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THE LAST CROSSING

Gladys Osborne Leonard

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GLADYS OSBORNE LEONARD



The Last Crossing by Gladys Osborne Leonard.
First published in 1939.
This ebook edition was published by Global Grey.
This book can be found on the site here:
globalgreyebooks.com/last-crossing-ebook.html
Global Grey 2025
globalgreyebooks.com

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Chapter 1. The One Thing We Fear

THERE is one thing in Life that the majority of men and women fear. One inescapable, inevitable event that each one must face. We cannot guard against it. We may perhaps delay its coming and gain a brief respite, but eventually we have to face it. Indeed, it is probably its inevitability that appalls us, because man instinctively desires to put off the unpleasant or fearful thing as long as possible. There are some people who regard-as Blake did-our human lives as only a "mortal stage of which death happens to be a part." Yet even these more fortunate ones may feel some qualms about that last journey into the Unknown, either for themselves or for someone whom they dearly love.

Who can blame them? Death, as we have known it, is shrouded in mystery, which man instinctively hates and fears. His whole life, from childhood through maturity, is spent in endeavouring to simplify and clarify whatever problems daily existence may bring. Consciously and subconsciously he resents mystery, and as far as possible he only comes to grips with what appear to him to be normal events, such as a career, marriage, the coming of children, holidays, etc. Even illness is looked upon as an ordinary happening in most people's lives, because there is usually present the belief in recovery, and resumption of every-day life again in a comparatively short time.

Holidays are prepared for joyfully; even great changes, such as setting out on a long journey to some far-off country where we will begin a new career under entirely new conditions, are viewed with equanimity, because, as in sickness, there is always the probability of a return to old friends and circumstances.

But Death-that dread word-seems to be an ending to all the known and accustomed things-to work, to love, and interests. So, many of us avoid all reference to it-all contemplation of this strange and terrifying phenomenon.

Even to those who believe that "death is a door with two sides-and the other side of it belongs to immortality"-shrink from certain aspects of death. For themselves, the fear of long-drawn-out suffering which may cause them to be a burden and trouble to those whose task it is to care for them, or in the case of someone who is near to them-a husband or wife, a dearly loved relative or friend-there is the terrible heartache occasioned by watching the suffering, and perhaps the struggles, that precede the actual transition, combined with the feeling of helplessness to relieve their distress.

As R. C. Trench says:

*When we are doomed to stand inactive by,
Watching the soul's or body's agony,
Which human effort helps not to make less-*

Well, we feel then we would give anything in the world to be able to do something that might help that dear sufferer to relinquish his hold on the tired-out physical body, quietly, normally, and peacefully.

Medical science provides us with merciful physical aids for intense pain, but there are many who shrink from the use of morphine and similar drugs, either from moral scruples, or because they have found by personal experience that these drugs, far from acting as a sedative or pacifying agent in their particular case, are worse than useless, because they excite and irritate. These unfortunate cases may be comparatively few and far between, but

personally I have known several such, and it is in the endeavour to make the act of dying easier that I am going to give some information regarding very simple methods that I found helpful in cases where drugs and medicines failed entirely. Indeed, so simple is one important treatment that some people may doubt its efficacy. There is an underlying, but as yet little understood scientific reason for its use, as I shall endeavour to show later.

In addition to the purely physical side of death, there is the spiritual and mental aspect, and we can give help to the one who is preparing to face this great change, so that he can meet it with peace, and even joyful interest.

We can enable ourselves to rejoice that our dear one is being released from the limitations of the physical life; we can be glad that he is doing so, providing we know or understand something of that new condition of existence which he is about to enter.

In order to provide such information as I can give on these two important aspects of the case, I am drawing principally on my personal experience, and also from some first-hand experiences related to me by other people which support and substantiate my own conclusions.

Chapter 2. Our Two Bodies

TWO thousand years ago St. Paul said "There is a physical and there is a spiritual body." Today many eminent scientists are beginning to accept the existence of this second body as a proven fact, and some among them have demonstrated its existence beyond all shadow of doubt. Witness the Kilner Screens (invented by the late Dr. Kilner), which enabled many ordinary persons to perceive the existence of the ethereal or astral body more or less clearly.

In the past many names have been given to this second body, such as the Soul body, Etheric body, Astral body, Mental body, even Fluidic body, but for the purpose of this book I may refer to it by any one of the first three, because these seem to be the names that are most commonly used and understood at present. Whatever name one may call it by, it is the body which the soul (and under this heading I am including the mind and individuality) will inhabit when it is separated by death from the physical body. What exactly are the constituents of which this finer body is composed it is difficult to say.

Some authorities say it is fluidic, being composed mainly of water or moisture of some kind, just as our physical body is made up of 70 per cent of water.

Others say it consists of a system of magnetic stresses. Probably both are right, and the actual "material" elements of the etheric body are watery substances animated or energized by the electro-magnetic stresses, and controlled by thought, which is simply mind in action, whether it is operating in the etheric or physical brain.

There is no doubt about its existence. The trouble is, we know so little about it and its functions and possibilities. Through personal experience I am convinced that the study of this second body opens out a new and wonderful field of research, and that in a few years' time we shall understand much more about it, and stand appalled by our previous ignorance on the subject. It is imperative that we realize, firstly, that we possess an etheric body, secondly, that it is possible to use it here and now under the right conditions (and it will be well for us seriously to study this point, so as to ascertain as far as possible what are the right ones), and thirdly, that we can and should develop our conscious minds on the purest and finest lines, because by doing so we are forming character and personality, which persist after physical death, and undoubtedly determine our place and position in the Hereafter.

Even in these present days of rush and strain a surprisingly large number of quite normal and ordinary type of people are aware of the existence of this etheric body. During sleep they consciously leave the physical body and travel in the etheric, sometimes to far-away places on earth, when they may visit some friend who is in need of help; sometimes to other planes of existence where they see and commune with those who are "dead, and have left their physical bodies permanently.

For evidence in support of this statement, one of the books I advise you to read (if you have not already done so) is "The Projection of the Astral Body," by Mr. Hereward Carrington, where many instances are given of the conscious use of man's ability to leave his physical body, and function in the etheric. It is not a power given to the chosen few and denied to others. It is common to all, but many have not contemplated the possibility, because to them it seems such a new and staggering idea that their minds reject it as impossible.

I am convinced that it is mostly a matter of practice. Undoubtedly it would take some people longer to accomplish than others, just as it takes them longer to demonstrate many other quite normal faculties in the course of everyday life. On the earth plane we are held back from

much we should like to do through lack of necessary material means-money, physical strength, time, and opportunity, etc., but in the etheric world there are no such obstacles. It is a field of adventure open to all who have the will and sufficient desire and enthusiasm to penetrate beyond the limitations of the physical.

Here a vital question arises: Is it safe to venture into this unknown territory?

Personally, I am sure it is safe if we undertake the investigation in a sincere desire to know more about our real selves-our infinite possibilities, so making ourselves of more service to others in our own daily existence on earth, then I am sure we are protected by the very purity of our motives. An unselfish desire for knowledge as a step to true progress cannot lead to anything but good.

Are we not struggling to know God, to realize Him and His wondrous works? And is it not feasible that we shall learn more about Him, and draw nearer to Him by learning more about ourselves, our two bodies, the physical, which often baffles us in the daily struggle for self-expression in the earth life, and that lesser-known vehicle, the etheric body, in which the soul dwells, and through which we can make a more conscious and definite link with that Infinite Source of Supply, which is always available, could we but reach out to it?

It is a fact that the nearer we draw to the final dissolution of the physical, the more likely we are to become spontaneously and naturally conscious of the etheric counterpart. This happens in many cases when the individual has never heard of such a possibility-never read about it, or been in the slightest degree interested in the subject. As the physical body loses strength, the etheric body gains it. This action is automatic, but the process can be, and often is, greatly assisted if those around the dying person realize this fact. There is no doubt that the whole process of death can be made considerably easier in every sense by a recognition of the existence of the etheric body and its needs, during the difficult period of transition and separation from the physical, with which it has been associated for so many years.

Death can be made a peaceful and even beautiful transition from one phase of existence to another by a right understanding of a few simple laws. It should be a natural discarding of, and complete withdrawal from, a no longer needed outer garment, and not the distressing and disturbing spectacle it sometimes is.

In saying this one must eliminate certain cases of violent death.

It is almost impossible for the onlooker to say what occurs and what does not occur in the minds of those who pass to the Other Side in such a manner, but from certain information received super-normally, as we call it, from such cases after the transition, we gather that they know very little about it at the time. In any case, nothing could have been done for them because of the suddenness of such a death, so we must confine ourselves to understanding what can be done to make conditions easier in the cases of death from ordinary illness or old age.

Chapter 3. A Way Of Escape From The Web Of Life

THE etheric body can and does manifest independently from the physical body during the lifetime of the latter. Many students of the occult have attained the power of projecting the etheric body consciously and voluntarily. They can visit distant places, and bring back a more or less perfect memory of whatever they have seen or heard. In some cases there is corroboration of this, because they have been seen or heard themselves by someone in the place they have visited. It is claimed that with practice anybody can “travel” in this manner. Again referring to Mr. Hereward Carrington’s book, “The Projection of the Astral Body,” Mr. Sylvan Muldoon gives numerous instances of his ability to project his soul and body at Will, and asserts that after finding out that it was possible to do it, he determined to experiment with a view to doing it voluntarily. This he did, with great success. Whether such constant practice of exteriorizing the astral body would be beneficial or otherwise, I cannot say, because I must admit that I have never been able to produce such a phenomenon at will. Such experiences have usually come to me spontaneously and unexpectedly. Until comparatively recently I had not tried for any length of time, as my life was too full and busy, and such attempts as I had made have been spasmodic and at long intervals, probably because I had read some thrilling and convincing description of such feats, but I always met with complete failure, and returned to my usual work and pastimes with the feeling that these were my jobs, and that the conscious projection of the astral- or etheric-body is best left to those who have circumstances, time, and inclination to carry out a really persistent study of it.

Since my husband’s passing, which took place two years ago, I have had more personal incentive to investigation of the etheric world and I feel that I have had sufficient personal evidence of the existence and powers of the etheric body to justify me in setting forth my experiences in this book.

The incentive that spurs me on to do this is the feeling that once we accept the evidence of the existence of this second body, we are well on the way to an understanding that we possess a vehicle through which our minds can function after death.

The materialistic man of science and the atheist maintain that when the death of the physical body takes place, the brain dies with it, and so the mind must die also) as it no longer has a vehicle to work through. Now, the etheric body is similar in all respects to the physical body during the earth life, and for some time after death; it possesses a brain, just as it has arms and legs, ears, eyes, and lips. (When I state “for some time after death” I do not mean that I think this second body ever dies, or ceases to exist, but I think it may undergo certain changes in the course of time. As the soul progresses and attains to higher planes of existence, I think the etheric body may become finer, ever tending toward a more perfect state of development.)

This etheric brain makes a far better and easier instrument for the mind than did the physical brain, because it has not the disadvantages of the grosser physical conditions to weight and harass it. Bodily fatigue, frustration, ills and woes of many kinds, combined with the continual struggle for material existence, in themselves adversely affect the brain, and have a tendency to prevent the mind from turning upwards to more spiritual and uplifting subjects, because of the necessity of focusing on the troubles of daily life.

As Whittier said: “Through every web of life the dark threads run,” but as we grow more conscious of this second body, and of the possibility of occasionally escaping from the

clogging conditions of the physical, we shall endeavour to spread the knowledge that will enable anybody who desires to do so, to spend a certain time in consciousness of higher and happier planes through actual astral experience.

A definite knowledge of this Other Body, which we possess here and now, and of the Other Life awaiting us, would help us through many a dark patch in our earthly lives, during which we feel inclined to say:

“Is this the way, my Father?”

“‘Tis, my child;

*Thou must pass through this tangled, dreary wild
If thou wouldst reach the City undefiled,
Thy peaceful Home above.”*

“Is it a peaceful Home above?” I hear someone ask. Yes, it will be for those who have passed through “the tangled, dreary wild with patience and a good heart, recognizing the truth that:

The ills we see

The mysteries of sorrow, deep and long,

The dark enigmas of permitted wrong,

Have all one key;

This strange sad world is but our Father’s School,

All chance and change His love shall grandly overrule.

(The italics are mine, but alas, I do not know who wrote these words, so cannot acknowledge their authorship.)

Just as schooldays are not all dark or dreary, but are enlivened by holidays, happy visits to relatives and friends, which are in themselves a glimpse into, and a promise of, the greater freedom that will be ours when “schooldays” are over, so will our daily lives be illuminated by the thought that the real world is around us now.

As E. S. Hooper said:

I slept, and dreamed that life was Beauty

I woke, and found that life was Duty.

Was thy dream, then, a shadowy lie?

Toil on, sad heart, courageously,

And thou shalt find thy dream to be

A noonday light and truth to thee.

My own personal experiences of that Other World and the reality of the Other Body have been so real and definite that I feel impelled to pass them on to my readers, and if retailing them is a “noonday light” to even one struggling or sorrowful soul, I shall feel it was well worth while recording them.

Chapter 4. Decay And “Whole-Ness”

SO many of us have watched the slow, insidious oncoming of incurable disease, its relentless attack on the defenseless mortal body of someone who is dear to us.

Now, according to eminent Medical Authorities, there is a curious similarity between the processes through which the body passes in youth and in old age, especially with regard to certain diseases and symptoms, such as senile convulsions and infantile convulsions, senile eczema and infantile eczema, to mention only two illustrations of the many disorders that beset an individual at both ends of his physical life.

In babyhood, his constitution has not yet attained its full vigour; in old age it is losing it.

The processes of decay are gradual, and do not affect all the structures of the body in the same way at the same time. In some people (and I feel sure that temperament plays an important part here) they begin much earlier than in others.

Changes take place in the bones, the muscles, the heart, the blood-vessels, and the vertebrae.

All these various forms of decay are gradual and progressive. Death may appear to take place suddenly from apoplexy, heart disease, etc., but it is the termination-not the disease itself-that is sudden. The encroachment of disease may have been going on for years without the patient or his friends being aware of its existence, but in addition to many of these physical changes we find that the mental faculties to some extent share in the general deterioration. Irritability, loss of memory, and its accompanying tendency to reiteration, suspicion, and a bad-tempered attitude toward those who are in their immediate vicinity, are among the many distressing symptoms that one may see in an individual whose nature in earlier life has been the reverse of the unhappy characteristics that he now exhibits.

Thus, on the physical side-viewed medically, shall we put it?-these psychological changes are brought about by a general break-up and deterioration of the physical body, but there is another aspect of the case which has been to a large extent, if not altogether, overlooked. The etheric body plays a very important part in the well-being or otherwise of the physical organism.

Under our present condition of ignorance as to the nature and possibilities of the etheric body, its functions and activities, it is probable that we are not giving it the opportunities for helping the physical, which it is capable of using to the highest degree. We must remember that this etheric body is the body of the Soul, and within the Soul is the Divine Spark, usually called the Spirit.

The Soul should be (it certainly can be) in touch with higher vibrations of life-giving forces than are our physical bodies. Given an understanding of this fact, by voluntary co-operation with the higher functionings of the Soul, we should find that the conditions of the physical body could be acted upon, and considerably helped by, the forces of healing that would be directed upon and through it by the etheric counterpart.

I am convinced that we are losing great opportunities of obtaining help in this way, simply because of our ignorance regarding the existence of this Other Body and its importance in relation to our well-being.

Physical ill health means that the soul body is in imperfect association with the physical something has dislodged it, it may be only in the slightest degree.

Old age and senile decay result in, or are the result of, the same phenomenon. When the etheric body and the physical are in perfect association, good health is the inevitable outcome. This is what is meant by whole-ness, or wholesome-ness.

When Jesus performed some wonderful cure, He said, “Thy faith hath made thee whole.” Now the dictionary definition of the word “whole” is “in a healthy state, healed, complete, a complete system, not defective or imperfect, entire, composing of all parts, units, etc., that make up the aggregate.”

When Jesus used the word “whole” in regard to a healing He meant the word to be taken in its literal sense. I submit that He meant that He had joined two component and absolutely necessary-to each other-parts (i.e. the etheric and the physical bodies) together. When He restored an apparently dead body to life, He followed exactly the same procedure. He induced the etheric body, which had become dissociated from the physical, to return and complete the latter, so making the organism whole again.

While the etheric body was dissociated it was probably recharging itself with life-giving forces and energy, which it took back into the physical when Jesus induced the reunion of the two bodies.

Also, when he referred to the man’s faith having made him whole, I feel sure He meant something more than the man’s mental acceptance of His-Jesus’-power to heal him. We can have that kind of faith in a bottle of medicine or a box of pills. No, I think He was referring to the fact that because of his faith, the man had allowed his higher mind to operate, and when that happens, even in the slightest degree an SOS is sent from the physical brain via the etheric cord (which I have explained in another part of this book is a telepathic means of communication between the two bodies) to the etheric body. If the command for the return of the etheric to the physical is supported by spiritual knowledge and authority such as Jesus had, it results in a union of the two bodies, and subsequent health, activity, wholeness, on the physical plane. Jesus and His followers evidently knew all about the two bodies, their existence, their functions, and their infinite possibilities.

Chapter 5. When Death Approaches

FIVE months before my husband passed away, I knew that it was inevitable, but he had no idea of it, and the doctors had advised me on no account to tell him, because he was of a highly nervous and sensitive type, and though he was convinced of the reality of the After Life, he could not bear the thought of leaving me alone. The difference of eighteen years in our ages had made him feel that I was very much younger than I actually was, and he always considered I was quite incapable of managing my material life without his constant help, which he had given unstintingly, uncomplainingly, for so many years. Never had a man more thoroughly sacrificed the personal side of life to what he considered was his duty, and which no one else could have performed for me in the same wholehearted spirit. Whatever there was in his life that he had the slightest idea might interfere with, or detract from, the value of my work, he put on one side without the slightest shadow of regret. As some compensation, he had the knowledge that I should-almost certainly-never have attempted my work without him, or, having started, and finding it of necessity rather an arduous life, I might have discontinued it but for his unremitting care and loyalty in whatever I was doing. Through helping in my work he achieved a belief in spiritual things, and in the immortality of the soul, that he frankly acknowledged nothing else had given him, though his youth had been passed in a good home with good parents, and he was brought up in the usual orthodox religious teachings.

During his long, and at times painful illness, it never seemed to enter his head that he would not recover.

An unfortunate phase of his illness was that morphine and other drugs had little or no beneficial effect in easing the pain; in fact, they seemed to irritate his nerves and increase his sufferings to a very great extent. This would have made it a very difficult time indeed, but fortunately a most kind and unselfish friend, Mrs. Ethel Hodson, who lived not very far away from us, possessed the power of spiritual healing, and whenever she laid her hands on place where the pain was, it decreased almost invariably, and sometimes my husband would fall into a short sleep, from which he would awaken, very often, refreshed and free from suffering.

Circumstances took Mrs. Hodson away from the neighbourhood. How I missed her unselfish, never-failing help! Then I tried to do myself exactly what she had done, and to my great joy, found that I too could bring about a certain amount of relief, and overcome the worst of the pain, and sometimes mercifully eliminate it altogether! In other words, Mrs. Hodson to a greater extent, and myself in a lesser, were able to demonstrate the power of enabling the etheric and physical counterparts to reunite, thus inducing a state of "wholeness" again, in which pain cannot exist.

We persisted in our efforts to make the best of the conditions, but the disease ran its course. Natural sleep became almost a stranger to my husband, and with the help of another dear friend, a nurse was found to look after him at night. She usually came in about ten o'clock, and stayed till seven o'clock next morning, so that I could go downstairs and get a few hours' sleep. Anticipating, through bitter experience, the certainty of a sleepless night for himself, my husband used to put off all preparation for the night as long as possible, such as washing, bed-making, etc., so as to make the long, dark hours seem shorter.

How he hated those hours when I was not with him! Yet he insisted on my going into another room to try and rest, knowing whoever was with him would stand no chance of rest, as he

himself was so intensely restless and “nervy” at night, and needed constant attention in many ways.

The nurse had arranged to be on duty six nights out of the seven, and I was allowed to take charge of the patient again on Saturday nights, because I could get a certain amount of rest the following day, as it was Sunday, and I had no professional duties to attend to. I knew my husband would love me to be with him on that one night in each week. When he heard we had arranged it, his face lit up with pleasure, so when it drew near to the end of the week, both Nurse and I were puzzled by his very urgent demand that another nurse should be specially engaged for the coming Saturday night, but our bewilderment was ended when he confided to Nurse that he wanted someone to come in just for a short time on Saturday evenings to give him a strong injection of morphine in the hope that it might (it had only succeeded once!) send him into a heavy sleep, and thus enable me to rest. Both Nurse and I realised his utter unselfishness in making this request, as he hated and feared the effect of the drug.

So things being as they were, Nurse and I made up our minds to make the best of things for him as far as we possibly could, and always postponed, as I have said, all necessary preparations for the night until the last possible moment, which meant that Nurse washed him about 11.30, and I waited up till she had finished, and was ready to place him on to a couch while we made the bed. He was very difficult to move, and I always helped her in this task, which meant that sometimes I had to wait until 12 or 12.30 midnight, and in order to keep myself from becoming drowsy after a long and tiring day, I used to take a walk along the sea front by myself. Peace seemed to come to me on the long stretch of unfrequented promenade. Sometimes I quickly walked its entire length, which was a matter of three-quarters of a mile, two or three times, before returning home to help Nurse, and say good night to my husband.

Early in February, 1935, there seemed to have been a slight but definite improvement in his condition. Certain symptoms had disappeared, and it seemed as if there was a possibility of recovery. Nurse and I had discussed it, quite hopefully, one Sunday morning. Then a sudden weakness seemed to set in, which I hoped was only a temporary set-back, but I felt rather disappointed about it, after the plans for certain treatments, diet, etc., that Nurse and I had evolved together.

On Monday, February 11th, I went out at my usual time, about eleven o'clock, and walked up the promenade to the point where I usually turn and come back again. Just as I was within twenty or thirty yards of this point I became aware of a vague, shadowy form on my right, walking along beside me, step by step.

Then I heard a voice-my husband's voice-say distinctly, “Don't worry, little woman, don't worry.”

I was so surprised I did not answer. I simply walked the few remaining steps, turned, and walked straight back home, instead of continuing my walk to the opposite end of the sea front.

It seemed very strange to me, because, though I was familiar with the idea of these exteriorizations of the etheric body (and I was quite convinced that it was my husband's etheric body that had walked beside me, and had spoken to me), I had taken it for granted that the physical body must be asleep in order that the etheric should be able to manifest in a complete and separate manner.

Knowing that at that very moment Nurse would be washing and otherwise attending to her patient, and that he would be quite wide awake, I was very puzzled indeed.

On my arrival home I went immediately to the bedroom, and on seeing me open the door, Nurse put her finger to her lips, and signaled me to enter quietly. Coming round the corner of the screen that excluded draughts from his bed) I saw that he was in a very deep sleep—a sleep such as he had not had for a long time. So the conviction that it really had been his etheric self that spoke to me strengthened considerably.

He slept much better that night than usual, and awoke in the morning apparently quite free from pain. I said nothing to him, but after Nurse had gone away for the day, he said to me, “Do you know I’ve been out on the sea front?”

I answered, “Yes, I know.”

He said, “How do you know?”

“Because I heard you speak to me.”

“Did I?” he remarked; “I don’t remember speaking to you. I only know I was on the sea front, and I didn’t know how I got there. I also remember that I have been with other people, talking to them.”

This experience made me quite certain that my husband’s soul body was loosening its hold on the physical counterpart in spite of the recent improvement in his condition. I re-lived in memory the other occasions in which I had seen and felt the exteriorized etheric body while the individual was actually alive on the physical plane. My personal experience has proved to me that when I see the “double” of anyone I know, it is a sign that that person is going to pass away from earth conditions within a limited time. The actual period elapsing between my witnessing this phenomenon and the physical death varies considerably, the shortest time being two days before, and the longest about two years. There have been only two cases in which the interval has been so long as two years, but in both cases the individuals were vigorous, apparently healthy people of only middle age. One would have expected them to be “good” for at least another twenty or thirty years, and they were considered to be remarkably fit and well by all who knew them.

In one instance I saw two people at the same moment. They were unknown to each other, but I had known them both for several years.

One Sunday afternoon in winter I walked into a room in a friend’s house, and to my amazement, sitting on a couch, was the figure of a man whom I was expecting to meet on the Monday following. The figure was quite distinct in every detail. I stared at it for a moment, looked away, then looked back at the couch. My friend had disappeared, but a kind of misty patch appeared rather at the side of the place where I had seen him. A face built rather indistinctly in this mist, then gradually took definite shape. Naturally I expected to see the same person materialize, but to my surprise a different face built up, yet with a striking resemblance to the first one. As it happened, there were several features of a rather striking similarity, such as the cut and colour of the hair and moustache, also the complexion and the general contours of the faces were somewhat alike. Here resemblance finished, as one man was considerably taller than the other. As the second face and form took more definite shape I recognized it as belonging to a man whom I had seen that very morning, and who was at that moment enjoying a game of golf.

This form also only stayed for a moment, but it was long enough for me to be quite sure of the evidence of my own eyes.

Well, the first man died two days later, and the second one two years after. The first one was unknown to me—taken suddenly ill at the time, but the second was to all intents and purposes quite well.

On another occasion I went out to do some shopping, and while crossing a patch of waste ground, I noticed an extremely strong scent of sweet-peas. It was as if a large bunch of them, fresh and fragrant, was held close to my face. After about half a minute it disappeared. A quarter of an hour later, while looking in the window of a confectioner's shop, it came again, more strongly than ever. I looked around, with my usual caution, but could see nothing to account for it. Some derelict building land on one side, and a small bungalow with nothing in the garden except a grass plot and some ramblers and chrysanthemums not yet in bloom on the other side of the cake shop. I moved on and looked in another shop about four hundred yards from the first-and the scent came again. I racked my brains to think what the meaning of it was-because these things do not come to me often-and there is always some definite reason for their presence when they do.

I had never been specially fond of sweet-peas, but I remembered one very close friend who had a great affection for them, and on the last occasion when I stayed in her house she had filled my bedroom with them, and had also given me a large bunch to take home the next morning. We had had quite a long conversation about the merits of sweet-peas, particularly about their scent, and we both remarked that the variety she grew had an especially sweet and strong perfume. This incident came very clearly into my mind as the only one that could have any connection with my present experience, but I could not see its import at the time, as I knew my friend was alive and well.

A few days later another friend (who knew the one who gave me the sweet-peas) and I went walking beside the sea, when quite suddenly, in the midst of discussing a subject that interested us both very much, I felt my first friend beside me, and a feeling of deep depression and sorrow came upon me. So strong was it that I stopped walking, and cried out to the friend who accompanied me, "Oh! I feel that Mrs. B-- is here, and that something is happening to her; something that is sad and terrifying. I feel awfully upset. Something is very wrong with her."

My friend wondered what it could be; our afternoon's outing was spoilt, as the depressing condition did not wear off so quickly as it usually does with me.

Chapter 6. “Rolling The Stone From The Grave Away”

VERY soon after I heard that Mrs. B-- had that very afternoon been to see a specialist to whom she had been sent by a doctor. She had been suffering from what she thought were rheumatic pains, and she went to the examination quite light-heartedly. To her horror she was told that she was suffering from malignant cancer in its worst form, and that she had only a short time to live. It was a great shock, as she had relatives on the earth to whom she was devoted, and many interests and philanthropic work. She hardly knew how she got home; she was scarcely conscious of her surroundings, and some time during the latter part of the day she had a kind of seizure from which she recovered only to face the usual course of the dread disease, which she did with courage and fortitude, once the surprise and shock had worn off. Later, she passed to the Other Side, dying peacefully, even cheerfully, knowing, as she fortunately did, that “our human lives are only a mortal stage, of which death happens to be a part,” and that the promise of “rest,” which all religions hold out to the tired sufferer, is not a long and endless sleep, nor is it a condition of apathy or unconsciousness regarding those we love, either on the earth or Over There. Goethe expresses it beautifully when he says:

Rest is not quitting

The busy career

Rest is the putting

Of self to the sphere.

‘Tis the brook’s motion

Clear without strife.

Fleeing to ocean

After its life.

‘Tis loving and serving

The Highest and Best;

‘Tis onward unswerving

And that is true rest.

As I remarked before, these and other experiences have proved to me that whenever I see the double, it is either that of someone already passed over, or someone who is drawing near to doing so.

I think that in many cases the soul knows long before the physical self that the time is soon coming when it will have to depart from the earthly body and the earthly life, and as soon as this stage in consciousness is reached by the soul, a loosening takes place. The etheric body gradually begins to free itself from the trammels of the physical, and takes journeys or excursions “on its own,” as if it were trying its wings, or endeavouring to make itself familiar with the new stage of existence in which it will shortly be functioning permanently.

Many people who have studied spiritual and psychical laws are often aware of these etheric experiences, and bring back a more or less perfect memory of them when they return to the physical, but without the conscious realization of the infinite possibilities of their own soul bodies. Others may have the actual astral experience, but they don’t remember it afterwards.

I am aware that many people may have seen the etheric doubles of people who are known to them, and who do not die soon afterwards. If this is so, then I think we can trace the cause to

one of two reasons, the most likely being that the “seer” is undoubtedly the possessor of clairvoyant powers which may only function occasionally and unexpectedly, and the second explanation may be that the exteriorizer has become somewhat proficient in the art of exteriorizing his etheric body, as undoubtedly has happened in many cases.

In The Nottingham Evening Post two stories of doubles of Members of Parliament having been seen in the House of Commons were retold by a writer quite recently:

Sir Carne Rasch [it is stated] was seen by several other M.P.s in the House at a time when he was actually ill in bed. Sir Gilbert Parker has stated about this occasion: “When Rasch accepted my nod with what looked very like a glare, and met my kindly enquiry with silence, I was a little surprised. And when he suddenly and silently vanished, I put my hand to my head in utter bewilderment, and asked myself if it were possible that poor Rasch, whose illness had been reported in the papers, had died.”

Sir Arthur Hayter also saw this apparition of Rasch, and about it he said: “I am positive that I saw Sir Carne Rasch. I was struck by two peculiarities-his extreme pallor, and his un-himselfishness; and by the fact that he occupied a seat remote from his usual place.”

Some years ago, Dr. Mark Antony Macdonnell was seen in the precincts of the House by fellow members on two consecutive days, when he had not left his own room during those two days. This “spirit” also recorded a vote in the division lobby. A strange case indeed, this, for men who knew him well were prepared to swear they had seen him.

We know so little of the reason behind this particular phenomena because we have not studied the subject sufficiently. Speaking personally, I don’t think that I have developed normal clairvoyance to the extent that would enable me to see anyone’s double easily. I don’t see auras, as so many people do; it is only on rare occasions that I am blessed with this power of being able to see something that evidently lies just beyond the range of our normal vision.

I know that there is a world of wonderful beauty both of sight and sound that lies just outside our ordinary consciousness, waiting for us to take the initiative. I feel that it would be beneficial for the whole human race if we knew more-mark, I don’t say all-because we shall have to be content with one step at a time, but one step inevitably leads to another, and the higher we ascend, the nearer we get to perfect Truth. I read somewhere:

Oh, well for us all some sweet hope lies Deeply buried from human eyes. And in the hereafter, angels may Roll the stone from the grave away.

Not only “in the hereafter” may the angels roll the stone away; they will co-operate with us and do it now if we wish it. If we exert all our strength and determination to live a spiritual life here and now, we can learn of those things that are at present “deeply buried from human eyes.” They are only “buried” because we have obscured our own vision and dulled our hearing by our complete absorption in the struggles and woes of our earthly lives.

Longfellow said that “our to-days and yesterdays are the blocks with which we build.”

This is true, and if we use only blocks of a gross and material kind we shall not be able to visualise that fine and noble structure that we might be building, and if we do not accustom ourselves to an awareness of beauty around us, we cannot become aware of that which is just beyond-yet such a little way beyond-our range.

It need not be so. It will not be so in a comparatively short time, when we have increased our knowledge and appreciation of Life in its higher aspects.

Chapter 7. “Every Calvary Has An Olivet”

DIRECTLY I realized that the end of my husband’s physical life was indeed drawing rapidly to its close, I turned all my thoughts and energies to helping him to accomplish the Great Change that lay before him. The doctor and nurse had warned me that the nature of his illness would most certainly terminate in a very difficult and trying passing. Indeed, the doctor had begged me—for my own sake as well as my husband’s—to let him go into a nursing home to die, but knowing his love of home, and dislike of strange places, I felt I must keep him in his accustomed surroundings at all costs. I suspected that the doctor, in the kindness of his heart, wanted to save me from what he believed would be a distressing and exhausting ordeal. In opposition to this idea of the physical aspect of the case, I had a positive, overwhelming conviction that there were ways in which I could assist my husband; ways by which I could help him to gently and peacefully loosen his hold on the poor pain-ridden body. I prayed fervently that my mind would be receptive to the right suggestions from a Higher Plane, and that certain friends who had passed to the Beyond some time previously would be allowed to come and help one whom they knew so well, among them being two who were doctors during their earth lives. I begged them -if it were not against God’s will that they should do so—to impress me what to do both physically and mentally for my husband, and I also asked that they should help him on the Spiritual plane, both before, during, and after his passing.

I am sure that in these times of sorrow and impending separation, the two worlds—physical and etheric—draw very near to each other.

It is one of God’s merciful dispensations that a wider vision is given to us then; the way is opened, and would-be helpers Over There break through the Veil, and reveal themselves to us as Ministering Angels indeed. They help willingly and joyfully, sorry for our sadness, but glad for the sake of the one who is about to shed his physical body and join them. How beautifully George Macdonald expressed it when he wrote:

*I think that death has two sides to it—
One sunny and one dark, as this round earth
In every day half sunny and half dark;
We on the dark side call the mystery DEATH,
They on the other, looking down in light,
Wait the glad birth with other tears than ours.*

Yes, “they wait the glad Birth,” and if only we would ask for their co-operation in the right spirit, with the right motive, they would impress those on the “dark side” what to do for the patient, and what not to do.

For the first time since my husband’s illness commenced, I felt impressed to give up my professional work entirely for the time being, and to devote myself to doing all I could to co-operate in making everything as easy as possible.

Now, my husband had always been very difficult about diet and taking care of himself in any shape or form. He had been advised to drink plenty of pure water to help clear his kidneys of some of the accumulated poisons that they contained as a result of every kind of tropical disease and fever that he (as he put it himself) seemed to have had a perfect gift for contracting in his earlier years.

All forms of starchy food were bad for him, but he loved them, and refused to drink plain water. Strong tea, that had been standing sometimes for two hours in the teapot, was his

favourite beverage, sugar and sweets, extremely rich cakes and puddings of every description were the foods he liked best. So you can imagine I was not very hopeful when the first impression I was given by our Unseen Helpers was to give him plenty of water to drink. This message came to me very clearly and definitely, while my patient was dozing the day after I had seen his double on the sea front.

As soon as he awoke he asked me to give him a drink of water. To say I was astonished at such a request from him is putting it mildly, but I put it down to the influence of our friends "Over There." When I handed him the glass he said:

"They told me to drink water."

I asked, "Who told you?" but he only answered:

"They said I must drink water."

Up to that time he had enjoyed the food I had given him, but now he waved it aside and asked again for water if I did not give it him as often as he wished for it. He had never been fond of fruit, but I got some good grapes, skinned them, and took out the seeds, and gave him the pulp and juice only, which he now took eagerly. With the exception of a little weak China tea now and again, this was all the food he took.

Even if they will take it, I am convinced that the dying do not need "nourishment." To "nourish" the worn-out physical envelope which the soul is trying its best to shake off is only to create and prolong an unnecessary struggle between the two bodies. In many cases it does not even strengthen the physical, because it can no longer make use of solid food, which only clogs the system, and produces more pain and suffering.

Death should be a "letting go," and one of my objects in recording these details is to endeavour to help people to assist in this loosening process.

The administration of drugs-morphine, for instance-is simply an artificial method of assisting what ought to be a perfectly natural and easy transition from the physical to the etheric body.

Somehow I knew that my husband's passing would be easy, especially if I obeyed the impressions that came so subtly, yet so unmistakably into my mind, and the day following his surprising request for water, something happened which pleased me very much.

He had been sleeping; in fact, he was now sleeping more peacefully than he had done during the whole course of his illness, though only in comparatively short spells. As soon as he awoke, he turned to me and said, I have been in a beautiful place-a beautiful institution; do tell me who runs it; it is run so marvellously."

No description that I could give in words would in any degree convey a true conception of the joy and wonderment that transfigured his face when he spoke these few words to me. The very tones of his voice were tinged with an almost breathless gratitude. I think that the atmosphere of the place that he had visited had given him such a feeling of hope and security that he was not very perturbed at finding no ordinary explanation of the occurrence.

During that last week he went several times to the "Beautiful Institution." I longed to know more details, but dare not plague him with questions in his increasingly weak state. It was sufficient joy to me to see the altered expression of his face, and the glad tones of his voice when he mentioned his experiences. Not for a long time had I seen such evidence of happiness on his poor emaciated face, and his voice had impressed its tones of pain on my memory to such an extent that I had temporarily forgotten what it sounded like when he was really and truly happy. Now, at the time which I had dreaded for so long, all the sting and sorrow of death were alleviated.

This trying time had its compensation. It seemed as if Giles' words were true, and that Every Calvary has an Olivet. To every place of crucifixion there is likewise a place of ascension. The sun that was shrouded is unveiled, and heaven opens with hopes eternal to the soul which was nigh unto despair.

To an old friend who was one of the very few who visited him during that period, he several times spoke of these other places he had visited, and said he had been told by the people there that he was not to eat anything, but to drink plenty of water.

I have since learned that the drinking of water strengthens the etheric body, and enables it to assert itself more strongly in its endeavour to separate itself permanently from its physical counterpart, with which it is connected by an etheric cord, sometimes called "the Silver Cord," which binds it to the physical body during its period of earthly life. This cord is never severed until death takes place.

A great deal of the apparent difficulty or struggling associated with death is caused by the inability of the etheric to dissociate itself from the physical envelope.

Some people are more firmly "fixed" in the physical state than others. It is, I think, partly a matter of temperament, and of physical and spiritual understanding, but a consciousness of the existence of the etheric body, and a realisation of its powers of dissociation or separate existence would go a long way to producing the phenomenon more easily than is possible under the present conditions in which human beings are only cognizant of one body-i.e. the physical.

Chapter 8. Practical Methods Of Helping The Dying

THIS last week of my husband's earth life was not an unhappy period, yet one could not help feeling the inevitable sadness of the parting to come-obviously so soon.

There was a peace in the air which had been lacking during the long months of trying to fight pain and discomfort, often unavailingly. Possibly our efforts had held a quality of stress, which never helps to create an atmosphere of peace. Many times I repeated to myself the words:

*Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.*

Here I want to give a word of advice-advice that at one time I should have thought to have been unnecessary, but experience has shown me that it is badly needed. When the time of severance draws near, the soul and mind of the patient need absolute peace.

Very often someone tiptoes quietly into the sick-room, and holds a whispered conversation with the nurse, or whoever is in attendance. The conversation may be about the patient, or it may drift from him to other things. Whatever the subject may be, don't talk about it in the room. Go outside and discuss it. You may think the patient is unconscious, or partly so, and doesn't know what is happening. No, his conscious mind may not be cognizant, but now his unconscious or subjective mind is gradually coming to the surface. That greater part of the mind that cannot express itself through the limited physical brain is now beginning to assert itself. It is the soul mind, and because the soul is beginning to detach itself from the earthly body, the subjective or larger mind finds itself functioning imperfectly and intermittently in both bodies. Probably it functions more completely in the etheric brain and body, but until the etheric is permanently dissociated from the physical, this mind will find itself occasionally floating into the physical brain, and recording flashes of awareness as to what is happening to, or around, the physical body. At this juncture it is most important that whatever is being done or said, or even thought in the room, should be directed towards the patient to help him, and should not degenerate into a kind of trivial chatter about the patient, or any other topic. If this is allowed, he will be disturbed, puzzled, and in an effort to understand what is going on around him, his mind will fasten on to the physical brain more tenaciously than is good for it.

All our efforts should now be concentrated on making it easy for the soul and mind to free themselves from the physical.

Mind-we must not try to do it for him-that would be unwarrantable interference with the natural progress of events, but we must do all in our power to assist the patient's soul to do it for itself.

This is the chief thing we must aim at.

Well-meaning people have often taken God's will into their own hands. Their attitude toward the patient has been, "Poor soul! It's time he went. The sooner the better for him. We must pray, and concentrate on him being taken quickly-to save him further suffering," and so on.

Their motive is good, but the result is that some part of the subconsciousness is aroused that portion of it that has been labelled “self-preservation,” or “the first law of nature” and which is always fighting to preserve its hold on the physical body. It is a very strong instinct indeed, as we realize when we remember the automatic action of raising one’s arm to avoid a blow before we are consciously aware that there is anything to be avoided. The closing up of the eye to the invading fly or speck of dust. Instinct is not one of the highest attributes of our minds, but while we inhabit the earthly body it is a very strong and insistent one. When death is near, it rouses itself at the slightest provocation, just when it is most important that the soul should go on its course of freedom, peacefully, and without hindrance, so we must aim at not giving it any provocation. The detached and impersonal attitude of the professional nurse, which sometimes strikes one as being unsympathetic and cold, is much to be preferred to some of the fussy, though well-meant attentions of fond and anxious relatives.

The perfect condition-whenver circumstances permit it-would be that whoever is attending the patient should be someone who understands the mental and etheric side of death as well as the merely physical. The perfect programme of behaviour at such a time would be for this wise person to take entire charge. (Probably it would be a woman, though what I have to say could just as easily apply to a man, but for our purpose I will refer to this person in the feminine gender.)

Her aims would be to think hopeful and encouraging thoughts toward the soul of the patient. If she cannot originate them she can fall back for inspiration on some of the reassuring passages in the Scriptures, or extracts from any good book on Spiritual matters which contain references to the happier side of the change we call Death. Any thoughts she can quietly, easily transmit will encourage and assist the soul in its efforts to liberate itself. Love will give the necessary understanding.

How wonderful if we were to some day combine a course of spiritual training alongside the usual material side of a nurse’s (and doctor’s) training! I have known many women who look upon the work of nursing as a holy mission, and would welcome such a course.

As Keble said:

*There are in this loud, stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusty lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily toil with busier feet
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.*

Yes, there are many who would fain carry the “music in their hearts, and the holy strain” to all who need it, and such a possession need not interfere with the practical common sense that is necessary for carrying out what are called the more practical, mundane side of nursing. We should find ourselves more easily able to “ply the daily toil with busier feet” in consequence of our spiritual knowledge.

While we are awaiting this state of affairs-a balance of physical and spiritual knowledge in medicine and nursing-we must just do our best with the material to hand. It is wonderful how insight and intuition can spring from love, and teach the unskilled exactly what to do

Was not Longfellow right in saying:

*Ah, how skilful grows the hand
That obeyeth love's command!
It is the heart and not the brain,
That to the highest doth attain,
And he who followeth love's behest
Far excelleth all the rest!*

So if you are not skilled nor clever nor experienced, you can still do so much, so very much, to make that passing a thing of beauty and of ease if you choose. Just the same quiet, careful attitude that you would adopt to a child who is learning to walk, or to essay any new task. The average soul is exactly in the position of a child in its relation to its new life.

Remember there are other souls waiting to help; souls who are already in the Great Beyond, and are even now waiting to assist the new arrival as soon as he frees himself, Loving hands are stretched out, beckoning the tired and weary soul to a place of peace; "Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease," as Wordsworth said. We must co-operate with those unseen helpers. They long for us to do so, and if we lift up our hearts and minds in simple expectation we shall find that they will impress us what to do for the best.

"He will give His Angels charge over thee is literally true, especially in this critical period when the two states we call Life and Death draw so near to one another that for a short time we can scarcely perceive the dividing border line.

Toward the end of my husband's last week on earth I was sitting alone with him. He had fallen into one of those easy, peaceful dozes to which he had been a stranger for so long. I had given him drinks of water, put through a small filter, and very little solid food. He persistently reminded me not to press food on him, but to give him more water. This was very unlike him, because, as I remarked before, he liked food and strong tea; he disliked water by itself. I also followed my impressions with regard to not talking about him, or about other things in the room, but talking to him whenever advisable. Sometimes I just sat quietly by his side, saying nothing, but thinking to him. I am sure this is the most helpful attitude toward a dying person that we can adopt, viz. talking quietly and hopefully to him whenever it is evident that he wishes) or is able to listen, and when he cannot do so., one should choose one's thoughts carefully.

There is little doubt that the loosened soul picks up and reacts to every thought in its environment. It becomes increasingly sensitive to thoughts until the final severance, when it is usually quietly taken away by those Others who have come to help with that purpose in view.

As I sat and watched, he awoke and stretched out his hand., reaching for mine. In a feeble but distinct voice he said I have been again to that beautiful place, but I don't want to go to it without you. I didn't know I had to go there alone."

In all my life, those were the most sad and difficult words to which I ever had to listen. I sat speechless, realizing that at last the spirit friends and helpers Over There had broken the dread news to my husband that he had to go to the new and beautiful country alone, leaving me behind. He had always disliked leaving me—even for a day! And now he had been told that he must leave me and make his home alone, in this other place.

Again he spoke. "I want to stay with you. These other people are very kind to me. They are all right to me, but I don't want to go alone and leave you. Can't I stay with you, darling? I don't want to stay with them without you."

I did not know what to say. The words came pleadingly from his lips. His hand feebly clung to mine. His face turned toward me, eyes too tired to open wide, but trying so hard to look at my face, and read there the answer to his question.

A sharp, swift prayer shot straight from my heart, asking for help, guidance, as to what I should say to him. He was begging for my assurance that we should not be parted, but how could I tell him a reassuring lie? A lie, in these last solemn, sacred hours?

George Eliot's words came to my mind:

What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life-to strengthen each other in all labour, to rest on each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent, unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting?

So how could I smirch those memories with evasion or deliberate untruth? Strength and courage came back to me, and I answered, "If you have to go alone, remember it will only be for a little while.

Some day I shall go, too, and join you; and in the meantime you will be able to keep in touch with me, and I shall try and live on here in the manner you would wish.

Hold hard to the thought that even if you are going first, I shall follow you later, whenever it is the right time."

He did not answer, neither did he refer to it again.

Chapter 9. The Last Hours

THAT same evening, being Saturday, Nurse was off duty, and we had the help of a sympathetic little woman who sometimes came in for that one night each week, so that I could rest down stairs. Seeing my husband was asleep, I left her in charge, and went down to my study, where a temporary bed had been made up for me. I undressed and got into bed, but could not sleep. Quite distinctly I received the strongest impression to get up and go back to my husband—that his time was now very short, so I must make the most of every minute, and help him all I could. Against this impression was the fact that we had all been preparing ourselves for the possibility of having to wait some time longer, because of his easier physical condition. Yet, on the other hand, we felt it might be fairly soon, because of the increased weakness. I resisted the impulse to get up again, remembering that only that day the nurse had implored me to rest, and “save myself up for the time when I should really be wanted, and when I should need all my strength,” but after a few minutes’ indecision, again came the impression, just as if a voice was speaking within my brain, yet it had come from some other, outside source.

“Get up. Go to him at once; we will tell you how to help him.”

So I put on my dressing-gown, and went straight up to the bedroom. I asked the friend who attended him to go downstairs and rest while I looked after my husband; the only reason I gave was that I could not sleep. Somewhat surprised, she obeyed me, and I was left alone.

My husband slept, but not a very easy sleep. It was fitful, as if broken into by a half-consciousness of physical discomfort. His breathing was irregular and laboured. I knelt down quickly, and asked that those Spirit Helpers who were around us would be allowed to impress me with whatever could be done to help him.

As I arose, I remembered that the doctor had that day suggested to the nurse that she might give her patient an enema; it was not an instruction—merely a suggestion. Nurse, knowing how he hated it, had not given it, as she had not wanted to disturb and worry him, especially as it was her weekly night “off,” and she knew I should have to deal with any disagreeablenesses that arose afterwards. Also, as he had eaten no solid food for some days, there seemed very little necessity for it. Now I suddenly felt that I had to give him an injection, but not an enema of the usual soap and water. I was impressed to get some olive oil, and slightly warm it, and I injected about a quarter of a pint of this with an ordinary glass rectum syringe. I achieved this with no trouble whatever, and without waking the patient. The result of this injection was remarkable, and I had all my work cut out dealing with it alone. One would have thought he had been living on solid food in large quantities up to the present moment.

I must mention here that for six long, weary months he had been unable to lie on his back, or on his right side, owing to a large lump on the lower part of his spine, slightly toward the right side. It had been terribly tiring, only being able to rest on the left side all this long time. The slightest pressure in any other direction, or attempt to lie in any other position, gave him intolerable agony.

I felt my hands being drawn toward his body, and almost before I realized what it was I had to do, I was making upward passes from his feet to his head, or rather, past his head. My hands felt as if they were charged with a kind of magnetic current, which increased as I repeated the passes, which merely consisted of placing my hands, palms downwards, a few inches above his feet, and moving them steadily and rhythmically over the legs and body, and

straight over his head. At the finish of each pass I “flipped” my fingers in a direction away from his body, as if I was throwing off something from my finger-tips. Afterwards I learned that these passes were assisting the etheric body to leave the physical body more easily. It withdraws upwards, through the head.

While I was completing the passes, which only took about five minutes, I noticed that my husband’s breathing altered. The laboured, painful sound ceased. He gave a deep sigh, apparently of relief, and to my intense surprise, raised himself, as if possessed of his full normal strength, up from his left side, and deliberately settled himself on his back, a feat which, as I have already explained, had been impossible for six months.

I was so glad! It was such a relief to see him once more in this natural position. I looked anxiously for the first sign that the position was becoming painful, but none came. He just breathed easily and peacefully, and awoke at intervals when I gave him drinks of water and the juice and pulp of sweet black grapes alternately.

From then onwards his condition was one of absolute peace. I prayed over and over again that he would not again refer to the question of going alone to the Other Place, and he did not mention it. He scarcely spoke at all, but smiled slightly when I gave him the grape juice or water. Though he was only semi-conscious, it was evident that he needed water. Even when he appeared to be unconscious, and I was a little nervous as to whether he could swallow while in that condition, I still persisted, and gave the water, a few drops at a time, in a teaspoon, to which I could feel his lips cling greedily, though he was motionless in every other way. It seemed as if he could not get enough of it, and I feel convinced from my own experiences, and from what other people have told me, that the dying need water, but are often physically incapable of asking for it. Water is the one thing that the etheric body can make use of when trying to free itself from the physical at the approach of death of the latter.

The next day, a Sunday, passed quietly in this manner. One or two of his relatives came in, but only stayed a short time, so I was able to hold peaceful, encouraging thoughts over him all the time. The hours did not drag; I seemed to live half on the earth, and half on another plane, where I felt I was mentally cooperating with the Unseen Helpers who were in the room, though invisible.

I kept my patient’s feet warm with a hot electric pad, carefully regulated and wrapped up so that it could not burn, or become uncomfortably hot. Warmth of the feet, and a comfortable coolness (not cold or draught) at the head seems to facilitate the withdrawal of the etheric body, either temporarily during normal sleep, or near Death, but especially in the latter case.

Late that evening, when Nurse came on duty again, she begged me to go down again and get a good night’s sleep, “so as to reserve my strength for when it should be needed,” as she again reminded me.

I felt that the time was very near for the passing, and very reluctantly I went downstairs, and, as on the previous night, I was not surprised to again get the strong impression to return to my husband. He wanted me, I felt sure. Yet I hesitated; was I being foolish, using up my strength unnecessarily, as Nurse said? I fought the impulse to go back to him for over half an hour. Then again it came so forcibly I could no longer resist it. I arose, and went straight up to my husband’s room. I entered very quietly, wearing soft slippers. He could not see me, as there was a large screen between the door and the head of the bed, but to my intense surprise, he raised himself up on one arm, almost to a sitting position, and urgently signed to me to come near to him. He said my name, urgently, imploringly. I went close to him and said:

“Yes, I’m here. Do you want anything?”

He replied, "Yes, yes, tell her"-pointing in the direction of the nurse, "-tell her-"

"What shall I tell her?" I asked.

Even more urgently, almost frantically, his voice hoarse and strained with the effort, he again said:

"Tell her-tell her-"

His voice failed, but with his right hand still extended, he made a circular movement in the air several times. Then he fell back exhausted, but still conscious. I could not imagine what it was he wanted me to tell the nurse, so I just said:

"Never mind; whatever you want you shall have. Don't worry, I shall guess or find out soon, I feel sure."

While I was speaking, my hand went out, from force of habit, to the drinking water on the table near the bed, and I gave him some.

He drank, and immediately after gave a deep sigh of satisfaction, a long "Ah-" and the tense, anxious look was replaced by a smile of relief. I then realized that I had not impressed Nurse with the need for constant sips of water, and the explanation of the circular motion of his hand burst upon me, and I remembered that whenever he had wished for a certain drinking cup with a spout which I had lately bought him, and was very easy to drink from in small quantities without spilling, he used to say, "Give me a drink in the-you know-my-" and rather impatiently he would describe these circles in the air with his hand. So I realized that while I was downstairs he had wanted water, and had made these gestures, which had of course conveyed nothing to the nurse. For the moment I had myself forgotten what they meant. He had thought I had only come up again for a few moments, and was afraid I was going away again until the morning, and that he would not be able to get the water he so badly needed. I told him I was not going to leave him at all, and I lay down for the rest of the night on a divan in the room, but did not sleep. All night long Nurse and I gave him drinks of water. She was afraid that he could not swallow, but I felt I should quickly see when it came to that point, and she told me to get a clean linen handkerchief, and dip a small part of it in water, and let him suck it, which he did later the next day, when drinking from the spouted cup or spoon had become obviously impossible.

I had noticed that his mouth was terribly sore inside, so I thoroughly mixed equal parts of honey and glycerine together, slightly thinning them with a little water, as the cold weather had made the honey very thick, and I applied this on another linen handkerchief spread over my finger to the roof of his mouth and all round his gums. This was a great relief to him, I could see. It is important not to use ordinary rags, no matter how nice and clean they may be, for either swabbing the mouth or giving the drinking water, as small threads or pieces of cotton might come off in the mouth and cause intense discomfort.

Most of the next day he took the water and the grape juice. In the afternoon Nurse looked in as a precaution, but saw her patient peacefully sleeping, so went away again, intending to return later in the evening, as usual. Soon after she left, he woke and said distinctly:

"This is a lovely place," and a great joy spread over his face.

I knew he had just come back from the Other Place again.

These were the last actual words he spoke.

One of my husband's nieces came in about three o'clock, and sat watching beside his bed while I lay down on the divan. Curiously enough, I was not tired, though I had had no sleep

for some days, and very little before then. About half-past three we made some tea, and I again took my usual seat close to the bed. I poured out the tea for my niece and myself, but before we had finished the first cup, I noticed that a scarcely perceptible, yet definite change had come over my husband. Indeed, the change had come into the room, not only over him. What is this strange something that so many people feel just before the soul is ready to depart? Tangible, yet intangible. Mysterious, yet unmistakable, and convincing in its reality.

I realized the time had come. I knew also that he did not want to go and leave me. I talked quietly, softly, to him.

Self-consciousness, that stranglehold on so many of our natural expressions of love and sympathy, left me. I knew his niece was beside me, but I also knew that she would understand. So I told him to go willingly and peacefully to the "beautiful place," where he would be safe, and free from all pain and discomfort -to go gladly away with those loved ones who had passed through the same Gateway; to go where he would be nearer to God in very truth, and to live and wait in that lovely land which God's mercy had allowed him to visit during these last sad, yet wonderful days-that place which seems so strangely familiar, the place where we shall see the smiling Angel faces "which we have loved long since and lost awhile," that the hymn tells us will meet us with the Dawn-the dawn of a new life.

I said nothing original or brilliant to him only the same old simple truths that well up from the very depths of our being when we face the deep and real aspects of existence.

I held his hand. His features relaxed. He smiled faintly and without the slightest difficulty; not even a fluctuation in his breathing it simply ceased. I still sat on for a while, encouraging him, giving him comfort and hope, so that he would not feel that the actual and definite leaving of the physical envelope had made any difference to my consciousness of his existence. This, I think, is important. It is unwise to pour out prayer, comfort and love previous to the passing, and the moment it occurs, to break off abruptly, feeling "this is the end." Few people really think that the shedding of the physical means the end of existence. It is the idea that the end of one volume has been reached, and the next is so inscrutable and mysterious that it is impossible to penetrate any further. There are things to be done, physical, necessary things to be seen to at once. So on with other physical duties.

This is wrong. Even though love and sense of duty actuate it, it is wrong.

The first moments immediately following the dissolution should be made as helpful to the departing soul as were the moments preceding it.

Chapter 10. Fear Of Being Buried Alive

FOR a little while I must leave the personal side of my narrative, and refer to some important aspects of death, and our present methods of disposing of the physical body.

People who are exhausted by severe pain, or die as the result of an accident, or are entirely ignorant of the possibility of survival, drift into a state of unconsciousness on leaving the physical body. They probably remain in this condition while their friends take them away from the earth plane and for some time afterwards. Others may be conscious, as and after they vacate the physical, and look down at what is happening, and on the people they are about to leave. Undue grief-which is always the outcome of ignorance regarding the facts of immortality-is to be avoided, because it must necessarily agitate the one who looks on, powerless to alleviate until he is himself established in his new condition, yet knows he is the cause of the very sorrow he longs to assuage. He may be drawn back to his earthly body by his desire to help. Remember the silver cord which binds the etheric to the physical is not yet broken, and the length of this cord-or as Mr. Hereward Carrington calls it, astral cable-can sometimes be shortened or lengthened at will.

Those who have acquainted themselves with all the available evidence and facts relating to survival, and have systematically tried to live their earthly lives in accordance with Divine Law and principles of Truth, Love and Service, often find themselves conscious of all that is happening during the actual transition from one body to another, and afterwards.

However, we must not forget that the etheric body is subject to certain mental and physical laws, just as the earthly body is, and that a sudden death by accident, for instance, may give the etheric body such a shock as will render it unconscious for a time, no matter how evolved and perfect the individual Soul may be. This subjection to certain physical laws only lasts while the etheric cord is intact. There may be some isolated cases where the manner of death, such as being blown to pieces by a shell or other explosion, may immediately cut it. I have no doubt whatever that the cutting of an artery would sever the cord, and if a body had to be buried or cremated at short notice, or before definite signs of dissolution have shown themselves, it should always be done. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that it should be done in every case, not immediately after death, as we call it, has apparently taken place (i.e. when breathing ceases), but at the last possible moment, before the final rites of fastening down the lid of the coffin, etc., have to be carried out.

In the majority of cases of "death from natural causes," I believe that the cord wears gradually thinner and thinner, as the individual life and consciousness become more firmly established in the etheric body. Usually about the third or fourth day after the death (from the medical point of view) has occurred, the cord has become so attenuated, it simply breaks its last weak thread, and what happens afterwards to the physical body does not materially affect the etheric counterpart at all.

I am afraid (and I know I am in danger of arousing a good deal of controversy) that the new methods now in vogue of keeping a corpse as lifelike as possible, in order to make it look pleasant and normal to the bereaved relatives, is not conducive to an early breaking of the etheric cord. Whatever the method used, if it succeeds in keeping the physical body intact, it means that a certain amount of the etheric force is being retained. Now, the etheric cord, or astral cable, is the medium used for conveying the life force to the body during its earthly existence, and whatever conduces to the retention of this force after death must necessarily maintain the existence of the etheric cord. It cannot be retained indefinitely, it is true.

Probably it is only possible to retain it at all for a slightly longer period than would normally be the case, but however short it is, it adds to the danger that the soul may be aware of what happens in the disposing of the physical body, either through burial or cremation.

On one occasion I saw a body which had obviously been “treated” in this way, and I realised-psychically-that the soul was still connected to it by the cable. I took steps to ensure being alone with it for a time, and prayed for help and inspiration to be given me to break the cord. As I knelt, I sensed the presence of certain discarnate beings, who were obviously there to help, among them being three men who were doctors when on earth.

(I have often been told that doctors are naturally drawn to the special work of assisting in the birth of the individual into Spirit Life, just as they had often helped new lives to be born into physical life; it is very much the same process, being born into a new state of consciousness, whether earthly or etheric.)

I addressed these three doctors by name, telling them I would do whatever they impressed me to do.

After waiting a moment or so longer, I felt impelled to make the same passes that I had used in my husband’s case (before he died), and while concentrating firmly on the cord being severed, I made several passes along the body (which lay in the open coffin ready for burial the following day) from the feet towards the head, but after the first two or three movements I instinctively started them from a point higher than in my husband’s case. I found myself impressed to start in the region of the solar plexus, and continued them well beyond the head. Many authorities state that the astral body is joined by the cord to the head of the physical body. Yes, I think this is so, but from certain experiences of my own, I believe there is also a connection of some kind (exactly what, I don’t understand yet) with the solar plexus. On this occasion I was strongly impressed to work between the solar plexus and the head, as if I had to clear something away from that region, and that such a clearance would facilitate the severing of the cord at the point where it is supposed to join the head. After about ten minutes on these lines I felt a sense of relief, which I was very glad to feel, as I knew I could not stay in the conditions any longer. Already I guessed I was arousing some speculation in people’s minds as to my rather long visit, especially as I had made a request to be left alone with the body immediately I perceived that the cord was not broken.

A few days later, through a psychic source, I received confirmation of all that had been done in this case, and was also told that a well-known minister, who had passed over many years ago, whose presence I had not sensed, had also felt my call for help, and had immediately responded. The astral cord had been broken) leaving the soul free and unperturbed by whatever might happen to its discarnate physical envelope.

Several friends have told me of instances where they have had reason to suspect that burial or cremation had taken place before the etheric cord had been severed. In their opinions there had been convincing evidence that this had been the case, and for many years after, the idea had haunted and distressed them. Whether their fears were founded on fact or not, it seems to me that an obvious and simple remedy lies in having an artery cut the day before the burial or cremation.

A friend who is an eminent doctor tells me that it is a very easy and straightforward operation to carry out, so there seems little or no reason for continuing to run such a horrible risk, however slight, of being cremated or buried alive on the one hand, or of relatives bearing the agonizing, even if entirely unfounded fear that it might have been so. Any surgeon will carry out this simple act, which can do no harm if it appears to do no good, and I advise everybody to leave instructions, not in their wills, which are often left unread until too late, but in some

safe place, or with somebody who can be trusted to see that their wishes are faithfully carried out.

Chapter 11. Sorrow As An Avenue To Joy

I SOON learned that my husband belonged to the ranks of those who are immediately conscious in their new condition. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that on the one hand his etheric body had been strengthened by the continual supply of drinking water, and on the other by his belief in, and knowledge of, survival in its personal and detailed sense.

About two hours or so after he had passed, while everybody was downstairs preparing for the evening meal, I went back into my husband's bedroom, and knelt down by the side of the bed on which his body lay. It was the first moment I had had alone with him since the doctor and nurse arrived, and I was glad of the opportunity to pray that he would be helped to progress, and find his right place in the Other World, and that if it were right and helpful to us both, that he would be allowed to return to me sometimes. As I knelt there I distinctly felt two solid hands placed gently on my head. They clasped my head, and remained there for several minutes. There was no possibility of the feeling being due to some disturbance of the circulation, owing to my kneeling position. I felt the long, narrow fingers outstretched on each side of the upper part of my head, and felt sure that they belonged to my husband's hands. Often in his earth life when I had been sitting in a chair, reading or writing, he would come up behind me and place his hands on my head in just such a way.

The touch was extraordinarily comforting. After a little while I rose, strengthened beyond measure, and went about the many tasks that were waiting to be done.

Next morning I went to the local undertaker's to arrange about the funeral. It was something that had to be done, and I had made up my mind that I would do everything as normally and cheerfully as possible, but in spite of my good resolutions I could hardly refrain from remembering that I was carrying out the very last service that remained to be done for the physical part of one who was so near and dear to me, as countless thousands of bereaved people must feel in such circumstances.

So I came back a little dejectedly, I confess.

My feet lagged as I approached the entrance to my house.

I felt tired, dispirited.

I opened the gate, and closed it mechanically, and proceeded up the curving path that leads to the front door. About two-thirds of the way up, I saw my husband standing in front of me, a little to one side of the path. He was trembling with excitement. His face was alight with pleasure and joyful astonishment, as if he was longing to tell me of the marvelous things that had happened to him. He began to say something, and then apparently broke off, and looked at me as if he were surprised to see that I had been out so early in the day, and asked quickly, "Where have you been?"

Taken aback by the nature of the question, and the realization that my answer would of necessity seem strange and unnatural to him in his present state of joyful well-being, I stammered out:

"I've been to see Mr. --" mentioning the undertaker, whom he knew.

"What for?" he asked.

Confusedly and almost apologetically I answered:

"Well, you know something had to be done about things-about getting rid of your body."

He looked so bewildered at this that I hastened to explain a little more, still stupidly and hurriedly, because the purely material and “normal” reason that I had to give him seemed so extraordinarily fantastic and unreal in the face of the reality before me.

As I explained his face cleared. Brushing the whole matter impatiently aside, he exclaimed: “Oh, never mind about that old body. I don’t want the thing, but I’ve so much to tell you!”

And then something broke. The vision went, and I was left standing on the concrete path, with the nepeta border on each side, staring at the spot where he had been a second before. Gone was my depression, and in its place came the determination to “see things through” in such a way that could not possibly distress him, because I realized that my dear one had found such joy in his new, healthy body, and his new surroundings, whatever they might be, that it would be selfish beyond measure for me to think or do anything that would impair his happiness, after all the long period of suffering he had experienced on earth.

Now, I am not very often clairvoyant, so to me this was an unusual as well as a comforting experience. I told my husband’s nieces about it, and we agreed that we would undertake the funeral and all matters pertaining to it as naturally as if we were going to dispose of some old unwanted clothes that he had left in our care to be disposed of.

While I am writing these words, I cannot help feeling that these personal reminiscences may be rather boring to some people, but I can’t avoid them if I carry out my original intention in writing this book, which was to endeavour to corroborate, in simple everyday language, St. Paul’s statement regarding the existence of two bodies, and the part that each of them plays in the personal life and evolution of the individual. So I won’t apologize, but just relate to you without exaggeration or repression of any helpful detail the facts that convinced me beyond all shadow of doubt of the immediate conscious existence in the etheric body of the soul of my husband after it had discarded the physical envelope. If this happened to my husband, it also happened to yours, or your wife, or child, father or mother, or whatever the relationship may be of the one who has gone ahead into that region which to many people is a place of mystery, a rather terrifying Unknown. Yes, it is the mystery of death, and even of that which we call “life” (meaning that short period of existence which is spent on the earth-plane) which often appalls us. Canon Westcott wrote:

To live is hard; and there is not one of us, I fancy, who has not again and again been tempted to despair of life when he has dared to look upon its dark mysteries; but again, there is not one of us who has not found a great sorrow, a great disappointment, a great trial, an avenue to unexpected joy.

If we accept the sorrow, or trial, it will indeed lead us into a better understanding of life as a whole. Eventually “we shall be glad-that for a little while we were so sad.”

Of course, long before I suffered this “bereavement” I believed in the truth of survival, and had had many interesting experiences which substantiated that belief beyond all shadow of doubt, but when someone passes with whom one has spent twenty-seven years of one’s life, it is a physical break, and any phenomena that occur that remind one of their continued existence beyond the grave, are more impressive and valuable than any other experiences that one has had in a more general way, fascinating and interesting as they may have been. Probably numbers of people have had more outstanding experiences than mine, but they don’t all tell or write about them, so you aren’t any wiser! That is one of the reasons that emboldens me to speak of mine, because as someone (I’m not sure who) wrote:

*To Truth’s house there is a single door,
Which is Experience. He teaches best*

*Who feels the hearts of all men in his breast
And knows their strength or weakness through his own.*

I can't claim to know all men's strength or weakness as my own, but perhaps I know a good deal of their sense of sorrow and loneliness "as my own," and it makes me long to give them something which will encourage them to realize the essential truth of the words: "There is no death; what seems so is Transition."

Chapter 12. A Terrible Experience

MY husband died on a Monday. Each day we went in and out of his room quite naturally, to see to anything that required attention. We did not darken the room by drawing the curtains. His favourite flowers were beside him, and now and again I went into the room for a few minutes alone, and sent out a prayer to help him in his new life.

I had arranged to have his body put into the coffin at the last possible moment, late on the Thursday evening. The funeral was to be on the Friday, at Golder's Green Crematorium, because at that time there was no such place nearer to us. Also my husband had once mentioned that he preferred cremation to burial, and that he liked Golder's Green Crematorium, because on one occasion he attended a cremation there, and was agreeably impressed by the surroundings.

It was a long drive-about sixty-five miles.

In the one car following the hearse were my husband's two nieces and an old friend. We carried out our determination to be sensible and cheerful, and I don't think any of us shed a tear during the entire day. On the way, I had one clairvoyant glimpse of my husband. He was sitting on a vacant front seat in the car. Whether he then realized the purport of our errand or not, or whether he did realize it, but feeling happy and satisfied with his new condition, he did not at the time attach any great importance to it, I was not sure. He certainly appeared unperturbed, even cheerful, as if we might have been going on one of our motoring jaunts together, as in the old days.

I noticed that he was wearing a long, tight-fitting overcoat with a black velvet collar. At the time I could not imagine why he was wearing such an old-fashioned coat, but afterwards I remembered that it was a coat he wore when we first met—twenty-eight years ago. Later, at the Crematorium, a friend who is occasionally clairvoyant told me she could see my husband with me, and that he was wearing a coat which she described minutely, especially the black velvet collar, every detail of which was identical with the coat I had seen. He had been specially fond of it, and always bemoaned the fact that he had never afterwards been able to get such a good fitting one.

Though it was bitter wintry weather, many dear friends had assembled to pay their last respects to one of whom they had many happy memories. I suppose every one of them believed in survival, as did the friend, a minister, who undertook the service, and gave a most inspired and helpful address, which took away any feeling of sorrow or depression that anyone present might have been feeling.

Now, because of this cheerful atmosphere I was totally unprepared for something that occurred during the service, and in case some of my readers have not attended a cremation, I must explain that toward the end of the ceremony, the coffin, which rests on a kind of narrow bier about four feet high, slides gradually toward a pair of doors, which are timed to open at the exact second the coffin reaches them. When the coffin has passed through these outer doors, an inner pair open, and the coffin passes immediately into the cremation chamber, the outer doors closing behind it, just before, or as, the inner doors open to receive it.

Having previously attended such a service, I was quite prepared for this part of it, and attached no greater importance to it than to any other part of the proceedings.

I think we were singing a hymn when the time arrived for the coffin to slide away. As a matter of fact, I had not noticed that it began to do so, yet at the very second it must have started, I was seized with a violent paroxysm in the region of the solar plexus. It is difficult to describe, because I have never before felt anything like it, and hope I never shall again. It was as if a giant hand had gripped my very vitals, and was drawing them out, together with every scrap of life or strength I possessed.

Never shall I forget it.

It was not a mental impression of being grasped by something that pulled and drew my very life away, but an actual physical sensation of the most excruciating kind. My internal organs seemed as if they were being dislocated, and pulled out from their usual positions.

In sheer agony, yet at a loss as to how to account for it, I looked up, and saw the coffin had begun to move, and was about a third of its way to the outer doors. Still, I did not in any way connect this fact with the terrible "drawing" on my body, but as the coffin advanced nearer the doors, the internal pulling and dragging on my solar plexus became worse. I felt I was about to die. I still remember the dreadful feeling.

Hating scenes, the thought flashed through my mind, "I hope I shan't faint, and I don't want to die here, just like this-it will cause such consternation and disturbance."

How I held on to consciousness I don't know, but just as the coffin began to disappear through the first set of doors I found that I was instinctively holding out my left hand, not as one would have expected, under the circumstances, to receive help, but to give it. Apparently drained as I was of every ounce of strength, I realized that I was speaking to my husband, saying, "Hold on to my hand hard-hold on hard." Why I was saying this I do not know. At the time, I should have thought my extreme physical distress would have prevented my mind from forming any conscious thought or message, but, as I said before, the feeling was in no sense mental, it was entirely physical.

A few seconds after the coffin had entirely disappeared, the terrible sensation left me as suddenly as it came, leaving me with less weakness and fatigue than I should have expected. I then became aware that my husband stood by my left side, against the wall, and was holding my left hand, which was still outstretched. A quick, fervent prayer for help for us both went out from the depths of my being, and I was conscious not only of an immediate influx of calmness and strength myself, but in some subtle way I sensed my husband had also received help at the same moment. The rest of the day I felt quite normal, and able to take part in whatever came to hand.

The next day I received a letter from a friend who is very psychic and extremely sensitive to conditions. She had been sitting just behind me during the service, and had felt exactly the same symptoms as I had done, only in a minor degree. She said she felt impressed that the actual cremation, or any fear of it on my husband's part, had no bearing on it at all, and gave an explanation which confirmed in part one that had already been received by me, which was as follows:

Because my husband had visited the "beautiful places" prior to his death, and had to some extent become accustomed to functioning in his etheric body, which he found was agreeably free from the aches and pains that had for so long tormented his physical body, he had not dwelt upon the fact that the latter was the only objective physical link that bound him to me and to our home and earthly surroundings. Except for the one time-two days before his passing-when he said he "did not want to go without me," he had been so enchanted with the beauty of the places he had visited, that the tremendous change in his and my relations to each other, the fact that without the mediumship of his physical body he could not talk to me

at will, and share my daily experiences, and all the other mundane but happy and tangible evidences of belonging that make physical existence a full and harmonious state—all these hitherto important considerations had been ignored or overlooked. He had visited me in my room, had met me on the garden path, but it was only as he saw the casket containing his discarded physical body moving toward the cremating chamber that he realized that this—his body—had been the channel, the vehicle through which he had expressed himself to me, and I to him, for all the many years we had lived together. The realization had come to him as a great shock, just as the coffin began to move. He felt a wild impulse to “go after it,” to stop it, and, as he had always done in matters of urgency in his earth life, he had turned to me, imploring me to help.

His etheric body had “drawn” on mine, so suddenly and strongly that my etheric body was partly dissociated from my physical one, in an abnormally short time, which affected me internally. (Indeed, I am inclined to think that under certain unusual conditions, the etheric may actually leave the physical temporarily by way of the solar plexus, though most authorities on the subject maintain that it always leaves by the head.)

I may be mistaken. An alternative explanation may be that in a sudden dissociation such as this, the etheric body may “pull” on the solar plexus, though it actually leaves by the head.

All this took place in a matter of seconds—not more than a minute, I should think. As soon as he realized the undesirability as well as the absurdity of interfering with a perfectly natural and sensible method for getting rid of something that was no longer of any use to him, something that he was really thankful to be relieved of, he pulled himself together, and grasping my physical hand in his etheric one, he joined in the urgent call for help that was wrung from us both at the same moment. He, too, seemed to recover from the shock as quickly as I did, and I heard nothing more about it from that time on. Whether I got the right explanation or not, whether there is an alternative hypothesis which would appear to be a more feasible one than mine or my friend’s, I do not know. I have not heard of one so far.

Be that as it may, it was a very strange, and at the same time harrowing experience.

Chapter 13. “When The Melancholy Fit Shall Fall”

ARE not the days immediately following after the funeral strange, dull, and hopeless? One feels “neither here nor there,” one belongs neither to yesterday nor to to-morrow. Indeed, yesterday may be full of sad memories, and to-morrow -well, to-morrow doesn't bear thinking about.

To the bereaved., all the to-morrows that lie ahead of them stretch out in a long unending chain of hopelessness and loneliness. Tomorrow? No, it doesn't bear thinking about. Yesterday is bad enough, but to-morrow....

So we often turn back in our thoughts, and drift into a kind of half-dead, half-alive existence in the past, the past which has at least its memories, but the future-who knows?-will it ever again hold any experience that we can share with the “lost” loved one-anything that we can ever do again together that will in its turn become a happy memory?

To say that I felt such desolation as must come to some people would be an exaggeration. I had the great privilege of knowing that Death is only one side of the door, and that Life Eternal is on the other, but alas, while one functions in a physical world, one often reacts wrongly to the many difficult and depressing conditions that may confront one in the daily round of earth life.

Keats said:

*And when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from Heaven like a creeping cloud,
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand wave,
Or on the wealth of globed flowers.*

It was a few days after the funeral, and things had begun to fall into their usual routine again, that I had my first-and worst-”melancholy fit.” I was standing in my little greenhouse, facing a box of overcrowded seedlings, that obviously cried out for more room. Trowel in hand, I started out to carefully pot each half-suffocated plant, when the fit descended on me, just as Keats put it, “sudden from Heaven like a creeping cloud.” Out of it burst the devastating thought:

“What is the use of doing this? He will never notice it now-or will he? He lives, I know, but will he be interested in such homely little jobs as these? Half my former pleasure in doing them was because I anticipated his eager interest in, and approval of, the results of my efforts. Now, what's the use.”

I stood then appalled by the thought that never again could I depend on sharing all these interests with him, at any moment of the day I wished, as I had done in the past.

Quite suddenly, I heard a voice by my side. I recognized it as my husband's. Quietly, but firmly, he said:

“Listen. You have got to go on living. You can't cease living, can you? Then face it, and live it as well as you possibly can. Do everything well. Even this potting; it's an example. Don't forget. You must live, so live well.”

The stark, obvious truth of this struck me. I pulled myself together. Never since have I felt the “creeping cloud” to the same extent. As soon as I have seen the least sign of its approach, I remember the words I heard in the greenhouse.

Being February, there were no morning roses on which to “glut my sorrow,” but there were a few buds on the almond trees and some benighted primroses putting forth brave faces in spite of the intense cold. Yes, nature is a healer, and my advice to any bereaved soul who is in a position to do so, is to seek consolation in her—in the woods and the fields, in a garden if there is one, or even an indoor plant. Trees, plants, and all living things can and do help us to step forward from despair toward hope. Everything, no matter how humble, that contributes toward that end, should be sought after.

I have found that vases of flowers in which the water is regularly changed, and growing plants, are helpful to our etheric bodies, apart altogether from the mental stimulus we get from their aesthetic appeal to our own sense of beauty. They are actually life-giving, and I feel sure that their presence feeds the etheric body to some extent, and makes it easier for it to express itself, or function in whatever way the mind is directing it to do so. We are told that the presence of flowers or plants in a bedroom is bad, because “they eat up the oxygen.” Whether they do or not, I personally have found them of great help in all spiritual and Psychical experiences, and have derived a feeling of physical well-being from them. This may be, of course, merely an indirect result of the spiritual and Psychical benefit derived from them.

Let us not disdain help from the humblest things that aid us in carrying on with those tasks that must be done, petty, trivial as they may seem to us, who still stand under the edge of the “creeping cloud” of sorrow.

The small things! Life is made up of them. Love, happiness, sanity itself, rests on them. How true are Coolidge’s words:

*One stitch dropped as the weaver drove
His nimble shuttle to and fro,
In and out, beneath, above,
Till the pattern seemed to bud and grow,
As if the fairies had helping been.
And the little stitch dropped pulled the next stitch out,
And a weak place was left in the fabric stout,
And a perfect pattern was marred for aye
By one small stitch that was dropped that day.
One small life in God’s great plan,
How futile it seems as the ages roll,
Do what it may, or strive how it can,
To alter the sweep of the infinite whole
A single stitch in an endless web;
A drop in the ocean’s flow and ebb
But the pattern is rent where the stitch is lost,
Or marred where the tangled threads have crossed
And each life that fails of the true intent
Mars the perfect plan that its Master meant.*

I make no apology for writing in this very personal strain about my own private sorrows and their accompanying difficulties. Are they not common to us all? And if some of us find a way of alleviating them for ourselves, shall we not pass on our knowledge to others, no matter

how trivial and commonplace it may appear? Volumes are written on people's experiences in travelling, dieting, camping out, and a thousand and one subjects. Unless one recognizes the value of, and relates one's own experiences, one cannot give anyone else the benefit of them. Few indeed are the numbers of those who have escaped pain and sorrow. We might lose much else if we lost pain, or the power to register pain. Can we realize peace unless we have first experienced pain?

Somewhere I read that "Life is pain, and pain is purification, and after purification comes peace."

"Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory."

The victory over what? The victory over self, over pain, over all that hinders perfection and keeps the soul in its low prison house of personal desires.

So let us take all the comfort we can from nature, and from doing those little acts that may help others along their paths, but above all, remembering that in prayer we shall find our crowning solace. The material aids, such as the beauties of nature, even daily service for others, are only plasters for our wounds. But prayer, which is conscious co-operation with God, sets the real, inner, vital healing power in motion.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit," but not praying as if we had to besiege God-to soften His heart toward us-or to overcome some reluctance on His part to help us, which is unthinkable, but remembering that prayer is our greatest tangible link with God.

Here we are, and there is God. His link is there, but where is ours?

Whenever we find it imperative to couple two necessary parts of anything together in order to make them into a perfect whole or combination, we fix a link or coupling point on each part.

We couple a carriage to an engine.

The bolt on the door is useless without its corresponding slot on the frame.

In front of me lies a watch and chain; on the watch a ring that fastens into a link on the chain.

And this is prayer; the link between ourselves and God. Through prayer we are keeping our hold on His power, and His willingness to help us. Also in prayer we lift ourselves on to a higher spiritual and mental plane, and on that plane the one who has passed over can meet us, and join us in our intercourse with God. It will be to our mutual advantage, I am sure of that. The habit of prayer will lead us to the habit of meditation, or should do.

Don't rush into prayer-don't gabble it quickly, as if you had dashed into a post office, and were hurriedly scribbling a telegram in place of that longer letter you ought to have found time to write, and didn't. On the other hand, don't explain too much, don't embroider, don't dwell on tedious details. Realize what it is that you feel, and express it as simply and straightforwardly as you can.

Whatever it is that you cannot find words for, God will understand. He will find them in your heart, if you are genuinely seeking to give yourself the opportunity to speak to God.

After prayer, if circumstances permit (and do your utmost to help them to fit in with your spiritual needs; don't always fit in the latter to your material conditions as a kind of make-weight that you can just afford to throw in), sit quietly with open mind to God, to His guidance, which will come without question. At first you may not be aware of it, but gradually ally you will realize that thoughts from without-thoughts of an uplifting and helpful

nature, are drifting into your mind-from nowhere, you may think, yet nowhere, in this case, means God.

Fortunately for myself, I had formed a habit of seeking guidance in this way, so I soon became conscious of help being given me from a Higher Source, in order that I might carry on and do my work and daily duties as efficiently as possible.

I felt sure that my husband would from time to time (not all the time; only earth-bound spirits are likely to do that) be able to contact me; see me, hear me, know something of what I might be doing and feeling. All this I took for granted, and simply made up my mind to live and speak and think in such a way that would help and reassure him as regards my own life. But another, far more important urge dominated me. I must know where he is; follow him on to his new territory, even if only for a moment's glimpse. But I must do it-I must.

Chapter 14. Nothing Venture-Nothing Win

ON a few occasions, yet often with long intervals in between, I had made astral excursions into the Other World. So far they had always happened unexpectedly. I have described them in a book called "My Life in Two Worlds," so won't repeat them here. Wonderfully convincing as they had been to me, proving beyond all shadow of doubt that there is another world and another life awaiting us beyond the grave, I had not been conscious of the intense desire for such experiences as I now possessed-or perhaps I should say, possessed me! And I was fated to discover that extreme anxiety to penetrate into the conditions of that Other Life defeats its own object. But I was determined to succeed, and I feel that a record of my attempts and subsequent failures and successes will be helpful to others who feel that tremendous urge to know what has happened to the one who has gone into the "shadow land," or the "Great Unknown," as it still is to a great number of people.

A question of tremendous importance arises at this point. I feel that many may wish to make the effort, and find out what lies beyond Death, but they are held back by the thought, "Is it right to do so?"

It all depends on your object, and on the use you make of your knowledge. If these experiences help you to help yourself, and then help you to help others in their perplexity and sorrow, yes, surely it is all to the good, as we say.

Are there dangers? Yes-I should think so, just as there are dangers assailing the efforts of everybody who does anything of any importance in the ordinary daily life on earth. Aviation, motoring, chemical research, swimming, only to mention a few, are fraught with great danger, but that does not deter us from participating in such pursuits.

I think it may well be the better thing for us to be able to contact the Other and Higher Planes ourselves, and meet our friends there in their own territory, so to speak, than to expect them to meet us "all the way," and be compelled to visit us on our lower plane, but we must remember that for us to visit theirs would mean a certain amount of self-discipline physically, mentally, and spiritually. Life on the earth plane does not make it easy for us to create such conditions in and around ourselves such as would enable us to succeed often in our attempts to travel to those Higher Planes. Therefore it is comforting to know that our friends who have passed beyond the veil can and do visit us from time to time.

Did not our Lord Himself take pity on those who loved and mourned Him, and when He visited them, spoke and touched them, and was touched by them? Did He not create a precedent by doing what He did? Above all, it showed His intense sympathy with grief, and as He still lives and feels for us, so He will understand our griefs for our dear ones, and He will rejoice if we succeed in our efforts to find "those angel faces which we have loved and lost awhile."

This is, I feel, a solution to a problem that often frets the Christian's mind, though he, of all men, should know the answer.

J. M. Gibbon said:

The presence of great questions gives hope that we are in the neighbourhood of great answers, and that as the when I was a child "changed slowly but surely into the "now I am a man," so the "now we see in a mirror darkly" shall also change-is, in fact, every moment changing into the "then face to face," our upturned and wondering faces wet and radiant

also with happy tears, for if once He wept with those that wept, because they had lost, He will keep also in blissful sympathy with those that weep because they have found.

There are three different ways in which we can contact those who have passed over, and there are three different places or planes on which we can meet them.

When I use the word meet, I want to convey the idea of actually being on the same plane with them, and functioning in the same kind of body for the time being. This is quite different to psychically contacting the Spirit World through the faculty of Clairvoyance or Clairaudience. We may go to a materializing séance, and there see a manifestation of the “dead” built up from the ectoplasmic materials drawn mostly from the medium’s body, and probably augmented by the sitters.

I want to draw a very clear line of demarcation between these two methods, and the power of projecting the etheric body which we all possess to some degree, and might possess in greater measure if we had the time and will to practise doing it.

In this book I shall not refer to the projection of the etheric for the purpose of travelling in the earth conditions. Many people have experienced the sensation of finding themselves floating above, and looking down upon their physical body. By persistent practice they find they can travel to other places on the earth, witness certain happenings, return with a clear memory of what has happened, and subsequent enquiries have proved them to have been correct in their accounts of what they saw or heard.

My main object is concerned with proving that it is possible to travel to higher planes, and contact those friends who have passed into the Beyond, and I must confess there is a very personal feeling at the back of my desire to present the subject in this particular light, because after my husband’s passing, I felt I must find out all I possibly could as to how he was and where he was.

As I said, there are three distinct methods of contact through astral-or etheric-functioning. First-the “dead” can visit us on the earth plane in their etheric bodies, but it is easier for us to see them when they do so, if we ourselves are functioning in our etheric bodies at the same time. This, I find, can, and does, often happen. One’s etheric body succeeds in “moving out” from the physical it may be only a few inches, but it is just sufficient to allow us to be aware of, and contact, the etheric visitor from the Other Sphere.

This usually occurs when we have just begun to fall asleep or as we are awakening from sleep. In either case we have to emerge from a sleep condition, shallow and light though it may be in the former case, or deep as in the latter. It appears to me that the physical brain must be either asleep, or extremely passive in order to allow the etheric body to move out from the physical. Among Western people it is not usual to find subjects who can become sufficiently passive while remaining awake. The actual sleep may be of only a few minutes’ duration; sometimes it seems as if one had only just drifted over the edge of slumber, yet during that time one has managed to exteriorize the etheric body. Consciousness may operate very quickly in the etheric, and as it moves out of the physical body, it becomes almost immediately aware of any astral visitor who is present in the room. In order to register this knowledge on the physical brain, the consciousness moves the etheric body back into the physical as expeditiously and quietly as it can, and in such a case, our minds transfer the impression of what we feel or see in our etheric body to our physical body. Unfortunately such an experience usually lasts for a very short time, because of the effort made by the mind in registering its impressions on the physical brain. If we are not frightened or distressed by the experience on awakening, there is a possibility that it may continue for a brief period, and that now, while wide awake in the physical body, we are able to see and hear what takes

place in the astral. How many of us have had the experience of waking, and still thinking we were dreaming, even though we could see our material surroundings with physical eyes?

During this experience it will often be noticed that a cataleptic condition prevails during the entire duration of the phenomenon. Many people imagine this cataleptic state to be part of a nightmare from which they have awakened, especially if, as so often happens, the subconsciousness has thrown up into the conscious mind some long-forgotten incident that has caused fear or sorrow in the past, or even a repressed fear that has no actual foundation in fact (so far as we remember) may be responsible for a mental picture being thrown on the screen of our mind at the exact moment we become conscious again in the physical body. If this happens, this false mental image may eradicate the entire etheric experience, and thrust itself forward into the consciousness so vividly that it is accepted as the real substance of our astral projection, which we disappointedly dismiss from our minds under the impression that we have had a most unpleasant dream or nightmare, which held us in its grip “even after we wakened up!”

Chapter 15. The Half-Way World

A SECOND way of contacting "Them" is by meeting in a kind of "half-way" or intermediary place. It appears to me as if this place (or perhaps "condition of being" is a better description) is indeed exactly half-way between the earth and the etheric world. It is a half-world. In it we seem to be only half awake, and I have a strong feeling that "They" (and when I mention "They" or "Them" I want you to understand that I refer to those who have permanently passed over into the Etheric World) have themselves entered into the sleep state, or a semi-conscious state, in order to meet us again. I am impelled to use the term -"half-way." This is not always a satisfactory method to either party, and it usually arises from the intense desire held by two people who are recently separated by death, to contact each other at all costs, under any conditions. This natural impatience precipitates a meeting under the only circumstances that are possible until one or both have progressed to the stage when they can meet under happier conditions.

This half-way state is very much affected, if not entirely governed by, subconscious suggestions from the mind of the one who is still living in the physical body.

The third method leads to the most wonderful experience that can happen to any human being, I think. It means that one goes, in one's etheric body, to the actual plane where he or she whom we are seeking really dwells, and that one brings back a complete and perfect memory of all that one has seen or heard "Over There." Anyone who has succeeded in doing this will indeed realize that "Angels have rolled the stones away." Nothing can erase, or even dim, the memory of such a glorious experience.

For many years previous to my husband's death I had realized the possibility of visiting the Spiritual Planes of Life, and I prayed hard that if it were in accordance with God's will (and only then) that I might be allowed to see the place where my husband now dwelt, his surroundings and himself in them; to see him in his natural setting, as it were.

I realized I might have to wait some time for this to happen, and that some special preparation might be necessary in order for me to undertake such a wonderful astral journey.

When it happens spontaneously, one may not be aware of the many causes that have contributed to its success. One is apt to look upon it as something that happened accidentally (whatever that may mean), because it happened unexpectedly! Of all that led up to it one may be totally unaware, but when one is trying consciously to bring about some definite result in anything, whether it be astral projection, music, painting, singing, chemistry, or anything else, one usually has to approach one's end by many very definite steps or methods.

So I set out on my quest fortified with a certain knowledge of the possibility of the many failures and difficulties that might befall me before I attained my object. Even so, I was not quite prepared for the nature of some of the phenomena that happened.

Several weeks passed by after my husband's death, and I appeared to achieve no success in visiting him, until the night of Saturday, March 23rd, 1935, when I retired to bed about the usual time, and went to sleep fairly soon.

I began to dream about something; the usual kind of mixture of imagination and subconscious memories. It is important to realize that a dream that is only a dream often merges into a true astral experience, and on emerging from the latter, one often passes through the dream state again before awakening. In fact, the dream state is a kind of gateway into-and out-of-the real

astral experience. With a certain amount of practice, one is able to distinguish the difference between the dream and the “true” condition. In the astral one nearly always knows that one is having an “out of the body” experience. Everything happens in a clear, orderly, and consistent manner, whereas most dreams consist of a fantastic jumble of scenes and happenings in which one jumps precipitately from one scene to another, performing all kinds of impossible feats.

I did not remember what I dreamt this particular night, but I suddenly emerged from it into a different condition. I realized I was in the astral, but I felt sure I was not on the etheric plane where my husband would be living. I guessed that I was in one of the “half-way” places. I could not see the distant scenery; only the near surroundings were visible to me. Outside this radius there seemed to be a kind of greyish mist. I noticed this vaguely, because my whole attention was riveted on my husband, who stood before me looking somewhat vacantly in front of him. He seemed to be half asleep. I quickly moved toward him and kissed him on the lips. He started slightly, and looked at me as if he was very surprised to see me.

This expression quickly faded, and one of relief and gladness took its place, and he returned my kiss several times. As he did so, I remembered that I had been in this same place once before since his passing, but that I must have forgotten on waking. During that previous visit he had been less awake, and I had looked at him in some consternation, wondering should I speak to him or not. Would it give him a shock? A voice belonging to someone outside my area of visibility spoke and said, “You may kiss him.” I did so once, but he seemed not to be aware of it, and I had immediately lost control, and had withdrawn to my physical condition. Often when one is functioning in the etheric world, one remembers having been there before. The memory is more clear than when one remembers in the physical world something that one did yesterday.

On this second (as I now knew it to be) occasion, I felt myself drawing away, back to the earth condition, and awoke remembering everything quite distinctly, but feeling rather disappointed with my experience. I felt I had not seen my husband at his best, but I think he realized that he, too, had been functioning for the time being on a plane that was not his own natural one, just as I had been doing.

Chapter 16. A Strange Experiment

AFTER this experience it struck me that it would perhaps be more satisfactory if my husband were able to visit me in my own room on earth, where the surroundings would be familiar to me, and also to him, though it was no longer his real plane of existence. He would remember the room, and expect to find me in it.

I think he caught my thoughts, and made up his mind to try the experiment, which he evidently set out to accomplish two nights later.

I had gone to bed about eleven o'clock, and was lying on my left side, quietly preparing for sleep. The room was not quite dark, as I had a night-light burning.

I had been dozing for a few minutes, probably, when I was awakened by feeling something solid insert itself under my left shoulder. I opened my eyes, and in the dim light I saw my husband's form lying facing me on the edge of the bed. My senses were alert, and I kept absolute control of myself in order not to do anything that might startle him, or disturb conditions. His right arm was placed under my left shoulder, and I distinctly felt the pressure of his fingers on the back of my shoulder. The strange part was that his arm must have passed through the material structure of the mattress and pillow, yet appeared to be perfectly solid. My theory is that I was conscious in my etheric body as well as in my physical body. It was my etheric body on which my husband's arm was making an impression. In other words, my etheric body was feeling his etheric body, and my mind was registering this fact in my physical body and brain. Consciousness was, as I said before, functioning for the moment in both bodies. As I looked at my husband I could see the china ornaments on the mantelpiece just a few feet away, gleaming in the light from the street lamp outside, and the night-light in the room.

This only lasted a few seconds; neither of us spoke. Quite suddenly my husband disappeared, leaving me with a deep sense of peace and comfort, and I fell into a long, restful, and dreamless sleep.

This deep, peaceful slumber usually follows a "true" astral experience, whether this takes place on the earth plane or on the astral plane itself.

The next morning I awoke, and began thinking about the wonderful phenomenon of the previous night, and wished I had been able to see my husband's features and expression more clearly. It worried me that I could not remember, or visualize from memory, the colour of his eyes as they appeared when he was in good health during his earlier days on earth. In his latter years-and especially in his illness-they had become dull and faded in colour. Only once had I had an impression that his eyes had regained their former clearness, and that was on the day of the funeral, when I had seen him sitting in front of the car, wearing the dark overcoat, and he had turned his head round and smiled at me. The friend who saw him in the Crematorium had apparently seen his eyes more clearly than I, and in her letter to me she had mentioned "his eyes are very bright, and very blue."

The night following his wonderful visit to me) I retired to bed about the same time. I again lay on my left side. I cannot remember going to sleep, but I had apparently done so, and awakened again very soon. With my eyes open, I saw my husband bending down, apparently looking at me. There was, as before, a fair light in the room from outside and from the night-light, but without these aids I could have seen his face clearly, because it was surrounded by a kind of luminous glow, which revealed every feature quite distinctly. I particularly noticed

his eyes; they were, as my friend had said, exceptionally “bright and blue.” His skin was tanned and healthy looking. His age when here on earth was seventy, but now he looked about forty-five. His face was a little fuller than in his physical life, and altogether he looked wonderfully well. I looked at him for at least six or seven seconds, and when he disappeared I remember saying fervently and loudly, “Thank God!”

After this I am afraid I could not help wishing that something of the same kind might happen again. Every night I went to bed expecting it, looking for it. Probably my mind was too alert and anxious, and some time elapsed before I had a similar experience.

Chapter 17. Mind Acts On Matter

SEVERAL weeks went by, in which I had remarkable evidence of my husband's existence. It came from various sources, which I will not describe here, wonderful as some of them were, because my main object in writing this book is to endeavour to prove the existence of the etheric body, and its power of functioning on the physical and etheric planes.

On one occasion I had an interesting example of the effect that an etheric body can produce upon what we term physical matter.

I think there is no doubt that the astral or etheric body is composed of material that is to some extent comparable with matter as we know it on earth, and that by virtue of its similar nature it can and does affect material objects on the earth.

One Saturday early in May, 1935, I spent a week-end with a friend whose hospitality my husband and I had often enjoyed during his my husband's earth life. In the evening we went to a theatre to see a rather rollicking revue. On the way there and back we drove through a district where my husband and I had spent a very happy time together many years ago. Memories of the hardships and difficulties that we had faced happily, because we were together, came surging back, and in spite of all my good resolutions, I could not help feeling somewhat desolate, thinking of the many years that might be in front of me without his physical companionship.

So when we arrived back at the house, I was feeling a little sad. The room I was given was one which I had not occupied before. A friend of my hostess, whom I had only met once, had been using it until quite recently, and had left many photographs behind, all of people unknown to me. There were two single beds in the room, and beside one of them stood a smallish oak table about two feet square, quite a strongly made, solid table for its size. On it I had placed my husband's photograph. Just before undressing, I went over, picked up the photograph, and-aloud-asked my husband whether he had been aware of my thoughts while I was passing through the neighbourhood we both knew so well. While doing this, I mechanically placed the photo on the bed near by, placed my hands lightly on the table-top, and still thinking aloud I said, "I've got no mediumistic power with which to move tables or anything else by myself, as some people have, and as you undoubtedly had when you were here. If only I had that kind of power, you might use it now, and move this table as a signal that you were with me on our way to the theatre, and that you did know all my thoughts." Almost before I had finished the sentence, to my intense surprise, the table leapt in the air, took a jump forward and upward, hit me in the region of my waist, and sank back again quietly, as if carefully controlled by unseen hands. I was astonished, to say the least of it, but comforted also, as I knew that it was impossible to account for the phenomenon by any normal (as we call it) means.

At the very second that the table rose, or perhaps I should say for one or possibly two seconds prior to its rising, I felt a curious blank feeling in my solar plexus. I felt it in my mind also, but without losing consciousness even for a fraction of time.

What actually happened was that my mood, my mental outstretching to the unseen, had put me in a suitable condition to bring about an exteriorization of my etheric body, either wholly or partially, and the combination of astral forces drawn from it, and from the etheric body of my husband, had been directed into, or under, the table, with just sufficient power to levitate it.

I think that this ability to project one's etheric double, voluntarily or accidentally, either for a short or long period, is the cause of many of the physical phenomena which scientists and students of psychical research are now investigating. At this present stage of our knowledge along these lines there are probably few of us who could produce such results deliberately. We might-I think we can-produce the exteriorization of the etheric body at will, but it is a much more difficult feat to perform some definite action during the exteriorization. In any case, I feel sure that the nature of the demonstration is decided-and carried out by-those who have permanently left their earth bodies, the so-called Dead who have become accustomed to functioning in their etheric bodies, and who use them as easily as we do our physical ones.

On their own plane they operate on their own kind or degree of matter, just as we operate on ours. Difficulties crop up when they-or we-attempt to operate on each other's planes, that is, when we endeavour to function on their planes, or when they try to function on ours.

It is then that both sides have to co-operate. When "They" produce an effect on the earth, they use their own minds on our physical material, assisted by our etheric power, and in some cases by our mental co-operation. If we set forth with the idea of being used by "Them," with some definite object in view, we are obviously trying to co-operate both etherically and mentally. In sudden unexpected phenomena we may be co-operating etherically, but not mentally, and this is what happened in the case I have recorded.

The night following this levitation, when I retired to bed, I went over to where the table stood, removed the photograph, placed my hands on the table-top, exactly as on the previous night, and waited.

I stood there for quite a quarter of an hour, then I walked away, waited awhile, went back and tried again, but with no result, probably because there was not the soul-need of help and comfort, as there had been on the previous night. Even if my husband had been willing on his part to repeat the performance, it is possible that my own astral could not loosen, or exteriorize itself sufficiently to carry out its share of the experiment.

On this second occasion I must admit that I was acting partly from curiosity, a desire for a repetition of a phenomenon that may have required a certain effort on his part, and on mine too (though on our side such effort may be made involuntarily and unconsciously).

I feel sure we should not seek these things lightly, without some serious and definite object in view, and I was not altogether surprised at my failure. Indeed, I was a little ashamed of attempting to get the levitation again, and while retiring for the night, I humbly apologized for having asked for a repetition of it.

I seemed to have been asleep for some time, when I was awakened by noises in the room. It was too dark to see what was happening, but I could distinctly hear sounds as if two or three people were moving about.

Realizing I had locked the bedroom door before getting into bed, and finding myself in a somewhat cataleptic condition, though absolutely wide awake and conscious in every sense, I realized that something was happening of an interesting nature. Then I heard a loud, scraping noise on the wall, somewhere near the door, as far as I could judge in the dark. I knew from previous experience that while the phenomena were taking place I should not be able to move my physical body without a strong mental effort, and also that if I made this effort, I should probably put a stop to the phenomena, so I remained passive for a few moments, listening to the sounds around me.

I must explain that when one is in the etherically exteriorized condition, yet at the same time perfectly and acutely conscious in the physical, one is sometimes able to exercise psychical

faculties which may be dormant in the daily, earthly life, and one may oneself become aware of certain conditions without using the ordinary physical senses through which our faculty of awareness usually functions. On this particular occasion I was "aware" that my husband was present, also my hostess's husband, who had passed over a few years previously. A strong feeling that they were carrying out some project that amused them came to me. I felt amused myself, though I didn't know the cause of my amusement. Probably my astral brain did, but could not transfer the knowledge to the physical counterpart.

The scraping noise and my cataleptic condition ceased at the same time, and I lay for a few minutes thinking over all I had heard, and impressing on my mind the direction in which the noises had been loudest and most insistent.

As usual, after such a demonstration, I soon fell into a deep and peaceful sleep. It is very strange that immediately after such a phenomenon one feels little curiosity as to what has happened. One accepts it in an unenquiring spirit, and it is later on that one begins to wonder how it happened, etc., etc.

I slept until the maid knocked at the door with my early tea. After she had pulled the blinds aside and left the room I looked cautiously round to see if my unseen visitors had left behind any trace of their presence. Remembering the particular sounds by the door, I looked in that direction, and saw that a picture hanging on the wall had been carefully moved round, so that instead of hanging straight, in a vertical position, it hung sideways, half-way between the vertical and horizontal positions. I got out of bed, and examined the picture and the chain that supported it. I found it was a most difficult feat to pull the chain round the patent fastener on the wall, as the links in the chain were of such a shape that they caught in the fastening each time one attempted to move it. One had carefully to lift both picture and chain slightly, and ease the latter round the fastener in order to move it at all.

Quite an effort must have been used to move the picture to the angle at which I found it. Moreover, it was not a light weight, being at least twenty inches in length, and about twelve inches across, framed and glazed, and weighing several pounds. As there were many lighter and more easily moved photographs and pictures in the room, I wondered why the unseen operators had chosen this particular one. It was a study of a girl in a garden. I did not know her, nor, as I explained before, did I know the subjects of any of the portraits in the room. On going downstairs, I went straight to my hostess, and asked her who the lady in the large picture near my bedroom door was.

"Oh!" she said, "that's an enlarged portrait of --," mentioning the name of a well-known actress, whom my husband had often told me about, as he had seen her when she was quite a tiny baby. The picture had been enlarged from a snapshot, and belonged to my hostess's husband, who had probably been told by my husband that he knew the lady in it, and as it was the only portrait in the room that had any significance whatever in regard to my husband, they had evidently decided to move that particular one, with obvious success. Many pleasant memories must have been invoked in both their minds by this picture, and that fact probably accounted for the happy, almost merry, condition that I had sensed during their visit.

Chapter 18. Dangers And Complications

OTHER experiences followed, showing me that beyond all shadow of doubt “They” can and do manifest on our plane when the “conditions” (of which at present we know so little) permit them to do so. The same “conditions” make it easy or difficult for us to visit “Their” plane, and I feel sure that they mostly arise on our side rather than theirs.

I have been told that the spiritual, mental, and emotional state of our plane constitutes a kind of fog which “They” penetrate with some difficulty. When we earthly mortals are living in, and expressing the higher side of our natures, spiritually and mentally, it is as if we create a clear space in the surrounding mist, in which the etheric visitors can more easily operate. If we wish for communion with the departed we should take great care to think, speak, and act in such a way that will provide these ideal conditions, and only good will come of such intercourse if we do so.

Our emotional and temperamental difficulties act adversely or otherwise when we attempt to visit the etheric planes. I am sure that our etheric counterparts are weighted by the quality of our usual mental outlook and general behaviour in our daily lives on earth.

These personal conditions, or soul vibrations, appear to affect the etheric cord which connects the etheric body to the physical. The etheric cord of an insensitive, unprogressed, unimaginative individual would be very rigid and inelastic. I doubt if such a person would be able to exteriorize the astral body voluntarily at all, or maybe only to a slight extent. Of course, an accident which resulted in a severe shock, or the administration of a strong anesthetic would probably cause his etheric double to move out, though perhaps only for a short distance, away from his physical body.

The inference is that the more spiritual our lives on earth, the easier we make it for our friends Over There to visit us, and the easier for us to visit them in their conditions.

Unless we learn to control our thoughts and emotions we run a greater risk of encountering difficulties when we try to embark on any astral travels. This I proved for myself within a few days of the incident of the moved picture.

In the interval I had been extremely worried about certain material matters which had cropped up unexpectedly, and I found myself scarcely able to cope with them. I worried about them a good deal; really more than I ought to have done. They were partly, if not entirely, connected with my husband’s illness and passing, and I longed more than ever to see him in his present surroundings, so as to assure myself that they were happy ones, and that he was happy in them.

On the night of May 17th, 1935, I went to sleep, and found myself in a place which I knew was not of this world. There is some curious quality in the atmosphere of the astral planes, which is soon recognized when one has paid several visits to them. On this occasion, the surroundings in which I found myself were not so clear as usual. A thick mist seemed to envelop everything beyond the radius of a few square yards. I stood in an open doorway, looking into a room which was furnished in quite an ordinary way. A few feet away, standing with his back to me, was my husband.

At last I thought, “I’m seeing him on his own plane; now I shall learn something of his real conditions.”

I stepped forward and put both my arms round him; he turned quickly; I lifted my face and kissed him. A look flashed over his face as if he was glad to see me, but that the gladness was completely overshadowed by some overwhelming distress and suffering.

I said, Aren't you pleased to see me?

"Oh, yes, yes," he answered, "but it's the pain. I'm in such dreadful pain."

He released me, and walked up and down the room) his face grey and drawn with suffering, his breath apparently coming and going spasmodically in his efforts to control the agony he evidently felt. Nonplussed, I watched him, thinking to myself that if this were indeed his "real condition" he was evidently in worse bodily plight than when he was living on earth. I felt overcome with misery, and I remember that an extremely selfish thought rushed unbidden into my mind.

I said to myself, "Oh! I have got to face everything all over again; all the anxiety and torture of watching him suffer that I thought was over and done with. I thought he was safe and free from pain, and I've been glad to lose him physically in order that it should be so. How terrible to find out that our ideas of perfect bodily health Over There have all been wrong!"

However, I pulled myself sharply together, and immediately banished these first unworthy thoughts, and made up my mind to face this unexpected state of affairs, and help him in some way, though I knew not how. Quickly I took hold of his arm, and led him to a couch in the room, saying, "Lie down there; I'll think of something to help you. The pain won't last long, I promise. I'll do something quickly to help you. I know I can. I promise."

I seemed to be repeating these words over and over again, and while doing so I felt a curious "pull," as if something was drawing me away from the place. I fought against it for a moment, loth to leave my husband in his unhappy plight. The "pull" increased. It had a strange magnetic quality. I felt myself drawn backward and downward, and lost consciousness of my surroundings until I found myself actually in my physical body in bed.

Every detail of my experience remained clear in my mind. I lay there, feeling sad and dismayed. Morning came, and my maid brought my early tea. I poured some out, and while drinking it, I tried to reconstruct the unpleasant "dream," and, calming my mind, I closed my eyes, and silently formed a prayer for help in understanding and interpreting the experience, or else banish it altogether from my memory.

It seemed beyond my earthly comprehension.

While I was doing this, I became aware that someone was sitting beside me on the left side of the bed, just near my pillow. I opened my eyes slightly without turning my head, knowing that the less we move about and disturb the conditions the better. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw it was my husband sitting near me, and I sensed he had come with some explanation of my dream. I closed my eyes again, and listened carefully while he spoke.

He told me I must be neither dismayed nor surprised if I got several experiences of the same nature as the one of the previous night. In fact, he said, if I persisted in trying to visit him on his own plane during sleep, it was most likely that I should go on having them until my mind ceased to evoke painful memories of his earthly illness. My subconscious mind was full of such memories, which I kept in check in my daily life, but in sleep they reasserted themselves, and travelled along the astral cord from my physical brain to that part of my mind which was functioning in my etheric body, and coloured its impression of whatever I might be doing or seeing on the etheric plane. In other words, my subconsciousness was able to interpose a screen (on which images were engraved of exaggerated fears and unhappy memories) between myself and reality. Now and again this screen became transparent, as if

the false wore thin, and my consciousness made a desperate but only partly successful effort to break through it, and reveal a little of the truth behind.

My husband said that I had visited him; he was present in the room I had seen, but was not in any pain, nor was he distressed in any way. He advised me to make up my mind not to be worried if unhappy, but false, impressions asserted themselves into any of my future astral experiences, but that I must remember that they were purely subconscious, and that in time the imaginary would inevitably give way to the real, and then I should see him as he really was. Unless I had the strength of mind to do this, it would be desirable that I should give up the idea of visiting him on his own plane until my mind had naturally, in the course of time, discarded the acute memory of his past physical illness.

I decided to accept his advice, and adopt both ideas, and not to make the attempt at exteriorization of my own etheric body at present, but do all I could to superimpose happy, constructive thoughts of my husband in the state of well-being in which I believed him to be, upon the unprofitable, destructive memories—either conscious or subconscious—which were beneficial neither to him nor to me. If his illness had brought any lesson with it (and suffering of any kind does bring a lesson in its trail, as a rule), it had been learnt. This I knew, and I also realized that any unnecessary dwelling on sorrows or pains that are past, leads to morbidity of thought and outlook.

Chapter 19. A Dissertation On Prayer

IN the last chapter I have related the lesson I was taught with regard to dwelling on painful memories. I took the lesson to heart, and it had benefited me considerably, both mentally and physically, but there was another lesson that I was yet to learn—one that opened my eyes more than ever to the necessity of tackling our earthly tasks and difficulties ourselves, and not inflicting them on the consciousness of those who have passed to other planes, and who have work of their own to do, and probably difficulties of some kind to contend with. We must be very careful indeed to avoid doing this, because those who love us best will be the very ones who will be most affected by our troubles, and yet they may not be in a position to help us, and it is this feeling of inability to aid us which distresses them, and may interfere with their own progress, and if we persist in thus unlawfully disturbing them, it will react adversely on us.

I know that many discarnate souls are able to help those left on earth, both in a general and individual way. They are peculiarly fitted for such work by temperament, and also by training for it on their own plane, before they attempt to contact the earth conditions which it is their aim and desire to improve.

The one safe, sound way we can take when we need spiritual assistance, is to ask God for it.

St. Paul said, “In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known to God.” And in more modern times Dr. Alexander MacLaren wrote, “If a man does not pray about every thing, he will be worried about most things.”

It is good that we should speak direct to God about our problems. He is above being distressed about our worries.

“My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him” (Psalm lxii. 5). If we do this we can rely on help instantly, if it is good for us.

While we are talking about prayer, let me tell you what R. C. Chapman said by way of encouraging those who sometimes feel that they are not in the right mood for prayer.

“When we cannot pray at all, then it is high time to pray. We honour God by fighting with inward difficulties, and show our faith in the intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ by bringing our coldness of spirit to the Great High Priest. True boldness in prayer is not to be judged by good words, but by this test: How far is God’s will the guide of the soul?”

The italics are mine. I realize only too well how we can excuse ourselves from prayer because “we don’t feel in the mood”; we cannot express ourselves easily to God at the moment, but it is our very inability to contact Him, our “Coldness of Spirit,” that we should take to Him, and if we do so we shall soon find that we have “caught hold” again. It is a good thing to have true humility about one’s self, but if it encourages us in the idea that we are incapable of, or unfit for, direct communion with God, then it almost amounts to unbelief.

Again we must be careful to ask anything according to His will. We must say, “Thy will, not mine.” If we do this, It shall come to pass before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear”

(Isa. ix. 24), which means that He hears our need, our thought, even before we have expressed it in words.

In an earlier chapter in this book I wrote the words, “He will give His Angels charge over thee.” I take them to mean that His angels are His ministering spirits, in whose ranks may be numbered those whom we have known and loved on earth, who have progressed on the Other Side, and are now in a position to become “ministering spirits,” or “angels having charge over us.” In most cases, if not all, these entities would have passed from earthly conditions some considerable time, and may have gone through many spiritual experiences, and made a deep study of Life since passing over. If a good purpose is served by doing so, they are allowed to help us, especially when we cannot help ourselves. If we can help ourselves, we ought to do so. It is a cowardly evasion of personal responsibility that impels us to seek help from others if we can possibly manage without it.

Wonderful help has been given from the Other Side under right conditions. I have had many examples of it myself. Indeed it is often staggering to look back and see what has been done through prayer and spirit agency.

“God works in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform,” but we must remember that His Infinite mind can see what is good for us, and whether an answer to our prayer will be beneficial or otherwise.

How many of us have realized, with bitter sorrow, “The curse of an answered prayer”?

If only we had left the matter in His hands after making the request, saying, “according to Thy will, not mine,” things would have been all right, but what often happens is—we ask God for something, and instead of leaving it to Him, we follow it up by mentally concentrating all our forces on one point, i.e. that what we think is good for us shall and must be brought to pass, and we proceed to bring it into being, because, as I said before, thought is mind in action.

This little dissertation about prayer, and the importance of not disturbing our departed friends with our personal troubles, is a preliminary to my describing a very curious and disturbing experience that happened to me soon after the events related in the last chapter. I began to have some very troublesome material affairs to attend to, and some of them appeared to be heavier than I could shoulder myself. In his earth life, my husband could not bear to see me worried, and always held the impression that I could not possibly tackle ordinary material life without his aid. Undoubtedly that impression was at the back of his mind shortly before his passing, when he said he did not want to go to the “beautiful places,” and leave me behind. Knowing his natural anxiety about me, I feel now that at the period of which I speak, I ought to have taken these earthly matters more lightly, and not let them “get on my mind” as much as I did.

Some weeks had passed since my last astral experience with my husband, and remembering his advice to me after that occasion, I was not expecting to reach him in my etheric body, nor was I definitely trying to do so while these troublesome earthly problems existed.

Then, one night, I had an experience which proved that he had sensed these troubles, and strongly reacted to them in a way that might have brought untold danger and unhappiness to us both.

Chapter 20. Can A Spirit Commit Suicide?

I HOPE that by this time I have conveyed my idea to you that in the normal waking conditions of our daily lives the etheric body finds it extremely difficult to function consciously apart from the physical. While it is in complete association with the physical, it is usually inoperative, or “out of action,” so to speak. There may be undoubtedly are some exceptions to this rule, such as the progressed student of occult laws who has become proficient in consciously exteriorizing his astral body at will, whenever and wherever he chooses. That this has been done is a proven fact, but we are not concerned here with such extraordinary degrees of efficiency in etheric exteriorization, but with the more limited and ordinary ways in which the average man and woman is likely to experience such phenomena.

If our etheric body can “move out” even a short distance from the physical, it is most likely that we shall see or hear something extraordinarily interesting, especially if there is someone belonging to us, linked to us, by ties of love and mutual interest, who will doubtless be waiting to encourage and help us to reach out from our usual limited conditions, and grasp their hands, if only for a moment.

One night in July, 1935, soon after midnight, I became aware that my etheric body was slightly exteriorized, just sufficiently for me to be able to see and hear other etheric bodies and conditions around me.

On this occasion I felt myself less alert than usual, and I was once again reminded that if we have been living in a disturbed emotional condition on earth, it affects the etheric body in such a manner that even when projected, it is more difficult for the souls from other planes to perceive or contact it.

So now I could see that my husband was close beside me, just a few feet away, but apparently he was finding some difficulty in seeing me. He seemed to realize that he was near me, and he was evidently trying hard to locate my exact whereabouts, but could not do so. I spoke to him, and with some considerable mental effort, I moved farther out from my physical body and drew nearer to him and was able to reach out my hand and touch him on the shoulder. Though he did not seem conscious of the actual touch, he appeared to sense that I was close to him, and he seemed to make a great effort to contact me by concentrating on me. He began to speak. I could hear his voice, and could follow all he said.

He spoke very deliberately, as one might speak on a long-distance call through the telephone if one were speaking on a matter of great importance, and wanting to make sure that the listener at the other end could really hear distinctly.

My husband said he realized the extent of my difficulties, and that he felt that I needed him with me, and that if I felt I could not carry on without him, he would “come back to me.”

I said, “How can you come back to me? What exactly do you mean?”

Though he did not appear to hear the actual words, I saw by his face that he had mentally received my question, and he gave the most astonishing answer:

“I could commit suicide.”

Amazed, dumbfounded, almost disbelieving, I asked him what he meant.

Again he seemed to sense my question, and immediately replied:

“There are forms of suicide on the astral plane; and I wonder if there is a form of suicide that I might take in order to be with you again, so as to protect and help you?”

I cried out, “No! Of course you must not do any such thing Don’t even think of it; put it right out of your mind at once. If you did do it, I am absolutely certain it would not benefit either of us.”

I remember that when he was on earth he had disapproved of suicide from whatever angle it was viewed, or whatever the motive might be, and I felt sure that he would not have any desire to take such a step on his own account, but that it would be entirely on my behalf, in order to be with me and help me again, and I realized that I must have dwelt unduly on my earthly troubles, hugging them to myself instead of getting on top of them, but I had not fully understood that our unhappy thoughts are so easily picked up by those whose etheric bodies are often with us, or we with them.

My feeling of intense dismay and anxiety to stop him thinking of such a course as “suicide” seemed to lend an added poignancy or power to my desire to impress my husband against the idea, for he suddenly lifted his face a little, looked in my direction, and appeared to see me.

He then talked calmly and quietly to me for some time, assuring me of his never-ceasing care for me, and admitting that it had not occurred to him actually to attempt suicide, but only that he was willing to do so if his being nearer to the earth would help me.

Before we parted, we both reassured each other about ourselves, my husband promising not to think of the subject of suicide again, and I informed him that whatever my difficulties were on the earth, they were not insurmountable, and I knew I could get through them all, so he must not worry.

Ever since this incident I have pondered over this question: What are the forms of suicide that are open to a discarnate soul?

Many suggestions have been put forward, none of them very convincing. One was that a discarnate soul could commit suicide by willfully leaving his own plane, and obsessing-or possessing-some person on earth.

The obsessing entity does not always show a mischievous or antagonistic attitude toward the person whom it is “possessing.” I knew of one case of apparent possession, when the entity was deeply attached to the girl whom it was alleged he “haunted,” and that his sole desire in doing so was in order to be near her. Personally I was not sure that this, or any other similar case I have had definite first-hand experience of, was one of genuine possession. I think it was more likely due to overwhelming grief and shock on the girl’s side, which had for the time being unhinged her mind and nervous system. In time it wore off, and we heard no more of the supposed obsessing entity.

Another suggestion advanced was that those who wished to commit this kind of suicide were spirits who were waiting in the spiritual planes for their next incarnation on earth, and that they might desire to anticipate the time of that incarnation, and go back to the earth life before they were spiritually ready to do so, the idea underlying this suggestion being that those who pass over usually have to wait a certain time on the astral planes, studying and developing their souls in readiness for their next earthly incarnation, which probably takes place in three or four centuries of time.

With regard to this point, I have no opinion to offer. I don’t know.

The theory that appeals to me as being the most feasible of any I have heard, is that those who actually live on a certain etheric plane, possibly two or three planes above the earth,

might elect to function on a lower plane, i.e. one nearer-possibly very near-the earth, in order to be as close as possible to the being they have left behind, and whose presence they long for.

If we on the earth cease to function on that earth, it follows we must go through a process of dying in order to take up life on another plane. It seems possible that those who change their plane of existence "Over There" go through what appears to be a form of "death" (though I am certain there is nothing painful or uncomfortable about it), inasmuch as they may change the nature of their bodies to some extent. If this is so, the process will seem to them to be a form of dying, and-if they were changing from a higher to a lower plane of existence, and, in doing so, cut short their activities and development on the higher plane-it might even seem to be a form of suicide. Again I must admit, I don't know. I can only relate what my husband said, because it constitutes a warning that anybody who is in close touch with the Other Side should care fully control and guard their mental lives on earth.

After this experience I decided never again to allow myself consciously to dwell in negative thought of any kind whatever.

Chapter 21. The Dream State

By this time I began to realize how many difficulties beset us when we venture to explore the etheric world. The most baffling of all seemed to be the dream state through which-as I have mentioned before-one often passes before one becomes conscious in the astral, and vice versa, on returning from a true astral experience, one again passes through a dream before one wakes. It is my experience that the memory of what one has seen or done in the astral is sometimes wiped out by the dream phase which superimposes itself upon the astral memories, so that when one awakes one may get such a muddle of “dreams” and “real” experiences, it is extremely difficult to make sense of it.

After a few experiences of this kind, people often give up in despair, thinking that the difficulties of sorting out the false from the real are so great that it is hardly worth their while to pursue their study of astral projection.

One cannot blame them, but it is a pity, because they often throw up the sponge just as they are coming to the point where they might realize that it is possible to derive some helpful knowledge from the very dream condition which has puzzled and exasperated them.

All my life I have dreamed a good deal. Hardly a night passed that I did not dream some farrago of nonsense, which I usually dismissed from my mind as soon as I awoke. I had paid very little attention to the subject of dreams until I began to realize the fact that there was another state into which we could enter during sleep, where we could contact other planes of existence, and meet beings who were no longer living in the limited earth conditions, beings who could help and teach us-with whom contact could only have a beneficial result.

Sometimes these discarnate souls are strangers to us-teachers and helpers whose work it is to instruct those who are sufficiently eager and venturesome to seek to obtain spiritual instruction in this manner. Others may be the ones we have “loved and lost,” whose features and characters are engraven on our very hearts, and who also long to comfort and bless us, even if they cannot instruct us in spiritual law and philosophy, as the teachers can and do.

Because I realized the desirability of contacting the higher astral world, and bringing back a perfect memory of it, I resented the interference set up by the dream state through which I often found myself passing after leaving the real astral. After a while it dawned on me that there had begun to be a better retention of astral memory drawn through the dream experience; a thread of true memory running through the imaginary fabric of the dream material.

As soon as I had recognized this fact I determined to hold on to the dream, instead of impatiently dismissing it from my mind on waking.

By carefully sorting out the incidents of the dream, I made some interesting and helpful discoveries, prominent among them being the symbolical meaning contained in many of the apparently inexplicable happenings in the dream.

I learnt that our friends on the astral plane are aware of our difficulty in bringing the memory of their world back into the physical conditions, and in consequence, they co-operate with us before we leave the astral in an endeavour to present the impressions of what we have experienced there, or the guidance we may have received-in some form which might survive the disintegrating effect of the dream condition through which they knew we would probably pass before waking.

The form which most easily survived was one that could be incorporated with, or woven into, the dream in a symbolical form such as could be more or less easily interpreted by the mind when it awakes in the physical body. A careful study of these forms will repay the student, and open up a new and interesting field of investigation into the power of the mind, both conscious and subconscious.

Our will-power plays an important part in this branch of the subject. By recognizing the fact that our spirit co-operators on the astral are endeavouring to assist us to bring back some helpful material from their plane, we can gradually train our minds to accept and retain whatever is beneficial to us, and it seems to elude the destructive elements in the dream world better if it is disguised in symbolical form.

Why these destructive elements exist I don't know. It may be that they arise out of our subconscious collection of fears, inhibitions and failings which well up during sleep, but a persistent desire to reach out and hold on to that which is constructive and beneficial ultimately overcomes the tendency of the subconscious to interfere. As in everything else, practice makes perfect, and eventually overcomes all obstacles. This is specially true in the field of astral investigation.

At one period I was being very perturbed by family matters, which threatened to bring about a very serious and undesirable crisis unless something intervened to prevent it. Time was becoming short; the crisis seemed to draw nearer. It seemed almost impossible to avert it, and though we who were directly concerned knew we were in the right, yet everything seemed to be going wrong for us. There seemed no step that we could take to avoid the calamity we feared.

One morning I awoke, and immediately brought back a very clear memory of having been in the astral world with my husband. What I had heard or seen there, I could not remember, but on leaving it I had passed into a dream state, and my husband had accompanied me into it.

In the dream state I saw a cricket field, and lying on the ground were some stumps and a mallet. My husband went to the stumps, picked up two, and stuck them in the ground. To my amazement I saw that they were at least six feet high, and I thought to myself, "They are too large for him to hit properly," but my husband took up the mallet, looked round at me with a reassuring grin, lifted the mallet, and with a few well-aimed blows he knocked the stumps right into the ground, until they almost disappeared.

He turned and grinned again. "I've knocked those two on the head," he said, with deep satisfaction.

As I awoke, this incident was clear in every detail in my mind, and I immediately realized that the stumps were the two people who were causing the trouble that had hurt us so deeply.

Remember, it is important to seek the symbolical meaning of the dream as soon as possible after waking, because the mind is more susceptible to the true interpretation before it begins to register the impressions from the mundane world into which we are awakening.

The certainty that the symbolical interpretation I had placed on this dream was the true one, sustained and helped me through the critical days of waiting until we knew what would be decided in our case.

Within a very short time the statement that the two people were "being knocked on the head" was verified. That was exactly what happened in the end, and everything came to a happy conclusion all round. No one was hurt; the "knocking on the head" led to a change of mind in the right direction very suddenly, and, in the normal sense of the word, unexpectedly, though not to me. Indeed, I should have been very surprised if it had not so happened, for I had

begun to find that one is never misled when one has learned to distinguish the real significance in dreams of this type.

On another occasion I had to tackle a business matter which had become very troublesome owing to the attitude of one person concerned in it. This person was renting some premises from me, and in order to force me to make some concessions that would have been grossly unfair to me, and quite outside the terms of our contract, she said she was going to vacate the house, and leave it on my hands at what was an extremely difficult time for such a thing to happen. She was aware of this fact, and exploited it to the fullest extent.

I felt quite helpless about the matter, and went to bed one night after having prayed that I might get some light given me in dealing with this unpleasant and difficult problem.

Once again I visited the astral plane, but probably because of my perturbed mental condition, I could not remember what had happened, except that I had received some spiritual comfort and sustenance there. I passed into the dream state, and dreamed that I saw a dog approaching me. I am very fond of animals, and am not particularly nervous even of strange dogs. However, this one approached me in an obviously unfriendly spirit. I noticed it was a light "ginger" colour, and as it came nearer it bared its teeth, and snarled in a most unpleasant way. It advanced with the apparent intention of attacking me.

My husband, who had seemingly accompanied me from the astral back into the dream, stood beside me, and as the dog approached, he said, "Don't worry; it can't bite you; it's only pretending to do so."

I immediately awoke, and remembered that the hair of the dog was of the same colour as that of the person who was causing me so much anxiety. Absurd as it may appear, there was also some definite yet subtle resemblance to her in the dog in other ways as well as the hair, which was of a pronounced and uncommon shade.

I acted on the assumption that my adversary could not bite me." I ignored her threats, and very soon proved that all her threatening tactics had been mere bluff, as she had realized the awkward position I should be placed in if she carried out her threat, and she had relied on my giving in to any unjust demand rather than face the alternative. Directly she realized that her conduct had no affect whatever on me (my dream upheld me and gave me confidence), she capitulated, and I had no further trouble in the matter.

A question arises as to how these symbols are given to, or received by us in these dreams. Do we, ourselves, manufacture them mentally? If so, how do we know what kind of symbol would be of most use to us as a warning or premonition? Are they chosen for us by other beings, discarnate souls who are living in the Great Beyond, and who may know more than we do about the events that are likely to affect us in the immediate future? If these souls are bound to us by ties of affection and mutual interest, it is possible that we discuss some of our problems with them on their own plane, and that illumination and guidance are received by us, not on trivial personal matters, but on those larger issues which may affect our work and progress.

I think this latter hypothesis may well be the true one, and that when we endeavour to bring the understanding we have gained through to the physical body, we find that we cannot bring the meaning through intact, and our own minds co-operate with those of our spirit helpers in making a selection of suitable symbols that will be easily understood by us on waking.

For instance, if the dreamer had a horror of drowning, that might be selected as a particular warning symbol. Another person might react in some definite manner to the idea of falling, flying, rain-clouds, stones, knives, or many other things.

As we draw near to our physical bodies after visiting one of the astral planes, memory of all we have seen and heard on these planes often seems to fade as we approach the physical. As our etheric body approaches the physical counterpart, the astral cord becomes shorter and thicker, and less elastic, and it is in my experience that when it has diminished to a few feet in length-sometimes a little more or less-consciousness and memory are apt to cease to operate. Why this is so, I do not know. I say "apt to cease to operate" because there are occasions when the consciousness is carried intact from the etheric into the physical, even when the etheric is functioning at short-distance range, and a complete memory of all that has occurred is brought forward into the physical brain. Probably the selection of symbols that would best suit the case is made on the etheric plane, and a mental picture is made up of them by ourselves and our spirit friends, so that should we, on nearing the physical, lose our consciousness of the astral scene we have taken part in, and even perhaps of the very mental pictures we decided upon, our spirit co-operators, who have not forgotten, can present the picture to us just before, or as, we are waking. They give it to us as a strong mental image, or series of images, throwing them on our brain like a magic lantern throws a picture on a screen; or it may be described as a form of astral hypnotism.

One of my pet horrors is any kind of crawling things, such as spiders, beetles, snakes, etc. I am far more frightened of them than I should be of a wolf or other wild and supposedly fierce animal. This idiosyncrasy of mine was used to good effect one night in the form of a symbolical dream. I was away from home at the time, having a specially pleasant holiday in the quiet restful home of a friend at Bath.

While there, I felt that I should probably contact my husband in the etheric world, and bring back the memory. One night I became aware that I had succeeded in projecting my etheric body, and also that I had managed to visit some higher plane, where I had seen and talked to my husband. On returning I had lost the memory of what had actually happened there, and felt very disappointed; then I found I was passing into a "dream state," and that my husband was somewhere near, though I could no longer see him.

In front of, and quite close to me, was a large, venomous-looking snake. It reared, and deliberately thrust its head toward me to strike me.

As it did so, I put out my hand, and rested it on the creature's slimy, repulsive-looking head. Afterwards I remembered with amazement that I had felt no horror, or even aversion, but only an intense feeling of pity. I found myself saying while I fondled its head:

"You poor thing! You can't hurt me. Oh! you poor thing!"

It did not bite me; its head sank down, and I immediately awoke in my physical body, remembering the episode in every detail, though I was aware that some astral experience had preceded it which I had forgotten. I felt impressed that the snake was a symbolical meaning to me of something about to happen, of which I must not allow myself to be frightened.

The next day I returned home, travelling on the Sunday. My house was empty, as it was my maid's "day out," so I quickly unpacked, and disposed of my luggage, and went into my sitting-room, where a large pile of letters awaited my attention. I opened a few at random, and then feeling rather tired after the journey, I thought I would only open one more. I picked up one which I could see was in the handwriting of a friend whom I had been asked to help, and previous to my visit to Bath I had been endeavouring to do so. I had only known her a short time, but she was a most interesting and attractive personality, though an invalid for some years.

When I looked at the words at the beginning of the letter, my senses reeled. Some of the foulest accusations that one human being could level at another were contained in that letter.

Horrible, poisonous, appalling statements. It was unbelievable. Never had I thought it possible that a human mind could frame such accusations, and as I read, I discovered to my further horror, that they were directed to me-referred to me unmistakably.

I felt myself go cold and faint with horror at the awful words that stared at me from the notepaper. I literally found my legs could not support me, and as I sank back into a chair that fortunately happened to be just beside me, the dream of the snake came back like a picture flashed suddenly into my mind from without. Simultaneously I knew that the snake symbolized the writer of the letter, and I remembered how I had known the snake could not and did not really want to hurt me, and at once my feelings completely changed, and I felt all aversion and repugnance immediately vanish, leaving only the deep sense of pity I had felt for the creature in my dream.

I definitely tried to visualize the writer of the letter and mentally extended my hand to her, placing it on her head, just as I had done with the snake. For the rest of the evening I felt uplifted and comforted, but I made up my mind to get to the bottom of the awful mystery. I did so with the help of a friend who lived nearer to the writer than I did, and we discovered that this poor soul had become mentally deranged through the inroads of old age and long-standing disease, which had ultimately and rather suddenly reached the brain, and that she had made these terrible accusations against several of her friends, especially those-strange as it may seem-to whom she was specially attached.

I should mention here that the letter had been written to me on the day preceding my dream, and I feel sure that my husband, and perhaps other discarnate friends, knew about it, and realized the shock it would give me, and helped to warn me by suggesting the dream. I have since had many repetitions of these kinds of dream experiences, and think they can be cultivated when once we are mentally open to their possibilities and significance.

Chapter 22. Animals And Their Etheric Bodies

THERE is no doubt whatever that we are beginning to realize the existence of the etheric body, and many scientists and serious investigators have given a good deal of time and attention to the matter during recent years. Much has been written on the subject of the aura, which has been detected, and even photographed by a certain apparatus fitted with a special lens.

Some people are gifted with a range of vision which seems to extend to a lesser or greater degree some distance farther than other normally sighted people can see.

Those who can do this often describe the aura as being luminous and coloured. The colours seem to vary somewhat, and include all the colours in the spectrum, but I have noticed there is a prevalence of different shades of gold, ranging from the palest yellow to a deep, brilliant reddish shade, and also of violet or purple, and its many varying tones.

I am sure that the aura is an emanation from the etheric body, and not from the physical, as some people appear to imagine.

There is some curious magnetic quality about it. Though I cannot often see the aura myself, I have been keenly aware of the magnetic power from it, and without turning round, I could feel that someone had come up noiselessly, and I could also sense to some extent the type of person, or the emotional or temperamental qualities they might possess. This power of sensing without seeing may be labelled "psychic" by many people. This word is now used to include whole multitudes of nebulous and vague suppositions. The dictionary definition given to it is: "Belonging to the human soul, spirit, or mind," and we can easily understand that the existence of the etheric body, which is the house of the soul, can be felt even when it cannot be seen objectively.

Though the dictionary uses the term "human soul," I have had convincing proof that animals also possess etheric bodies, which can manifest themselves during their physical life on earth, as well as after death, though to a somewhat more limited extent than the human can. I have felt a strong emanation from the body of an animal of whose presence I was unaware until I felt the electrical power coming from a certain direction. I have looked down (under the table, for instance) and found that a dog or cat had come into the room unperceived by me, and was standing or sitting in exactly the spot from which I had felt the magnetic current.

If we admit that animals possess an etheric body, we may suppose that this body will exist after death. I have had what to me was convincing evidence that animals do continue to live, and that their minds and memories function very much as those of human beings, in relation to their friends on earth.

I will relate one very striking example of after-death survival and manifestation of animal life. I have had several such, but this particular one happened recently and is very clear in my mind.

For many years my husband and I owned a very intelligent, domineering, autocratic, disobedient, belligerent, and withal lovable Pekingese. (Doesn't this description fit the majority of the breed?) Eleven years ago she died at the age of fourteen. My husband was profoundly attached to this dog, whom we had called "Ching," regardless of the fact that it was a female.

A few weeks ago I was awakened from a sound sleep by feeling something moving about on my bed, close to my right shoulder. I was lying on my left side, a little on my face. Whatever it was on the bed was patting or pawing my shoulder. I was rather startled for a moment, as the touch was so "solid" and definite. Remembering that nothing evil could touch me so long as I myself realized the paramount power of good, I pulled myself together, and tried to put my left hand and arm (on which I had been partly lying) out from under the bedclothes, and to reach back over my right shoulder in an endeavour to touch whatever it was that was touching me. In doing this I found, as had happened before in such cases, that I was partly cataleptic.

The room was not quite dark; I could see the fireplace, mantelpiece, and cupboard door opposite me.

Making a tremendous mental effort, I managed to extend my hand out and back over my shoulder. Anybody who has had a similar experience will understand how difficult a feat it is to move about at all during the cataleptic condition. If it is very deep, it is impossible to move at all for the time being, but even if one is only partly so, it feels as if the limbs are weighted with lead when we attempt to move them.

However, I succeeded, and my hand came into contact with a fluffy, furry object. Also, with an effort, I managed to ask, "Is it Ching?" The effort to move and speak was so great that I soon lost the power to do so, and collapsed into a deeper cataleptic state. My arm and hand dropped back again, and every limb stiffened.

As this was happening, I became conscious that my etheric body was moving slightly out from my physical, and I realized that my consciousness was beginning to operate in both bodies simultaneously. I have explained in a previous chapter that this phenomenon can take place under certain conditions, especially when this state of catalepsy is present.

Though my physical body was lying on its left side, facing the fireplace, which I could still see distinctly, I could now see, equally clearly, the foot and the right-hand side of the bed (to which my physical back was turned), and part of the room which was shut off from my range of physical vision.

A curious feature of these circumstances is that one seems to see the etheric objects with about the same-or only slightly more-clarity than that with which one sees the physical which is in great contrast to the vividness with which one sees surrounding objects when one is entirely dissociated from the physical. The darkness of the room appears to affect the etheric vision to about the same extent as it does the physical.

This, I think, may be entirely due to the cataleptic condition which limits the faculty of sight in the etheric body while it is so closely associated with the physical counterpart. As one is seeing in both bodies simultaneously, it may well be that the amount of consciousness of seeing is halved. As I say, this is usually more noticeable when the subject is in a state of entire or partial catalepsy, which I have found customary when power is being taken from us by the etheric operators in order to produce some definite manifestation on the physical plane.

As soon as I became aware that my faculty of sight was operating in my etheric body, and that I could see and feel without moving my physical body, I gave up all effort, and prepared myself to observe carefully anything that might happen.

At the foot of the bed I saw my husband standing. He was regarding with great interest the antics of the moving object on my bed.

Now I could use my etheric arm, and I put it on the furry object, and recognized at once the form of my little Pekingese. I passed my etheric hand over head, back, and under her chest. When she realized that I was doing so, she nearly went mad with delight. She plunged, and leapt, and rolled over. As she rolled on my hand, I felt that she weighed about the same as she had in her earthly life. The soft silky hair on her chest, and the long, hanging ears were the same. I remembered how, long ago, she used to plunge about and roll over on my hand while I was trying to stroke her when I awoke in the mornings, and she knew that at last the time had arrived when I would speak to her and touch her again after the long night's silence.

During this time I could see both my husband and the dog, and though the light from the window was dim, I noticed there was a kind of faint, luminous glow in the vicinity of my husband's body, and that of the dog. As I fondled her, my husband answered the question I had asked when I first tried to touch her, saying: "Yes, it is Ching," as if he was afraid I should doubt the evidence of my own senses unless he assured me that it was really so.

As always, after such an experience, I felt comforted and soothed. I did not seek to prolong the experience, but mentally asking a blessing on my husband and Ching, and giving heartfelt thanks for the inestimable boon of their visit to me, then I gave up conscious control of my etheric body, and after a moment or two's quiet reflection in my physical body of all that had happened, I sank into a deep, restful, and dreamless sleep till morning came.

Chapter 23. Important Scientific Corroboration

IN the early part of this present year-1937, a most important record of an “out of the body” experience was read by no less a person than Sir Auckland Geddes to the Members of the Royal Medical Society. It was the occasion of the bicentenary of that Society, and was fully recorded in the Scotsman and also in the issue of The Edinburgh Medical journal for June, 1937. This record contained remarkable corroboration of many of my own experiences, some of which I have already related to you, but one-the crowning and most uplifting manifestation that has ever come my way-I have reserved for a later chapter in this book.

Sir Auckland Geddes described the document which he read as the experience of a man who had passed into the very portals of death, and retained his full consciousness while out of his body, and when medical treatment forced his etheric body to return to the physical, he brought back a complete and detailed memory of all he had seen and done in the etheric. The record was immediately taken down by a skilled secretary.

Sir Auckland Geddes said the existence of the record had been known to some of the teachers in the Society, but he requested that anyone who knew to whom this strange experience befell would respect the anonymity and professional secrecy in which the communication was veiled.

Sir Auckland then proceeded to read the following extract from the record:

On Saturday, November 9th, a few minutes after midnight, I began to feel very ill, and by 2 o'clock was definitely suffering from acute gastro-enteritis, which kept me vomiting and purging until about 8 o'clock. By 10 o'clock I had developed all the symptoms of very acute poisoning; intense gastro-intestinal pain, diarrhea; pulse and respirations becoming quite impossible to count. I wanted to ring for assistance, but found I could not, and so quite placidly gave up the attempt. I realized I was very ill, and very quickly reviewed my whole financial position; thereafter at no time did my consciousness appear to me to be in any way dimmed, but I suddenly realized that my consciousness was separating from another consciousness, which was also me. These for purposes of description we could call the A and B consciousness, and throughout what follows the ego attached itself to the A consciousness. The B personality I recognized as belonging to the body, and as my physical condition grew worse and the heart was fibrillating rather than beating, I realized that the B consciousness belonging to the body was beginning to show signs of becoming composite, that is, built up of “consciousness” from the head, the heart, the viscera, &c. These components became more individual, and the B consciousness began to disintegrate, while the A consciousness which was now me, seemed to be altogether outside my body, which it could see. Gradually I realized that I could see not only my body and the bed in which it was, but everything in the whole house and garden, and then I realized that I was seeing not only “things” at home, but in London and in Scotland, in fact wherever my attention was directed it seemed to me; and the explanation which I received, from what source I do not know, but which I found myself calling to myself my mentor, was that I was free in a time dimension of space, wherein “now” was in some way equivalent to “here” in the ordinary three-dimensional space of everyday life. I next realized that my vision included not only “things” in the ordinary three-dimensional world, but also “things” in these four or more dimensional places that I was in.

From now on the description is and must be entirely metaphorical, because there are no words which really describe what I saw, or rather appreciated. Although I had no body, I had what appeared to be perfect two-eyed vision, and what I saw can only be described in this

way, that I was conscious of a psychic stream flowing with life through time, and this gave me the impression of being visible, and it seemed to me to have particularly intense iridescence. I understood from my mentor that all our brains are just end organs projecting as it were from the three-dimensional universe into the psychic stream, and flowing with it into the fourth and fifth dimensions. Around each brain, as I saw it, there seemed to be what I can only describe in ordinary words as a condensation of the psychic stream, which formed in each case as though it were a cloud; only it was not a cloud. While I was just appreciating this, the mentor who was conveying information to me explained that the fourth dimension was in everything existing in the three-dimensional space, and at the same time everything in the three-dimensional space existed in the fourth dimension, and also in the fifth dimension, and I at the time quite clearly understood what was meant, and quite understood how “now” in the fourth-dimensional universe was just the same to all intents and purposes as “here” in a three-dimensional universe—that is to say a four-dimensional being was everywhere in the “now” just as one is “everywhere” in the “here” in a three-dimensional view of things. I then realized that I myself was a condensation, as it were, in the psychic stream, a sort of cloud that was not a cloud, and the visual impression I had of myself was blue. Gradually I began to recognize people, and I saw the psychic condensation attached to A, B, C, D, E, F, and to quite a number of men that I knew, especially to G and H. In addition I saw quite a number of people that I know had very little psychic condensation at all attached to them. In addition to those just mentioned, I saw “I” very clearly, and she also gave a visual impression of blueness. “A” gave purple and dark red “B” pink; “D” rather indefinite grey-brown; “E” pearly; and “F” apricot colour; “G” was definitely brown. Each of these condensations varied from all others in bulk, sharpness of outline, and apparent solidity.

Just as I was beginning to grasp all these I saw “A” enter my bedroom; I realized she got a terrible shock, and I saw her hurry to the telephone; I saw my doctor leave his patients and come very quickly, and heard him say, or saw him think, “He is nearly gone.” I heard him quite clearly speaking to me on the bed, but I was not in touch with the body, and could not answer him. I was really cross when he took a syringe and rapidly injected my body with something which I afterwards learned was camphor. As the heart began to beat more strongly, I was drawn back, and I was intensely annoyed, because I was so interested, and just beginning to understand where I was and what I was “seeing.” I came back into the body really angry at being pulled back, and once I was back all the clarity of vision of anything and everything disappeared, and I was just possessed of a glimmer of consciousness which was suffused with pain.

It is surprising to note that this dream, vision, or experience has shown no tendency to fade like a dream would fade, nor has it shown any tendency that I am aware of to grow or to rationalize itself as a dream would do. I think that the whole thing simply means that but for medical treatment of a peculiarly prompt and vigorous kind, I was dead to the three-dimensional universe. If this is so, and if, in fact, the experience of liberation of consciousness in the fourth-dimensional universe is not imagination, it is a most important matter to place on record. Since my return with the injections there had been no repetition of any sort or kind of the experience or of the clear understanding that I seemed to have while I was free from the body.

“Thus ended the record,” said Sir Auckland. “What are we to make of it?” he asked. “Of one thing only can we be quite sure. It is not fake. Without certainty of this I should not have brought it to your notice. But, was it a dream, or does it record a symbolic vision of one aspect of reality translated into adequate words? I do not know. Whichever or whatever it was it provides us with a scheme that helps to make picturable to our minds things otherwise difficult to grasp. First it has helped me to define the idea of a psychic continuum spread out

in time like a plasmic net. It does more; it provides a comprehensible background for the soul paleontology of Jung, and it seems to throw a flood of light on the meaning of soul abysses discovered by the method of Freud. It brings telepathy, clairvoyance, spiritualism, and indeed, all the parapsychic manifestations into the domain of the picturable. It also provides a rational-seeming background for such ideas of the group or national soul and such a conception as the psychic atmosphere. But, most important, it makes the idea of the lifelong unity of body and soul much simpler to grasp.

“Of course,” added Sir Auckland Geddes, “I do not imagine there is a visible psychic stream, but I do quite definitely believe that the record I have read presents in words one aspect of Man’s complicated being and relationships, as these were symbolized in the mind of a man at the point of death. The clouds of personality, that were not clouds, as the record says, show how inapt to describe this adventure in, or dream of, a world unknown to our five senses, ordinary words are. Personally I regard the record as a valuable symbolical impression of a man’s body-soul as it disintegrates in death, and of the existence of a racial psycho-plasmic net extended in time. There is one important point that we must notice before I pass on. There is absolutely nothing in the record which is metaphysical. The whole adventure, if such it were, took place on the plane of nature. It is thus to be sharply distinguished from the records of the spiritual adventures of the mystics. These belong to the plane of spirit, which is supernatural.”

I do not understand why Sir Auckland Geddes thinks that this particular experience is to be “sharply distinguished from the spiritual adventures of the mystics,” because they belong “to the plane of spirit, which is supernatural.”

To my mind, it seems evident that many of the mystics’ “spiritual adventures” were probably “ordinary” out of the body experiences such as Sir Auckland related, though in some cases one might be justified in classing them as metaphysical or “spiritual,” because the actual facts regarding what the subject had seen while out of his body may have been interfered with or supplemented by dream matter during that difficult stage when the etheric body seeks to re-occupy the physical, and endeavours to establish consciousness therein. On the other hand, there are many records of “out of the body” experiences that have been brought back untouched and unspoiled by any imaginary matter. I respectfully submit that Sir Auckland Geddes is wrong in regarding this particular adventure as unique. There are many such authenticated records in the annals of psychic science, but it is probably the first time such an experience has been brought openly before such a body as the Royal Medical Society.

On the same occasion on which he read the foregoing record, Sir Auckland referred to the hitherto incompletely explored area of Man’s being. He remarked that “medical students learned some zoology, physics, chemistry, anatomy, physiology, pathology, etc., etc., but they were never given a chance systematically to study man as a whole.

“Beyond their scientific knowledge of man lay an incompletely explored area in which important things happened without discoverable physical cause. But they had all become so sure that science was the only door to knowledge that they tended to ignore the older ways of approach. If they could re-awaken the sense of untrammelled wonder, which in the days of the Renaissance gave birth to science itself, they should make fresh starts along new lines; but for the time being, and for a little longer, science was queen of the mind. The brilliant record and achievement of science showed how rich had been the prize won for each of them by disciplined curiosity, but that must not obscure from them the fact that to-day science was running into blind alleys from which it could only emerge by escaping from direct touch with human understanding. They could not grasp man as a whole. This did not mean that it was impossible to improve their understanding. On the contrary, once they had ceased to fear

what seemed to them non-rational, and recognized that human reason could not grasp all reality, they could get to know a lot about him. The body-soul of a man was only the house in which his real self lived. Man was also a spirit, and this spirit in some way had become a partner in the body-soul, making the diagrammatic formula of man, body-soul-spirit.”

Chapter 24. The Light That Never Fails

IN the last chapter but one I mentioned the luminous glow that surrounded the etheric body of my husband and the dog when they visited me; also the fact that the aura of a living person displays a more or less radiant quality which appears to fluctuate according to the health or emotional state of the individual. Judging from all I have heard from reliable sources, and from what I have seen myself, I believe that the more highly evolved the soul (meaning the mind, personality, and character of the person) might be, the more brilliant would be the emanation of light from the etheric body.

Those students of the subject who have learned how to become conscious of-and in-both bodies, and can exteriorize the etheric, and contact other planes and beings, undoubtedly show a greater degree of light in the aura than the people who are so "fixed" in their physical bodies (either by lack of initiative in psychical matters, or doubts as to the possibility of attaining personal success in any efforts they might make in such directions) that they never exteriorize or function in the etheric at all under normal conditions.

By functioning in the etheric, I do not refer to the mere act of projection, which is nothing in itself, leads nowhere, and is simply a means without an end. As already stated, it can and does take place under the shock and stress of an accident, explosion, or while under the influence of an anaesthetic.

The crucial point is: what use do we make of our powers in this direction?

If we so desire, we can learn much, both on the astral, and on our own physical plane, because the faculty of loosening the etheric-rightly understood and used-leads to greater sensitivity. Whether this sensitivity makes us open to destructive suggestions, or hopeful, illuminating, and constructive ideas, depends entirely on our will-power and freedom of choice, which we all have the God-given power to use, or not use, according to our desires. If we are seeking truth in our investigations, we shall find ourselves reacting to, and attracting, the thoughts that are the best for us.

I read somewhere, but do not know the author's name, the following words:

Seek truth at all times; do not grovel with the false things of the world. Truth leads upwards, untruth downward. Truth holds kinship with God, untruth belongs to the Evil One. Truth is open as the day, and its presence is light and joy, while falsity reigns in darkness and dishonour. Battle against error and wrong; be not turned aside by every wind that blows, but be strong in purpose, and keep fast hold on the hand of Truth; she will prove a faithful guide.

All the so-called psychic gifts, such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, inspirational speaking or writing, manifest more strongly in an individual whose etheric body is easily loosened from the physical. An undue degree of looseness may carry with it certain disadvantages or dangers. Some authorities on the subject believe that an ignorant and indiscriminate use of such a faculty would lead to many mental and physical troubles, particularly epilepsy. To know that one can use a certain power or thing, and to choose to use it well is a fine achievement in itself, I think. Socrates said:

There is no difference between knowledge and temperance; for he who knows what is good and embraces it, who knows what is bad and avoids it, is learned and temperate; but they who know very well what ought to be done, and yet do quite otherwise, are ignorant and stupid.

To be satisfied with mere eating and drinking, and the material conditions of life, does not take us any distance on the road to progress. No matter how attractive and comfortable our surroundings may be, we must not stagnate in them, and so fail to reach out to the higher, but more subtle beauties that lie just beyond the ordinary range of our physical senses. This is so well expressed in the following words

*Thou may'st not rest in any lovely thing,
Thou, who wert formed to seek and to aspire
For no fulfilment of thy dreams can bring
The answer to thy measureless desire.
The beauty of the round, green world is not
Of the world's essence; far within the sky
The tints which make the bubble bright are wrought
The bubble bursts; the light can never die.*

L. LARCOM.

So many writers and thinkers of the past seem to have been impressed to use the idea of brilliance, light, colour, or radiance in describing conditions, people, or objects of the Other World. They have got the mental idea of an actual objective fact. The etheric bodies of those souls who have permanently left the earth plane-the so-called dead-are strangely brilliant when one sees them in contrast to the darker, duller tones of the physical world. When they are living on their own natural plane their bodies would be more in keeping with the surrounding atmosphere and scenery. The whole general appearance of the higher astral planes is considerably lighter than that of earth, as I will describe to you in a later chapter.

Again, if the soul of a person still living in the physical body, but approaching death, exteriorizes and makes itself visible to any other person on earth, it is seen to be extremely radiant. Sometimes this actual radiance is the only indication that an astral visitor (whether still of the earth or from a higher plane) is present; the actual form itself is not seen.

Many people who do not think of themselves as being possessed of psychic powers, see unmistakable rays, streaks, or balls of light, for which they cannot account.

These are usually emanations from an independent etheric body. The appearance of the light sometimes lasts for only a second or two. I think that the length of time, and the size and intensity of the light, depend on some momentary fusing of the magnetic essence of both the astral visitor and the observer. In my own case, and according to the experiences related to me by reliable witnesses, the longest and most striking manifestations of light have occurred to me just as I was waking from sleep, and known that my astral was slightly exteriorized, though I was mentally functioning consciously and clearly in my physical body.

On one occasion, when staying at a friend's house, I awoke and felt my attention drawn to the right-hand side of the room. There I saw a most brilliant light, which, as I looked at it, proceeded to divide itself into hundreds of separate rays, which arched themselves in most graceful and symmetrical fashion to about eight or ten feet in height, playing like a beautiful fountain of golden fire for at least five minutes. I lay and watched it, fascinated by its beauty. It declined gradually, exactly as if it had been animated by some power which had "run down," like a battery.

I felt that it was a manifestation of the presence of a "loosened" soul, one who was about to die. Actually, I think I had been completely exteriorized myself while asleep, and had been with both my husband and this other person, who was a keen worker in spiritual and psychical matters, and both he and I had then known that his soul was preparing for departure from earth conditions. At the time, this was merely a psychic impression on my part, but was

very soon proved to be correct by other events that quickly followed, terminating in the death of this friend a short time after this demonstration.

On another occasion, in my own house, I was sleeping on the ground floor in a room leading into the garden. One side of the room is entirely of glass, so one gets a good view of the garden.

One night I awoke with the familiar feeling that I had just returned from some astral experience, and found I was lying with my face turned toward the window, outside which a large poplar tree stands, about six feet away. To my astonishment, the centre and several of the branches were lit up by a most vivid and dazzling display of many lights. I turned my head this way and that to see if there was any "normal" reason for the phenomenon, such as powerful headlights from a car on the promenade, but there was nothing to account for it. As I looked, the lights grew in brilliance till the effect resembled that of the well-known and popular "Golden Rain" in a firework display.

It continued for several moments, and was a delight to behold. As in the previous manifestations of a similar kind, it died down gradually as if the "life" of it had been withdrawn. Again I got the feeling that it was the forerunner of another passing of an evolved and progressed soul, which turned out to be true. It happened a few days later.

Chapter 25. More About Light

ACCORDING to many writers and authorities on the subject, rays and streams of light are often visible at the actual moment of-or just before-death. Andrew Jackson Davies gives instances to this effect in his writings, and I once had an opportunity of witnessing an unmistakable demonstration of this kind in the case of a relative by marriage who was passing over to the Other Side.

This relative was a man of seventy-six, who had been extremely active all his life. Though he suffered from heart trouble and other complications for some years, he was usually doing some work about his house or garden; in fact, he was doing so until a few days before his passing.

On January 7th, some complications of a difficult nature set in, and the doctor assured the family that, as the patient drew near to his passing, it would be necessary to have expert nursing and attention, and he strongly advised them to send him to a nursing-home. Acting on this advice, they agreed; an ambulance quickly arrived and conveyed him to a local nursing-home within easy walking distance of their house.

The family (his invalid wife and three daughters) were able to visit him frequently during the daytime, but were rather disturbed at the idea of leaving him alone (except for the night nurse at the home) all night, as all his life he had been accustomed to his wife sleeping in the same bedroom, and the certainty that his eldest daughter was within easy call, and would be with him at any moment. One of the daughters was suffering from heart trouble herself, another was recovering from an indisposition; the third had to look after her mother and a sister-in-law who had been extremely helpful, and was not very well herself.

I had a strong impression that I must ask to be allowed to be with the patient during the nights till he passed over. I felt that my husband, who was the patient's brother, would wish me to be with him during the nights until his passing, so that when the time came I might help him in the same way that I had helped my husband should he happen to pass during the night time. I had a strong conviction that he would do so, and felt it would comfort his family to know that he had someone whom he knew with him, and who would tell them exactly how he passed.

So at 10 p.m. on the night of January 9th, 1936, I arrived at the nursing-home. A terrible gale was raging; torrents of rain were falling, and the wind blew with tremendous force.

The sister in charge had told me that afternoon that it might possibly be a week before my brother-in-law passed over, and suggested I should defer the sitting-up at night with him until later on. Quite naturally they did not welcome the idea of strangers being in the home all night. Obviously some people might make themselves a nuisance, but I assured them I would not be a trouble in any way, so they kindly placed an armchair at my disposal, where I could sit about five feet away from the patient, and watch him with the aid of a good light from an electric table-lamp on the mantelpiece.

When I arrived he was only partly conscious, but seemed to realize I was present. He had a healthy pink colour in his face, head, neck, and body, and his feet were nice and warm.

Acting on impressions arising out of previous experiences, I had made up my mind not to try to seek any possible phenomena, but to "give out" to the patient in every way instead of using up any power myself.

I gave him tiny draughts of water in a teaspoon, and wiped out his mouth with the glycerine and honey concoction which I had brought with me ready mixed, just as I had done in my husband's case. This and the water evidently comforted him, as he smiled slightly each time, and sighed contentedly. Between doing this, I sat in the armchair, facing him sideways, when I could watch every expression.

Mentally I called on three doctor friends in Spirit Life; the three that helped me with my husband's passing. I asked them to help in assisting the etheric body to withdraw from the physical gently and peacefully.

About midnight I became strongly aware of the presence of these doctor friends. I did not see them, but I knew they were there. Every hour, the nurse who was on night duty in the home came in on her rounds and looked at the patient.

The gale was dying down, and there was peace and quiet in the room. Occasionally the patient moved slightly into a more comfortable position, but otherwise seemed to be unaware of, and untroubled by, his surroundings. His breathing still remained regular, though rather heavy, and his colour good.

In between attending to his physical needs, and adjusting bedclothes according to his temperature, I persistently held the thought of peace and hope over him, thoughts which are so well expressed in the lines by Adelaide A. Procter:

*Child, do not fear,
We shall reach our home to-night,
For the sky is clear,
And the waters bright
And the breezes have scarcely strength
To unfold that little cloud,
That like a shroud
Spreads out its fleecy length
Then have no fear.*

Soon after 4 a.m. I went and sat in the armchair by the fire. About 5 or 10 minutes past 4 o'clock I saw-clearly and objectively-a bright stream of light playing between the head and feet of the patient.

This stream or line of light was of a reddish-gold colour, and very vivid. It might be likened to the colour of forked lightning when seen in the distance over the sea. It was rather arched in shape, like a crescent, but the arch not quite so accentuated. The ends of the stream of light did not seem to be attached to the physical head and feet, but to something invisible to me, that seemed to be about six or eight inches immediately above the physical head and feet.

The "stream" seemed to be alive, exactly as Andrew Jackson Davies has described it, as if animated by a current of vital electricity.

I was able to observe it for about thirty or forty seconds. After that it faded, so I rose and went over to the bed. The patient still went on breathing naturally as before. I felt impressed not to touch the body in the region in which the light had been playing (he was lying on his back), but by putting my hand carefully under the bedclothes sideways, I assured myself that his hips, legs, and feet were comfortably warm.

I sat down again, and at 4.45 I noticed that the part of the room in which the bed stood became enveloped in a kind of mist, so that it was isolated or shut off from its surroundings, forming a kind of little world of its own. The outer edge of the mist was roughly circular in

form. It was clearest in the centre, immediately round the patient, then became denser toward the edge. It was rather like looking at a scene through a circular window or porthole.

The clearance within the mist was lit by the luminous glow which I have mentioned several times before, and within this lighter part were several human forms. Probably the glow was produced by the emanations from these astral bodies. One of them stood very near the bed, between myself and the patient. Part of the bed was blotted out by the form, which appeared to be opaque. The figure and face had their back to me, but partly turned to the right, so that I saw the profile. It was that of a girl of about eighteen years of age. She was dressed in an old-fashioned manner, of about the time 1880, I guessed. She wore a greyish or lavender-coloured dress, with a slight bustle effect, and deep flounces on the skirt. The bodice was moulded tightly to her figure, which was extremely slim. She was bending over the patient in an attentive and expectant manner.

(Afterwards the patient's relatives told me this was his sister, who died at the age of eighteen, and whom I had never seen.)

This vision lasted about the same time as the stream of light, then disappeared. I remained seated in my chair; the patient still breathed. Then suddenly a strange stillness crept into the room. One cannot describe it. It is like a complete suspension of everything, as if all life is stopped for a few moments. During it) I heard the breathing going on, but this extraordinary stillness still persisted. I had noticed it on a previous occasion while watching a dying person.

I got up and stood by the bedside again. The breathing stopped, quite suddenly, yet with absolute ease. There was no gasp or sign of the slightest discomfort; simply a withdrawal. One could not think of it in any other way. It did not seem like "death," that is, as many people visualize death when they think of it as a difficult or painful process, but I knew he had ceased to function in his physical body.

I did not call the nurse immediately, as I was impressed to talk quietly to him, telling him to dissociate himself from the physical, and give himself entirely into the care of the Spirit-Friends that were around him, with absolute confidence. Then I called Nurse, and together we gave the last physical attentions to the castoff body that remained behind. All the time I held the thoughts of peace and well-being positively in my mind.

May I say here that I feel it is a very great help to the departing spirit (who may not have entirely disentangled his new body from the old one, and who may be conscious to some extent of influences and personalities around him) if some familiar and trusted person attends to, or assists in, those "after-death" attentions called "laying out" which have of necessity to be carried out so quickly after death has occurred? I know that some people look upon it as an unpleasant or even uncanny task, but surely any action, any service which may give comfort to another soul in an important change or crisis., should be looked upon as a privilege, a thing of beauty, a chance to serve, and what better time is there than at that greatest change of all, the "road's last turn," which, as Horatius Bonar said, leads:

*Where the hidden wound is healed,
Where the blighted life re-blooms,
Where the smitten heart the freshness
Of its buoyant youth resumes;
Where the love that here we lavish
On the withering leaves of time,
Shall have fadeless flowers to fix on
In an ever spring-bright clime;
Where we find the joy of loving,*

*As we never loved before,
Loving on, unchilled, unhindered,
Loving once and evermore;
Brother, we shall meet and rest
'Mid the holy and the blest!*

I must confess I was tempted to omit the last two lines, because I don't want to rest too much "Over There," and I hope I shan't meet only the "holy and the blest," unless their "holiness" has been diluted with a sense of humour, a spirit of joy, and even fun, as so many of our Spirit-Friends assure us they possess, and which, after experiencing many years of communication between the two worlds, I believe to be true.

Since I had the opportunity I have just recorded of witnessing the display of radiant light just before death, I have heard from several people that they have observed very much the same phenomenon during the dissociation of the physical and etheric bodies.

Chapter 26 A Wonderful Experience

AFTER having made several excursions into the Astral World during sleep, and accomplished other short-distance exteriorizations while awake, there came to me the crowning adventure-the most convincing and satisfying experience of my whole life.

Never in my wildest dreams had I dared to expect such a wonderful revelation of that world which lies beyond the normal sight and hearing of our earthly existence. Ever since my husband's death in February, 1935, I had prayed daily, morning and evening, that I might be allowed-some day-to visit the place, locality, condition-call it what you will-in which my husband now dwelt, worked, and lived his life apart from me. Yes, "apart" is the word one is compelled to use when referring to separation by death in the "bodily" sense. No matter how great one's belief in the Unseen World may be, the absence of constant objective evidence of the dear one's presence is frequently a great strain on even the staunchest faith.

I prayed that such a blessing might be vouchsafed to me once, and that if God's will permitted it, I would rest contentedly on the memory of whatever I saw or heard for the remainder of my life on earth.

As I say, I prayed continually that this should happen. Several months passed, and I still sent up the same prayer. "Lord, if it be according to Thy will, and only so, let me see my husband on his own plane, in his present natural condition; that condition or place to which it has pleased Thee to call him. Let me see him as he really IS, and I will ask no more. I will continue with whatever earthly tasks shall come my way, happily and thankfully, if I may have this one definite experience."

The most marvelous happenings seem to come to us unexpectedly. On Saturday morning, September 14th, 1935, the day opened for me with its usual round of work and domestic duties. It gave no hint of the almost incredible adventure that was to be mine before the evening came.

It was a fine sunny day, so after a rather late and simple luncheon of salad and brown bread, I sauntered out to the garden to see if there were any odd gardening jobs to be done in order to ensure that the place might present an appearance of Sabbatarian orderliness on the following day. I took with me my husband's watch, which I usually place on a table in the summer-house, where I can pop in and remind myself of the time; any practical gardener knows how it flies when once one has become engrossed in dislodging a healthy crop of weeds from their unlawful territory, or removing a few depressing rows of old pea haulms and netting. (Absorbing work, isn't it, fellow-enthusiasts?)

Well, on this particular afternoon I did not leave the watch in the summer-house, but wandered round the garden holding it in my hand. On the previous day I had noticed several things that needed immediate attention, so I strolled round to make a mental review of them prior to attacking the most urgent ones.

A spade, a fork, a wheel-barrow, and a definite task in the garden usually draw me to them with an irresistibility that more artistically inclined mortals accord to a beautiful picture, or a perfect musical instrument, so it was a rather unusual thing for me to find that-almost unconsciously-I had strayed away from that part of the garden that needed attention, and I had wandered to the summer-house.

I went in, and as usual, placed the watch on the table, but contrary to habit, I lay down on a long, low shelf that forms a seat or couch. As I did so I looked at the time. It was two minutes before three o'clock.

I was not tired, but I lazily stretched myself out straight on my back, just relaxing and resting. Within a few seconds I realized that I was entering a kind of "dozy" condition without being actually asleep; at least I was quite conscious of the fact that I had just placed the watch on the table, and that I could still see the large Prunus bush just outside the summer-house doorway.

Suddenly an extraordinary sensation came to me. I knew I was travelling in some strange, inexplicable manner, yet I was unaware of making any effort or voluntary movement of my own. To this day I cannot make up my mind as to whether I passed through space, or space passed by me.

As the man whose "out of the body" experience Sir Auckland Geddes referred to, said: "There are no words which really describe what one sees or appreciates during such an experience." One can only relate it in simple but inadequate language, with absolute regard to its essential truth, and without exaggeration of any kind.

I arrived, without understanding how or in what manner I had arrived, in a place whose like I had never seen before or since, either in dream or reality.

No play, no picture, no effort of the imagination had ever conjured up such beauty as I was now aware of. This beauty was not only visible in the surroundings and scenery: it was felt. It was like a living stream through my very being, charging me with a sense of absolute well-being, blessedness, safety; an over-all and overwhelming sense of bliss indescribable.

I lay-not on the prosaic and rather hard shelf in the summer-house-but on a soft, resilient, sandy beach. It appeared to be on the bank of a river that opened out in the distance to a wide lake or sea. In the centre of this wider expanse of water stood a small island. On it there were one or two white stone buildings of an impressive and beautiful architectural design. Coming back to what I mentally designated the mainland, I saw there were woods of an indescribably beautiful and restful green. Over all this there hung a curious kind of iridescent glow, the colour of which I find hard to describe, but a soft gold gives the best idea, I think. The very atmosphere was filled with this softly brilliant, yet restful, golden radiance. The blue of the water, and of the sky behind and over the island, also defies description. I suppose that on a perfect day it can be seen on the Mediterranean, or something approaching it. But even the beauty of the scenery was nothing to the inner sense of beauty that penetrated one's whole being.

Without surprise, I saw my husband kneeling beside me, his left arm supporting my shoulder. I looked in his face, and realized that my prayer had been answered-answered fully and completely.

Even in his prime, in the earliest years of our earthly life together, I had never seen him looking as I saw him now. He was the same, yet there were differences. A healthy tan showed on his face and neck. His hair had lost its greyness, and was once again thick, wavy, and a light brown in colour. His eyes shone with a healthy clearness. He appeared to be dressed in white flannels (a favourite form of dress when he was on earth), and as far as I could tell, the texture and cut were very similar to those that men wear during the warm summer earthly days.

He spoke to me, and whilst doing so, he leaned over me, looking into my face intently, as if he wished to impress every syllable on my memory for ever. I shall never forget his words; they are engraved on my mind, and nothing can ever eradicate them.

He said: “You are only here for a little while. Try to hold and remember all I am telling you. Do not trouble to remember the details of the scenery or anything else, beautiful as it is, but remember every word I am telling you, because time is short.

“Tell everybody-everybody that will listen -that there is this Other Life. It is a real life in a real world. It is an active, interesting world. We are happy in it. All is well with us on this plane.

“God is here.

“We are nearer Him. All the best and most hopeful ideas that Christian religion on the earth has ever held out about a future life are poor compared to this wonderful reality.

“Tell everybody. It’s true. All that our religion has tried to teach us is true. Love and memory persist. We wait here for those we love. I am waiting for you, but I am happy while I am waiting-happy and busy. So much to tell you, but time is short. This wonderful visit is an answer to your prayer. You won’t forget, will you, that you must do all you can to make people realize that there is this Other World and every opportunity for progress?

“Oh! if they only knew the marvelous life that can be theirs, they would do all in their power to be ready for it, so tell them. Don’t forget. Tell everybody, and remember I am here, waiting for you, and that I love you now and always.”

He said much in this strain, and I could see on every feature, in every line of his face, his intense desire to impress me with the great, yet simple, truth, “We live, we remember, we love, we are happy.”

As he paused after speaking this last sentence, I was filled with gratitude and wonder. A heavenly (no other word would suffice to describe it) feeling of well-being and certainty with regard to the present, the future, and all that life might bring now or in the hereafter, flowed through my very being.

My husband bent forward, and I saw he was about to speak again, but I did a most disastrous and unfortunate thing.

I thought to myself: “When I go back to my physical body that now lies in the summer house, I will never allow myself again to feel depressed or lonely. I will live on this wonderful experience that God has mercifully given me; I will ask for no further gift or blessing for myself. How happy I shall always be now that I know how intensely beautiful is the place in which my husband lives.”

Alas! as I thought of my physical body in the summer-house I felt myself receding from my husband, the beach, and all the surrounding scenery, and again I felt that swift passing through, or being passed by, space that I experienced on my journey to them.

I felt myself re-enter my physical body, which was still lying just as I had left it, with an abruptness which caused me a severe shock in the region of my solar plexus. It was exactly as if I had been kicked or hit in that part of the body. The pain disappeared almost as quickly as it came, and I realized that I was immediately wide awake with a perfect memory, intact in every detail, of all that I had seen and heard. Most wonderful of all, I still retained the glorious feeling of happiness and well-being that I had felt Over There.

I reached out my hand for the watch, and found it was half-past three, so as far as I could calculate, I must have been on that wonderful Other World plane for approximately half an hour.

The feeling of upliftment and bliss remained with me for several minutes, then gradually faded, as if it were of too delicate a nature, too fine a vibration, to play for longer on the coarse physical instrument, or in the dense atmosphere of earth. But even when it had gone, I could recall something of its beauty. I knew what it had meant to me, and that some day it would be mine again-when as Whittier said:

*I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place.
Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,
And flows forever through Heaven's green expansions,
The river of Thy peace.
There, from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find at last, beneath Thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long.*

Chapter 27. The Outward And Inward Man

WHEN once we grasp the fact that the etheric body, the “inward man,” exists, fear of old age and death are minimized to such an extent that it no longer has the power to make us shrink from the natural processes of decay which attack the outward man. So soon as we realize that the casting off of this outward man means joy, freedom, and a wider life for the inward man, we shall learn to view physical death as a friend rather than as an enemy.

“Though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor. iv. 16).

It is the apparent finality of death that has caused so many people to view all signs of approaching age, such as grey hairs, wrinkles, decreasing energy, as reminders of an ugly and terrifying fact that they wish to ignore as long as they possibly can.

George MacDonald wrote: “Age is not all decay; it is the ripening, the swelling of fresh life within that withers and bursts the husk.”

Let us remember this, and dwell on the fact that until the husk is withered, the fresh, real life cannot manifest perfectly and completely. Granted, if we become aware of the “inward man,” and learn to be conscious in, as well as of him, we shall be able to taste in advance some of the joys of spiritual freedom.

The realization of this etheric body is a vital thread running through literature throughout the ages, including the Bible itself. Philosophers, writers, poets, artists of all kinds and nationalities have referred to it.

In bereavement, this knowledge takes away the sting that Death can plant in our hearts, because we regard him as our worst enemy. Even those who lead exemplary lives, fortified under ordinary conditions of fairly good health and a prospect of many years of useful activity before them-by the teachings of orthodox Religion and the moral satisfaction arising from good work well done-have often confessed to me that they have a horror of death. If they but understood even the elements of the real truth regarding the “inward man,” they would be able to say with Coleridge:

*Hath he not always treasures, always friends,
The good, just man? These treasures-love and light,
And calm thoughts, regular as infants' breath;
And three firm friends, more sure than day and night-
Himself, his Maker, and the Angel Death.*

There is no reason, as far as I can see, why anyone should be debarred from seeking and obtaining personal evidence of the etheric body and its possibilities, so long as they safeguard themselves by exercising mental control as a habit in their daily lives, and keep themselves cheerful and sane in every sense of the words. I hope I have made it clear that it is essential that the would-be adventurer into etheric realms should fit himself for his task spiritually and mentally, just as anyone qualifying for some highly specialized physical work would endeavour to fit themselves physically for it in order to do it well.

If there should be any circumstance that appeared to render personal investigation inadvisable, then surely much comfort and help can be obtained indirectly through perusing the actual records of experiences of those who have been able to function personally in the etheric body. Even if one could not attain the same degree of conviction thereby, it is a splendid thing to obtain hope, which to my mind often opens a door to realization when all

else has failed. I once read some words by J. C. MacKenzie, which are apposite in this connection:

Hope is anticipation, with possibility of realization. It is an inherent feeling in mankind, and a divine provision for the sustentation of interest in life. Hope is a chord which strikes pleasant desires for the future; it is everyone's sunshine, the rainbow in the storm, the silver lining to the present cloud, a star set in the firmament of our lives, to brighten, lighten, and cheer the way, and differs in magnitude and brightness according to the occasion. Hope is an antidote to misery, a cordial for the desponding, and a chain with many links.

So let us not disdain anything which gives us hope because it arises from a source outside and apart from our own personal experience. I feel convinced that scientific acceptance of the existence of the etheric body is very near at hand. The evidence is piling up continually from unimpeachable sources, and it can no longer be ignored, and, if by knowing it to be true, we can bind up broken hearts, give courage to the helpless and hopeless, surely the obtaining of such knowledge is well worth while.

Nothing, not even the certainty of a life beyond the grave, will entirely compensate for the actual loss of the physical body of the one we love, and might we not lose some spiritual quality if we succeeded in obliterating the ability to feel pain or sorrow? There is no great virtue in mere stoicism, but there is sacredness in tears, if they are the evidence of sincere contrition, and of deep love. D. M. Craik says:

Strangely do some people talk of getting over a great sorrow-overleaping it, passing it by, thrusting it into oblivion. Not so. No one ever does that-at least, no nature which can be touched by the feeling of grief at all. The only way is to pass through the ocean of affliction, solemnly, slowly, with humility and faith, as the Israelites passed through the sea.

If we can pass through a great affliction "solemnly, slowly, with humility and faith," we shall indeed gain inward wisdom and power of inestimable value far beyond the imagination of those who endeavour to thrust the painful side of life into oblivion.

It is the selfish sinking of one's whole individuality into one's sorrow which eventually induces a condition of hopelessness and morbidity which is paralysing in its effects on the growth of the soul.

Let us keep the ability to suffer, because it brings forth many fruits of the spirit, chief among them being patience. Dekker's beautiful words remind us of the One who was a great and living example of this.

*Patience! why, 'tis the soul of peace;
Of all the virtues, 'tis the nearest kin to Heaven
It makes men look like gods. The best of men
That e'er wore earth about Him was a sufferer,
A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit
The first true Gentleman that ever breathed.*

But let us combine this exquisite quality of patience with the hope and knowledge derived from the certainty that the "inward man cannot perish," which we can obtain through the perusal of others' experiences, or let us examine ourselves and see if we can pass muster for a personal investigation into the existence of the etheric body, the "inward man," and so travel into those wonderful planes of light and higher consciousness to which we have been blind and deaf for too long.

When I think of the soul-uplifting experience of which I told you in the last chapter, I am filled with a longing to make you see it for yourselves-and, as my husband begged me-"Tell everybody who will listen that there is this Other Life. It is a real life in a real world."

Yes, I can tell you.

I have told you.

But will you believe me? Some will, and if their number is small, it will be worth while having bared my own intimate feelings and experiences to others' gaze and criticism, if I have given to even one soul that "antidote to misery, cordial for the desponding, the chain with many links-Hope."

THE END