

GONE WEST

PART (NARRATIVE) TWO
FROM

“THREE NARRATIVES OF
AFTER-DEATH EXPERIENCES”

COMMUNICATED THROUGH
THE MEDIUMSHIP OF
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LATE SCHOLAR AND PRIZEMAN
OF TRINITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE

PART / NARRATIVE II

“THE OFFICER”

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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 NOR PITY NOR RUTH.
TO THE MEN WHO HELD THE BREACH
IN THE HOUR OF BRITAIN'S NEED

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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 spirit communication.

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 off 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 look 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 recognised 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. 20, 1807, was Sheriff of Nottingham and a colliery manager at Babbington, near Notts. He died June 21, 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 endeavour 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 labour 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.

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 endeavour to obtain it, but wish it to be plainly understood that I do not mean thereby that I will endeavour 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.



EXTRACTS (Re. "THE OFFICER") FROM PART I

SOME INTRODUCTORY REFERENCES TO "THE OFFICER" FROM PART I
DURING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN J.S.M. WARD AND H.J.L.

PART I, LETTER 2

H. J. L. "I have come. Learn as much as you can on earth and so save delay afterwards. Now about myself. That man I spoke of (*The Officer*) 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 demeanour 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 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?

PART I, LETTER 3

H. J. L.... "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."

PART I, CHAPTER V

THE OFFICER

Jan. 31st. AT SHEFFIELD

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

.....

H. J. L....“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.”

J. W. (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."...



PART / NARRATIVE 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

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 splendour. 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 more 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 fellowmen, 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 endeavouring '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 jeweller'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 VIII

THE EMPEROR.
A THEATRE IN HELLTRANCE CONVERSATION WITH "THE OFFICER"
THE PRESENCE OF H. J. L.

March 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 favourite 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 favourite 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 theatre’ 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 theatre. We had walked some distance, and here the buildings seemed fairly modern. The theatre 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 neighbour, 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 theatre 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 signalled 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 theatre 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 theatre. 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

TRANSE 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 endeavour 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 neighbouring 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 honoured 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 reuniting. 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 endeavoured to do as much damage as possible to the houses and people we met. While we tortured and made slaves of the latter, we endeavoured 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.

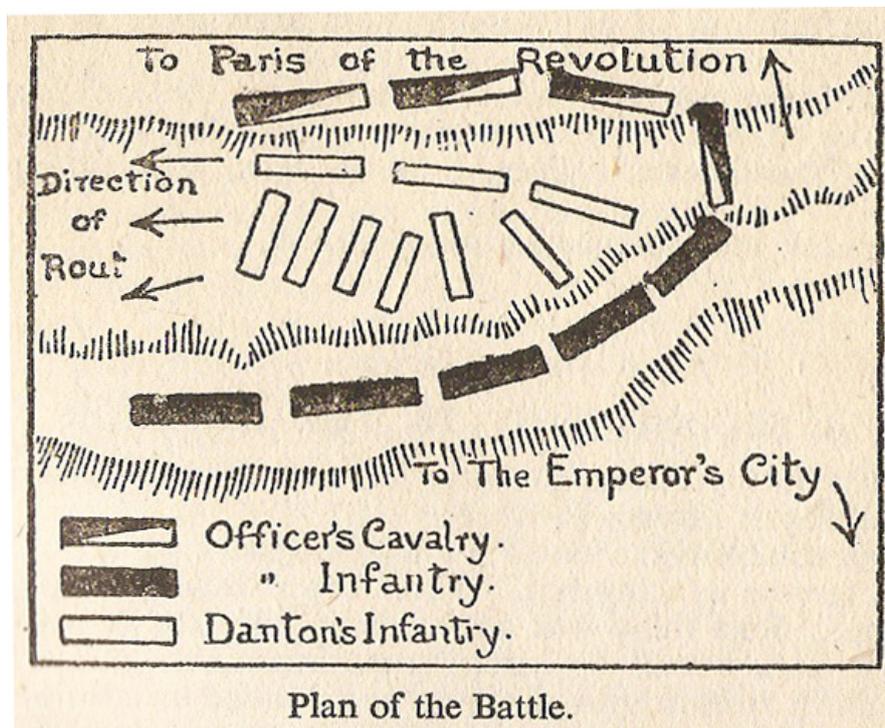
“The plain between the two ranges was covered with what appeared to be wounded and dying men, and the screams of anguish rose even above the roar of the guns. I

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.



“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 splendour, 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 theatre 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 coloured 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 moulded 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 rumours 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 dishevelled 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 colour 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 will 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 screens 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 endeavoured 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 scree, 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 reconnoitring 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 theatre. 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 centres. 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 neighbouring 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 endeavours 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 favourite 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 neighbouring 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 neighbouring 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 harbour.’

“‘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 neighbours 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 neighbours 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 labour here), have the messengers come seeking the lost? Long before Christ came down to earth there were spirits labouring 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 revellers 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 favours 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 chimneys 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 neighbours, others, mostly women, were criticizing the clothing of their neighbours. 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.’

“I (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 centred 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 neighbour 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 theatre, 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 theatre. 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, vapid 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 centre 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 honour 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 favour 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 popish 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.”

