learn what sorrow means they are on the road which leads to the earth.

“Perhaps violet, the fairy, is already being ‘born’ as a real violet on earth. If so, I hope her sister will be growing on the same root, but I wonder whether she will have intelligence enough to realise it. I asked the children, but I don’t think they understood me. Anyway, they gave me no satisfactory answer.”

He ceased, and as it was evident that he would not renew the conversation, I said good-bye, and returned to earth, wondering what had become of the two violets.

Chapter XVIII

The Battle Between the Oak and the Ash

January 7th and 8th, 1918

As soon as I had settled down, R.L.W. took up his narrative where he had left it last week.

“As we approached the wood, Beryl said, ‘Don’t trust the ash or the alder. They hate all men. Why, I don’t know. They are horrid things.’

“‘They can’t hurt us, though,’ I said.

“‘I don’t know, but we’re afraid of them,’ she replied, and we said no more on the subject.

“As we advanced further into the wood, I noticed that both the flowers and the flower fairies grew fewer and fewer.

“The light too grew less, and I became aware of strange shadows that seemed to flit from tree to tree, and glided noiselessly near us. If ever I turned round to look at them fully, I could see nothing; but if I went on and appeared not to notice them, I caught glimpses of them out of the corner of my eyes.

“After a time this began to get on my nerves, and I said to the children, ‘What are those shadows?’ “Joyce answered, ‘They are the fairies who live in the trees and the shrubs, at least some of them are, but what the others are we don’t know. P’raps they are fairies who live in rocks and streams.’

“‘Can you tell the difference between the two kinds?’ I asked her.

“‘Not easily,’ she replied, ‘they are all so shy, except the oak and the beech; they love us, and sometimes talk to us.’

“‘Suddenly I heard a voice speaking, and it seemed to me from a big oak tree. ‘Yes, I love men. Sit down and talk to me.’

“‘So we sat down under the spreading boughs of the oak tree and it continued: “‘Who are you?’ (meaning me, R.L.W.). ‘The children I know well, and have often talked with them before, but you are new to this place.

“‘So I told him briefly, and he said, ‘Ha! A warrior. I long to be a warrior and to deal lusty strokes. To beat down the evil creatures who cross my path. To help and protect the weak from those who would ill-treat them. Above all I would like to break down every ash tree I see.’

“‘Why do you hate the ash?’ I inquired.

“‘Because he is evil. Do you not hate him? You should, for he hates you, and so does the alder, and the deadly night-shade that fawns upon them. He hates the rose! Do you see how he tries to strangle her? So does the ash. I think he hates all the plants. See how they shun him. How often do you find any growing under his branches? Do you know that if any do, he drops poison upon them from his branches?

“‘He is an evil tree, and I hate him.’

“‘Can’t you come out of the tree and talk to me more closely?’ I asked. “He laughed a jolly, blustering laugh. ‘I will, my young friend.

“Next moment, in front of us, stood a tall, strapping fellow. He reminded me of the statues of young Hercules rather than those of the Dryads, as I expected would be the case. But instead of a lion skin he had what appeared to be a cloak of leaves matted together, but draped very much as one might drape a skin around one’s body. One shoulder and breast were bare, as were his legs from half-way above the knees. In his right hand he bore a heavy club, and his head was crowned with oak leaves, with acorns in place of jewels.

“He swung his club lightly in the air, and shouted for joy. The muscles of his arms and thighs stood out like ropes, and he towered over me.

“I stood up so as to get some idea of his size, and he must have been at least nine feet high, and broad in proportion.

“Suddenly his face grew set and stern, and he swung sharply round and sprang into the open. I looked in the same direction and perceived at once the cause of the change.

“A tall, lanky being was gliding towards him. Not so tall as the Oak, being about seven feet six inches high, yet it’s very thinness made it appear taller than it really was.

“It was a dull grayish-white in colour, whereas the oak was ruddy red-brown. It had excessively long arms, which hung well down below its knees, and which, like the rest of its body, were long and unpleasant-looking.

“But its face! It was like that of a dead corpse, save that its eyes were almond shaped, and set at an unnaturally acute angle. Its mouth was floppy and shapeless, more like the mouth of a leech than of anything human. It was naked save a loin cloth of ash leaves, and these told me what it was, even before I heard the frightened whisper of the children, ‘The ash! The ash!’

“He held in his hand a spear made of a pointed ash stake, and I noticed his hands, which were almost as bony as those of a skeleton, had nails like the talons of a bird.

“Suddenly I heard a shrill unpleasant voice call out, ‘There they are, master,’ and I perceived that there followed the ash; like a jackal follows a tiger, a repulsive little beast who, I knew by instinct, was the spirit of the deadly nightshade. It was not more than three feet tall, and more like a spider than a man. It was an ugly green, not the pretty green of grass or oak leaves, but a most repulsive colour difficult to describe. Its body was small, with purple and yellow patches, but its arms and legs, which were out of all proportion, were green. It could not walk properly, but sprawled and shuffled along, often using its hands to help its progress. It had orange-coloured eyes in its small, misshapen head, and in its hands carried a lariat of green tendrils and stalks woven together, and evidently made from the trails of the deadly nightshade. At intervals this lariat was decorated with bright scarlet beads.

“Neither of the great protagonists had spoken as yet, but now the ash cried out in a harsh, grating voice, ‘Give them to me, all three of them. What right have they here?’

“‘Give them to you!’ roared back the oak, in a perfect paroxysm of fury. ‘If I once get a chance, I’ll smash you to pieces, and your miserable servant too.’ Without another word he sprang at the ash.

“Seeing a fight about to take place on our behalf, I sprang at one of the boughs of the oak which sheltered us, and tore off one of its boughs. The latter came away readily

in my hand. It was not rotten, but a stout piece of wood. Rather it seemed as if the good tree gave it to us willingly. Rapidly I broke off the twigs, and found myself with a stout cudgel about three and a half feet long in my hands.

“I then looked at the two spirit trees, for all this had taken but a moment to do. The oak struck at the ash, who nimbly leapt aside and as he did so, smote at the oak. The latter’s club had struck the ground harmlessly, but the spear of the ash hit the oak full on the right breast. His robe of oak leaves, however, seemed like a cuirass of steel, for the point of the spear glanced off harmlessly.

“The oak recovered himself, and aimed a smashing blow at the ash, who caught it on his left arm, and gave an agonizing howl. The limb seemed to be broken, but at the same moment there was a flash of scarlet and green, and next instant the brave oak was caught by the lariat of the deadly nightshade. The rope was too wide to hold on his shoulders, but slipped and tightened round his arms and chest, preventing him striking again, as the little green beast pulled it taut.

“At once I dashed in to the rescue, despite the frightened shrieks of the children.

“Now the deadly nightshade was defenseless, for his lariat was round the oak, but the ash saw the danger, for he ran to meet me with his spear raised to strike. I struck it aside, and we passed each other not a foot apart.

“I turned at once and landed the nightshade a stout blow on his left arm, which he had raised to cover his head. The blow sent him sprawling, and he loosened his grip on the lariat.

“I heard a roar from the oak, and knew that he was shaking himself free of the green rope which bound him, but I had not time to look in his direction, for the next moment the ash was on me again, and I felt a sharp pain in my left thigh. He had transfixed me. For a moment I saw his baleful, evil eyes gloating over me, then heard a sickening thud, followed by the splintering of wood, and the gray shadow seemed to burst.

“The good oak had struck home, but I had no time to see anything further, for the next instant the long arms and bony fingers of the deadly nightshade were about my neck, trying to throttle the life out of me. I don’t suppose he could have done it, for, after all, I am an astral being, not a fairy, and so not amenable to their laws, but in any case, there was no opportunity of settling the matter, for next instant the little brute was torn from my throat, and I saw the oak holding him in the air by one of his legs.

“He squirmed and wriggled like an eel, and in his struggles tore the oak-leaf crown from the giant’s head. I tried to struggle to my feet, but the spear, which was still in my thigh, prevented my doing so.

“The next moment the deadly nightshade was dashed to the ground, but one of his arms, still holding the oak’s brown locks, was torn from its socket and hung dangling

idiotically in the air.

“But the little green brute seemed as if made of rubber, for he bounced up again, and raced off into the forest far faster than I should have thought possible. His remaining arm was broken, and his right foot, with which he had torn the crown from the oak’s head, was still entangled with it. This proved his undoing, for he tripped and fell sprawling. In an instant the oak was upon him. The club flashed in the air for a moment, and descended with a thud. There was a squashing sound, difficult to describe, and soon there was only a heap of green pulp.

“Finally, the young giant stamped on the remaining arm, which had fallen from his head at last, and then returned to me.

“He drew the spear from my thigh, and was loud in praise of my heroism in coming to his help, but I could not respond appropriately, for I felt sick with pain. It seemed as if there was some poison in the wound. On realising this, the oak said. ‘Let us go back to the beech tree. She will soon make you well.’

“The two children, who appeared badly scared, joined us, and as we went I looked for the remains of the ash, but could see none except a few scattered leaves, which must have once formed his dress.

“That was a great fight!’ said the oak, joyfully. ‘There will be one less ash in the forest now. I wish I could kill them all at one blow, but there are so many.’

“At length we came to a noble beech tree, I limping painfully.

“Ho! Lady Beech. May we have some of your leaves to dress this young hero’s wounds? He helped to slay the ash and the deadly nightshade, but the ash has wounded his thigh. Give us your leaves to heal it.’

“And the beech waved its boughs, as a soft, gentle voice murmured, ‘Take them. Poor lad! I hope he will soon be well.’

“So the little girls plucked bunches of leaves, and made a poultice of them, and as soon as it was laid on, my wound ceased to pain me. While this was being done, the oak related to the beech all that had occurred, and when he had finished, and my wound was dressed, she said, “Let him rest under the shelter of my boughs, and I will talk to him, and soon his limb will be healed.”

“So we all three rested there, but the oak went back to his tree, singing lustily. “But I think you have been here long enough, so I will break off here.”

At which I (J.W.) said good-bye, and departed.

Chapter XIX
The Beech Tree

January 14th-15th, 1918

As soon as I had greeted all three, R.L.W. began:

“We sat under the beech tree for some time, while the lady of the beech talked to us and told us many strange tales of the doings of the alder and the ash. According to her story there was an unholy alliance between these two. From what I could make out, it was seldom that human beings ever came their way, though they were filled with a deadly hatred of mankind, and so for the most part they vented their spite on the flower fairies and on the weaker trees, such as the elder.

“One part of the beech’s conversation I will give you in full.

“Some of us at times descend to earth, while still retaining our fairy powers, and dwell there for a season. Some of the ash and alder spirits do this, and while there are ever ready to work their evil will on any wayfarer. But of course, this is our real home, until the time when we depart to return no more.’

“How many orders of fairies are there?’ I (R.L.W.) inquired.

“Many, many orders. How many I do not know, but these are some of them:

“The flower fairies;

“The gnomes, who dwell in the earth, and delve for gold and gems;

“The tree spirits;

“The Spirits of earth, air, fire, and water, generally.

“The fairy folk; and above all, the high fairies.’

“What do you mean by the last two types of fairies?” I (R.L.W.) asked her. “She seemed troubled at this question, and the boughs of the tree waved mournfully.

“The high fairies are - the high fairies. I do not know how to explain what I mean so that you can understand me. They are above all other fairies, and even I have seldom seen them.

“They are so, oh so beautiful and bright, and their colours are ever changing! Perhaps you will see them. Then you will understand. As to the fairy folk, they are much like men, and live in houses and cities, and have kings and queens to reign over them. If you journey on beyond the further edge of the forest, you will doubtless come to them.’

R.L.W.: “And where shall I see the fire fairies, and the others of earth, air, and water?”

The boughs rustled as if she were laughing, and she replied. “Why, they are everywhere. Every stream, on earth, as here in Fairyland, has its water sprite. Many

of the gnomes are earth spirits, though indeed, there are greater earth spirits than these. As to the fire spirits, they are the servants of the god of fire and do his bidding." I started at this, as you may well guess.

"Is there, then, a god of fire?"

"Yes, of a truth, and many other gods. Did you not know it?"

I hesitated, and said, "No, I thought there was only one God."

She waved her boughs, as she answered softly. "There is but one God, yet he works through many gods and spirits and men and animals. He shows His power and His majesty in all that is or was or shall be. For all that was is, and all that shall be was, and in Him all things are."

A great stillness passed over the forest now, and it was some time before I plucked up enough courage to ask her, "Is He in the ash, then, and the alder?" "Yes, truly, even in the ash, who, doubtless, has his work to do."

"But what is the work of the ash?"

"Nay, I am but a poor beech tree, or the spirit thereof, as you like. How then, can I know what is His intent? But doubtless it is good."

"But what has happened to the spirit of the ash whom the oak slew?"

"That I can tell you. He has passed down to your earth, and even now a young ash tree is growing somewhere in which he dwells, but after that has perished I cannot tell you what will happen to him, but certainly his spirit will not perish. And as to the spirits of the air. They, too, are everywhere. In the air which you find on earth, but also elsewhere, according to their station they have their part in the Universe. Man is not the only spirit, either on earth, on this plane, or the next."

"So," I said, "you know of what we call the spirit plane?"

"I have heard of it," she replied, "but know little of it."

She ceased, and at length I rose and signed to the children, but before we went I said to the lady of the beech tree, "Will you not show us yourself? We have heard your voice, but have not seen you."

"Here I stand!" she cried, and there, at the foot of the beech tree, stood a beautiful lady. A little taller than human she seemed, but perfectly proportioned, and I noticed her hair fell almost to the ground. It was brown in colour, and she wore a green robe, exactly the colour of the beech leaves, but shot here and there with delicate threads of bronze. Her face I cannot describe to you, but it was very beautiful.

"Good-bye, and beware of the alder. She, too, looks fair - at first." And so saying, she vanished as suddenly as she had appeared.

I turned to the children. "Shall we go further into Fairyland?"

Beryl at once said, "Yes, do let us. It is so nice here, isn't it?"

So we started on once more.

“But now you must return to earth, Jack.”

So I returned.

Chapter XX

The Fairy Folk

January 21st, 1918

As soon as I saw R.L.W. he continued:

“We journeyed on, seeing various fairy forms flitting past us in the forest, but we saw no sign of the alder. As we went, we came to the splintered fragments of an ash tree, and Joyce said, ‘That must have been the ash which the oak killed.’ Near it was a crushed and broken deadly nightshade, and I knew that the child was right.

“On we journeyed, until we came at length to the edge of the forest, and passed out into smiling fields, where I saw little houses, and further off, across a river, a city with shining domes.

“Not far away was a castle; yes, a regular medieval castle, and clustering round it were cottages. We went towards this castle, and were suddenly stopped by a shrill, piping voice, and, looking round saw a queer old woman standing at her door. She was dressed in an old-fashioned dress, such as one sees in the pictures of nursery tales of the old crone.

“I turned to her, and said in my best fairy-book style, ‘Good-morrow, dame!’

“‘Where do you come from, and where are you going?’ she asked, promptly. “‘We are mortals, or were mortals,’ I replied, ‘for we are dead, and now are exploring Fairyland.’

“‘Yes, I can see that, but how did you get here? That’s what I want to know’ she inquired sharply.

“Joyce explained briefly, and she then said, ‘Well, as you are here, I suppose you deserve to be here.’

“‘What is your name?’ I inquired.

‘I haven’t one as yet, but someday I shall, I expect, when the children discover me, but so few of them believe in fairies now, and so only those who have already been discovered long ago when everybody believed in us have a name. Perhaps you will teach these silly mortals that there are such things as fairies, after all.

“I promised to do so, and she went in, saying as she did so, ‘I should call at the castle, if I were you.’

“We reached the castle without further incident. It was surrounded by a broad moat,

and on a tree, opposite the gate, hung a silver horn.

“Blow the horn,’ said Beryl, ‘and let’s see what will happen.’

“I did so, and immediately the drawbridge sank down till it rested one end on our bank. The barbican rose, and soon a knight, clad in silver armour, on a white steed, rode across to meet us.

“Greetings, friends!” he said, courteously. “It is long since I saw any wanderers from the earth. Welcome!”

“Who are you, sir?” I inquired.

“I am he who was sung on earth as Sir Gareth, and the Lady, my wife, is none other than the Lady Lyonesse. Sir Gawaine and the Lady Linet dwell in yonder castle, and there are many other of the same goodly company.’

“But,’ said I (R.L.W.), ‘I thought that you were either real men who lived long ago, and to whose names these tales had become attached, or that you were inventions of some poet.’

“There you were wrong, young sir, for I, at any rate, am as you see me, a fairy. And the deeds of which they sang on earth were wrought in Fairyland. Truth it is that some of the deeds which were done here have become attached to men who once lived on earth, as did King Arthur himself, but even so, though King Arthur was a man, yet much whereof they sing was done not by him, but by that other King Arthur who dwells here still, and who gained his name from your King Arthur.

“But as for me, no deeds of which they sing of me were ever done on earth. Yet were they truly done, only they befell here in Fairyland. If but in those days earth and Fairyland blended so that it were hard to distinguish between them. But tell me truly didst ever hear that I had a son?’

“I shook my head, and he smiled. ‘In Fairyland the children are not born as amongst men folk, and therefore it is that King Arthur had no son - in the story. But enough of this, for it must strangely puzzle you.

“Enter my hall, and the Lady Lyonesse will greet you well, but bear in mind that half of my adventures have not yet been told on earth, and belike they never will be told. For today men grow old and say adventures interest them no more. And, indeed, there are many nameless knights in these parts who, I fear, will never receive a name.’

“How, then, do you receive your name?’ I inquired, wondering.

“In this wise: When a poet writes a song about us, it is because his spirit has entered Fairyland and seen or heard of what befalls there, and he gives to the knight whose adventures he relates a name, and henceforth that knight holds that name, and some knights have several names. But sometimes the nameless knights grow weary of waiting for the poet who comes not, and descend to earth, and Fairyland knows

them no more.’

“We entered the castle, and, passing into the central hall of the keep, were received by a fair lady clad in the costume of the time of Edward IV. This was the fairy Lady Lyonesse. After the ceremonial greeting, I ventured to ask her how it was she wore the costume of that period, and she answered, ‘I have lived in the pages of many writers, but in none better than in those of one who wrote in the reign of that monarch of whom you speak. But, indeed, I have many changes of raiment, and it chances that at this present moment I wear this one.’

“Then I asked the knight several questions, and he told me many tales which, if I were to tell them all to you, would fill your book and make it appear to be an old-world romance, and not an account of life beyond the grave.

“So we stayed there some little time, and at length I asked him if he could direct me to the high fairies.

“Thereupon he summoned one clad like a wizard of the olden days, and gave us into his charge, and we made ready to depart.

“Even as we were bidding them farewell, there came a messenger. ‘Up, Sir Knight! The dragon is awake, and you must go out to do battle against him.’

“I would greatly have liked to stop and see the fight, but I felt it would be but a repetition of many medieval romances, and not of much practical use to you, so we said farewell and departed.”

Chapter XXI The High Fairies

“We went on for a long way across the countryside in company with the old magician.

“At length he spoke: ‘My children, those whom you seek are seldom seen by mortal eyes, and I know not whether I do well to take you to them. Nevertheless, you have come a long journey and I think have proved yourselves worthy of so great an honour.’

“Now you comprehend the laws of the astral plane, in which portion of it think you that Fairyland lies?”

R.L.W.: “In the sixth division.”

Wizard.: “That is so, but the high fairies dwell in the seventh division, in the land which borders on the spirit plane. Thither they too may pass, under certain conditions. The reason why they, and they alone, can enter the spirit plane, is that they have aided man on earth, and thereby won for themselves a different road of salvation.”

R.L.W.: “How comes it that you alone of all I have met in Fairyland know of the

astral plane, or at least, know it so well?”

Wizard.: “Because I was once a man, and like yourself, strayed into this strange country. Learned in many curious and forgotten sciences am I, and finding this a congenial spot in which to stay, have remained.”

“Then I (R.L.W.) told him what I had learned as to the nature of fairies, and he confirmed it. Thus talking, we went gradually on till suddenly we came to a river.

“Across it was a bridge, but its entrance was guarded by a dragon.

“The strange beast had the head of an eagle, the body of a snake, and the legs of a lion, and great dragon wings sprang from its shoulders. It spread these out to bar our way, and spoke:

“By what right do you claim admittance?”

“The Wizard answered. ‘In the case of the children, by their innocence. In the case of this warrior, in that he seeks knowledge. And in my own case, because I possess the requisite knowledge.’

“The Dragon answered. ‘The right of the children I recognise, but not that of the warrior. As to your claim, stand forth and prove your knowledge.

“Then the Wizard bent down and drew strange symbols and circles on the ground, and he made the double triangle and the pentacle. Then standing in the midst he spoke strange words and pronounced a name, and the dragon bowed his head in awe, and said, ‘Enter, ye three, but not that other.’

“Then I (R.L.W.) pleaded hard to be admitted for a brief space, and I promised to return, and explained why I was so particularly anxious to see the high fairies and tell you all about it. At last the Dragon said, ‘You others may enter. Go to the house of the king, stand before him, and make supplication and it may be your petition will be granted, and be permitted to enter, see, and return.’

“So the others went over the bridge into a city which gleamed like gold, and whose domes seemed to be made of gems. Here I lost sight of them, and felt very lonely with nothing but the strange-monster to keep me company.

“It was a long time before I saw Beryl walking across the bridge. Beside her was one of the most beautiful beings I have ever seen. Though neither so big nor so large as my guardian angel, he seemed to belong to that order of beings rather than to the human species.

“He was clad in a kind of golden mail, which flashed and glittered, while from his shoulders a mantle hung, thin as gossamer, which in the sunlight, was continually showing all the colours of the rainbow.

“His face was not only strikingly handsome, but bright and radiant, and on his head was a helmet, with a dragon as its crest. ‘The king bids thee enter to see what lies herein and to return!’ he cried.

“As he spoke, the Dragon drew aside, and I joined Beryl.

“We passed swiftly into the beautiful city, through broad streets lined with trees in full blossom-peaches and nectarines, oranges, and countless others.

“At length we reached a splendid palace, which at first sight appeared to be made of gold, but on closer examination I found it was made of no material I knew. The nearest thing I can compare it with is silvery morning mist solidified, and reflecting the golden sun. It was ever changing in colour, now gold, now silver opalescent, and then it would run through all the colours of the rainbow. It was neither opaque nor transparent, but rather between the two, and never for an instant did it remain the same. Its shape, however, was permanent, but its colour and texture, never. Dome upon dome, and tower upon tower, it rose, with courts and turrets and balconies - an ideal fairy palace, nowhere to be found on earth.

“We passed through spacious halls, each more splendid than the last, till at length I joined the others before the throne of the fairy king and queen.

“So dazzling was his face that I could hardly bear to look on it, but when he spoke his voice was so sweet and musical that all fear left me, and a great peace stole into my soul.

“Stranger, seeking knowledge, ask, that I may answer.’

“R.L.W.: ‘Sire, who are you, and these beautiful fairy folk I’ve seen in this city, and how is it they dwell in the seventh division of the astral plane?’

“The king answered, ‘Long ago I was one of the fairy folk, such as those you have just left, and so were we all. I dwelt in a castle, and did deeds of glamour, and hoped that a mortal would one day proclaim them to the world. But one day I fell into a strange trance and dreamed of earth and the sufferings of mortals, and their follies, and I saw how foolish were their griefs, and how easy it would be to relieve them.

“And when I awoke, I pondered over these things, and it grew upon me that the life I lived was aimless and empty, since it was but glamour, and there was neither real sorrow nor sin, but only make-believe. For evil was only potential, but there it was real. Here the triumph of the good knight was always assured, but there it was uncertain.

“Then I set out towards the confines of Fairyland, and turned my back on the pleasant vales. I journeyed through the dark woods, and came at last to the cave where the gnomes dwell. These would have bidden me stay, but I heeded them not, and at length I came out into the astral plane, of which you know. But lower and lower I went, seeking sin and suffering, just as you men folk flee from them, and on the astral plane I worked for a while; but as I knew not earth life, I found my efforts of little avail.

“So at length I reached the earth plane, and wandered unseen among the sons of men till the sorrow of the world ate into my soul and grief for its woe overwhelmed

me.

“Yet try as I would, I found I could do little to help mankind, for I was not of their nature. Till one dread day I stood on a hill near a city men call Jerusalem and I gazed in the faces of three who were crucified. Then He in the centre saw me, though the rest saw me not, and He spoke these words:

“O spirit of air, who knowest not the love of man, draw near.’

“And I drew near, and said, “I have sought suffering and grief that I might be able to aid men folk. Thou, who seemest to be the King of Pain, bring pain to me.”

“And He smiled. “Thou hast asked a hard thing, yet shall it be given unto thee. Wrench forth the nails which fasten My hands and feet, and set Me free.”

“Then I arose and strove to grasp the nails, but couldn’t, for they were material, and I immaterial. And as I strove my utter helplessness filled me with a new sensation, and it was grief. For, strive as I might, I could do nothing to help that gentle sufferer.

“And the grief grew to an intensity of pain which is indescribable.

“Then again He spoke. “It avails not, thou canst not help Me, and yet in the striving thy request has been granted. Go, and My love for man go with thee.

“Then the vague desire to help man grew into a burning passion, and I went from the spot and strove to help them. And now it seemed that I was changed in spirit, or I comprehended their griefs and also how to help them.

“So I comforted the heavy-hearted in the dark watches of the night, and I guided the erring ones into the safe road. I strove with the wayward, and warned the foolish till my work was accomplished. Then I came back to the fairy folk, and told them what had befallen me, and many others, following my example, went forth likewise to earth, and some there be who are even now labouring, and others there are who rest from their labours with me in this fair city, and yet others there are who are here and have passed on to the spirit plane, for there are many roads, and the same path is not used by all. Yet it seems to me that though for us the life on earth will not be needful, it will yet be necessary for us to dwell on one of the less material planets, for though I have learnt to suffer, yet have I never learnt to die, and I think none can become perfect till that experience has been endured.’

“He paused for a moment, and then continued: ‘I am wise, wiser perhaps than men folk, and the lore of this realm is an open book to me, and if it were for thy good, I would gladly reveal to thee much wisdom. As, indeed, I have done when on earth but the simpler lessons are for thee, my son, and enough has been said already for, of even that which I have told thee, much will appear a mystery. Only remember that without suffering there is no completion of soul and without love there is no peace.’

“Then his fair queen spoke, and what she told me corresponded very closely with what the king had said. In one point, however, it differed strikingly, for she learnt suffering through the anguish of a woman whose love forsook her for another.

“When she had finished, the king of the high fairies told us that, if we wished we could return by a different route, which would enable me to see the seventh division of the astral plane allotted to men. I, he explained, must pass quickly through but the children could remain there as long as their progress entitled them to do so. As to the Wizard, he left us, and returned to the fairy folk.”

Here R.L.W. stopped and I left and returned to earth.

Chapter XXII

The Seventh Dimension: The Vales Of Paradise

February 4th, 1918

I sped rapidly to where R.L.W. was awaiting me, and after greeting all three, asked R.L.W. to continue.

“The king placed us in charge of another fairy messenger, who took the children and myself out of the palace by a different gate from that by which we had entered.

“We passed through wonderful gardens and parks, across open country, past other cities and palaces, till at length we came to a high wall which seemed to me made of amber. In this was a gateway and the gate appeared to be made of ivory, with hinges and locks of gold. There were sentries on duty, and one who seemed to be the captain of the guard unlocked a postern, and we passed through. We turned round as the gate closed, and I at least expected to find that it had vanished; but no, it was still there.

“We were accosted by a sharp command: ‘By what right do you enter these vales by the ivory gate and gold?’

“I handed the inquirer a letter from the king, and while he read it, I took note of him.

“He was plainly an ordinary astral man, not a fairy, the difference was unmistakable, but he was far more advanced than I had seen any in the sixth division.

“A faint blue aura played about his head, at times seemed to flash from his fingertips, but, otherwise, he was much as we are. But here and now, I think, I ought to say that, whereas on all other divisions of the astral plane I found both good and bad mingled together, in this seventh division they were all advanced beings, and, as we learnt later from H.J.L., from this division they usually passed direct to the highest division of the spirit plane, and never to anything below the second division.

“When the warder of the gate had read the letter, he summoned another attendant, who led us along a broad grass road through open forest glades, till we came to a wonderful garden which seemed to stretch for miles and miles.

“Amid the gardens, surrounded by trees and covered with roses and other flowering creepers, were numbers of little cottages.

“Into one of them he took us, and introduced us to an elderly couple who lived there, and who told me their life-story.

“It was just a simple story of duty done, and two souls knit together in genuine love and affection. After death they had come straight to the seventh division, and had seen nothing of the other divisions of the astral plane. There they awaited the passing onto the spirit plane, not without, however, a certain amount of trepidation since they feared they would have to separate.

“I (R.L.W.) told them all I had learnt from H.J.L. about the spirit plane, but as I felt sure they would go to the highest division, of which I knew least, I felt it was not of much real value to them.

“I asked how it was that they had not been separated by death, and the old lady, for they were both over sixty, replied, ‘When I died, my husband was so broken hearted that he died within twenty-four hours. My spirit had been waiting near him trying to comfort him, but as soon as he emerged from his physical body we went away hand in hand to this place, led here by two beautiful angelic beings whom we often see here, and who are, I think, our guardian angels.’

“They were a delightful pair, but as I found they knew little about even their own division, I asked the messenger to take me to someone who did.

“As he was leading us away, he said, ‘That pair are characteristic of many in this division, which is a place of rest, of meditation, and refreshment, preparatory for the more active life which will recommence for them in the spirit plane. In short, this is the meditative division of the astral plane, and as such you should always consider it. Nevertheless, there are active souls who devote themselves to other interests, and I am now about to introduce you to one.’

“We had now reached a city, beautiful and unlike any in the other divisions. ‘This city,’ the messenger said, ‘is not the astral form of an earth city, but one raised here. See how it is done.’

“A building was being erected by a large number of men, under the guidance of one whom I can best describe as the architect. There were curious machines at work, which appeared to be drawing the astral elements out of the air and converting them into building material, but in certain cases I noticed that the same process seemed to be carried out solely by the exercise of the will-power of some of the workers. They appeared, however, to have some set formula, similar to a magical ritual, and the messenger told me that these rituals were to assist the operators to concentrate the mind.

“The material was generally moulded into the required forms by the will of the sculptor, but I noticed some preferred to use ordinary tools. In short, side by side two entirely different processes were going on, one in which astral matter was being changed in form by astral tools, and the other in which the will alone was sufficient to change the form of the astral elements.

“I asked why it was that all did not use their wills for this purpose and he replied, ‘Even here all men are not equal in spiritual development and will-power. Only those who have achieved considerable strength of character are able thus to affect matter, even astral matter, and therefore the others are obliged to adopt these other expedients.

“I asked the architect the purpose of the building, and he replied, ‘It is to be a university for the study of science. There will be laboratories, lecture rooms, and so forth. Our object is twofold. (1) To learn still more of the secrets of science, and especially of the nature of astral matter, and (2) to endeavour to inspire men on earth to devote more study to the astral elements enshrined in the physical, whether organic or so-called “inorganic.” We intend that pure research and applied science shall go hand in hand, although in most cases different types of men (astral men he meant) will be required.’

“We then left the new building, and entered a picture gallery, attached to which were numerous studios. Here the astrals similarly fell into two groups, some drawing their colours by will-power from the astral elements, or, as one artist put it, from the sun, and the others who had to use more mechanical means to obtain their paints.

“In no case, however, did they use the astral form of paints which had originated on the earth. They told me several times that such paints were lacking in lustre, fire, and vitality; and to prove the point, one woman showed me a painting she had brought from the sixth division, and placing it beside a picture she had finished in the seventh division, pointed out the subtle differences.

“Briefly, the first seemed dead, while the other appeared to be alive, to change from minute to minute. It had a strange light in it and ripples of light seemed always to be passing across the picture.

“The messenger took me to a place where beautiful clothing was being woven. For the most part this was done by machines which drew the raw material from the atmosphere and converted it first into threads, which shone with a lustre more like fire than silk. These threads were afterwards woven into beautiful fabrics, many of which had an opalescent effect, and changed in colour under the influence of the light, as they were moved about or worn by the inhabitants.

“Many other things I saw. I listened to wonderful concerts; saw beautiful statues; heard splendid poems recited, and so forth. But before ending my brief account of this region, I must tell you of the only note of sadness which I struck.

“I came across a young man and woman, and somehow knew they were not quite happy, so I asked them why, amid such pleasant surroundings, they were not happy; and the woman replied thus: ‘When we were on earth we had a strange delusion that to have children was gross and material, and therefore, though we were married so that we could live together without causing a scandal, yet we remained continent. Now we know we have missed the experience which the Supreme Being intended we

should have. Never can I hold my own child in my arms; never suffer, that it might be born. We are incomplete, both in the lesser and the greater degree, and we know it, and are ashamed. If only I could undo that foolish act, if only to have one child to lavish my mother-love upon, I should be intensely happy, but it cannot be. Too late we have discovered our mistake, and all through eternity we must go on with that chill-hunger unappeased.’

“And then the man spoke: ‘Yes, I know what you are thinking: how foolish we were. Yes, yes, and yet, if ever two souls loved each other we did, but we know now that just as it is folly to allow the physical love to outrun the spiritual, it is equally wrong to allow the spiritual love to despise the physical. For, when we are on the physical plane we ought to comply with the laws thereof, which can be done without in any way degrading the spiritual. But man is always immoderate in all things. Some try to be too spiritual before their time, and others are too gross. So we suffer for having failed to comply with the physical laws when under them, just as we should now suffer, in another way, were we to defy the laws of this realm. Our one hope is that in due season, we may be allowed to return to earth in a new incarnation. Do you think this possible?’

“And I (R.L.W.) replied, ‘I cannot say for certain, but I think you will not yet, but in due course, for I am inclined to think that most of us here are not yet sufficiently evolved to pass into the higher planes of pure spirit; but, of course, I cannot say for certain.’

“So I left them, and the messenger took us to a house where the children (Joyce and Beryl) met those from whom they had been parted for a long while. I left them with deep regret, and went on alone with the messenger.”

But now I (J.W.) felt the earth pull, and so we separated

Chapter XXIII

R.L.W. Returns to the Sixth Division

February 11th, 1918.

On my arrival at the house where they dwelt, R.L.W. at once resumed his narrative.

“The messenger then took me through more gardens, past stately colleges and fine cities, till at last we reached a wood. The wood developed into a dark forest, and by degrees the ground rose into a chain of mountains.

“When we had climbed these for some time, we reached a narrow gully, and proceeding up this came to where it arched over and became a cave. As we penetrated deeper and deeper into this all light failed, but the messenger, who still accompanied me, seemed to shed a faint soft light which enabled us to pick our way amid the rocks and holes.

“Gradually I became aware of soft musical notes, at first pleasant, but by degrees these became harsh and strident, until they rose to a horrible clamour, unlike anything I had ever heard before.

“I turned to the messenger and inquired the meaning. ‘These are the last elements of passion left behind by those who have entered the seventh division from the sixth. Often the traveler wanders amid these caves for a considerable period, for until these elements of carnal passion are left behind he cannot find the way into the haven of peace which lies beyond them. Some, indeed, are so terrified by the noise of their own passions that they turn back and re-enter the sixth division. You are going the reverse way, and therefore obtain a strange distorted effect.

“The clamour grew fiercer and wilder, but we pushed on, till suddenly daylight appeared, and next moment we were on the brink of a precipice. There was only a narrow ledge, and beyond it was a deep ravine, impossible to scale. On the other side was a fairly well marked road, winding out of sight amid the foothills, but how to cross was the problem that puzzled me.

“I noticed that all along the opposite bank were the remains of what were obviously the beginnings of various bridges. Some even overhung the ravine for a considerable distance, but none reached far enough for me to be able to spring on to them.

“The messenger explained. ‘Every soul must build its own bridge if it wishes to enter the last division and meditate in peace. No one can use the bridge built by another. See, over there is one who is hard at work.’

“Sure enough, a woman was slowly building out a bridge across the ravine. I watched her for some time. Again and again portions of masonry fell away, but still she persevered.

“‘She will complete it in time,’ the messenger said.

“R.L.W.: ‘How was it I was able to discover that other route via Fairyland, and how was it the children were permitted to stay after coming by that route instead of this?’

“The Messenger. ‘There are other routes besides these two, but the one you now see is the most usual one. You were able to enter Fairyland because there is still in you a great deal of the child nature, but because of your other nature you could not remain in the seventh division.

“‘You were permitted to visit and return that you might fulfill the task which you had set yourself of informing the world of some of the conditions of life beyond the grave. This is a task which the “enlightened ones” approve; but now it is for me to assist you to return.’

“So saying, he began to make strange passes, and as he did so a bridge grew out from our side of the ravine and touched the other side.

“Farewell! he said and I hastened across. On turning round I perceived it slowly fading, and next moment it had gone. For one instant he stood there looking towards

me. I saluted, and then he turned into the mouth of the cave and was lost to view.

“I slowly and painfully picked my way down the rough path, till after many turns and twists it led out into open country. In due course I worked my way back into this city, in which I now am.”

He ceased, and H.J.L. spoke. “I think now you have a fairly good idea as to the general conditions of life on the astral plane. In any case, as much as you will be able to publish in a book. Therefore I think we had better revert to friendly meetings only. These will keep open the door, please us, and at the same time prevent you being overburdened with matter.

“In due course, if you wish, we can make further investigations into the higher divisions of the spirit plane. I shall return there soon for I must again take up my work of preparing myself for passing on to the second division.”

Mother then spoke. “I seem to be spending rather a useless life here. I must find something to do, and I think I shall devote myself to the children. There’s quite a number here, as Rex has discovered, though at first he did not realise it. I love children and, from Rex’s account, I can see that the path to the seventh division through Fairyland is pleasanter and more suitable than the other route. Of course, it’s not open to us adults, but I can see how I can help. I shall tell the children fairy tales, and particularly about the real Fairyland. So many children have lost all belief in the fairies, and will otherwise merely grow up as ordinary men and women on the astral plane. Well, if I can start them on this journey through Fairyland into the seventh division, as did Beryl and Joyce, I’m sure I shall be doing a useful piece of work, and I shall enjoy it too. I always loved children.”

Then I rose, and, after bidding them good-bye, returned to earth. Since then we have met each Monday for mental recreation but as most of it is of purely private interest, I have not recorded it.

Chapter XXIV

The Armistice in the Astral Plane

November 15th, 1918.

On visiting R.L.W. and mother on the astral plane, I was surprised to find H.J.L. and the Officer there. The former told me he had come down specially from the spirit plane because of the armistice. I first inquired how he was getting on in the spirit plane, and he told me he hoped to pass to the next division before very long. I then asked the Officer and Rex to describe the effect of the armistice on the astral plane.

The Officer: “Well, we knew that it was coming some time before, of course, because the battle between evil and good powers in the lowest division has been going all in the favour of the good powers. But one word of warning. The evil powers are not yet beaten. They are shifting their ground, but before long they’ll break out elsewhere.

On earth, it will take the form of anarchy, as in Russia. But it won't stay there. Germany will have a good dose of it; so will Austro-Hungarian. She'll split up. Italy may also have a touch of it, too, if she's not careful. In fact, this armistice, of which you think so much, will be followed by risings all over the world, India and Egypt, for instance.

"This whole period is going to be fairly uncomfortable, I'm thinking. Still, the first stage is past, but I'm keeping my organisation going, and shall make it more international. Try and help the poor devils who are coming over from Russia. Talk about Hell! They've made a fair imitation of Hell on earth there.

"A peculiar thing about the evil powers is they can never make a stable government. Sooner or later, they always relapse into a state of anarchy, whether on earth or in the astral plane. Another thing, anarchy doesn't mean liberty or democracy. No, fear! It means tyranny, as in Hell.

"However, I don't want to damp your pleasure. The armistice has brought a big drop in the number of newcomers, though this spell of influenza had kept up the flow fairly well. Still, we haven't attempted to do much there. Got our hands full with soldiers.

"We had great rejoicings among the soldiers. Processions and all that sort of thing. Let them work off their excitement. Had some trouble with those who wanted to have a drink to celebrate the event, and all that sort of thing. Now we are beginning to settle down, though. The men are quite enthusiastic about the Russian idea. So we were quite despondent when they thought they'd lost their job. "A lot of the Russians of the worst sort are very difficult to deal with. Shall have to be fairly drastic, I think."

J.W.: "How did you get the news?"

The Officer: "The thought form sent up from almost the whole western world was so powerful that we could not fail to be aware of it. Actually, I became aware of it the instant it was signed. The thought form of the people actually involved reached me.

R.L.W.: "There were services by dozens in every church, and we had a church parade at headquarters. The Officer excelled himself, but ended up with: 'Remember, there is no armistice in the fight between good and evil. Neither in the fight which goes on within ourselves, nor in the greater struggle which is always raging. It shifts its ground, but does not disappear. Today the organised force of Germany has perished; tomorrow we shall have to deal with the evil wrought by anarchy. Our work is not done, but it will be different. Yet, since this chapter is closed, let us rejoice.

After more conversation of this sort, we drifted into discussing private matters, and in due course I left them.

Chapter XXV

Conclusion

April 20th, 21st, 1919

On arriving at the house where they dwelt, I reminded R.L.W. that this was the third anniversary of his death. He smiled, and said, "Then it is a good point to wind up this work on which we have been engaged. You see, we are all here tonight."

H.J.L.: "Next Monday I want you, Jack, to be present at my passing onto the second division of the spirit plane. I am ready, and my guardian angel has agreed that it should wait till then."

So it was arranged accordingly.

The Officer.: "I, too, am returning to the spirit plane. My guardian angel has agreed that I have done good work here, and must return now to the spirit plane, so our young friend (R.L.W.) will be left alone. I have made all arrangements for my organisation to go on doing its work. For it has still plenty to do."

Mother.: "As you know, I've been busy with the children. Several little bands have set out into Fairyland, and as they haven't returned, I think they must have reached the seventh division.

R.L.W.: "I've made up my mind at last to help someone I hated. I've discovered a chap whom I really disliked. He was a fellow-officer, and my guardian angel agrees that he is a suitable person, so I hope before long to get to the seventh division, if no higher."

Suddenly we were aware of a celestial presence, and slowly my own guardian angel appeared. The light dissolved everything, even the bodies of my companions grew faint and vanished, and I could see only him. His face, more radiant than the sun, seemed to absorb me into him, and I cried: "What would you?"

Then, like the notes of a splendid organ, these words pealed forth. "Your work on this plane is, for the time, finished. Give forth the message and the knowledge to the world. For the world is in travail, and much sorrow lies before her, as well as behind, ere she enters the haven of peace. For a new age is being born, and a new order arises. Old faiths perish, and only He the unknown remaineth immutable. But out of sorrow cometh forth joy, and out of war ultimate peace.

"For all things are of set design, and though the souls of men are ever moving forward, there is no stagnation or decay, but out of corruption arises incorruption, and out of death, life. Though darkness encompass the earth, yet the dawn is at hand and the new day shall be better than the old, for even the high power tremble at the might and the glory of the Supreme."

He ceased; and I fell amid the clash of warring worlds and the tumult of elemental chaos.