

Richard N Kimball

(The style of writing is
similar to Hemingway's)

LIFE'S MYSTERIES; A QUEST OF THE GOLDEN MEAN

~~(In many aspects)~~ an autobiography)

PART ONE

OUR SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

By: Estelle Jenkins

· PRESENTATION

1. A story out of life which is dedicated to youthful dreamers of dreams, and to those of maturer years who have appraised lightly these soul-visions, and these ideals, and these forward anticipations--not realizing that they are the beacon lights on the borderland which divides the enchanted land of Youth from the sterner world of realities; and, as the very wise materialistic philosopher of the ages will inform us, the cold, literal facts of life, and human nature.

This story is submitted with the hope that it will contain a message which will reach and benefit the very ones who are reaching forward for analysis and a solution of their own problems, and heart-interests, and mysteries which have entered into their own life experiences. Some of the facts and life experiences here related are stranger than fiction or romance, and seemingly more unreal.

When an artist, through his pure creative genius, conceives a dream-ideal, he reaches forward and grasps it and transplants it on his canvas, and he is very sure that the model who poses and impersonates for him is able to represent his ideal worthily.

And just so, when a student of life and human nature problems believes that there is a Golden Mean--the natural and right balance between extremes--he is under certain sacred obligations to make an earnest quest for the knowledge that will establish his belief as true--if it is true; and which will point out the paths which lead toward the planes of progressive education, and establish them among the covenanted people of the Golden Mean.

And so, believing as I do, I now enter earnestly upon my quest for knowledge, and for a model which is able to represent and present my Ideal worthily. And as the great scroll above, the mystic loom of life is unrolled from day to day, I shall write, with what skill I possess, the simple and the difficult lessons as read and interpreted in the School of Experience and Ethics, and out before Nature, in the School of Life.

One prominent motive of this work will be a protest--uttered with all the force of my being against that old traditional double-standard regime in Society, and against instability and Ungodliness as an asset in the scale of values in human nature; and supplemented by an earnest plea that Suffrage for women will prove the open door toward the emancipation of womanhood, and establish women as a worthy ally in the Cause of humanity and true democracy.

It is my intention to not only bring many and different characters forward and present them in their own native atmosphere and environment, but to endeavor to picture the effects--mental, moral and physical, exerted on a person or in Social realms, by that atmosphere and environment. I shall study the characters, and esteem them, and support them, and uphold them if they prove worthy; but I also shall scorn and expose the ones that prove unestimable and unworthy with the same integrity.

"The years of man are the looms of God

Let down from the place of the Sun

Wherein we are weaving away

Till the mystic web is done."

(Selected)

The Author

*Zina Estelle
b2 Mar 1875*

CHAPTER ONE

A woman stood alone before a closed door which bore the insignia, "Life's Mysteries." Her life, up to this time, had been a series of disillusionments, unfulfilled dreams, unrealized ideals, and almost unsurmountable obstacles; but because between the rifts in the shifting clouds a blessing, uplifting, hope-inspiring ray beckoned her on, she had determined, within herself, to quest for the key which would open the door behind which, and concealed in the Archives of Wisdom, were the solutions to the mysteries of the three worlds--Mental, Spiritual and Physical.

And after waiting before the door, anxiously until she had grown weary and almost despairing, for an answer to her knock, a Voice within answered: "If you have the key, unlock the door and enter: the key is earnest and good works, and Silence and Meditation."

Turning away, she resolved that she would qualify herself, with what powers of reasoning might be centered in her intelligence, and with what capacity of faith and intuitional guidance she may possess, for her lack of a technical education had been one of her keenest regrets.

The condition of her home and little family was very unfortunate indeed, for the husband and father had availed himself of the old traditional right, reserved to man only, to migrate to more free and unrestricted and congenial climes, when he made the discovery that love, covenants and marriage bonds carried responsibilities and even duties which he, in his blind determination to claim for his own, the woman of his choice, had overlooked.

A penurious, ruthless landlord had learned of the family's condition and had demanded immediate settlement of the rent which was overdue, and had followed this up by prescribing that from that date, rent was payable "Strictly in advance:" and Phyllis Lewellyn, sheltering with her own life another life which was unfolding in the Sanctuary of Mysteries, and demanding its birthright endowment, was very

*JOHN ROSE, youngest child
b. 17 Mar 1903*

helpless, and very distressed indeed.

As was characteristic of Phyllis, she had met her trials with fortitude and with courage, but now, without home, and without money or endowment, she and the tiny and helpless baby for whom she was waiting, and the three very small and very beautiful children who clustered around her wonderingly, were surely resting in the Mercy and Love of Overruling Providence.

* * * * *

Fifteen months have passed since the woman first waited before the closed door of Life's Mysteries, and now she is back again--this time very silently, very prayerfully, and earnestly endeavoring to penetrate the shadows which like a grey mist, are now obscuring her vision: for silently and mysteriously that door had opened, and ushered her first born before angel guides who had carried him to that Elysian home beyond the Veil.

Again she resolved for courage and fortitude, and again she made supreme effort towards deliverance and support for herself and babies who were dependent upon her.

But again, her lack of skill because of not having been endowed through technical or vocational training, forced her into an atmosphere--a class of unskilled service, which was surely testing her endurance and character as relentlessly as ever a crucible separated its chemicals.

And thus, sorely tried, she had at last sought an interview with the man she had married--the father of her children, who had returned from his aimless, misdirected wanderings to his home city and people, but not to his family, and appealed to him for cooperation in the support and education of the children, and asked him also to lend his moral support in providing home and protection for the children.

"Of course, since you seem to have been so disappointed in me, as your wife, I shall ask nothing for myself," she had finished, wistfully but firmly.

To her appeal he had replied with a fine scorn--a manly assertion of his freedom from obligation or responsibility. "You are impudent and bold to come to me with your selfish, mercenary schemes. I do not wish to be annoyed by you.

"Your children are not entitled to my consideration, nor even to my recognition, because you have refused to reinstate me in the home and enter into our former relationship, on a basis of 'good faith': you demand money, moral tests, restitution; you expect me to bring you explanations and proofs--another indication of your small, soulless, loveless nature; and so I tell you, once and for all, that I do not even acknowledge your children as mine, for I hate you, and you are their mother!"

And since the family social and moral well-being is not subject to Civic or Community regulation, or Church over-governing, Phyllis returned silently to the little stricken ones, and again bowed her head in silent prayer and meditation, seeking to solve the commonest and most unfortunate of all of life's mysteries--the mystery of human and social relations and relationships, with their accompanying obligations, honor pledges, fellowships, and natural responsibilities which Society itself seems to refuse to acquaint itself with, and refuses to undertake the solution of, because of its great immensity, which involves so much of the work regenerative, the work re-creative, the work self-sacrificing; and again she made the resolve for courage, and unrelenting effort for the protection of innocent, dependent childhood, and for undegraded womanhood.

Her life had always centered upon planes of the ethical and the ideal; and this, with her great love of Nature beautiful--her sincere belief in a better inner soul-self in the human being, her belief in God, and a burning desire to work for humanity's cause, made her one of those who, in spite of obstacles and barriers, could always look forward with optimistic faith, and generous, sympathetic belief. She was capable of experiencing almost an exalted pleasure in congenial and harmonious Social relationships, and also, she was capable of

suffering deep pain if a trusted friend betrayed her generous belief, or violated her trust or faith.

Her love of nature led her to embrace every opportunity which afforded long walks out in the fields, the hills, the woods, along country roads, or to follow as far as her time and strength would permit, some stream or river, or along some charming lake shore.

CHAPTER TWO - FRIENDSHIP

It was on one of those dreamy, balmy, golden autumn afternoons that are so conducive to a retrospective state of mind and to philosophical thought.

A woman sat in the veranda of a charming rustic hotel in a small Northwestern town. She, like the admirable Mrs. McChesney of heatherbloom petticoat fame, had entered the ranks of the Knights of the Grip, and this was her initiative trip out from her home town.

Washington or Oregon

Initiative is much more than only the evolutionary developing of an efficient and typical traveling woman, for Phyllis Lewellyn had entered with extraordinary earnestness into that very practical, very broad school of instruction--the greater School of Life and Experiences. "I do want to believe in my fellow-beings--in the inner, higher, real self: I really must if I am to continue to believe in God and in the immortality of the soul. And believing in these I still must believe that in each soul God planted a tiny sacred seed called love--a tiny sacred seed which is truly a God-principle in evolution, and has its source in the great heart of God."

The meditation of Phyllis was here interrupted by the cheery voice of William Wallace, of Great Falls, Montana, who was a guest of the little rustic frontier town hotel for a day, and who was the expert Collector of Accounts for a Corporation.

"May I come up and chat with you for awhile?" he asked as he came briskly along the board walk towards the hotel.

"Do come up," Phyllis invited, "for I am becoming extremely bored sitting here analyzing and weighing and measuring my own thoughts and beliefs, with only myself as critic and confirmer."

Mr. Wallace stood for a moment silently contemplating Phyllis with an interested though quizzical expression, then entered the broad, though somewhat unmodern, veranda and sat in an old-fashioned, though comfortable, porch chair opposite to where Phyllis sat. Presently, as the two acquaintances sat and engaged in pleasant small conversation, the subject of friendship was suggested by Mr. Wallace.

"What is your ideal of friendship; real friendship?" he asked.

Phyllis sat for a moment considering the question, then suddenly brightening as though inspired by a convincing thought, she replied: "A real friend, of course, is one who is an equal, a well-wisher, and also one who is capable of realizing with you congenial comradeship, as well as one who will prove himself in any test, the sincere and loyal friend."

"But," Mr. Wallace asked, "does your ideal also embrace the friendship between men and women? Do you believe that men and women can enter into real, sincere friendships and maintain the relation indefinitely, without forming for each other a deeper attachment?"

"You, of course, know about, and no doubt are influenced, even, by that old tradition," Phyllis spoke pensively while her mind seemed to be searching the musty pages of an unregenerate past. "An old tradition which concedes only one relationship and one language for men and women. The language, that of love, and the relationship, only the sex relation. Men are supposed, by that old regime, to expect nothing, to ask nothing, from womanhood but the gift of sex.

"The enlightened emancipation of womanhood has shown her that the old condition imposed upon her by man of the dark ages, was an imposition which rendered her condition not only parasitic, but refused to her the evolutionary

development, mentally, morally, physically and spiritually, which man claimed for himself--a condition which sacrificed the woman intellectual, and the woman spiritual, to the woman sex-nature and the woman physical.

"Now, I believe that upon the right and normal fundamental foundation that a standard would evolve which would certainly make it possible for men and women to be friends--real friends; yes, and co-workers and comrades.

"If love should spring from such a relationship, believe me, it would be a love that is different. Such a love as would embrace all that was true, and real, and satisfying, and creative, and aspirational. Such love between a man and a woman inspires with incentive, with pure idealistic motives, and with confidence, and belief, and faith."

"You do not believe, then, that love between men and women just comes unbidden and burns itself into their blood--their brain--their heart--their reason and will?"

"Real love, even may come in this way under unusual or extraordinary influencing circumstance; but, more often, the love that comes in this form, and way, is purely erotic--even taking on a degree of madness bordering on a dangerous form of sex-insanity."

"You base your belief, or ideal of friendship and love on Platonic principles, do you not?" Mr. Wallace asked.

"Only in part," Phyllis replied, "but greatly upon my instinctive mind and soul perceptions, and my observing, reasoning powers.

"Plato, however, stands very high in the world of ethics, and philosophy, and idealism.

"Plato, like all great teachers and philosophers, is often misinterpreted and misunderstood.

"Many who have never read a single page in one of Plato's books, speak freely and with a wise, knowing smile, of Platonic friendship, and Platonic love.

"These people draw upon tradition and depend upon hearsay, the imagination, and upon impulses which they have never troubled themselves to analyze, for their conception and views; and always, we find these the most loyal supporters of any theory which discredits anything, and challenges everything 'Platonic'. Plato, as we know, was a well-bred and a well-educated young Greek of the better class, in his time; he was born at Aegina, and was very active in the education, the culture and the pastimes of the highest type of people of his day.

"He traveled a great deal too; and then finally he returned to Athens and founded an Academy where he taught for fifty years. It was Plato who developed, or perfected the philosophy of Socrates who, as we know, was a martyr for the sake of his beliefs and ideals--because he taught a new system and a new standard of education, which led the minds of his pupils away from the traditions, the mythologies and the practices of their fathers, and instilled instead, a new plane for Civilization which was to prepare the world for a true Christianity; for Plato was one of Socrates' best pupils.

Plato is considered, I believe, by great students and thinkers, as a great Master--a great philosophical Idealist.

"As for myself, I have found no other teachings outside of the teachings of the greatest Master-Teacher of them all--Jesus of Nazareth; that seem so well-founded, and worthy, and true. For a long time I have believed that there is a real Golden Mean--a happy balance between extremes; and that the balance settled upon planes free from mysticism as the world knows it, from superstition, from barbarous beliefs and practices, and from the purely materialistic in Scientific research."

Mr. Wallace listened eagerly and then suddenly remembering something, he drew a folded paper from his pocket-book and, handing it to Phyllis, requested her to read it very carefully through and then express her own opinion and criticism of the thesis.

"It is an article which I composed and which explains some of my own ideals and beliefs regarding friendship."

It was quite a coincidence, for the spirit of the thesis was very much in harmony with what Phyllis had just been so eagerly expounding.

There was one part of the composition which ran as follows: "And a sincere friend will be loyal. He will stand by his friend in the hour when friendship will be put to the severest test.

"He will, to the best of his ability, defend his friend from injustice and calumny, but best of all, if need be, he will defend him from himself. Often, a man is his own very worst and most treacherous enemy. A real friend will still remain loyal and true even though the loyal defense involves his life--if for honor's sake; and this is true in spite of the too often sad and tragic experiences which often come to contradict it, and prove the contrary."

"You have brought out my own thought in your talk this afternoon, and expressed it far more clearly than I have ever been able to do," Mr. Wallace remarked, as Phyllis finished the paper. "And I hope that it may be our good fortune to realize real friendships along our chosen paths in our relationships and associations with our fellow-beings.

"I trust that you may know only men who are honorable--men who will not impose upon your good-will, nor take advantage of your pure, idealistic, friendly confidence."

CHAPTER THREE

It was near the close of a long, tiresome day; Phyllis had been on a westbound train since early morning but now her destination was reached.

The train had already stopped in the rather commodious and neatly kept depot in a charming little city of about twelve thousand inhabitants.

After delivering her baggage checks to a Porter from the leading hotel, Phyllis started out with enthusiasm to take a long walk before reserving a room at

the hotel, or even accommodating herself with a dinner.

The streets of this city were broad and clean, while fine shade trees bordered most of the walks, and well-kept lawns and flowers graced many of the handsome and even modern homes. From between the rugged hills to the north, down through a small but picturesque canyon, issued a tumbling, noisy stream of clear sparkling water, pouring for a short way through a part of the city and then emptying into a river which wound its way through the central part of the city, flowing westward through fertile cultivated lands, and thence to the mountainous, forest-grown country beyond.

The buildings of a University were clustered close to the base of a mountain range to the south, and altogether it was the most charming western city that Phyllis had seen in her western travels--most of the cities and towns being so typical of the new west under reclamation.

The next day was Sunday and although it proved to be one of those blustery, stormy days which forecast the beginning of the rainy season in the northwest, it found Phyllis still a very interested visitor. She did not permit the storm to dull her spirit of adventure and so, after first exploring every street and place of interest, she made an excursion by trolley out to one of the great lumber camps located about ten miles up a very interesting and rugged canyon, and on the banks of another river of great volume.

There she watched a long "logging" train steam slowly and noisily down the very picturesque and scenic Blackfoot Canyon, and watched the crew, by some mechanical contrivance, dump the thousands of logs into the river.

Men with sharp spiked boots and long rods were at work upon the river, skillfully and cleverly leaping over onto the floating mass of logs and directing them into a channel where they were taken up by wide, corrugated revolving belts, or cables, washed thoroughly as they moved, and finally arriving at their destination in the great mills.

Returning early, she decided to attend services in the new M.E. Church which had just been completed.

As she paused for a moment in the Vestry to arrange her wind-disheveled hair and sagging hat, she noticed a lady near the window quite vainly struggling to untangle loosened light brown locks of hair from a fine silken veil that she had attempted to wear, and trying to restore them to an orderly appearance before entering the assembly. "May I help you?" she offered courteously.

The lady accepted the small service gratefully, and then said: "Let us enter together." After they were seated they exchanged cards, then smiled and nodded pleasantly to each other.

Engraved upon the card that the lady handed Phyllis was the name: "Lydia Brinton - New York City." Upon further acquaintance Phyllis learned that Lydia Brinton was employed in the U. S. Mints, and was enjoying her first visit to the great west of golden opportunity; and she had expressed herself unreservedly as being greatly pleased--aye; as being very fortunate in gaining the acquaintance and the comradeship of a woman of the native western type.

On the following Wednesday evening Lydia Brinton called for Phyllis and together they attended a lecture given by the newly elected President of the State University, in the auditorium of the High School.

Some things the speaker said made a deep impression upon Phyllis--especially his commendation of an Honor System for student bodies in High Schools and Colleges.

The rest of that week was so filled up with work and study that Phyllis did not see her friend again until Sunday morning, and then they attended morning services of the Church together.

"You seem pensive and a little sad," Lydia remarked, as they walked together in the soft amber sunshine of that autumn morning.

"There are some things which have caused pain and sadness in my life,"

Phyllis said, "but you see, I am trying to find compensation and forgetfulness, through my interest in others, and if possible, Social Service to humanity."

Lydia smiled reassuringly, and sympathetically, as they entered the Church, and pressed her hand in a friendly way as they were seated near the door. The service, as conducted by the Venerable Reverend Benidict, was very impressive; and at its close he came among his congregation, and for everyone, he had a kindly word and a brotherly handclasp.

Phyllis was favorable impressed by his attitude, and as he came quickly to her, before she could leave, and with a friendly smile, and almost fraternal handclasp, and cordially welcomed her, and invited her to come again; quite unexpectedly her eyes filled with tears.

Pretending not to see, but speaking gently, he said: "God bless you, my sister, and peace be with you!"

CHAPTER FOUR

Mrs. McBride was a typical German woman who kept a small boarding-house and catered to the students at the University. Phyllis had called at her home to explain a business proposition which she was representing, and Mrs. McBride had suggested that she could accommodate her at her table and give splendid home-cooked meals at a very reasonable rate.

Phyllis, who was longing for home, and cheerful companionship, readily accepted the offer.

Promptly at 12:10 nine hungry, animated, hurrying young men, representing nine distinctly different types, came in and took their accustomed places at the dining table.

Mrs. McBride then presented Phyllis informally and gave her a place next to Russell, an aspiring student of English and Oratory; indeed, this young man was already winning recognition because of the eloquence of his language when debating, and when filling the Pulpit on Sundays; for this young man had

Ministerial ambitions at that time.

Phyllis was reminded as she observed this group of young men, a little furtively, perhaps; that one may find many types and personalities even in small groups. Karl, specializing in Mining and Chemistry, asked the others what they thought of this Honor System, proposed for the School by the new President. The question again aroused the interest of Phyllis.

Russell defined the system as something calculated to dignify the student body by making it self-governing. "And," he had explained, "if a student were to violate one, or all of its laws, the whole student body would be wronged; and that therefore such student would be ostracized from honorable standing among his fellows until he had expiated the wrong, and thus reestablished his right to honorable membership again."

Karl said that if such a system really was efficacious in a School or College, that its influence would be felt in the private and social lives of young people, and that the influence would be for the uplift and benefit of society.

Winston Marvel, in the Department of Geology, was the most reticent of them all. He did not take part in the discussion, but listened pleasantly to the others and poured the tea. His reticence seemed to be a little exaggerated because of a super-self-consciousness; and this self-consciousness was partly due to the fact that his face and neck was covered by a thick rash of unsightly pimples; yet he seemed possessed of a certain youthful, egotistical assurance that challenged any undue familiarity or hasty judgement on the part of his fellow associates.

But, in spite of this, he showed by his attitude toward life and his associates, that he had not yet come to the realization that all knowledge is not gleaned through the perusal of, and study of, books.

He had not yet grasped the fact that in a College or University one has a wonderful opportunity to learn his true relation to humanity, and how to deal with

his fellow-beings. He appeared as one who had not yet come to realize how meeting people from all walks of life, and from all parts of the country, develops a sense of fellowship, of unity of interest, and of fraternity, and how it is this sense of realization that helps greatly in fitting young men and young women for the greater part that they will be called upon to play beyond this School, in the greater School of Life and Experience. And Phyllis, reading young Winston thus, had not been so favorably impressed as with Russell and Karl.

One especially sunny and delightful autumn day Phyllis had been admiring the beautiful view from the east window of Mrs. McBride's dining room, as they all sat at luncheon; and had enthusiastically called the attention of the young men to the scene. As she spoke, young Winston's countenance brightened and seemed almost transformed.

"I wish that you could see it all as I have seen it!" he exclaimed. "But in order to do this one must go into the canyons, the forests, and climb to the very mountain crests before it is possible to know nature as she really is, and see her in all her different aspects."

Phyllis was startled, surprised. She looked at him searchingly for a moment before she was able to discern beneath that rather plain, and even a little crude exterior, slumbering latent powers which if brought to the surface and into activity through education, and though the inspiration of high ideals, surely forecasted the poetic genius, as well as the creative scientific mind.

As the acquaintance of Marvel and Phyllis grew more intimate there was evidence of a congenial, mutual understanding which was harmonious and sympathetic. Each seemed able to draw inspiration and strength from long walks, and communion with Nature; and in their first brief talks they realized that their ideas and beliefs concerning the balanced and successful life, were quite in harmony.

Mrs. McBride professed a sincere interest in Winston because of the fact that

there were unfortunate conditions in his home environment, and his relations with his home people not being entirely harmonious because of difference in character and ambitions. Winston had, in the face of all disadvantages, worked hard to rise above sordid conditions, and shown determination and courage in his endeavors; and this fact had won from Phyllis an admiration which otherwise might have been withheld.

She found that she was not entirely free of embarrassment while at table with so many young men students, and so she called upon Lydia Brinton one afternoon and persuaded her to accompany her and also take her meals at McBride's.

Lydia, who had more leisure time than Phyllis, often stayed and talked awhile with Mrs. McBride. Thus it was that Mrs. McBride became very confidential, and confided to Lydia the story of Marvel's life. She had also confided that she had made plans for him and a young girl of whom she was very fond, when he had finished his education.

Lydia told the story to Phyllis, and one day at dinner they told Marvel that they knew about his romance and then they playfully congratulated him. He had indignantly denied the existence of any romance or heart interest.

"It may be the plans of someone else," he said, "but it does not appeal to me."

CHAPTER FIVE - THE HIKE

Phyllis was called upon the phone one Saturday evening by Lydia, who explained that she had spent the day at Mrs. McBride's and that young Winston and his friend George Logan had proposed a real "Western hike" into the mountains the following day. "Will you go with us?" her favorite friend had asked. Phyllis, who had lived near the mountains always but who had never walked in a forest, could see in fancy, mysterious trails, leaf strewn; mountain heights, majestic with pine-woods like temples whose spires held communion with clouds and stars. Then glades, half in shadow with flecks of sun-light filtering through and dancing

over the mosses and fallen leaves.

"Oh, Lydia!" she exclaimed, "It is something I have dreamed about--but to think that tomorrow the dream may become reality! Yes; I will go."

Miss Brinton spoke to the others who were with her, then called: "Winston says you will never be sorry if you come with us."

It was a perfect October morning--Sunday morning; and the Church bells were ringing, calling the people to morning services, when Phyllis joined the little party who were already waiting.

They had packed a substantial luncheon, and now they set forth in high spirits.

First, there was the long walk through the canyon where the river runs between the high rugged mountain on one side and the rolling hills on the other. Soon they entered a forest of pines, tamarack, beech, maple and ash; and followed a trail upward and along the mountainside. The Autumn frosts had left the most gorgeous colorings upon the trees and vines, and bright sunbeams filtered across the trails.

Soon the spirit of the place seemed to permeate Phyllis' whole being with a calm, uplifted, renewed strength which she described in the lines of the poet, Mary Carolyn Davies:

"Tamarack and pine and beech, balsam and maple reddened
Turn and sway and give you speech, as your heavy footfall deadened
By the moss, you find the good comradeship of trail and wood
Where the branches thickly spread, blot the sunlight overhead;
And the shadowed coolness stealing on your senses bring you healing
And you find new strength to help you on the trail of life ahead."

About four o'clock the little party "camped" and did full justice to the luncheon--all seated around upon a huge boulder beneath two giant pines; after which, Marvel and George climbed to the topmost branches of one of the old pine trees and suspended the lunch basket and discarded lunch things upon the limbs to express their buoyant pleasure. Then the party followed another narrow trail

along the mountainside, high up to where the world seemed but great billowing seas of forest, lovely green and red and brown; and above skies of fairest blue with snowy clouds--the downy ships of the blue expanse, floating--rolling--changing, and sailing lightly overhead.

Soon they stopped before a fine, sturdy young evergreen tree that seemed "as one that stood apart" like a sentinel of the hills. The young men proposed that they carve their initials upon it as a memento of the occasion; and while they were thus engaged Phyllis and Lydia were endeavoring to take some pictures of the lovely scene before them. All around was Nature's beautiful places and over all, and in all, the spirit of peace and inspiration.

The young men had now finished carving initials and had called the ladies to come and view the effect. Phyllis noticed that Marvel had carved her initials, and his own just beneath, but made no comment.

Miss Brinton broke a branch from the tree and pulled from it a sprig for each one. With these as symbols they pledged each other sincere friendship, and agreed to keep the evergreen sprig always in remembrance of that pledge and that wonderful day. Walking down the moss-grown, leaf-strewn trails while the setting sun threw its golden glory over everything, they sang songs and chatted, while in the distance could be heard the tinkle of cow bells, as the herds were returning to the nearby ranches and corrals; and the soft ripple of the river just below floated to them like zephyrs on the breeze. Lydia Brinton sang an old song in her pure, sweet soprano, and George Logan joined in with a fine tenor. As the song floated out upon the quiet evening, through the stillness of the forest, Phyllis was thrilled. It was one of the old sweet songs that, hearing once, one never forgets:

"Once in the dear dead days beyond recall
When on the world the mists began to fall
Out of the dreams that rose in happy throng--
Low to our hearts love sang an old sweet song;

And in the dusk, where fell the firelight's gleam
Softly it wove itself into our dream.
Just a song at twilight
When the lights are low
And the flickering shadows
Softly come and go.
Though the heart be weary
Sad the day and long
Still to us at twilight
Comes love's old song
Comes love's old, sweet song.
Even today we hear love's song of yore
Deep in our hearts, it dwells forevermore
Footsteps may falter, weary grow the way
Still, we can hear it at the close of day.
So to the end, when twilight shadows fall--
Love can be found the sweetest song of all."

About two miles below was the lumber camp with its busy humming mills, the one that Phyllis had visited that first Sunday of her arrival in the Garden City of the hills.

Later, the party descended to this little camp town and boarded the electric car which runs out there from the City.

It is a scenic ride for the road winds through a canyon and follows a river most of the way.

The experience was one long to be remembered by Phyllis, and she speaks of it in her Diary as: "Nature's gift of one perfect day."

It was Sunday--another of these sunshine and shower weather conditions so typical of the Northwest prevailed, but when Winston Marvel called and announced his intention of spending the afternoon, Phyllis suggested that they walk to the top of the knoll where a huge reservoir had been excavated and then walled around with concrete cement, and which afforded a splendid water supply which was maintained for the City.

As the friends walked and talked Phyllis noted an admirable tendency in her friend toward calm, self-governed, manly behavior, and a seeming over-mature development of intellectual qualities, but in direct contradiction to this, at unguarded moments, there also appeared a super-sensitiveness of nature, and

evidence of a somewhat unsocial nature, such as results from too much self-isolation from the companionship and interests of others. From the eminence of the knoll they viewed the panorama of the City and surrounding Nature scenes--photographed a few views and then returned to the City in time to attend services in a very small Church of which Marvel was a member. At the close of the service he presented Phyllis to his Rector, who shook her hand courteously and invited her to come again.

She resolved to become better acquainted with the tenets of the religion which her friend accepted as his religious belief; this, partly, because she saw that the Rector was a man typical of the old Schools of Theology, with all the close adherence to ritual, and ceremony, which is seemingly demanded in Churches of certain denomination and creed.

"Our present Church is rather small and unpretentious," Marvel apologized, "but we are soon to have a very modern and handsome new building in the near future; then I will be proud to ask you to accompany me again."

"I prefer to remember the Little Church Around the Corner, there, and the Little Minister, just as I saw him in that Church this evening," Phyllis replied.

As the acquaintance grew into a deeper friendly regard, it seemed that during the long tramps close to beautiful Nature-places, they were even able to read, like the poet, sermons in rocks, hear music in the running streams, and see good in everything. It was so with Phyllis for she painstakingly recorded it all in the Diary which was always at hand ready to receive the confidences of the Nature-loving, philosophy-loving, innately poetical and sensitive Phyllis.

One afternoon towards the close of the lovely Indian Summer of the West, Lydia called and explained to Phyllis that she and Mrs. McBride had arranged a small dinner party for the evening.

"You see, I am going away and this is to be my informal farewell to all the congenial and friendly people I have learned to love, while meeting in the cosy

dining-room in Mrs. McBride's home."

A very sumptuous dinner was prepared and served by the hospitable landlady, and there was not a vacant place.

A tiny card with a sentiment or legend written in beautiful script, with a tiny spray of pansy blossoms laid across it, was at each place.

The legend, or sentiment, I believe, was calculated to awaken in each mind some slumbering genius of eloquence or poetry, when his turn came to arise and unburden his responsive soul.

Someone made his toast complimentary to Mrs. McBride's dinner, and that woman, typical of her class and social standard, replied with the following as she raised a glass of pure, home-made grape juice, and signalled for all to drink with her.

"Here's to the man who stays at home
And rocks to sleep some other man's babe
When he thinks he is rocking his own."

The toast was received in silence by Lydia and Phyllis, and with a few suppressed giggles from the Students--yes, "giggles" is the right word in the right place. Lydia and Russell tactfully saved the dignity of the occasion by some clever repartee, and then Lydia stood at the head of the table and spoke a few friendly words to all and then closed with the remarks that after people meet, esteem each other, form friendships, and then quite unexpectedly drift apart like--

"Ships that pass in the night,
Speak each other in passing
Only a signal shown
And a distant voice in the darkness;
And it is just so, as--
'On the ocean of life we meet and pass one another
Only a look and a voice, and then silence again, and darkness.'

"But," she continued brightly, "we may pass one another more than once, and we may all anchor safely in the same Port."

Phyllis was now invited to respond to the sentiment which was written on her

card--a beautiful expression of friendship.

"May we who have met and been such congenial companions around this table, have the good fortune to meet often on the ocean of life, signal each other, and send out the voice of greeting and good will; and may it also be our good fortune to anchor in some good Port where we may again be associated together as friends.

"This has been a happy experience for me, and I shall carry back to my home a pleasing remembrance of the hospitable spirit and the friendly attitude of you young people of the Northwest."

Phyllis could say no more, for her heart seemed to overflow with joy in the realization of what sincere, congenial friendships could mean to people if only they would open their minds, and hearts, and be free from, and above, confusing, silly, guileful traditions, and conventional superficialities.

The following evening Phyllis was invited by Mrs. McBride to remain and visit for awhile after dinner, as the students were attending some special meeting or exercises, at the University; and she would be alone.

Phyllis accepted and even wiped the dinner dishes for her, and set the dining-table ready for the early breakfast. And as they worked, they talked. Mrs. McBride was very talkative and confidential and in the course of the exchanged woman confidences, she said: "I really have a profession which I have followed for years and this is only a new venture in business for me--the keeping of this boarding-home for students.

"I am a nurse by profession."

"If you are a nurse by profession," Phyllis replied, "would it not be possible for you to advise young Marvel of a way to relieve that embarrassing, disfiguring pimply condition of his skin?"

"I have made the attempt--even going so far as to consult a physician under whom I have nursed many cases. He agreed with me that the case was peculiar and would yield only to peculiar measures. But Winston is a modest, reticent fellow

and probably would not do as many young men do, for reasons of health."

Involuntarily, Phyllis felt every fibre of her being stiffen in a cold revulsion. She realized what it was that the woman was advocating with the utmost sangfroid. "And here is the link in the chain of social-moral life that is weak, and doubly dangerous because it is concealed under the supposed authority of advisors and helpers; and even the Medical authorities," Phyllis reasoned with herself as she walked meditatively out toward the river at the mouth of the canyon, where she loved to walk alone with any question or problem that perplexed or worried her.

The following evening when young Marvel asked permission to call, she gave her consent almost eagerly.

When he arrived she was waiting for him to accompany her on one of their long walks out of doors with only Nature and the stars for place of entertainment and inspiration. With gentle tact and womanly reserve, Phyllis contrived at last to make Marvel talk upon social-moral topics as represented in a large student body, and the standard usually accepted by at least the average young man in School or industrial pursuits.

"And the majority in most student bodies are influenced by a double-standard in morals and religious belief that would be painful for you to understand.

"These students make sport of, and ridicule a fellow student, who, as they put it, 'have not the courage to be a regular fellow; nor the 'pep' to be a man.'"

A shudder of indignant pity made Phyllis feel cold and weak. "It is that social-moral poison octopus which reaches out for the very vital being and soul of every young person who crosses the borderland, from adolescence into young manhood and young womanhood. It does seem that they would see and recognize it, for it blights, and limits, and degrades everyone that it touches. Boy," she pleaded, "don't you be a moral coward nor become a profaner of the sanctuary of your own manhood!"

"Please do not call me 'boy'!" he protested. But she interrupted quickly.

"But you are a boy, aren't you?"

"I lack less than two inches of being a six-footer, and I am past 21, as you know."

"Yes, but just being big and tall and past 21 doesn't make men," she teased.

"It takes character of superior strength, ability to be self-governing, and broad education, to make real men."

"I consider myself in line for development in each subject you have prescribed," he said, "and I consider myself a man--not a boy."

"Very well, then," Phyllis, assuming mock resignation, replied; "and now I shall surely expect great things of you."

"And now," Marvel answered, "since we understand each other perfectly, let us discuss some other subject: For instance--I want to invite you to meet my only sister who will be at Mrs. McBride's tomorrow evening. Today I received a letter from her informing me that they are moving to a new location and that she would be compelled to wait about five hours in our Station in order to make Railroad connections. She has five small children and so the waiting would prove tiresome indeed; and when I explained it to our landlady she generously told me to invite them to her house, and promised to serve a fine chicken dinner."

Phyllis promised to be there and on the following evening remembered to keep her promise. At the corner of the Main Street she met Marvel walking rapidly towards the Railroad Station. He had a pained expression on his countenance, and when he began to explain, his eyes filled with tears and his chin trembled like a hurt child's. "Mrs. McBride is awfully piqued because I called on you last evening; and so, in order to reward me according to her light, she has snubbed my sister at the last moment, for now, she refuses to entertain her. You must go on to the house and never let her know that you realize what has happened; but after dinner, come at once to the Ladies' waiting-room at the Station. I have already

told my slster that you will come."

Arriving at the boarding-house, Karl met her at the door and quietly handed her a note. It was from Marvel. "He said that if he did not meet you that this would explain," Karl said quite sympathetically.

Phyllis remained to speak a few friendly words to Mrs. McBride and try to discover if possible what had prompted such an attitude on her part. The woman had betrayed a little bitter feeling, and had spoken in rather a critical way of Winston, considering that she represented herself as being his sincere friend.

"If he were to become infatuated with some woman or girl," she concluded, "I believe that he would let reason, and will, fly to the winds, and just go to pieces."

"I do not believe that, Mrs. McBride," Phyllis defended sincerely. "I believe him to be a very estimable and self-governed young man."

"I am a very good reader of character," she said significantly.

At the Railroad Station Phyllis found Winston waiting. His greeting was cordial and seemingly free from all guile or superficiality.

Mrs. Drew was a frail, very reticent and rather small woman. She sat in a far corner of the waiting-room, in a large rocker. Her five sturdy, active, though not pretty children played about the room.

Winston brought the baby--a plump, rosy-cheeked little boy, and sat him in Phyllis' lap. "This is my namesake," he said proudly. "What do you think of him?"

There seemed to be very little responsive congeniality between the two women, and so Phyllis paid her compliments, and made excuse that she must attend to some urgent work before she could retire, then left. Winston accompanied her; and as they walked leisurely along the street Phyllis advised with a strange sense of responsibility prompted, it is certain, by motherly instinct, although it would most likely have been defined by her then as friendly interest.

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"Winston," she said, "it is not really necessary for you to write out all your personal individual feelings and plans for an only curious and even meddlesome public to read.

"I believe in you, and I want you to believe truly in yourself--your higher self."

"Mrs. McBride has no right to meddle!" he said indignantly, "but it seems that she has elected herself to the office, although I owe her no obligation whatever. I am a self-supporting student of the University and I pay her as I agreed to do.

"I am past 21 and I am quite able to and capable of managing my own affairs."

CHAPTER SEVEN

Business interests had made it necessary for Phyllis to visit that part of a Mining District far up in the scenic, and towering, forest-grown mountains of the Coeur D'Alene. (PAXO)

By chance she came to the home of Winston Marvel, and upon learning that the woman who stood in the doorway with such a challenging, unfriendly attitude was Winston's own mother, she endeavored to make friendly advances, and draw her into a conversation.

The effort was unavailing, as the woman seemed to move in a circle of her own, upon a different plane.

But, quite unexpectedly, the story of the Marvel family and their home and community life, was told voluntarily to her by a neighbor of the Marvels, and the narrative corroborated the story told by Mrs. McBride.

The following morning she had called at the Post Office for mail, and was much surprised as well as pleased to receive a letter from Winston Marvel. "I seem, somehow," he wrote in one part of the letter, "to occupy the rather unenviable position in my family, of the one imposed upon. I don't want to be selfish, nor to complain, but I don't see just why I should be the one always, who

must sacrifice and give up for the sake of the others."

Phyllis answered at once. In closing she wrote: "And you know, it is usually the strongest, and the most capable, who are called upon to give such service. You have all my friendly interest, my good will, and my sympathy, and I will take the liberty to suggest that it ^{is} ~~ws~~ the Divine teacher Jesus who set the example in both sacrifice and service."

The day following this, Phyllis returned to the Garden City, and Winston, meeting her in town, asked permission to call in the evening. Permission was freely granted.

"Your letter came this afternoon," Winston informed, as the friends shook hands in cordial greeting, "and I want to thank you for the thought you sent in such a friendly, understanding way."

Later, he questioned her closely about her trip, whom she had met, and what she had heard about his own people. When she finally yielded, and explained, he seemed very depressed in spirit, and resentfully sad.

"Now that you know so much you will not care to be my friend!" he said.

"Now that I know so much, I am very sorry, and I am always your true, sincere friend," she answered.

As time passed, Phyllis began to experience a vague, uncertain feeling of unrest.

She hoped sincerely that the friendship would prove so real and "Platonic" that some of her most often and bitterly challenged principles of belief would be established as true, and actually demonstrated by herself through actual experience; but the visits of Marvel were becoming so frequent, that she finally decided to suspend all unfinished business interests in that District and return to her home and family.

As she bade her newly elected friend good-bye, the two entered into a correspondence compact.

Phyllis took advantage of Senior precedence and wrote the first letter.

"I feel that I may be presuming upon our friendship," she wrote, "but I also feel that if you will allow me to occupy the position of an older sister, I may be able to help and encourage you in the way you need encouragement and helpful achievement. I would give my right hand--my very tongue, before I would knowingly write or say one word that would be misleading or unworthy. And above all, I want to know that you will be self-understanding and self-governing in all your work and recreation, and first of all, in the social-moral relations, and standards of life."

When the answer to that letter was received, Phyllis felt a little pang of disappointment for the tone and spirit of it showed that Marvel had taken offense--or at least, that his egoism had received a slight shock.

"I understand more than you know and right now I am more capable of doing the things, and maintaining the standards we have discussed, than many of my associates who are much older than I in years."

"Well," Phyllis reasoned with herself, "if I was a real friend to someone I would prove it by showing that someone that I had confidence in him or her; and that I believed in his capacity, his motives, his sincerity and his worthiness.

"I feel the urge to gauge and govern this friendship by some sort of standard, or criterion."

And as she reasoned and meditated upon the question a tender light dawned in her eyes and she smiled a wistful smile.

Just outside, in the spacious yard, Elmo, a boy of eleven, is romping and racing about with Bruce, a beautiful black and white curly dog--a favorite pet among the children. Elmo is a sturdy, normal, mischevious boy, whose dark hair, fine complexion, and sparkling eyes even a girl might envy.

Phyllis went to the window, and as she watched, he threw his arms around the dog and they rolled and tumbled about like real pals; then they were up again and

racing over the old garden lot.

"Why does a real, normal boy always love a dog?" she wondered. "And why, after he is grown to manhood, if he is still real, normal and humane, does he still love a fine dog?" she questioned. After a moment's reflection, she exclaimed delightedly: "Bigler knows! In his Stories of Dumb Animals there are some verses entitled:

SO THAT IS WHY (Bigler)

"My dog and I are the best of friends
We always go together;
Over the hills where the woodland ends,
Scrambling through brush and heather;
Down by the mill where the river bends
Through any kind of weather.

Crossing the fields in the twilight flow,
Where soft the wind comes creeping;
Where'er I lead he's sure to go,
From morn till the stars come peeping;
So that's the reason I love him so--
He's faithful, awake or sleeping"

"Winston, too, has a favorite dog and often he has entertained me with stories of the clever pranks, and the good comradeship of Carlo.

"Once when he was protesting, with bitterness and a sense of injury again, at his home which had brought him unhappiness, hardness, and conditions which had forced him in unfair situations among his playmates at school, as a child, as well as in his community; he had said:

"'And when everything seemed too hard for me I would take Carlo and wander away into the forest. And when night overtook us I would make a shelter of limbs and bark, close in some group of trees, and Carlo and I would nestle close together and sleep until morning.'

"I can't believe that Winston rebelled and complained from any lack of loyalty or natural affection, but because his mind inclines to the logical and a sense of what should be, and what should not have been. He feels that he has been robbed of a happiness that should have been his, and he envies those of his

associates who are more fortunate than he."

At last, with a gesture of finality, she left the window.

"I feel a sense of responsibility that weighs heavily," she contemplated. "Here I stand like a balance, while in the scales are a young man and a boy. I am the center. On either side of me they stand. Motherlove is invincible; friendship is-- real friendship is a mutual covenant that is not to be regarded lightly. I weigh and consider; and as I meditate and weigh and consider, a picture forms itself in my mind. ^{POP} Elmo is the central figure; a real boy, full of love, and mischief, and boyish pranks, and thoughtless omissions, and winning, charming ways."

She smiled as she recalled how one morning when she had sent him on an errand, telling him to make haste; she had waited until her patience was exhausted, and then had vowed to punish him when he did return. He had rushed in flushed, animated with eyes as bright as stars and cheeks as red as the rosiest apples bearing in his hands the first violets and daisies of spring, and--

"They are for you, ~~mama~~!" he shouted joyously, as he piled them in my lap. Of course I surrendered. And that morning last winter. He had been asked to fill the coal-box and then bring in a bucket of water from the well.

He had to pass the summer house, and over in the corner hung his much-prized skates. He tried to pass there bravely, on his way for coal, but temptation overcame him, and he tip-toed back, just to peep in and see if they were really there.

Just then, the sun rising, shone on myriads of little frost elves and made them dance and sparkle like diamonds. Elmo suddenly dropped the coal scuttle, took his much-prized skates down from the hook and rushed out excitedly with them dangling at his side. "Oh, gee!" he exclaimed as he made for the pond nearby. "I'll just slip these skates on--it'll only take a second! I want to see if the ice froze hard last night. Maybe after all, it didn't. Oh yes; it did--it did!

O jimmeny! Now I'm off," he shouted as he ventured upon the pond. About an hour later an excited, rosy, innocently happy boy appeared with a shout and began a most wonderful narrative of his experience, and of how he had met his friends Billy and Allen and challenged them to a race.

"And I beat them all the way!" he declared proudly. A mother could only find it hard to crush ingloriously such enthusiasm and spirit in her boy, and so, he escaped any unpleasant consequences for his boyish enthusiasm, that day. Another time he was out teaching his small sister ^{ROSE} how to skate. Suddenly there was a distressful cry and I rushed out to find them clinging desperately to the broken edges of ice which had broken and let them through, while they struggled bravely against the undercurrent that tugged away at their feet.

After they were rescued and dried and put into warm clothing again, Elmo boasted proudly about the adventure. "The boy wins again," Phyllis smiled, at last, "for he shall be the criterion by which I shall measure, and gauge, and consider the friend."

In the morning's mail there was a letter from Winston Marvel. Phyllis read with growing interest his expressed belief in the piety and permanency of friendship; and his quotation: "For the first principle of friendship is sincerity; and he who betrays the trust or confidence of a friend, for selfish motive, or for personal gain, is worthy only of condemnation. For the deceitful heart of such a one will soon betray itself, and call forth only the contempt due insincerity. I appeal to you, Phyllis, to believe in and trust my sincerity and my unselfish motive," he finished.

"Would any professing friend express himself in this way and yet be insincere, or superficial?" she questioned now. "It is hardly a logical supposition," she reasoned, "and I am going to believe, therefore, that Winston Marvel is self-understanding and sincere. I am going to believe that his heart is true, that he is worthy, and that he is striving for the true and right in life,"

she concluded.

CHAPTER EIGHT

It was just after the holidays that the next letter from young Winston came.

It was rather a discouraged sort of letter, telling of conditions and associations that were not conducive to the best success and advancement of one who had aspirations and ideals such as his. He seemed to Phyllis like one who would meet a test courageously and justly, but he seemed, for some reason, perhaps tempermental, to be so alone, and so different, and apart from his own people.

"Strange," Phyllis mused, "how human beings are all so different--yet so dependent upon each other for happiness. To me, people seem like the stars in the Firmament, each having its own little orbit, each its own degree of glory; each only a unit, but under a perfect system, all a part of one grand whole."

The letter interested Phyllis for it was extraordinary in some ways, yet, a little cynical, and expressing here and there through the paragraphs, a little youthful egotism which amused, yet puzzled her a little as well.

"Dear Friend," he began--

"As I sit here in the Office at the University and reflect, a great philosophical truth is impressed upon my mind: Life is what we make it!

"In my own life I can see much that was full of disappointment and pain; but for every pain I seem to find some blessing in disguise. We, who are of a finer and more sensitive nature get more out of life, because we see all that is good and beautiful in it. But Old Dame Nature has balanced this by causing us also to feel the bitter side of life more keenly.

"How many live for the pleasures of life alone, and not for the true purpose for which life was given? They do not feel as keenly as we do because they are less highly organized, and when we think of the beautiful things of life that they are missing, then indeed do we pity them.

"I am thankful that I have been given the power and the inspiration to see

and understand the higher and worthwhile things of life.

"Dear Friend, in your last letter you spoke of possible misunderstanding on my part, regarding our friendship. I want you to believe in my sincerity, and in my understanding. True, there are those who profess to be our friends when in reality they only are governed by some selfish motive.

"Perhaps you are wondering now why I am saying all this to you, but I want you to understand me, and to believe in me. I can truthfully say that I am grateful that you are my friend.

"Mrs. McBride is more civil of late, since she found out that she could not dictate my affairs, nor humiliate me when she found that she could not govern me. She has certainly tried to do both, you may be assured."

It was several weeks before Marvel wrote to Phyllis again. The letter was typical of the last one, only he had a new bit of news.

"Mrs. McBride is at my home town now. She has given up her boarding house project and has secured a job as cook at a camp.

"Somehow I do not trust her. She may go to my people and misinform them regarding my friendly esteem for you.

"Phyllis, you must remain my friend and write to me often, because your friendship, and your letters inspire me with greater self-confidence and greater incentive than any other thing in my life."

In answering this letter, Phyllis spoke of the true Mother heart, and the great love of such a one, saying:

"So, if you have the love of your Mother, never fear that an outsider can misrepresent you to her. Do you know, Winston, I have enjoyed the book that you gave me to read. In the beginning, Queed was very exclusive and egotistical, but Shirley did him a service when she told him of his faults. She was very severe, but it was that he needed. Afterwards, when he really came to know himself, and had taken the right attitude toward life, he came out grandly. Don't be offended

when I compare you with Queed, for I really admire the story and to me it demonstrates the wonderful possibilities of the Natural evolution of human beings."

CLOSE TO NATURE

The University had now closed for the Summer Vacation. Winston had come to spend (it at home). In his letters now, he described the long tramps through the mountains, never omitting to make the interesting pen-pictures of mountain scenery nor to describe the fishing trips along canyon stream, or else, out in a boat upon some charming mountain-rimmed lake; always noting carefully the quantity, and quality, of his catch.

And these chummy, descriptive letters--so enthusiastic, so free from superficiality--creating the spirit of the great outdoors, were prized by Phyllis more than any others she had received.

In attempting to describe the mountain and forest scenery in the lights and shadows of early dawn--the clouds of mist like billowing seas; the-- Here he had stopped, leaving the sentence unfinished, and wrote below: "Only an artist and a poet can describe it, and I will quote a few lines from Byron's poem "Solitude". That will make the picture more clearly defined than my own words.

"To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er, or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen
With the wild flock that never needs a fold
Alone o'er steeps and flowing fells to lean;
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold converse
With Nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled."

Then had followed a flowing story of that day's adventures. Carlo, a rifle, a fishing "kit", and one sandwich, was what he seemed to consider a good day's outfitting--for that day at any rate.

"The day turned cold with drizzling showers and wind," he wrote, "and Carlo was a sight. He would frisk and scamper through the woods and underbrush,

searching for squirrels, and sniffing at every fallen log as though he intended to search out even the scent and tracks of the bear.

"Presently I became hungry and sat on a log to enjoy that sandwich; and immediately he was there, claiming his half. And as we ate he wagged his tail in a friendly, comradely way as much as to say: 'We don't care for a little thing like a storm, do we?'"

"Carlo is my best pal because he enjoys those hikes as well as I do.

"As I sat resting, I took my rifle and shot at a log, to test my marksmanship. I now followed the top of the ridge East, until I reached a point where the range divides, one branch running Northeast and the other Southeast. Below me was the beautiful 'hanging valley' with a little lake nestling in one corner. The valley lies between two mountain ranges at the point where the main range divides. It is the most beautiful spot I know of, and I could not begin to do justice to it in a description. The rain did not spoil its beauty. As I stood there on the crest of the range and admired the scene below me, I wished that you could see it too. Your views and mine are so closely akin regarding nature that I knew you would see it as I did, and that you would enjoy it. There had been no fog, but a cold mist now appeared, flying before the wind. All I could see now was the little valley below. It was about a half mile long and half as broad. The lake, at the opposite corner, was nearly hidden from view by a small knoll. The valley terminates in an abrupt drop, and this is why it is called the 'hanging valley'. I soon reached the pass, and as I stood on a high bank of snow, which had withstood the warm rays of the sun, with the wind and the rain whipping my face, I felt as though I was a part of it all, and the fog-hidden world seemed far away. I now descended to the lake, and after a few hours of fishing, returned home with a basket full of fine speckled beauties, and as hungry as a wolf. Write to me often. I look forward eagerly for your interesting letters.

Your True Friend, Winston Marvel"

CHAPTER NINE - WEAVERS

In order to successfully pursue the study of Sociology, Ethics and Civics it is necessary to give up much that centers only in self-interest, and to sacrifice a great deal; for one must engage in research; as well as class recitation; and then beyond this engage oneself in movements which reveal the inner life and governing forces and influences which are at work among every class of people, in every condition peculiar to the plane of development they have reached, in their evolutionary education, or unfoldment of character and personality.

The analogy of the weavers was suggested to Phyllis Llewellyn one day while she was an interested visitor in a very large and quite famed Woolen Mills of the Northwest. As she stood silently watching the rhythmic, powerful driving force of the busy, humming looms, the shuttles flashing forward and back, forward and back through the warp which was first set by the skilled hands of the weavers, filling in with almost super-technic the woof and reproducing the most wonderful patterns in the woven fabric, from patterns suspended like great scrolls above the looms. There was no one there to explain the intricate details of the Modern loom and its mechanism, but while she stood and watched the looms and the weavers seemed symbolical of life and humanity. "The human being," she contemplated mystically, "before he is developed through training and education, is the warp in the loom of life. The woof which is filled in by the Moral training, the Spiritual and intellectual development, and the Social environment, reproduces in its human character the pattern from which it was formed.

"And in life, as in the busy mills, these patterns are inspected, classified, and assigned, according to their respective quality, perfectness, and relative value."

After leaving the Mills, Phyllis walked and still meditated upon the Natural philosophy and divine science of life.

And with some strangely impelling interest, her mind reverted back constantly

to the letter which she had received from her friend and correspondent, Winston Marvel, the day before.

"I haven't been to Church for three Sundays now," it ran, "and I even missed Easter Services this year.

"But somehow, dear friend, I feel much nearer the Creator when in the wilds of the mountains, than when in Church. The Church seems farcial to me in many ways, and it seems that the majority of people attend Services, not so much to worship their Creator, as to display their beautiful clothes.

"At least, as I observe, the worship of God is the secondary interest. Most of those who give us a nod of recognition at the Service, do not know us outside, unless in their opinion, we rank equally with them in class distinction, and worldly possessions.

"They do not understand that great principle of brotherly love, upon which Christ based the truest ethics of life.

"But out there in the mountains and woods everything is true and real and nothing is artificial.

"The mountains and woods are a grand Church to me--the mountains are the walls while the heavens are the roof.

"True, it is too big a Church for most people; but there the Spirit of brotherly love seems to permeate every tree, flower, stream, bird and insect.

"I often listen to the conversation and arguments of the fellows here.

"They like to air their opinions and often they become involved in the discussion of subjects about which they know nothing at all.

"I usually maintain silence, but all the while I have to smile to myself at their misinterpretations and ignorance; and sometimes when they misinterpret or belittle some subject that I am deeply interested in, it is all I can do to keep from speaking out my mind."

As Phyllis reviewed the letter and meditated, gradually the question arose:

"Does the spirit of the letter lean toward the pantheistic--the belief in only a Universal Nature God? Or is my friend only carried away by a slight exaggerated egoism; and by poetical impulses toward Nature which he is not able to analyze? This Church of the mountains and woods, the roof of which is the great Vault of the heavens is poetically grand, but somehow I could not be satisfied to people it with only woods, and flowers, and streams, and birds, and insects, etc. My Church out there is peopled with humanity and the spirit of brotherly love is the Christ Spirit which seeks to permeate the hearts of all humanity. My Church out there is not too grand and large for any human being, if they choose to come, and the Universal Spirit of my Nature-God is moving over all. Dr. Newman, I believe, is the Author of the following:

'There goeth forth in all Space depths the Spirit, which, emanating from the Great Creator, fills immensity of Space with the power, yes, even the Presence of God; just as a ray of light is not separate from its source.'

"It is a great gift to one who loves Nature, and who is able to experience the thrill of adventure in mountains, woods, or open plains.

"It is a great gift for one to be interested observers of the haunts, habits and species of the strange creatures of the animal world, and to be able to discover in their lives the filial attachments, instincts of self-protection shown in their adventures, their strangely intelligent observance of the Nature-law of their existence, and even their comedies and tragedies. But it is a greater gift--the love of humanity and the spirit of fellowship and fraternity.

"To me the influence of religion and the true 'human touch' is essential to one's best development, and progress, and happiness.

"If one will keep in his heart the dream, and in his mind the vision, I don't believe that human beings would settle on the levels of materialism; nor of over-analytical, over-critical, over-disorganizing theoretical, unproven Science."

When Phyllis answered that letter she wrote out the thoughts which Winston's

letter had awakened in her mind, and the beliefs which as if by some magic touch were called up for analysis and confirmation.

CHAPTER TEN

After a correspondence of nearly two years Winston Marvel and Phyllis Llewellyn meet again. Young Marvel had accepted a position with a corporation which employs advanced Science Students in its land department and gives them opportunity for research and practical experience in Geology, Engineering, etc.

He learned that Phyllis was temporarily stationed in a City through which he must pass in going to his own field of work, for the summer; and so, he arranged to stop over for one day.

He notified her by phone, of his arrival, and Phyllis immediately suspended all business interests and planned to entertain the very welcome guest. That meeting was to Phyllis just a little disappointing, for Winston appeared different.

She studied him to discover in what was he was changed; then suddenly--quite abruptly, as was often characteristic of Phyllis, she said impulsively:

"Winston Marvel, what is the matter with you? You are thin, seem very nervous, and your finely organized physique and mentality which I so much admired in you seems almost on the verge of some sort of disorganization."

He did not seem surprised nor resentful, but replied: "Dr. Von Roche talked to me before I left, just as you have; but he finally conceded that I had been applying myself too closely to work and study with too little consideration and time given to recreation and exercise."

"And that being granted," Phyllis replied, still a little doubtfully, "why have you permitted the condition to develop? You have athletic organizations in your School, and all around you inviting Nature places which would even promote your studies in Science if you would go out and spend more time, for the preservation of your health, in active exercise."

"In reality, Dr. Von Roche demands so much of my time in assisting in class and laboratory teaching that I do not have enough time left, as it is, to properly prepare my own studies."

"I should think that the Youthful Spirit of Sportsmanship and adventure would just get hold of you in spite of everything, and just draw you out into Social and field activities, at least, enough to keep you strong and fit."

"You may think me different and odd, as some seem to at the U., but I have never been much interested in the Athletic and field activities of the School. I have noticed too, that those who are, are not the ones who win the highest credits in class and laboratory work," he defended.

"Oh, well," Phyllis conceded, "you are going now where old dame Nature will have the ruling hand. You will encounter her in some of her roughest and crudest aspects, but you will react, and come back a strong man."

"And now that you are here what shall be our programme for the balance of this day?"

"Why, a 'hike', of course," Winston proposed. "We will take plenty of lunch, and spend the day in the open."

"Agreed," said Phyllis. "And you are to be the Scout-guide. You shall conduct me over the trail that leads to the hills over there, and I will provide the luncheon."

"Agreed, again," said Winston with enthusiasm.

That trail through which the erstwhile Scout-guide led Phyllis was beset with many thorns and pitfalls in the form of wild rose bush thorns, underbrush, wire fences, swampy ground, water trenches, and a burning, beating sun heat from overhead.

However, they either climbed over, walked around, or crawled under all the barriers and finally arrived at their destination hungry as wolves.

They spread the luncheon temptingly upon a grassy, cool spot and with their

coats for seats proceeded to enjoy the repast.

But presently, scourges of the tormented! What? Were those green pleasant hill-slopes alive? Ticks--mountain ticks! And the two friends were given a reception which kept them energetically engaged for an hour in freeing themselves and their clothes from the too intimately familiar inhabitants of that region.

"Phyllis!" Winston exclaimed when they were fairly started back towards the City, "Just look at those mountains across the Valley with the snow still covering all their peaks. Some day I shall be free to explore and tramp in such mountains and canyons until I am satisfied."

He wore the Khaki clothes, puttees and tan sombrero hat, and as they stood there and admired the scene, Winston took off his hat and with a backward toss of his head, turned his face to the mountain breeze; and reminded Phyllis of some lithe, tall young Chieftain of the hills.

All too soon, that day was ended and the time had arrived to say good-bye.

With a firm, friendly handclasp they said their adieu, and Marvel, after descending several steps on the stairway, suddenly darted back and impressed a hurried, timid kiss upon her lips. "Remember!" he said, "that you have agreed to answer all my letters, from out there where I am going, and I intend to write quite a few."

Phyllis now began to feel some vague, strange impression that this was not an ordinary friendship, but must be of the very elect--a friendship which meant good--all good, for both. "I want to see Winston make a happy marriage that will be the Crowning Success of his life," she mused.

"Marion!" she half questioned--half agreed. "My Marion. She is much younger; but her type--her perfectly functioning girlhood promises a personality and beauty in womanhood that would grace the educational accomplishment, and highest station that my friend Marvel could ever reach."

"But I will not be a matchmaker even for my best friend nor for my own; too

much that is serious, and sacred, and fundamental, depends on happy, harmonious married companionship. But if they should meet and--" Here she left off contemplating and ordered her mind back into the channels of business, and study, and research.

One day Phyllis received a letter from Winston that carried a subtle suggestion of a growing sentiment which was closer than friendship. "I am way out here in the field," it ran, "isolated from civilization. I am at the present time sitting here on a 'camp chair' within our tent. Nearby is a campfire and at my elbow is a sputtering candle-light. The wind keeps playing pranks with the fire and some of the sparks keep lighting on me and getting onto my paper as I write. Close at hand is my 'bunkie' pal, sound asleep, and he is snoring outrageously; so you see, I am writing under difficulties; but it is to you I am writing so I am more than compensated." Then followed the sentiment with the new note which awakened a strange impulse in Phyllis' heart, almost of fear for the friendship she esteemed so highly. Laying the letter upon the glowing coals in the fireplace, she watched it burn, then drew a small study table near the window, and answered at once.

"I do esteem such friendship as ours," she wrote, "and it is my wish that it shall be guarded, and always my friendship shall follow you down the years, and I shall always remember, but I am sincere in saying that I shall never, never intrude."

Winston had answered this letter at once and had protested against a seeming lack of confidence which Phyllis' letter seemed to betray; then he had said: "Never say that again, pal-o-mine, because you cannot intrude where I am concerned. There is nothing that can ever happen to me or come into my life in which you would be considered as one on the outside, or as intruding."

Then changing the subject he said: "I have often wondered about this Creature called Man, and after reading your last letter I wonder still more.

"It is a singular fact, yet one that is quite true, that man is the most nonunderstandable of all living Creatures. With his wonderful gift of reasoning and the many intricate complications that have resulted from this, he has become the living personification of the untrue and while he approaches the ideal of the Creator most nearly--still he is the most evil of all created beings when he chooses to be. We excuse wickedness in the lower animals because they cannot understand. We do not excuse it in man because he has intelligence and can reason.

"Man differs from other animals also in that he has a soul. Along with this wonderful gift from the Creator, he has a weakness--his animal nature often prevails over his spiritual. Without placing myself upon a pedestal I believe that I can truthfully say that I have grown to understand human nature quite well--due more to circumstances and conditions surrounding my life than to any personal experience, however.

"It is one of my greatest ambitions in life to be of service to humanity. I must bring my letter to a close now, but first I want to let you understand that I always look forward eagerly for your letters for they bring me renewed inspiration and strength; so don't fail to write often. The papers and magazines you send are very welcome for it is not often we can get them here.

"With kindest regards.

As Always,

Your True Friend, Winston Marvel"

CHAPTER ELEVEN

It was September again--just two years since Phyllis first discovered the little City in the great Northwest, and had been pleased to call it "The Garden City of the Mountains."

She had become ill before she had been able to complete her business interests which had called her forth on so long and lonely a journey, and the

Physician she had consulted had advised her to go at once on to the "Garden City of the Mountains" and there remain until her health had improved. "For," he had explained, "it is the only place in this region where you can obtain proper care and rest."

Shortly after this Marvel returned from the field, to again enter the University. He sent a note through the Post Office, as he did not know where she was staying, notifying her of his return and asking her to call him over the phone, at the University.

She called him and then gave her consent to his request for permission to spend that evening with her.

Again the meeting of the two friends was a happy renewal of their frank, companionable friendship.

Phyllis was pleasantly surprised this time for there was none of the former enervated, or seemingly disorganized nervous or physical functions of mind or body. His complexion was ruddy under a deep coat of tan, his eyes clear and steady, his voice vibrating as under the spell of health and clean living.

That was on one Saturday eve and the first thing that they did was to plan a "hike" for the next day, and retrace the trail formerly followed far up into the canyon, through the dense forest, right back to the tree--the Sentinel tree of their friendship pledge. They carried a luncheon as before, and spread it upon the same huge boulder, under the giant pines.

Then they wound their way through unbroken paths, around dense undergrowths of vines and small sprouting trees and wild shrubbery, coming soon to the evergreen tree--the friendship tree upon the gently sloping hill.

Winston carved their initials deeper, and again each broke a sprig from the tree and renewed their friendship pledge.

It was several weeks after this when the comrades started out to climb by the beaten path along the mountainside to the insignia of the U upon a high elevation.

Suddenly, and impulsively, Winston protested: "Phyllis, in spite of our beautiful friendship, you always hold me at a distance as though you did not consider me quite your equal.

"Why can we not be as equal in everything as we are in some ways now?

"That is the only barrier to our realization of a perfect friendship."

"The first essential is that we fully realize ourselves and know that we are equal to a perfect friendship," Phyllis explained even kindly.

"I know that we are. I know myself. I am sincere and I hold our friendship in the highest esteem," he said.

"And with this understanding, I am proud to regard you as you feel is right," she affirmed.

As they returned that late afternoon Phyllis paused upon a high ridge on the mountain side to view the scene below: the City--the University buildings--the river and the landscape beyond.

"They are all my friends!" she exclaimed exaltedly, "because they all seemed to call to me and make me welcome, even that very first day when I arrived travel-weary, home-sick and lonely."

Soon they were upon the level ground again, and Winston proposed that they go over to the University and visit the classroom and laboratory in his Department.

Together they examined the many display cabinets, and Winston explained as they went. She noted with pleasure the very orderly arrangement and the perfect cleanliness of everything in that room and asked who was the one to attend to that work.

"I am," he answered with some display of pride. "I am responsible to my Professor for the arrangement and care of this Department."

"You will be more than a Professor some day," she complimented; "you will be a Teacher."

And thus, the friends conversed as they left the building and walked across

the Campus in the early twilight.

In a sheltered place near the hedge Phyllis discovered an unusually perfect half-blown rose.

"I must have that! May I have it, Winston?" she insisted. "The rose is my favorite flower."

"Wait," Winston said, "and I promise to guard it until the day after tomorrow, for that is the day you have set for leaving here. And then I will mail it to you at your new address."

"You see, I have already declared my intentions of writing to you."

While Marvel gathered a few blossoms for Phyllis, she silently made a mental picture of the Campus and buildings. "The University is the Genius. The Instructors are there for the purpose of driving her Master-thoughts through the endless raw material--the Student-mind.

"Back of the Genius is the Master of Creative dreams and Constructive, Visionary thoughts.

"Fortunate indeed are those who are privileged to come and be partakers, and beneficiaries of her gracious and dignified gifts."

Suddenly, a fleeting, pensive, shadow-thought held her. "Aye; but even in the University not all the raw material is successfully moulded into a high quality of Manhood and Womanhood for various causes, centered in the functioning and developing processes of the Mental, Spiritual, Physical and Social life."

CHAPTER TWELVE

One evening as the now very frankly congenial friends walked in the early twilight, Phyllis suddenly stood still in the path which led through the wood and across the rustic bridge, and on, into the little clearing where the tall swing was.

The large and very brilliant evening Star was rising over the highest peak of the rugged hills. "I am not a person, as you know, Winston, who is governed by

superstition or mythical fancies; but that Star, for years, has attracted me and its influence has always been the same--impelling, inspirational; and always beckoning to me and holding a promise.

"I noticed it first when I was very unhappy and very lonely back there in the past.

"I used to walk out alone at the close of those dreary days, and always, as the twilight deepened, that Star gradually grew out of the twilight, and shone out with such a cheering constancy, that I finally came to look for it at the close of every day, and I called it my 'Star of Hope'."

Winston was silent and seemed wrapped in earnest thoughts, but as they again turned their steps toward the "trysting place" he said: "I wish we could share the Star of Hope, as we do everything; just as we share the beautiful evergreen Emblem. May we not call it, our Star of Hope?"

"One of the privileges I grant to very few indeed," Phyllis said, "but you and I are real friends--" Phyllis offered her hand and the pact was silently signed by one of their frank, warm, friendly handclasps.

That night after Phyllis had returned to her room she sat long and meditated. "I still am puzzled at times about Winston's inclination toward the isolated and unsocial.

"Beside myself, he chooses very, very few friends; and this aloof and reserved manner towards his associates and fellow students still puzzles me a little at times. I have criticized and scolded him, but my active interference only seems to annoy and repel him.

"There are also times, of late, when I have questioned as to the wisdom of my unasked-for advice. Supposing that he did embrace a more free and promiscuous Social life and enter more freely into the Spirit of the times--embrace the Spirit and Standards of the 'popular set' in his School and Community?

"I turn away from the picture quickly and return loyally to the Winston

Marvel of my dream-prophecy--the friend of my confidence and esteem. That new story that I have just finished reading has a passage which has left a deep impression on my mind.

"It is where the Author introduces the great, very famous novelist, in one of his higher, instinctive, true, inner-character moods.

"He has been terribly disillusioned and cynically embittered, through having silenced the true writer, and the real man beliefs of his Natural self, and created for the world the kind of stories and books that the world demanded, in order that he might win fame and success.

"He counsels a young graduate who is in danger of doing the same way with his artist-gift, but who is so unspoiled by the world and its delusions, that he does not realize the fact himself. This promising young Artist had just completed a portrait of a very worldly and ambitious society leader, which flattered her so much that it promised fame and wealth and--the Novelist knew what else. 'If you prostitute your noble genius to deceptive art, for the sake of fame and wealth,' he had counseled, 'you must pay the price!' And then taking him to view the majestic and wonderfully beautiful mountain before which the true Novelist--the better man displaced for a time the disillusioned, cynical man of the world, he said: 'There is an art like the mountains--lonely, apart from the world; remotely above the ambitions of men; God-like in its calm strength and peace--an art to which men may look for inspiration and courage and hope. And there is that other art, petty and shallow and mean that sets real men apart and distinguishes them from the common crowd and makes of them leaders and noble men. I have noticed, in my wanderings, how in the crowded tenement districts of Cities, there are places commonly used as rendezvous; and how it is the most ignorant, and therefore, the most unfortunate and most inferior, through bad environment and the conditions that poverty and ignorance impose, who turn to account the most readily, the instincts of sociability and solidarity. The multitude is like a torrent that

sweeps everything in its path; and being one of that crowd we do not possess ourselves completely. Our wills are not so strong, our vision is not so clear and our sentiments are not so lofty: thus we become confused and allow ourselves to be dominated by less worthy forces

"I have always aspired to help humanity in some way, but always, I have found that I am not of that class who can 'mix' freely with the crowd nor to be swept along with the popular tide. Some have called me a 'hermit-soul', because of this; but in considering the question, I often recall the lines:

"There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
In the peace of their self-content
There are souls like stars that dwell apart
In a fellowless firmament."

"One of the pioneer souls in some new movement for the betterment of human relations and education I may aspire to be:

"There are pioneer souls that blaze their paths
Where the highways never ran."

"But I could not dwell apart as a social hermit in a fellowless atmosphere; for my aspirations embrace the 'human touch', the great brotherhood and sisterhood of human relations, and the Christ-Standard of consideration for all who are unfortunate.

"Let me live in a house by the side of the road
Where the race of men go by
The men who are good and the men who are bad
As good and as bad as I.
I would not sit in the scorner's seat,
Nor hurl the Cynic's ban;
Let me live in a house by the side of the road
And be a friend to man."

(copied)

"Being alone in the many and changing crowds has not depressed me unduly, thus far; I really have not felt myself to be entirely alone.

"But standing as one apart, my vision has been clearer and my reasoning more just.

"I always have been able to see good in people. I value friends with a high

appraisal; although I am not one of those who mingles freely with the Sociable Spirit, and with conversational powers.

"I have always depended, it seems, upon inner forces to draw, and hold, and persuade, and convince, and inspire.

"And every friend thus gained is just one more jewel added to my royal crown of friends. I have just been seriously considering one of my newly-gained friends, and now feel to leave him to himself before the Mountain of his aspirations, and ideals, and ambitions; and I only trust that he will win his place and fame, untouched by the world of superficial, materialistic Standards and fictitious Values; with vision unclouded before that Mountain of aspiration--remotely above ordinary ambitions of men; Calm--Strong--Courageous, and, I hope--eminently successful.'"

PART TWO

THE IDEAL LOVE

CHAPTER ONE

"As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman,
Though she bends him she obeys him,
Though she draws him, yet she follows,
Useless one without the other."

(Longfellow)

As the time drew near for Phyllis' departure, Winston betrayed signs of depressed spirit and the suppression of some emotion.

"I am going to miss you more than you know, for you have come to mean much more to me than a friend!" he finally blurted out.

After this, there was a long silence between them as they walked, in the late afternoon, in the path through the wood, toward their "trysting-place in the forest" as they called it, where the tall swing served as "hammock" for two, on occasions when they had some important subject to discuss, or some confidence to exchange.

"Why are you so thoughtful and silent, Phyllis? You look almost troubled." Winston was very solicitous, as he questioned his friend.

"I can hardly explain. If I were inclined to super-sensitiveness, I would surely believe it is a premonition of some sort."

"Are you grieved because I told you that I am coming to regard you as more than a dear friend?" he asked.

"Why could it not have gone on, and on, just as it began? Why is not our wonderful friendship enough?" she protested. "And besides; there is the barrier!"

"The barrier which you refer to is only a conventional one--only one of our own permitting. You are my senior by a few years and because of that, I almost believe, at times, that you would let it stand between us and spoil our happiness."

"But Winston; I cannot coin the words that would adequately express how deeply I would be grieved should any unhappy future complications develop out of

our very happy comradeship--our very perfect friendship of the Evergreen pledge."

"I am not a fool, nor one of those weak, susceptible natures with a selfish motive!" he challenged. "Nor am I one of those who does not know his own disposition and his own mind. I am of a different temperament to the average young man. I am of a serious and mature turn of mind; and I am very studious, and ambitious in my work; so you can see for yourself that you are a far more suitable companion for me--and far more of an inspiration than any of the younger set, which, you constantly remind me, is of my own generation, and the Social Circle from which I must choose, when the time comes for me to care a great deal for someone--enough, you say, to make me want that someone for my own wife. You and I have interests, ideals, beliefs and aspirations in common; in fact, our congeniality is mutual and very harmonious. You would be the best and the safest, and the most adorable companion for me in all the world.

"I do not take well among the girls at the U, either, because they openly regard me as 'old fashioned', even prosaic and uninteresting; while I openly regard them as lacking in many character considerations which would make them interesting to me.

"You and I are equal on every plane of thought or action in which our associations has tested us out, and our regard for each other is high and fine. And I know this, Phyllis; that you can trust my sincerity and my integrity."

"And what of me?" Phyllis asked. "Are you not anxious to enquire very carefully into my past? You know I have a past life experience which plunged me into deep grief--deep distressing conditions socially and financially, and that I am truly a woman representative of the toilers in the ranks of the working-woman. You have never asked, but you are permitted, as my esteemed friend, to just go back and exhume, and examine, even with that 'irresponsible' mind of yours, the records of my past."

"I have known you long enough, and intimately enough, to know that you are a

very superior woman--one in a thousand! I have known you long enough to know that at this moment, you are more worthy of me than I am of you."

"There are only three kinds of men who go out of their generation for their wives--either up or down the scale," Phyllis quizzed. "And these are the ones who are just plain adventurers, or else geniuses who step forward or ahead of their generations in order to mate with their equals, and then, there is the man who idealizes only the baby-minded, clinging-vine type, whose charming incompetency in everything but sex attraction, is her strongest appeal to him--at least, before marriage; yes, and I am reminded that there is a fourth type of man--very insignificant, but likely to do anything that suddenly pops into his impulses--I won't say head, for he does not use that; he just acts upon impulse, according to what influences, propinquity or persuasion is brought to bear upon him. You never know what he is likely to do next; but that type is just the plain fool kind who is always getting himself or his friends into some ridiculous situation, or unenviable position."

"I do not belong to the fool type, I am quite sure; and as for my friends, I am not choosing for them--I am choosing for myself," he emphasized very earnestly. "And even Dr. Von Roche, who has seen you, told me that yours was a personality that was very attractive and you was one friend who was a credit to me. And then there is Professor DeWolffe, who has also seen you with me, and who had spoken very complimentary of you."

Phyllis was plainly reassured, and much pleased with the compliment. "You must be a higher, truer type of friend sent to me in order that I may prove to a doubting humanity the truth of my Standard and principles of the Golden Mean," she concluded, as they continued their way to their destination--the little clearing in the Natural woods, where someone had set the tall swing between two trees, and placed a long table and several benches nearby for the benefit of picnic parties or those only seeking a quiet place in which to rest and read; and which they

always referred to, as their trysting-place.

Arriving there, they sat in the swing and talked.

"Have you ever read Hugo's Les Miserables?" Winston asked.

"Only a partial review while at school," Phyllis replied.

"It is one of my favorite books--in fact, it is a very special favorite with me--I have read it through from cover to cover very thoroughly. Won't you get a volume and read it in your spare time?

"If you would, we could discuss it together--especially, some of the things which have interested me the most." His explanation and request seemed so sincere that Phyllis mentally decided to read the book at the very earliest opportune time..

"You have aroused my interest and also my woman's curiosity," she said, "and now I want you, just as a very special favor, to outline your own view point in a sketch, or review of the story. It is very early yet and we have ample time."

"I am afraid that my own poor effort would only weary you, for I am a very poor scholar when it comes to making a narrative or review interesting to an audience; in fact, I fear that I would even bore you," he demurred.

"I will agree to stop you in that case, but I will be a very attentive listener to the end if you do as well as you have with some other reviews and narratives in the past," she encouraged, and he began reluctantly.

"'Les Miserables', you know, means the unfortunate ones--the unfortunates who are under condemnation either Socially, Morally, or Intellectually, by reason of law, or custom; or by reason of poverty and ignorance. The Author describes, very vividly, how it is such condemnation that creates hells on earth and complicates the divinely ordained destinies of the people, with human fatality. Jean Valjean appears in the story as the man suffering under such condemnation; and Fantine as the woman who is ruined under the same condemnation.

"Thenardier and his thieving and murderous pack of human wolves appear as

those utterly degraded by ignorance, poverty and immorality.

"Jean Valjean was illiterate and poor because his parents died when he was only a child, and he was left to depend upon his own resources to make a living. When he was about 25 years old, the support of his sister, who was a widow with seven children devolved upon him. Their circumstances were extremely difficult always, but when he could get no work and there was no more money--not even anything that could be pawned or sold, and the children were hungry, in desperation he smashed a baker's window and stole a loaf of bread.

"For this, he was arrested, tried, and sentenced to serve five years in the galleys at Toulon. He remained there 19 years because of several desperate attempts to escape.

"When he finally had been expiated by every punishment the Authorities dared to permit, he was released. They gave him a passport which classified him as a dangerous criminal--this unfortunate man who had gone to the galleys a thoughtful, affectionate, self-sacrificing young man had emerged hardened, embittered, cynical, disillusioned.

"They had blotted out the existence of the real Jean Valjean and created Convict No. 24601.

"He had taught himself to read while in the galleys, but instead of the effort of the ambitious youth to improve himself, his whole thought was that this would enable him to do wrong to greater advantage.

"After his discharge from the galleys he started inland, but was looked upon with so much suspicion and distrust on account of his yellow passport, that he could find no lodging, even though he had money to pay for it.

"Finally, he heard of the good Bishop Mgr. Bienvenu, who always slept with his doors unbolted, believing that unless God protects a house, they who guard it, watch in vain. The convict was kindly received by the Bishop who treated him as a brother, and Jean Valjean heard the first words of kindness since his first

arrest, 19 years before.

"Jean Valjean was fed at the same table with the Bishop, and the best linen and silver plate was used. Valjean was bewildered at the treatment, and when the Bishop himself lighted him to bed with candles in silver candlesticks, he amazement was complete. But during the night he awakened, and creeping past the sleeping Bishop, he stole the silver plate from which they had eaten supper, and fled from the house. He was arrested shortly after daybreak and conducted to the Bishop's residence so that the stolen goods might be formally identified.

"The moment the Bishop perceived what had happened he said: 'Why! how is this? I gave you the candlesticks too which will sell for two hundred francs. Why did you not take them with the rest of the plate?'

"Now, Jean Valjean was greatly amazed; and as the Bishop held to his attitude the officers had to release the prisoner. The Bishop insisted that he take the candlesticks too, and as he was about to depart said: 'Never forget that you have promised me to use this money to become an honest man.'

"Valjean had no recollection of having promised anything, but he stood there silent, while the Bishop continued: 'Jean Valjean, my brother, you no longer belong to evil, but to good. I have bought your soul of you. I withdraw it from dark thoughts and the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God.'

"That same afternoon Valjean sat under a tree thinking deeply. Gervais, a little Savoyard boy passed him singing gaily and tossing a two franc piece. Once he failed to catch the coin and it fell at Valjean's feet. He put his foot on it and when the boy begged for his money back, Valjean ordered him away in such a terrible voice that the boy became frightened and ran away crying. Suddenly Valjean seemed to awaken, as from a dream, and realizing what he had done, became overwhelmed with emotion. He called the boy again and again, but receiving no answer, he ran, hoping to overtake him and give him back his money.

"When he failed to find the boy, he fell, as though the invisible power of an

accusing conscience were crushing him; and clinching his hands in his hair, he cried: 'I am a wretch!' Then he wept for the first time in 19 years.

"He set out, wandering aimlessly until he arrived at the town of M---- while a fire was raging, just in time to rescue, at the peril of his own life, the two children of the Chief of Police. For this reason, no one dreamed of asking for his passport, and so he settled in that town as a working man. Here he invented a cheap process of making jet beads, and within a year his enterprise succeeded so well that he built a factory.

"He was known as M. Madeleine, and his charities soon became so numerous, and his enterprises for the public good, so beneficent that his fame spread among the people. The King wished to make him a Knight of the Legion of Honor, but he declined. Later, however, he was made Mayor. Javert, the Police Inspector who performed at M---- was the only one who was antagonistic toward Jean Valjean. Javert was born in prison; his mother was a fortune teller whose husband was in the galleys.

"When he grew up, and being beyond the pale of society, which he despaired of ever being able to enter, he had a choice between only two classes--those who attack society, and those who protect it; and so he chose the latter, and entered the police service. His two characteristics were an exaggerated respect for Authority, and hatred of rebellion; on the one hand he said: 'A functionary can do no wrong; a Magistrate cannot be mistaken.' On the other hand, he believed that they who fell were unremedially lost and no good could come of them.

"Fantine's story is of no less interest than that of Jean Valjean, and the threads of their lives seem strangely interwoven.

"Hugo says that the beautiful and unguarded daughters of the poor have fatal councilors--poverty, and coquetry. They have both whispering in their ears--each on its side. Their unguarded souls listen; thus their fall is accomplished, and then stones are cast at them. Fantine, after she was deserted by her lover, with

her child Cosette, bravely set about caring for herself and child. She could find no work in Paris, so she journeyed toward her native Province. Traveling through the country she chanced upon an inn-keeper's wife, Mme. Thenardier, who was playing with her two children in a swing. Fantine, realizing that it was impossible to take the child with her in her quest for employment, asked the woman to keep Cosette for her, until she could find work.

"Mme. Thenardier, assisted by her villainous husband, drove a hard bargain.

"Fantine sadly proceeded to her old home--M----sur----M, and secured work in the Manufacturing plant of M. Madeleine. She sent her meagre earnings to the Thenardiers for the support of Cosette, but they spent the money for themselves and their children and allowed Cosette to go cold and hungry, and before she was eight years old she was an ill-clad, ill-fed servant, and compelled to do all manner of drudgery, and deprived of every childish pleasure.

"Soon the old gossips began to whisper about Fantine, saying she put on airs and wrote too many letters.

"Then an old woman found out about Cosette, and finally they got Fantine discharged; but without the knowledge of Father Madeleine.

"Matters became from bad to worse, until one winter evening, Madeleine saw Javert arrest a woman of the town. He made inquiries of the bystanders, and learned that the woman's only offence was that she had defended herself from a well-to-do bully in the guise of a gentleman who had thrown snow down her bare back. That the man who was a wealthy taxpayer took advantage of the unfortunate woman, without provocation from her, as she was pointed out to him, meant nothing to Javert. Madeleine went to the Police Station and demanded her release, but before Fantine realized what it was he was doing, spat in the Mayor's face.

'You are the Cause!' she shrieked. 'It was you, you monster of a Mayor, who compelled me to sell my honor, not that I might live, but that I might support my baby! You discharged me on account of the gossip of the shop. My baby is with

the Thenardiers at Montfermeil. They have made me pay more and more for her keep, and when I was discharged I couldn't earn enough to meet their demands, so I had to become a bad woman!'

"Madeleine listened attentively, then repeated his demand that she be released.

'This is a police matter!' thundered Javert, 'it is not in the province of the Magistrate to interfere. Moreover, the woman has insulted you.'

'That,' replied Madeleine, 'is my affair!' He then quoted from the Statutes to show that in certain contingencies, like the one under discussion, the Mayor had authority to overrule the police.

"After a heated controversy, the Mayor ordered Javert to leave the room. Fantine was released, and the Mayor sent her to the Infirmary, where she fell seriously ill of a violent fever.

"An order for Cosette was written and more than enough was sent to the Thenardiers, to pay the bill due them. They were surprised at the sum sent, and here their scheming cupidity shows forth. They refused to send Cosette to her dying Mother; claiming that even more money was due them, and holding her until it was paid. Fantine had been most unfortunate in her choice of guardians for her child.

"Javert called upon the Mayor now, with a confession. 'In a moment of passion, inspired solely by a desire for revenge,' he said, 'I denounced you to the Chief of Police as a Convict, one Jean Valjean. To suspect you might pass without censure, for it is a policeman's duty to suspect; but to denounce one in authority from such motives as stirred me is the gravest dereliction. I am no longer fit for police duty so I ask you to dismiss me; for such error deserves the severest punishment.' Then he explained that he was now convinced of his mistake, as the real Jean Valjean had been found.

"The Mayor enquired closely concerning the man who was to be tried as the

Convict, Jean Valjean, for two crimes---the robbery of the silver plate, and the little boy's money, when he was first released from the galleys, and learned that he was a stupid, harmless old fellow who was a burden on the community.

"All night long the Mayor struggled with his problem.

"If he remained silent, the only sufferer would be the worthless victim of the error. If he surrendered himself to protect the unfortunate, but worthless man, the industries and prosperity of M---- would fall to pieces.

"At last, Valjean concluded to go to the trial, and give himself up. As the sentence was about to be pronounced upon the supposed escaped convict, the Mayor arose and cried out that he was Jean Valjean. He recalled incidents and facts before the testifying witnesses which proved his identity beyond a doubt.

"The Court was dumbfounded. After telling them that he was open for arrest, he went toward the door. Pausing, he addressed those assembled: 'You all, all who are here think me worthy of pity, do you now? Great God! When I think of what I was on the point of doing, I think myself now worthy of envy!' Thus, he left the room.

"He withdrew his savings from the Paris Bank and hid them safely in a wood not far from Montfermeil. Then he was arrested and sent back to the galleys where he remained for about 6 months.

"One day, a sailor was in extreme peril, far aloft in the rigging of a ship, and his fellows stood around helplessly, momentarily expecting him to pitch down to his sure death--Jean Valjean asked permission to try to save him, which was given. With marvelous dexterity and strength he performed the feat; but while he was descending, himself, he appeared to lose his balance, and fell overboard. A search was made of the harbor, but they failed to find his body.

"There was an official announcement that he was dead.

"Fantine died without seeing her child again.

"Jean Valjean, after a most marvelous escape, went to the Inn of the

Thenardiers and after paying an extortionate sum for what they claimed was due them on Cosette's account, took her away, and adopted her.

"After this the Thenardiers went to Paris in hopes of finding a better field where they could find more prey upon whom they could thrive. They established themselves in a miserable hovel, and with new found companions turned it into a den of thieves. The height of their crime was reached when Thenardier, under an assumed name, trapped Valjean, who was living in Paris, as a retired officer, with his now beautiful adopted daughter Cosette.

"The lives of the Thenardier children have become most pitiful. Their parents are bandits of the worst sort, and the children are compelled to become efficient in the life of the street, the tenderloin, and the robber--they must do this or starve. They have become hardened cynics, though little above babyhood in years.

"Marius, son of the Baron of Pontmercy, and who becomeing estranged toward his grandfather; and who is struggling to educate himself in the Law, but whose poverty compels the strictest economy, is a tenant in the same house as the Thenardiers, witnessed their acts when they trapped Jean Valjean. Later, he was saved by Efenine, the eldest daughter of Thenardier, who loved him, from being a victim, himself.

"Marius, who had seen Cosette on different occasions was in love with her, and she returned his love. The lives of the unfortunates of each, or all the degrees of condemnation, are strangely interwoven.

"When Jean Valjean discovered that Cosette and Marius loved each other, and that Marius had been confined, for political reasons, in the Barricade; he went there and succeeded, through some clever management, in carrying Marius away through the sewer of Paris, through filth and quagmire, to freedom.

"Cosette became the wife of Marius after this, and Marius--the Baron of Pontmercy--not knowing who his deliverer was, gradually weaned her away from her

step-father, who was so grieved that he wasted away broken-hearted.

"One day a mysterious person appeared in disguise, and tried to sell the story of Valjean's life; and thus, unknowingly disclosed the fact that Valjean was the man who had carried Marius from the barricade--the man for whom Marius had been searching for so long.

"Cosette, and Marius--Baron Pontmercy, hastened now to find Valjean, hoping to recompense him for his heroism and self-sacrifice. They found him, poor, and broken in health, and the call of death was even then upon him.

"Had not the degraded, poverty-stricken fiend Thenardier unwittingly revealed the secret of Valjean, he would have died alone; but now it was Cosette and Marius who tenderly watched the passing of his soul."

As Winston finished the review he apologized in a half-embarrassed way for taking so long a time, and then the two friends walked back through the October evening, to the Hotel.

As they walked, Phyllis became even more pensive and depressed. Suddenly she exclaimed with a great deal of feeling: "Winston, if I should permit you to persuade me that you were right in what you told me this afternoon, and you should discover afterwards that you were mistaken and should regret; and I, one with you, in the discovery; it would grieve me so deeply that I would just want to hide away from all the world! You see, I too, care a great deal about our friendship."

Winston laid his hand firmly across her shoulder as he answered: "Never speak nor even think like that again! It is like rebelling against a gift from God. It is farcial to try to invent excuses; we seem to have been destined to meet, and to care for each other as we do."

Phyllis invited him to come into the Hotel and spend the remainder of the evening there.

As they talked Winston absently picked up the small, leather-bound diary that Phyllis kept always handy, from a small writing table, and began absently to

examine it and turn the pages.

"No," she said hastily, as she reached for the book, "you must not read in that Diary--at least, not yet."

"But why?" Winston questioned eagerly.

"Because it is a Diary. Most of it, however, is done in a cipher, or rather small symbolic characters of my own originating, and for my own convenience. I can write enough in this little book, in this way, to make a small volume when in print. No one but myself can read it only unless they have the key."

"Will you ever interpret it for me?" he asked.

"Only the future can answer. I do not know. It all will depend on circumstances."

When it was time for Winston to go Phyllis accompanied him down the hall, to the front stairway; and it was here, standing reverently before each other as though each had suddenly assumed great importance as to personality and relationship, Winston spoke.

"I am speaking with an understanding mind and heart. I have considered every side and phase of the question, and I feel convinced that it is ordained for us to love each other; and Phyllis, I love you!"

He spoke with a simple dignity, and with an earnestness which challenged doubting or discrediting. Phyllis silently bowed her head.

The next morning she left the city without seeing Winston again.

William Wallace was again a guest of the same Hotel where Phyllis registered
1st L met on the porch -
and reserved a room for one week.

Seeing her name on the register the next morning he waited in the reception parlor until she came downstairs.

The greeting was a very cordial one, and this being Sunday, the two acquaintances walked out to the river, which wended its way along the base of a beautiful mountain range; and as they walked they talked. Oddly enough, the

conversation finally settled upon disparity of ages.

"Many people," Mr. Wallace said, "consider that the only misalliance of ages rests in a man's choosing and marrying a woman who is his senior. They condemn the act as being very unconventional, and, oh, so very unfair to himself. But at the same time, they reserve to him the right to choose and marry a girl who is young enough to be his daughter, or even his granddaughter, if the ambitious mamas and sweet, 'conspiring' daughters deem his social position and his possessions of sufficient importance.

"The age disparity then becomes a very insignificant consideration, and society commends the very fortunate and flatteringly appropriate marriage of Miss So and So. Oh no; society is not shocked even very mildly--tradition and social ideals have not been violated, and the girl really is considered quite fortunate to have been so chosen.

"But let the finest and most truly mated pair declare their intention of marriage when the seniority is on the side of the woman, and be it in ever so few years; the man will suddenly discover that he has a horde of friends--all very personally interested in his future welfare, and eager to advise him not to make a fool of himself.

"Such a love, they tell him, does very well as something with which he may amuse himself, play with, with impunity, tire of, finally; and then without qualms of moral sense or conscience, discredit and set aside when the time comes for choosing a real companion in marriage. But these friends and very personally interested advisors do not trouble their heads about that worst of all misalliances--the misalliance of mind and soul.

"The educated people who really are interested enough to study and observe, know that perfected manhood and perfected womanhood cannot be reckoned by just years. Who does not know people who demonstrate this fact? Who does not know people in the early twenties who appear to be at least past thirty; and who does

not know people past the thirties who look and act more like those not yet out of the twenties?

"Do you know what old age really is? Well, I will tell you. Old age is declining vitality, declining vision, declining enthusiasm, and interest in the things which are of importance to every normal, active, human person living.

"Perhaps it may be the one of senior years whose life evolves and blossoms, while the one of junior years may permit his youth to wither and die."

Phyllis, thus encouraged, told of some people in her home City who were very prominent socially and professionally, who had defied that old traditional rule and who certainly had won happiness for themselves.

"The woman is his senior by more than a decade," she informed, "but they look so well together; and their friends declare that they are ideally mated. They must be, for after about 20 years he still prefers his home and her company, to his Club; and he consults her on very important business matters, and accepts her judgements, in preference to the best legal authority offered by men--and they call each other 'pal' and other endearing names with as much confidence and satisfaction as the very youngest of newlyweds."

"Real love never can fail only in the case of incomplete beings--for it is the true bond between moral beings, and a real inspiration that strengthens, and sets one all aglow with a nobler manhood and womanhood," William Wallace said.

Phyllis now felt a glow of encouragement as she mentally reviewed the very unusual, as she now believed, friendship of herself and Winston Marvel. "I will wait," she concluded. "It is one of the things that will work itself out and prove itself either true or false if we only will remain true to principle and law, and then only wait."

CHAPTER TWO

Early Monday morning, Phyllis called at the Post Office and received two letters from Winston Marvel.

In one envelope was a long and ardent letter--in the other was the promised rose. "Yes, Phyllis dear; it is true that I have given to you--into your honorable keeping, the greatest thing I possess--my love," he wrote. And then followed a long and very beautiful letter which almost overwhelmed her and set her mind in high and faith-inspiring places.

But that evening when she answered, she emphatically refused to decide the question either one way or the other. "But rest assured," she wrote, "that if I am given wisdom, I will be governed in my decision by what will mean your truest happiness and greatest good. I am very sincere in this and shall not change."

By return mail Winston's answer came.

"I am coming to you, dear--I must. It is for the sake of your truest happiness and your greatest good that I am coming now. We will discuss everything together, that it seems so inadequate to discuss in writing; and besides, there is occasion for more appropriate reverence toward such an attachment as exists between us."

And so on the next Sunday Morning Winston Marvel would arrive in the little frontier town called Plains, and then, Phyllis hoped, they would come to a true and perfect understanding, and make plans for their future which would be in harmony with their final decision.

The following morning William Wallace came to the reception parlor and talked with Phyllis again. "Have you really decided to marry that poor student over at the University who seems to be taking up so much of your time and interest?" he asked.

"I have not given my promise, but he is coming here next Sunday and he hopes that at that time we may arrive at a mutual and definite understanding."

"But he is poor as well as young, and he has not proven his ability to make a success in his chosen profession, nor his moral integrity, which may, if put to the test, prove of just the same quality as the average College student shows

under similar conditions. He may not have the courage to uphold his convictions, even after he has pledged himself to that Compact which he now is so anxious to have you enter into, with him. I am only a man who knows men, and I have the conceit to believe that your happiness would be safer with me, than with him. And I even, with my experience in the world and with people, would not regard it as a light or indifferent task to live up to a standard which would be in harmony with your ideals or Nature," he said.

"Yes;" agreed Phyllis, "but he has the heart-dream, the youth-vision, the high incentive, the idealistic motive, and so, you see, he is poor only in one thing--money. He knows what hard work is, and sacrifice too; but I believe that he has a way of turning his whole mind and will to effort, and his soul to aspiration.

"Being deprived of so much money, he goes to Nature and studies the Universe and people. He sees in humanity, fellow-beings with souls; and he sees in Creation the handiwork of God, which he is always acknowledging.

"I know that he contemplates by the words he uses in expressing his sentiments; and because he, himself, has suffered, I don't believe that he would inflict suffering upon any human being; and you know, yourself, that most women--those who are true to their womanhood, loves and trusts, and esteems, and honors clean, strong, young manhood that is not poisoned by the world."

"It is the unusual thing, just the same, for women to appraise men as you do; I don't mean to say that there are not many--very many women who do, but the average woman only appraises manhood by a very mercenary standard, and by his social popularity. They do not know that he is supposed to have a soul, or honor, or morals," Mr. Wallace replied, with a momentary spirit of bitterness, and a cynical touch of world-knowledge. "And so, more than ever, do I honor you, and I sincerely hope that your esteemed University friend will prove worthy of the generous belief, and high trust that you have placed in him."

When Marvel arrived at Plains that Sunday morning, Phyllis was waiting for him upon the platform, at the Station. As he came toward her, his countenance brightened up with a wonderfully sincere and happy expression.

They greeted each other with their accustomed quiet dignity and almost fraternal handclasp.

They were silent until after they had crossed over the street and were upon the sidewalk, then Winston spoke eagerly:

"Phyllis, dear, our question is just about solving itself. That 'barrier' as you chose to consider it, of age difference, has dwindled down to such insignificance that it makes me feel like a cad to even mention it.

"Now, in your opinion, is there any other barrier?"

"No," Phyllis said, "there is no other barrier, as far as I can realize everything."

"Very well; we must never mention that one factor again, which, when weighed against all the other considerations in our favor, becomes very unimportant indeed."

The waitress in the dining-room at the Hotel, very considerately set a small, round table in a reserved corner, and thoughtfully provided fresh white linen, and a center decoration of a small bowl of variegated sweet peas.

Winston sat back in his chair and observed the thoughtful compliment a moment, and then said: "Phyllis, this reminds me of the way we will sit at our own table, in our own home, some day. We must always have clean white linen for our table, and freshly cut flowers."

That evening as they sat conversing in the little reception-room, Winston came and sat on the arm of Phyllis' chair and pulled her head gently back until it rested upon his shoulder.

"Phyllis," he said, "there is a question I have wanted to ask you, but I have not dared until now.

"Phyllis, look at me and tell me--do you love me?"

She did not answer at once for to her, such confessions, when once affirmed, could not be revoked, nor repudiated, without involving truth and integrity. Finally, as though half contemplating and considering to herself, she repeated softly: "There are many loves, but only one real love.

"There are many voices that call us, but only one voice that reaches the heart of its own, and vibrating there, calls forth an answering voice.

"There are many hands that beckon to us, but we follow only one freely, gladly, and without guilt--follow gladly, only because that is the thing to do.

"Even though I love you," she spoke now with direct, frank sincerity, "I must not bind myself to any pledge, unless it really means all in all to you."

"It means happiness, and incentive, and love, and faith--it means everything," he said.

"Then you really do love me very greatly, Winston?"

"With all my heart, with all my mind, with all my strength," he said.

"And I love you!" she answered softly.

"And this is final--it means one inseparable, unto Eternity. Our pledge is inviolable and irrevocable. You are the only woman I have ever confessed love for; and no other woman can even come into my life. You and I are one because of the love that is our gift. It is the ideal--the real love." After a brief silence, Winston said: "I was just thinking of our Star of hope, dear. That star would be a most fitting symbol of the love and faith pledge that we have just entered into."

Phyllis considered a moment and then said: "The beautiful evening Star--our large, brilliant one, is eternal like truth; high like honor; inextinguishable like faith, and like real love, it never fails--for it is governed by the orderly system of the Universe; and so, that Star shall symbolize our pledge, entered into this night."

There was a harmony--a sweet, compelling harmony, of which they both were conscious, and presently Winston said: "The harmony and good will between us is like a higher harmony--like the 'Music of the Spheres', for we seem to be impelled toward each other by that silent, yet eloquent voice of the Universe, that you spoke of awhile ago."

The thought pleased them both and they laughed together, like two free, happy comrades without a care in all the world.

"It all might mean only a practical fancy to some," Marvel meditated aloud, "but it is real too. The Music of the Spheres is the wonderful order and harmony of their movements in the Universe. And in life, it is just what we have, ourselves, discovered tonight--the harmony of love--the music of the soul."

It was this music of the soul that prompted these two that night, to acknowledge their happy realization, as a gift from God.

And with such a gift between them, any man and woman may attain to great heights--and fathom great depths, together; for they will not be bound and limited by the ordinary barriers which so commonly stand between wedded people. The jealousies, the selfish and thoughtless demands, or refusals, the deceits and infidelities--all, all would be of a different plane and circle to theirs, and they are bound together, only by ties of love, and faith, and truth. Presently, they remembered their hours spent walking and talking out in the twilight of so many evenings. "And no matter how far separated we are, nor for how long, we will not forget our twilight hours, nor our Symbol Star," they agreed.

As they bade each other good-night, Phyllis took a lovely, half-blown rose from a vase, saying, "Its lovely petals unfolding is like the awakening of a heart. I wish this one would never droop nor fade; for I am giving it to you to take home with you in the morning."

"You will be gone before I am up, so, as you pass, first knock on my door and call--good-bye."

CHAPTER THREE

In the morning there was a quick step in the hall and a light knock on Phyllis' door.

"Good-bye!" she called.

"Not that way, Phyllis!" Winston's voice protested. "Just open the door a very little--just so that you can give me the good-bye kiss that I have a right to expect."

She hesitated, then turned the key and opened the door a small space, standing behind it, and looking out.

Suddenly, Winston had gathered her in a close embrace, and then as suddenly released her, and hurried away.

In the first mail that very day came a note: "Write at once," it pleaded, "and say that you are not angry because of this morning. I am trusting your beautiful love to understand, and sincerely hoping that you are not offended."

"I swear the embrace was prompted only by my great and impulsive love--a love not as sanely governed perhaps, at all times, as yours is; but nevertheless, I believe, as true and sacred."

"I was grieved at parting from you because I care so much for you, and seem, in spite of myself, to resent separation from you; but what happened this morning only serves to bind us, if that is possible, even more closely than before."

And as Phyllis watched the every flow of the river as she walked along the bank, noting, with her ever-responsive appreciation of Nature-scenery, the reflection of the rugged mountain, and the sky--clear blue, with the banks of billowing white clouds toward the east; in the clear depths of the stream--as in a mirror, she reflected; and her reflections soon merged into a deep meditation.

"If Nature breathes her Spirit into the minds and hearts of her native people, they must, of course, be very strong, and in their elemental natures, be pure and aspiring. It is in such natural and beautiful environment that one comes nearest

to self-realization; and in this self-realization is revelation. The mind is on the higher planes--in the Mystic garden of the Soul. And presently, one realizes that in this Soul-garden--this mystic but very real garden the vision is very clear and the perceptions very keen. The spiritual plane, which is the highest, makes one responsive to pure emanations of inspiration, and faith, and love and creative, developing powers.

"And the mental powers, brought up to this plane can soar to the Infinite, and receive wireless messages from the great 'Unknown' which quickens the powers of our intellect and will, and work for the greater wisdom of our acts.

"And thus, we come to regard our physical bodies as the temple of our Souls and minds; and require that the temple be built strong and responsive, and kept clean and flooded with light; because an immortal Soul and a Noble Mind cannot dwell in a hovel-like body.

"Beyond this sacred garden of our being is the vast, unexplored world-garden, which, from afar, and by its tinseled decorations and glittering lights, attracts the adventurous and restless mind, like a Candle-light attracts the myriad of moths and other flying insects; and the wings and bodies of the insects were never more cruelly singed by the Candle-flame, than are the minds and Souls and bodies of the too-thoughtless and venturesome one out there in the world-garden of the purely materialistic plane.

"Edouard Shure believes, as his writings prove, that Souls, like bodies, are endowed with sex and are destined to live and complete themselves in couples in order to reflect the perfect Being.

"Happy indeed are the couples who find in each other the inseparable companion. Sacred is their embrace, and nothing can permanently separate them nor tear them asunder.

"These couples bear within themselves the Science of love, and the Creative fire.

They are the ones who have power to feel, and to see, and hear, and to understand."

Phyllis thrilled with happiness as she thus reviewed and meditated; and she felt sure that the love between her and Winston Marvel was of that quality that obeyed the Command of the Soul and was superior to all barriers.

And even on the train the next morning Phyllis' mind was still centered on the, to her, remarkable and beautiful relationship between herself and her dearest friend, and a resolution was gradually forming which willed that Winston never should be put to too severe a test, nor lose one opportunity that would tend to advance him toward a realization of his truest happiness and greatest success.

Upon arrival in the little town of Thompson Falls--a little town built among the cedars and pines along the banks of the Clark's Fork of the Columbia River, she found another short letter from Winston, awaiting her.

This one was a little different, in one respect, from any others that he had written.

"Now you have been the one, always," he wrote, "who has considered me; always with you, it is my happiness, my well-being, my greatest good, and justice to me; until it makes me feel very selfish and weak for permitting you to place me first in all things as you do; but which has awakened me to a realization that you are equally entitled to my consideration of you."

Then he spoke of some of the sacrifices that they must make in order that he might go East and study for his Ph.D. degree.

And then he wrote reverently of their Covenant and vowed by the Evergreen and the Star that he never would violate it by act or thought.

That night a very vivid, very impressive dream awakened Phyllis out of a sound sleep and set her trembling in every fibre of her being.

It had seemed as though she was on a level plane where a dark pool of water--deep and treacherous, was just at the base of the precipitous ledge, just

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It had seemed as though she was on a level plane where a dark pool of water--deep and treacherous, was just at the base of the precipitous ledge, just

across the narrow ridge.

A very beautiful but willful child was at play and in his movements ran nearer, and ever nearer to that dangerous brink.

Becoming alarmed for his safety she had called to him persuasively, to come back; but because he was willful, and unaware of any danger he rushed right to the place she was warning him away from, and before she could reach him, he had fell into the pool below. Disregarding herself, she had plunged in, with only the thought of saving him in her mind. The water, it seemed, had drawn her down and had roared in her ears, and blinded her vision, until at last all was dark.

She was still conscious of grasping the child and raising him high above her head, and all the while, praying desperately for his safe rescue.

Then very gradually, she realized that they were rising and that it was becoming lighter; and then a great light shone all around them and they were lifted skillfully to the level ground again by two men and carried into a bungalow type of house with large windows and wide doors. And then, close beside her a man was standing--a man of very fine personality and great strength.

"You are Winston Marvel, are you not?" she asked.

Without speaking, he crossed to a far corner of the room to where a half-interested, half-listless woman of no particular personality was sitting indifferently beside an empty cradle.

The man stood irresolute, and as though thinking deeply for a moment; and then, seeming to give back something to her, he returned, and taking the waiting wondering Phyllis reverently into his embrace, bowed his head.

Phyllis, as soon as she was able to control the undefinable emotions caused by the dream, wrote it down, and in the morning copied it in a letter which she sent to Winston. And in her letter she told him that she never proposed to consent to any test of his love and constancy, which was greater than he could pass with true integrity.

"Why, I would even go so far as to release you from every obligation and promise of our compact, if I believed sincerely that it was the right thing to do; and even then, remain loyal and true with never a moment's regret for what had been between us for awhile; but instead--only sacred, loyal remembrance."

The answer came back by return mail, and its spirit and imperativeness almost overwhelmed Phyllis, so that she had to read it several times before she could realize that it was Winston Marvel who was appealing to her in such positive terms.

"Dear Heart:" the letter ran: "I am coming to you. I must come now before you go any farther away from me. I must!

"Do you know how I feel at this moment? I feel as though I was in some danger of losing you and the thought makes me tremble all over and turns my blood ice cold.

"Forgive me, darling, if I have written anything that has seemed selfish or unappreciative. If I have offended you, forgive your blundering, devoted Winston, I humbly ask you.

"You must be misunderstanding me. So, when I come to you, we will talk everything over. No! It was not wrong that you came into the great Northwest. And you stand in the way of my progress? You, who are life itself to me, to whom I owe all that I own; around whom all my ambitions, all my future centers! My Sweetheart, how could you cherish such a thought for a moment? And that dream! That child was our love. That home was ours. Through my neglect, and my inability to understand, that love came near to death, and you saved it. God has shown this to me. And you sometimes feel that you had no right to come into my life in this way? Well, if that is true, then, I had no right to have been born! I am appealing to you now with my whole soul. Could I think that you would not share all with me, and help me, as you can? NO! Would I be willing for you to marry some other man? NO! You are mine! I can never love another; the very thought is sacreligious! You are mine to protect and guard always. I will fight for you

until the last drop of life blood leaves my body, before I will give you up. No one can take you from me, because you are mine, and God meant that you should be. It is around you that I have centered all my ambitions, all my aspirations, and your love is going to give me a strength and courage in my work that I never knew before. We must do our part and be worthy of that happiness which will be ours. The future holds much for us. I am aggressive now! It is just a trace of the ancestral savage in me! Remember that I am working for you, that I love you as few women are ever loved by men. Do you remember the rose you gave me? You wished it would stay fresh always to remind me of you. Now, I am going to say good-night, but, my dear, in spirit I am with you, and listen while I whisper--'I love you, Phyllis!' We are inseparable unto Eternity."

CHAPTER FOUR

The rainy season had settled over the Northwest, and now the climate was irregular--intermittent rain and sunshine.

The rain was falling in perfect sheets and gusts of such density that the water was pouring in torrents over the streets and unpaved walks, when Winston came that Saturday afternoon, and with the water still running off from hat and raincoat leaving a wet trail as he came, registered at the Commercial Hotel across the street from the Railroad Station. Phyllis sat over in the portion of the large Office and lounging room that was reserved for ladies, and supplied with a long writing-table, writing materials, daily papers, a number of magazines and a very splendid Victrola. Presently Winston came to her and they greeted each other with their own accustomed quiet, frank, and undisguised happy smile and handshake.

After dinner that evening, Phyllis asked Winston to accompany her to a little home across the river which was built in a small clearing right in the heart of a forest, and right on the bank of a mountain stream of considerable volume.

"I have to go there on a business consideration," she explained, "and that man has worked out a clever arrangement for drawing water for household use, out of the

stream which rushes on several hundred feet below in the bottom of a ravine; and I want you to see it.

"The woman has only to stand by the window and fasten her bucket to a hook, then turn the handle on a little motor and the bucket glides down on a trolley rope and sinks into the stream. Then she reverses, and in a moment the bucket, filled with water, comes gliding back and stops right at her hand."

"That is clever for a woodsman. Usually they don't trouble to invent or arrange things for the convenience of their women folks, but adhere rather, to the crude and elemental in frontier life."

As the companions crossed the river and entered the path in the wood, the rain came down again in torrents and darkness quickly settled over the hills.

After walking a short distance they began stumbling over tree stumps and against huge rocks and soon they realized that they had left the path and were wandering aimlessly through the woods.

"That first time," Winston bantered, "it was I who led you out and lost you in the swamps, and dense underbrush and wire fences of the foothills; but now you have actually lured me out into the worst place I have ever seen inside the border of Civilization, and lost me in a dense wood."

At this they laughed merrily as two school-mates out on some skill-testing adventure--and who were enjoying the outing very much.

"If we are lost we are together," Winston consoled, "and we may rest assured that we never will be very seriously lost, ever; as long as we remain together."

They missed the house but they finally found a trail that led them back toward the river, and soon they were back at the Hotel playing over the newest records on the splendid Victrola.

After breakfast the next morning, Winston brought the book which he had given Phyllis to read--a Scientific book called "Science and Religion", and read one of the Lectures on 'The Probation of Man'.

They discussed this after; and then their interest centered on two others--
"Truth" and "Love".

"I read those while on the train," Phyllis informed, as they discussed these.

"I knew that you would read them, and I am glad you did; because they represent the very foundation of my own beliefs and now it will be easier for me to make you understand the quality and trueness of my love which I have centered all in you."

Early that afternoon they started out for a long tramp through the beautiful canyon and over the less steep hills, until they came to the Creek which is the fisherman's delight, and the haunt of the wild game of the forest, such as deer, bear, mountain sheep and some smaller game. The banks of the stream were even higher than where the little cottage stood, that had interested Phyllis so greatly; and densely overgrown with many Species of the Native forest trees. Down in the bottom of the ravine the water poured, and foamed, and sparkled, with its deep, monotonous, mystic song which held one spell-bound, and compelled one to listen with the senses gently soothed and the spirit uplifted and even reverent. Great moss-covered boulders and fallen logs were in the stream, and its swift current dashing against them threw whirling, foaming geysers high into the air.

Ferns and vines grow right to the water's edge and the colorings left by the early autumn frosts on tree and vine were gorgeous in color and effect. It is a rugged, awe-inspiring canyon with its high peaks and forest grown mountains.

Soon the companions came to a glade and climbed upon a great flat rock which overhung a deep, clear pool; and this pool--filled from a branch of the main stream, was literally alive with the most lively, gamey trout with iridescent colors flashing every time they swam through a broad sun-beam which shone upon the center of the pool, through a break in the limbs of the trees overhead. They were ideally happy that day--these two comrades; and now they jumped from the edge of the rock and ran--hand in hand, across the leaf-strewn moss and fern grown space,

and out to the main road which they followed until they found themselves once more before the old-fashioned entrance to the Commercial Hotel.

The next morning they walked out to where men were at work on the river, drilling into the solid rock and blasting out a place for the erecting of a great Electric Power Plant.

Suddenly a shrill whistle warned everybody that the fuse on a huge powder blast had been lighted and the signal was for everyone to get away to a safe distance--and lose no time in doing so.

Winston and Phyllis had not gone far when the explosion made them wonder if that part of the world was in volcanic eruption.

They stopped short in the path and Winston forced Phyllis against a great tree trunk, then stood before her in order to shield her from any flying rocks or debris. "I shall protect you like this always--even to the giving of my own life; for without you--the one woman; my own life would be of little account," he whispered.

When it was again safe they followed a narrow trail which led up to a high moss-grown cliff.

It had begun to rain again and they climbed to shelter up on a rocky ledge which was overhung by the top of the cliff. Winston brought an armful of boughs from the tamarack trees and ferns; and made a comfortable place for them to sit and talk while waiting for the shower to pass.

"Phyllis," Winston spoke earnestly, "do you know that spiritually and morally you are my wife now? And," he asserted, "that we are bound to each other now inseparably by ties of love--of holy love; and by our pledge symbolized by the Evergreen and the Star?

"I shall not let you be separated from me for very long, you can depend upon that; and in the meantime I am going to exact absolute confidence in me, and belief in my integrity under all circumstances, while we are forced to be away from each

other."

"I do believe in you, Winston, and I shall trust your integrity; and all I ask in return is that you will never betray my confidence, nor violate my faith."

"My father and my sister will be your friends the moment they meet you; as also, Dr. Von Roche and Professor DeWolff. The rest of my family and circle of acquaintances do not count anyway. But I have made my choice. You measure up to my ideal of one who would grace my home and my position in life."

Phyllis was silent and thinking deeply, how like the ancient and sacred oath of Isis, their compact seemed, and wondering what genius of Mystic lore had come and prompted them to enter so freely, and with such confidence, into a relationship so sacredly binding as they had done.

All too soon the time arrived for Winston to return to the Garden City, and the University. Shakespeare writes that: "The true love and union, to which we should admit of no impediments, is that born of the perception of and love for the inmost soul of the real human being to whom one is drawn by force of Spiritual and Mental attraction. And that this is the only marriage that has any claim upon our admiration."

As Phyllis sat at the window in the Hotel and watched the train leave the Station, she agreed with the conviction that had been growing steadily in her mind, for she meditated: "I should surely have to argue down my own heart now before I could send him from me; for he has taught me to need his love, and his comradeship, too.

"He declares that I am the one woman, that mine is the one voice, and presence, that can hold him above all the other women with their voices and presences and make his life ideally and aspiringly happy; even though my own heart still grieves because of that only barrier that I am able to discern in the otherwise ideally conceived, and admirably planned, and poetically pledged companionship.

"And so, I shall wait; and if in the course of our testing he remains true, his companionship and strong young manhood will teach me to forget past sorrow and restore to me the beliefs and dreams of a youth I had feared was obscured in the too-stern realities and experiences of an unhappy past.

"And he will keep his dreams and ideals, unblighted by any of the disillusioning and unregenerating things which overshadow and threaten the too materialistic and purely sex-attracted marriages."

Now that Phyllis was alone again her longing to be back in the City of her birth, with her family and friends, became irresistible, and so she made her plans to return in the very near future to that jewel of the mountains--that City encircled round with mountains--snow-peaked and very beautiful; and she wrote Winston that she had planned to cross the wonderful Pend Oreille lake on the excursion Steamer "Northern", and then return home by a new route in order to see more of the great west; but a letter from her employer had changed her plans, and so, it happened that she would pass through the Garden City, once more.

She notified Winston and he answered by return mail: "Great news. I shall be at the Station to meet you, for you know, that means that you are to arrange to stop over, at least a day or two.

"I had planned a great hike up to Mt. Murphy with a couple of the fellows, but now that you are coming, that is called off, and I will walk with my Sweetheart only in Nature's beautiful and sheltered places. You know, it is very bleak and rugged and barren over on that Mount--not at all, the kind of place I would take my Sweetheart pal to; and so I shall be waiting for you on the platform when your train arrives."

She sent back a message saying when her train was due, but in some way it failed of delivery in time, and she was much disappointed when she arrived and looking expectantly through the waiting crowd, realized that Winston was not there.

In the morning they met on the street. Winston was much surprised, and

somewhat chagrined, when he realized what had happened.

It proved to be a time to be long remembered--those two days. They wandered together out to the beautiful and sheltered Nature-places, and seemed destined to get acquainted with a new phase in each other's dispositions.

If any reader wonders what could possibly hold such attractions for the Nature-lovers, out in the great outdoors, the author would like to ask him or her to defer judgements long enough to just go out and see for themselves. Choose some fair morning and go out for an all-day's experience.

Walk leisurely, and as you walk watch and listen. Sit down awhile in the quiet glades and relax, and wait. Presently you will be conscious of the Voices--Nature Voices of field, and forest, and hills.

Soon your own self will respond to the influence and harmony around, and the happy realization of it all will steal softly into your mind and heart and the worries that wearied you, and the doubts and ungracious thoughts that troubled you, and the remembrance of unkind words or deeds of others will all give way before the quiet, Mystic, compelling peace and inspiration of these Nature places so little known and enjoyed by those who would be immeasurably benefited, could they put aside other considerations at intervals and become the guest and the student of Universal Nature.

Winston and Phyllis sat on an old rustic bench, beneath some tall cottonwoods, far up in the woods and listened to the monotonous, Mystic murmur of the stream a little distance away, and the Song of the forest as the wind stirring through the densely interwoven branches of the trees made it seem like the ebbing and flowing of great waters.

Winston spoke presently in a quiet and very confident tone--new to him when he was talking with Phyllis. "I have been working out a plan," he said, "since we now understand each other.

"I will want you to reflect credit on my Social and professional position, you

know; and so I am outlining a reading course for you.

"We will discuss the books as you read them. But I thought I would begin first with your letters.

"I will probably take them separately and correct the errors as I find them-- especially your grammar, and English Composition--"

"Winston!" Phyllis interrupted, "do you actually mean that you could take my letters and treat them like common examination papers? Are they not sacred to you then?" She was deeply pained.

"Would you like for me to treat your letters in the same way?" she asked a little rebelliously. This was the first shadow that had ever fell between them and they both were deeply affected.

They left the place and walked over to the bridge that spanned the creek and stood there silently watching the water; then Phyllis spoke. "Winston, are you not afraid to make our confessions and vows so sacredly binding, and to found them on such high principles of truth and integrity?"

For a moment he seemed amazed, and even angered at her question.

She hastily turned away to hide the tears that now overflowed; and in a moment more Winston had recovered himself and coming hastily to Phyllis' side, he said: "No; I do not fear because what has been entered into by us and made permanent by those sacredly binding confessions and faith and honor pledges is right; and our Evergreen Symbol is on the hill and our Star Symbol is in the heavens. They are our silent witnesses."

Phyllis was comforted and confident again and they walked back to the City and enjoyed immensely the dinner that they ordered at the very select dining and refreshment parlor kept by the very neat and very pleasant Mrs. Smythe and her sister. As they sat and chatted pleasantly Phyllis' expression became serious for a moment as she asked:

"Do you fear that the difference in our religious creeds might ever make a

difference between us?"

"No," he replied, "it could not, because I do not really belong to any Church nor profess to believe in any particular creed. This is chiefly because the tenets or creed of every Church I have investigated seem not sincere and well founded. They even seem only ritualistic and superficial to me.

"I have a bigger, broader faith than their tenets teach me, and you share my beliefs and your confessed faith and mine certainly has measured up to the best beliefs of each and so, we really are of the same faith, in spite of difference in denomination, or, let us say, the label on the Churches we attend."

The story of Winston Marvel and Phyllis Llewellyn is a story of depth and significance; but few people are even permitted to live such stories through to the end without the interruptions and barriers which constantly confront all humanity, in their stories and experiences along life's way.

But it is a wonderful story in many ways--real and unreal; divinely human and connected with a thread of pure gold of most delicate spinning. The dream steals vividly into their hearts and minds at twilight when just one large Star is out; the hour when everything seems to pause and take on a spirit of peace and reverie.

The dream has power to change everything--even to turn the grey into gold, and their sadness into hope and gladness.

When they met the next morning their greeting held a gracious, tender meaning and they planned to spend the greater part of this day, also, out in the open. This time, however, they climbed, by a narrow trail, to a high ledge near the top of old Mount Sentinel, and sat there with all the panoramic view below them--the City--the river--the lumber Mills--the orchards and small farms. "Would you like to make this place your home?" Winston asked.

"Only if I had real interests here," she said.

"Would my position in the University and a home; be real interests?" he asked.

"Yes," she said, "where you are, and where your work calls you, will be real

home, and real interests to me."

As they descended by a new route, picking their way through trees, and brush, and shale, they talked.

"I have never had a real home, and I have never known a Mother's love," he said. "You may think it very unusual, but you are the only one who ever has really talked with me on Social, Moral and religious subjects."

"Your own mother never could have been entirely indifferent," she protested.

"You say that because you have not known her," he answered bitterly.

"And yet; you do not know what may be back of all her failures. You would be more satisfied if you could only believe that she has her story too, and may be only one of those who could not prove strong and determined until she had overcome the obstacle, or whatever it was that caused her to stumble," Phyllis reasoned gently.

"But I never could teach myself to love her--she is to blame for that herself; and now it is too late."

"Many sons have proven themselves very loyal in the face of failures on the part of their mothers; when honor and good reputation hung in the balance," she said, "but I shall not be either your judge nor your councilor."

"Oh, I did not say that I had no respect for my mother; but if I do not love her, she alone is to blame," he insisted.

"I am sorry," she replied. "I believe in you, and I know that everything will work out right for you at last." Phyllis was leaving very early the next morning, and as the evening advanced, Winston became very depressed in spirit and almost ill.

They both seemed saddened because of the coming separation, but they were determined not to give way to emotion, and thus, make the parting harder.

"I have one dream-aspiration," Winston said reverently, "which I hardly dare hope could ever be realized."

"Phyllis, it is that I may one day see you the real mother of one child of mine."

"There is a wonderful, perfect dream-child always beckoning to me and smiling," she mused softly in a low tone. "Who knows but the dream-child may some day become a reality."

* * * * *

As Winston Marvel and Phyllis Llewellyn bade each other farewell at the Depot, both seemed depressed and dissatisfied. They were not reconciled to the separation, but resolved to meet even this with fortitude and faith. As the train rounded a curve just before entering the canyon, Phyllis, who had suddenly sensed an intuitional forewarning, looked wistfully toward the river, and the group of University Buildings at the base of the mountain; and just then the sun shone through the early morning mist and a brilliant rainbow was formed which extended from the University Campus--across the open field and rested over the river.

"The rainbow is a good omen and carries a promise," she consoled herself, as the train entered the canyon and the City was obscured from her view.

The love of Phyllis came very near measuring up to the Standard of the ideal love; and through the forces awakening in mind and soul, Phyllis believed that it would even be possible for them to ultimately realize the rare gift of the perfect love.

And often now, at twilight, as Phyllis reviewed the contents of the long and very beautifully composed letters which Winston sent at frequent intervals; she affirmed, with a believing faith, her hope that Winston was destined to high character and intellectual development, and that ultimately he would rise to a position where he would be recognized as a man among men--a teacher and leader; she hoped.

Intuitional promptings still forecasted trials and tests, but always her faith answered for her, and promised that where love, and truth, and integrity ruled,

there could be no failures in any of the tests, no matter how severe, or of what character.

And so, as she watched for the first bright flash of the Symbol Star, she always smiled and affirmed for them both: "Under the beautiful Star-Standard thou shalt conquer."

PART THREE

BARRIERS STRONG

CHAPTER ONE

Dan Randall, Junior Partner in the Law Firm of Victor, Campbell, and Randall, and Bessie Allen, Stenographic Secretary for the Firm, had called to spend an evening with Phyllis Llewellyn. The three friends were cosily grouped before a cheery grate fire in the quaint little Library in Phyllis' home.

The log fire threw out fitful lights across the floor and wove mystic shadows in the corners.

It was just between the daylight and dark, that hour when the mind pauses and permits the ordinary things of every day affairs to be set aside, while it reaches out and considers, with a clearer vision, and a saner reasoning, subjects and philosophies involving truth, and one's ideals, and beliefs, and ambitions.

"I received a letter a few days ago from a very dear friend out in the Northwest," Phyllis was telling them. "He is a Student in the Sciences and, I think, is interested a little, in the Study of Sociology and Ethics.

"He has reviewed a Story which he had read, and then sent, under separate cover, the Story for me to read.

"It is entitled, 'The Love Pirate'. At the end of the Story, in the margin, my friend has written the question - 'Was this man justified?'

"I read the Story with more than usual attention because of the circumstance under which I received it, and tried to measure the man's justification with my understanding of Ethics and Justice; and somehow, it has left me with that proverbial 'bitter taste in my mouth'."

"Please tell the Story for us," pleaded Miss Bessie Allen; and Dan Randall insisted that no excuse would be accepted.

"The Story," Phyllis began a little pensively, "deals with that everlasting Social-Moral problem--the 'Eternal Triangle'; which always means a man, his wife and the other woman; or vice versa.

"In this Story the man was one of those who had been very ambitious, and who,

from the very day of his graduation from College, had worked tirelessly; and who had schemed and planned and sacrificed in order that he might excel in his chosen profession. There had been a long and very trying period in which his ability and skill had been tested and challenged on every hand.

"During this period he had married the charming Sweetheart of his College days, and she, with surprising ability, worked for his interests in every possible way.

"She attended to all the housework, and John declared that she could broil the best steak and keep the tidiest home of anyone he had ever known about.

"And no Mother could have been more devoted to the proper care and bringing up of a child, than she was with their own little Gloria.

"John was one of those men who seem to be marked for success, and so one morning he awakened to the almost unbelievable realization that he was a very rich man--a Chief among Engineers; a Wizard of Construction.

"The new home was a very mansion, and the furnishings were the best that money and skill could provide. Marie, the wife of the successful John Alstyn, now set out to maintain, with what she considered proper dignity, the high position to which they had attained.

"A Governess, and Nurse, were employed for Gloria; while a high priced Cook, two maids, a laundress, a seamstress, a butler, a lady's maid, and a chauffeur, made up the train of attendants for that household. In a short time Marie Alstyn came to exaggerate her high Social position and her own importance.

"She demanded larger and ever larger sums of money, in order to maintain what she considered her high Social supremacy.

"Soon John began to experience difficulty in keeping up with the demands, and at the same time, saving his business from bankruptcy.

"At last, in desperation, he tried to explain it all to Marie, and to persuade her from such extravagant management; but business, and household management had

receded far away from Marie's environment, and were such a bore to her; and besides, Gloria would be "coming out" soon now; and it was important that they spare no expense in presenting their only daughter, in a manner befitting her class, and position, she told him.

"Later, when John found that his only chance for saving his now very rapidly growing business and keeping it on a safe foundation, lay in his ability to reach the understanding of Marie, and enlist her cooperative interest; he tried to appeal to her through awakening in her, the old love and the old interest that in the past, had been such an inspiration and encouragement to him.

"But she could not be reached in this way, and made him feel, in a very high spirited manner, that he had offered her an inexcusable affront, to dare to even hint that he could not provide them with all the money necessary to make it possible for herself and Gloria to shine and lead in the Social world.

"The Stenographer at the Offices, whose work it was to look after much of the detail Clerical arrangement of Accounts, Contracts and expenses, unconsciously, through her efficiency and sympathetic interest, gives John the only moral support that he now has, and that he needs so much.

"At first, it was only the usually well-intentioned friendship existing between and employer with pure Motives, and a great problem; and his trustworthy and efficient Stenographer; but events and circumstances gradually precipitated a deeper attachment. Marie Alstyn seemed to have detached herself from all interest in John as her husband; and only consider him as a means of financially supporting her own Social eminence. One evening John returned home and went directly to Marie's room and called her appealingly. The maid was just dressing her for a reception which was in honor of some new Social light with a title--a man whom her motherly ambitions prompted, was a very promising alliance for Gloria. He waited until she was quite ready, and then courteously dismissed the maid.

"When they were alone he came close to his wife, and gently touched her, and

tenderly placed his arm about her shoulders and spoke in a tense, anxious voice: "Marie; it has come to the worst. I have exerted almost superhuman efforts to prevent it, but it had to come. There was no foundation, and no resource; and so I cannot maintain it any longer."

"What--what do you mean!" she demanded coldly. "How dare you come here and tell me that you have failed?" she cried, while her eyes flashed like sparks struck from cold steel.

"Marie," he pleaded, "'I have come to talk with you. I am sick--utterly weary of this life. Marie, let us arrange all of our affairs and then leave it, and go back to our former life of freedom, and love, and independence. It is the only way that we can regain what we have lost.'

"Go back to that?" she scorned coldly. 'Never! I refuse to even discuss it with you.' And with this, she left the room with an air of one who had been both affronted and robbed.

"The next morning at breakfast he had hoped for some sign from her, showing that she had relented; but instead, both wife and daughter met him with such coldness and resentful accusing glances that at last his courage broke; and when he arrived at the Office that morning, he was a discouraged and a defeated man.

"It was then that he reasoned about his domestic affairs with his Stenographer. 'What has she done that has given her such an absolute right to demand for herself, while she creates nothing, and gives nothing, either to me, or to worthy causes.

"She has not even brought up our one child, as every Mother is under Moral and Spiritual obligations to do--she has left all of that to the Governess and Nurses.' And now, the deeper attachment for each other, which until now, they had fought against honorably, seemed to be robbed of its last resisting reason; and Ruth went out and offered her Services to another Firm.

"John put the poor remnants of his affairs in the best order he could, and

then set out to find Ruth.

"One morning he presented his card in the Offices of Blake and Kane, Contractors and Builders, and asked permission to speak with Miss Ruth Merrille, the Secretary, who had just accepted a position with them.

"A clerk delivered the message and in a moment Ruth came to the outer Office.

"'Ruth!' he cried. 'I am going away and I came to talk with you a few moments, privately, before I go.'

"He led her quickly to the outer hall, and then, before she realized the significance of his actions, he had gathered her in a close embrace, and between passionate kisses, had announced: 'I have come for you and you are going with me. I will not go without you, and I will not stay, so come with me now, just as you are.

"'I have purchased our passage on the Steamer Lejuaine, which leaves in less than an hour, and I have a taxi waiting to take us there, at once.'

"And before she could recover herself, he had dashed her away, and soon she was lost, with him, to all their former friends, and to the former Social and Moral world which, it had seemed, they would have remained in--true to their convictions, and to themselves. And at the bottom of the Story, my friend has written the question: 'Was the man justified in what he did.'"

"The man was justified," Dan Randall exploded in indignant emotion, "insofar as it is right for a man to sacrifice, to his own interests, and desires, his best and truest friend--leaving it to chance, or fate; whether, or not, his act will leave even the good name of his friend under a cloud of doubt and suspicion."

"And what do you think, Phyllis?" Bessie asked, with eager interest.

"I have a philosophy of life, out of which I have created an Ideal.

"Some think that in order to realize that Ideal, I must create to represent it, a superpeople; but in reality, my Ideal can only be represented by the free, and strong, and progressive Spirit of a Moral people who love Freedom, and Justice,

and integrity; and who know how to choose between right and wrong, and how to act.

"If it would not tire you, my friends, I would like to illustrate my own opinion by a story which is almost a parallel; or, I may say that the first part is so similar that it will not be necessary for me to even describe it now; but I will pass on to the place where the roads divide and the story goes on to its finish in a different way.

"When the final crash came to William Osborne, it was under very similar circumstances and conditions to those connected with John Alstyn's failure. Only when William Osborne struck out for the newly discovered gold fields of California with a determination to regain, if possible, his lost fortune, he bid Mary, his very efficient Stenographer and Clerk, and estimable friend a reverent regretful farewell, and he went away alone.

"He joined an emigrant which was bound overland, and shared with them in the many hardships and sufferings encountered on the way. In Colorado he left the train, and purchased a good horse and necessary equipment, and struck out alone, to complete the journey, with time and freedom to observe, investigate and study the country, and conditions, and apparent prospects for development, as he went along. This was about the time that the Mormons were emigrating to the West, and I must relate a few of his experiences, between Colorado and California.

"Even in the extreme Southern part of Utah, little prosperous settlements were marking the landscape here and there, showing that these industrious, home loving people, by their faith, industry and fortitude, were able to make even the desert blossom and yield, from their sowing; for, Osborne noted with surprise, that many shade trees grew along the straight, wide streets, while streams of water in irrigating ditches watered fine gardens and fields of alfalfa, and even grain and corn.

"In one of these settlements, which he was observing from a hill where he had stopped to rest his horse and prepare for himself a late afternoon meal, he noticed

a quaint sort of bowery at the back of a new Church.

Posts had been driven in the ground and then a roof foundation of slender poles, brought from the nearby hills, had been cleverly woven over with green branches and leaves, thus, providing a very pleasant place for the Village people to gather for a picnic, or a dance, or such social pastimes as suited them best. Among the crowd gathered there moved a man who seemed to be an honored guest. His manner was that of a Minister, while his strong personality and confident dignity proclaimed him a master of the desert, and a leader of men.

"Osborne's mind was suddenly diverted by a spectacle that made the roots of his hair begin to twist and send little chills chasing down his spine. From a trail in the hills about a score of Indians emerged, all wearing blankets of most striking weave and colors, and decorated with vivid paints and freakish headdress of feathers, which made them appear like some strange creatures; half ostrich-half men; and they were making straight for the settlement, led by their Chief.

"Osborne, feeling that he was helpless to warn the people, steeled himself to witness a ruthless massacre, on the plains; but as he watched, the people continued on with the dance and the games. Presently, the Indians filed in, and formed a half circle in the rear.

"The leader of men walked over to where they stood and shook hands with their Chief, and saluted a welcome to the others.

"They all watched the dances with evident amusement; and when Brigham Young again addressed them and asked them what they thought of the dancing, the Chief again spoke for them all. With a gesture almost of intolerance, he said:

"'Paleface's dance no good; feet too heavy; make much dust cloud. No rhythm in paleface dance. Indians' dance much better.'"

"'Will you ask your young Indians to dance for us? Our young people will stop their dance and watch them.'"

"Red Cloud was flattered, and even more, was the vanity of the other Indians

flattered, when their Chief told them that the great white father had invited them to show his young people how to dance.

"Their dance was very rhythmic, and very fantastic and weird in some of the movements, but to the delight of their Chief, not the slightest cloud of dust was raised.

"There was great applause from the settlers, as the Indians finished their dance and filed out, and quite stoically, as is characteristic of them, assumed their former attitude, and turned into the road, and departed as quietly as they had come. Osborne, no longer able to restrain his curiosity and interest, descended the hill and approached the man he had already recognized as one who was a leader of people, and after introducing himself, told what he had seen, and of his own astonishment over the Indians' visit.

"He was received with great cordiality, and the people insisted upon his remaining with them overnight. They entertained him with kind hospitality, and in the morning insisted upon providing him with several essentials for his comfort during the remaining part of his journey.

"'I trust that I am not intruding,' Osborne said to Brigham Young that evening, 'but from what I had read and heard, I had believed that the Indians were a very hostile and a treacherous people, and so, what I saw from that hill this afternoon, amazed me beyond measure. Would you mind telling me how it is that they seem to regard your people with such a friendly spirit?'"

"The Mormon leader smiled and in his own superior, kindly way said: 'The Indians have been very troublesome and hostile, and are responsible for some very ruthless massacres; but these are incited chiefly by the belief on their part, that the white man is their enemy, and that it is his mission to displace them, and drive them out from their own native hunting grounds, and rob them of what they consider their inheritance. There is only one way to deal successfully with them in overgoverning their prejudice and hostility, and that is to win their confidence

and reverence by letting them know that we really are friendly, and have no unbrotherly, or unneighborly spirit toward them, and no evil intentions."

"Osborne meditated upon his experience with the Mormon settlers and the lesson they had taught by their friendliness and hospitality, and on many occasions, he applied the principle successfully in dealing with severe civic and social problems.

"The little mining town where he finally decided to cast his fortune, or misfortune, as it may be; was located among the hills near the Coast range of mountains, in California. A creek wound its way curvingly, from the nearby hills, and furnished water for the town. The wonderful tints of rainbow hue that rested on the mountains softened the too austere outlines of the pine trees, and made a picture pleasing to the eye, and not depressing to the spirit. The town consisted of a main street, a General Merchandise Store, with the Post Office in one corner; a ramshackle Hotel with a Bar to one side of the dining-room--partitioned off, with a door between; two large Saloons, the small lumber shanty at the end of Main Street which served as an Office Building for the Pacific Coast Mining Company, and two back streets with rude shacks, built of wood and canvas, and even tin.

"William Osborns was quite travel worn when he wandered into the New Mining Camp and put up at the Hotel one late afternoon, and entered the bar-room and ordered a drink in order to impress the few men who were drinking and playing cards in there, that he was on terms of good will, and thus, avoid becoming an object of suspicion, and of double dealing, among that nondescript and variously intentioned populace that one always finds in New Mining Camps and newly developing frontier towns. That evening he let it be known that he was searching for a good location where he could stake a claim and seek for gold.

"'We can tell you of a good location,' the men told him in a good natured, bantering way; and two men stepped forward accommodatingly, and taking him by the arms, led him to the door, and pointing toward a sloping, unpromising looking hill

where only one pine tree stood, they said: 'Do you see that huge pine tree standing alone over on that hill?'

"'Yes,' he said, 'but what has that to do with the question?'

"'That is your location for a mining claim. You will find plenty of gold up there.'

"And William Osborns, perhaps overtrustful and overgenerous in his estimation of his fellow beings, to the Satanic joy of the others, actually took them seriously, and took up his claim over there. It seemed certain that he would fail, for, it seemed, all his efforts only rewarded him with worthless dirt.

"One morning he determined to blast out the old tree and level the ground there for a cabin. And while thus engaged, Bill, as they called him at the Camp, received the most amazing surprise of all his life; for there it was! the gold--real gold; his pot of gold at the end of the rainbow trail. Bill was weary of living over at the Hotel and often sat and studied the problem as to how a man can build a shack even if it is impossible to obtain lumber, canvas or tin; and then his inventive mind suddenly had an inspiration. Next day he set to work, to the amazement of all the Camp; and soon, from the thousands of old bottles in the dump at the back of the Saloon he had secured enough material, and had actually succeeded in building one of the most unique and comfortable cabins imaginable, entirely out of bottles and mud; the only wood in the structure being that which he secured by cutting up his old pine tree and hewing it into rude boards for the window frames and the door.

"He even planted flowers and vines around his unique 'shack' and made a rustic seat out of another pine log which he brought from the hills, and split and fastened together cleverly with wooden pegs, and set it invitingly before his door; and soon Bill's house was the envy and admiration of all the Camp.

"In the meantime, Mrs. William Osborne had received a divorce, and was about to be married to a scheming fortune hunter, of the Social fast set, who, unbeknown

to her, had learned of Osborne's good fortune, and who thought he saw an opportunity for her to secure a handsome alimony allowance, which would enable him to further develop some of his ungodly schemes.

"As is ever the case in newly developing Camps and towns, the orderly and law-abiding citizens have to contend with a lawless and disorderly and parasitic element, until they become well established and strong enough to set up some good form of government and then enforce its laws; and William Osborns soon began to figure prominently in every movement for the betterment of the Town, and a permanent organization of a political, Economic and Civic system for its government.

"It was during the time when the new book by Harriet Beecher Stowe, entitled, 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' was creating such an impression all over the country, in the cause of Justice and Morality; that Osborne was chosen, because of his good education and his great strength of Character, to represent the State, at Washington.

"Mary Jeane Smythe, the former valued Clerk and Accountant in Osborne's employ, who because of circumstance, had also become his councilor and more than friend; had accepted a position in the Civil Service, and had been transferred to Washington.

"Without either having known of the other's presence at the Capitol, they met one morning upon the street.

"The girl had remained an ever-present inspiration and dream-ideal with Osborne; and now an unconquerable, honorable love sent him straight to Mary's home for an interview.

"Instinctively they both knew as he stood there before her, that all their heartaches, all their loneliness, all their yearnings had been swept away.

"Tenderly he pressed the little work-skilled hand and as tenderly she gave an answering pressure.

"'We have found each other, again,' he said softly, 'and now I want to take you back with me, to enjoy with me, in the beautiful land of sunshine and flowers, the pot of gold that I found at the rainbow's end.'

"The now very rapidly growing City of El Dorado, California, was the scene of great festivities and splendor, and it seemed that the whole population had turned out to welcome William Osborne the afternoon that he arrived, proudly escorting his estimable and beautiful bride Mary.

"And Osborne's heart swelled with pride that day, and justly too; for his experience in the past had taught him what it was to lose much and to suffer; and this day he had reached the realization of a cherished dream; and this, with his eminent position, reached by reason of his own worth and industry, now raised him right to the shining top. And he had a right to feel proud of the little City and its people; for out of the melting-pot of Civilization and Industry, he had helped to evolve a splendid people, and City. A splendid Modern Mansion was erected on the leveled top of a gently sloping hill; but you may be sure that the unique, vine covered cabin built of bottles and mud, was preserved for the sake of memories.

"And now, I have tried, in telling this story, to illustrate my own opinion of what is the wrong way to act, and what is the right way to act, under circumstances such as those described in the Story which my friend sent for my opinion and criticism. The real conquerors in life are those who first conquer themselves.

"I do not condone John Alstyn's manner of solving the problem of himself and Ruth Merrille, his very efficient Stenographer and Councilor and friend; even on the grounds that theirs was that 'great love' that comes unbidden and burns itself into the very blood--the brain--the heart--the reason and will, so that it would just be impossible to resist it.

"I believe that a love that is not strong enough to crown its object with honor, and deport itself above calumny, is better left to burn itself out in its own flash of ephemeral, exalted madness, apart from its object, for it never has

character nor permanency on which to build and has never been known to be productive of happy results."

CHAPTER 2

Phyllis wrote her letter the next day, in answer to Winston's and she expressed her sentiments in much the same way as to her friends--only a little more briefly.

It had been customary on the part of Winston, to write at least one letter each week, but this time, his answering letter was not received until the end of the second week. And then, with the reading of it, her mind was troubled by an intuitional prompting; for the letter was not just what she would expect from Winston Marvel.

"Phyllis Darling:" it ran, "I am sorry that I have not been able to write more promptly, but the reason, you may be able to decipher as you read.

"There is something I have to tell you, dear; but I may wait until I see you again; and even then I may decide not to, as it deals only with the unpleasant and the sordid past.

"In spite of anything which may appear to the contrary, my love for you is sincere and strong.

"I pray every night for your happiness and well-being and each evening at twilight, I look for our Star.

"I have just been recalling that day last fall, when I came back from the field work, bronzed and uncivilized looking; and of how you received me. I had sent a note asking you to let me know where I could find you, and you called me by phone and gave me permission to call.

"Then came the days that are so full of vivid memories. As time went on, I told you little by little a Story that I can tell but once in this life.

"And you thought because there was a seniority of years on your side that I was making a mistake, and you grieved. But after awhile you came to understand as

I did, and we held our gift as something high and sacred and beautiful; and so at last, we were as one. You and I must never let anything influence us to forget our pledge to each other.

"In the last two weeks I have had the unique pleasure (?) of facing the most hopeless array of odds that anyone in my position could face.

"Oh, my Sweetheart, don't you lose faith in me, for I need you, dear, more than you know.

"I have been in a cynical mood for the first time in my life, and I would not write for fear that my letters would reflect the mood. A splendid success which is nearly within my grasp is going to be mine, for I feel that if effort is rewarded, I deserve to be given recognition.

"I have just been remembering how you held me close to your heart once when I was ill; and I want you to know that if you were with me now these feelings of depression and cynicism never could have come over me.

"I love you, Phyllis, more truly than anyone else in this world ever could; and oh, how I long to have you with me again.

"You face your trials so much more bravely than I face mine and yours have been a hundred times more severe than any of mine.

"But from now on, I am going to govern myself by your Noble example and keep myself in better spirit from now on."

When Phyllis wrote again she told him that she knew that if there was something that he should tell her, that he would do so, in due time, and in his own frank and honorable way. "You will have your tests," she wrote, "but I believe in you and your integrity; and so, Winston, I shall not worry about you. You will find the way to meet every test."

It was almost a month before Winston wrote again.

"Darling Phyllis:" the letter ran, "I have to write this to tell you that I am unworthy of your sacred and beautiful love.

"I am a miserable failure. I will explain when I can think and write more sanely. I love you, and nothing can change that; and I will prove to you that given time I will recover my equanimity, and make good, in spite of all."

Phyllis was so dumbfounded that she sent a letter by return mail.

"I confess, Winston, that I am both surprised and pained; but failure and unworthiness must come only from the inside and not the outside; and nothing can make me doubt your integrity. When the trial, of whatever nature it is, has passed, you will be even more strong; and then you will write and explain!"

After this she began to experience depressing, soul-wounding premonitions. These, she resisted, trying to persuade herself that they were only prompted by the absence, and the uncertainty; but one evening she brought out the treasure-box with the spray of forget-me-not on the lid, took out Winston's letters, one by one; and each, with its written message, led her mind back to a pleasant memory.

One of recent date read: "Dear Heart: You were wondering when you wrote last, if I was remembering.

"Yes, rest assured that I am remembering--I have to because it all is a part of me, just as you are.

"And then, I need you--your comradeship and your love. And you need me, dear; just as greatly as I need you. I don't consider myself as one who is of the Sentimental type, but our Story is such a beautiful one, that I know Divine forces of love, greater by far than we are, have guided us to each other. In the days of the past, Phyllis, before I met you, I knew you--even as rivulets twain--from distant and separate sources see each other afar as they leap from the rocks and each, pursuing its separate course--but drawing nearer and ever nearer, rush together at last in their trysting-place in the forest. And so, with us--our lives, that had run so far in separate channels--looming in sight of each other then swerving asunder; parted by barriers strong--but drawing nearer again, and ever nearer; rushed to gather at last and one was lost in the other.

"And so, Sweetheart, whatever life holds for us--for you and I, in the future, rests with God's Infinite Wisdom and Will. My love for you is an honorable love that is true and strong; and listen: All my hopes, all my aspirations, all my love and all my happiness centers around you!"

Phyllis sat a long time perplexed, and with bowed head. Presently, recovering herself with an effort, she resolved: "I will wait. Few people in this world would be willing to make such claims and confessions and pledges as he had, and then not uphold them with integrity. I would despise him as a weakling and a cad, if he could."

She waited for the promised letter of explanation until she felt that a reasonable time had passed, and then, failing to receive it, she was impressed as though a Spiritual and Moral affront had been imposed upon her.

In the closely written pages of the little Diary she describes a dream, which followed on a troubled day. "I was awakened by an awful dream. I was stirred in every fibre of my being, because of what the strange, mystic dream seemed to forecast. Every effort to banish it from my mind, only serves to make it the more vivid. It seemed, we were wandering happily together through a forest glade. I had become tired and wished to sit down and rest. Quickly, and with admirable skill he built a bower of branches and ferns and wild flowers. As I waited and watched, I felt very proud of him. Suddenly, the branches and vines at the edge of the glade were rudely parted and two men stepped out and stood before the bower.

"Their countenances were hard, scornful, with a cynical, mocking smile that plainly scoffed at Marvel--and then they laughed.

"To my horror, Marvel gave no defense, but instead, he became actually servile, trembling and apparently trying to excuse himself in their eyes; and then--he slunk out of my sight and I was left alone, to defend my own position before them. 'Winston!' I called; and when he did not answer, I turned to look for him, and found him hiding; but he had changed, and was not a very pitiful,

shrinking form of a dwarf."

Phyllis had not been one who was in the habit of experiencing such phenomena of Mental and Spiritual significance, and naturally, she became greatly depressed and strangely influenced by them; and at last unable to endure such a confusing strain she wrote a long, appealing desperately earnest letter and mailed it to Winston quickly, before she could change her intention of letting him know that his attitude was affecting her adversely.

But immediately after mailing it, she regretted having sent it, and wrote another in more confident, faith redeeming and reassuring spirit, and dropped that in the mail box too.

May 30, Phyllis was really ill. That overgoverning, intuitional influence had again impressed her so strangely that she was unable to continue with her work.

When the twilight hour came and she looked for the bright Star, the soft grey mist that was around it inspired a thought:

"You have drawn a veil around you this night, as though you too, felt indignant at some impiety, or violation," she greeted wistfully.

No sooner had she gone to sleep that night than she was disturbed again by another of those, now, dreaded dreams. This time it was the Symbol Star. It rose over the hills--very large and bright; and then, slowly rising before it, and obscuring it partly, was a bright red star of lesser glory.

She had seemed to be trying to understand this, when someone led her away and brought her before three graves. The silent, persuasive power of the Guide compelled her to look into the first: She shrank back frightened and shocked at what was there.

By the same silent, impelling power she had to look into the second one.

"It is even worse than the first!" she protested.

Then, in the same way she was led to the third.

She drew back with a sickening revulsion, for even a worse spectacle of grim

death was there.

"Now, look again!" the Guide said. And being impelled, as before, she looked.

Gradually, like the unfolding of a flower--or the evolution of a moth, the transformation was wonderful, and presently a child--a perfect, wondering, beautiful child stood before her.

Late the next afternoon the letter came.

She received it eagerly, and then dropped it quickly--spiritually it had stung like an adder.

Presently she was able to overcome the feeling and open the letter and read it; then believing that she must be misinterpreting the true Spirit of the letter, she read it again.

"Dear Phyllis," it began, "I owe you an apology for waiting so long before answering your last two letters; but I had to wait until I could be firm and inform you as to the real situation. And while what I have to say may seem cold and unemotional to you, it will represent the very best I am capable of doing at this time. Since the time that we were last together I have had ample opportunity to reconsider all of the circumstances of our meeting and the development of our friendship and love, and the reaction that has taken place in me, I feel justified in believing, is but natural.

"While my decision may be painful to you at first, I feel sure that later on, after you have had time to grasp its true meaning, that you will realize that it is for your best good and happiness.

"Through propinquity, and the fact that our tastes and ambitions and beliefs were similar and harmonious, a chord of sympathy was struck, and for a short time, through forces over which we had no control, and for which neither one of us is to blame; our friendship only transcended itself.

"You may, at first, even feel that I am lacking in integrity, but I feel, also, that after you have taken time to consider everything reasonably and

logically, that you will also acknowledge that there are extenuating circumstances that establish my vindication."

And then followed a review of circumstances and conditions in his past home life, which have already been revealed in these writings, which, he said, would leave their blighting effects upon him all through his life.

"Why, even up to the time when I first knew you, I had never known affection of any kind, and I had almost come to believe that the Social privileges and love that others enjoyed were not for me.

"And then I met you. You measured up to the dreams and ideal that I had formed, as I told you, while on long tramps in the hills and while on fishing trips along some canyon stream--of the one woman in all the world for me; and so when I realized this, I thought I loved you, and so I claimed you. But now, since I have had time for due consideration of everything, I realize that in my Nobler, truer Nature, I do not love you, as I told you; but instead--my love for you is more like that of a son for his mother.

"Self-abasement, you know, Phyllis, like self-exaltation, is only a form of egoism, and so, I can only say that the cause rests with unknowable, ungovernable forces under which we moved for a while; and now we can only forget.

"I am reminded of that poem which your friend Lydia recited for us that evening at the party, when she bid us all farewell--ships that pass in the night--hail each other in passing; only a signal shone and a voice through the darkness, and then silence again."

After torturing her in this cold, scientifically logical strain even further, he said, in words which implied his assurance that Phyllis would even deferentially submit--unconditionally, and without question, to any terms which he proposed:

"And too, I want to be free to continue in School until I have won my Ph.D. Degree in some Eastern College; and then after that, of course, I will want to choose my wife from among those of my own class, and age, and faith.

"You may keep the neck ornament that I gave you at Christmas, and the Evergreen and Symbol Star can remain unviolated.

"Now, don't you go and be broken hearted, but turn to your children for incentive, and comfort; and rest assured of my friendship, and sincere ^{wish} with for your happiness with them" There was more--several pages more. Phyllis felt as though someone had grasped her forcibly by the throat and was forcing some potent, vitrollic, highly cultivated world-philosophy which governed in some Satanic astomphere of worldly righteousness, into every fibre of her being. "And remember!" he had told her when they bade each other good-bye, only so short a time in the past--"You are to tell your children about me, and teach them to love me. Tell them that when I come I am to be much more than a friend to you and them."

"And now," she scorned indignantly, "he would humiliate the Mother before her children; and then send her to them for sympathy and new incentive."

Several hours later, through the grey mist which had come before her eyes like a veil, she answered that letter as best she could.

She realized that she was bordering on nervous disorganization, and so she wrote in feverish haste.

"Winston Marvel," she wrote, "Your letter came several hours ago. I have read it through twice--the first time with only a feeling of incredulous sorrow; believing, or at least, feeling that it was only a dream from which I would awaken in a moment to find a letter wholly worthy of the man who pledged very sacred faith with me--upon his highest integrity. But when I read it again and realized that you, Winston, could actually write a letter like that, under any circumstance; I truly suffered the deepest pain and humiliation that I have ever known. Do you wish me to understand now, that in the past you were playing with chance, and destiny, and reverence, and truth, and a woman's love and faith, and trust?

"And then, do you wish to ~~X~~ understand that your Science, and your Standard, and your religion sweeps away the offense as being oh; only a condition of

circumstance, and of propinquity, and of human nature; and complacently condones it all away, and leaves you high, and honorable, and very much to be commended for your frank, straightforward and manly violation of your own integrity, and of a woman's trust and faith?

"You were, as you yourself made very plain to me; past 21 before I knew you, and very responsible for your own self-government, and for your own acts, and decisions--therefore, you claimed to know that the step you were taking--under the compact symbolized by the Evergreen pledge and the Star Symbol, was irrevocable, and inviolable with honorable men. I seemed to have been converted to my belief in you--like being converted to a new faith, and so, for that reason, I have placed you very high in my scale of values, and loved your honor and your soul even more than the physical you.

"I do not understand you nor your scale of values; but there is one thing I do understand and want you to understand also--I am not now, and never have been in the past; and certainly never will be, in the future--inferior to you, Socially, Morally, physically nor Spiritually. And as for your faith, or religious belief--you know how you have represented that to me.

"Oh, how I wish that I could take this inconceivable thing to some good, Christian principled, trustworthy man and be advised by him--but are there such men in the world? And now; before I close, I will ask you to remember that you are, and no one else is, responsible for what you, of your own free will, have proposed and entered into, in our compact of the Evergreen and the Star, and pledged with your honor."

After mailing the letter she hurried across the street where an interurban car was about to leave, and boarding it she rode far out into the country.

"I would not have held him for even one moment longer than he was honored to be held," she regretted wistfully. "If he had been true, I would have discerned any good reason why it was best to revoke and annul the pledge, and the Compact;

and I would have released him, freely and without violation of faith and integrity; and without inflicting humiliation and injustice, and pain."

CHAPTER THREE

And now came a period for Phyllis which was unreal--a period when the mist, and the suffocation, and the wounded self-confidence persisted.

It was about 3:30 A.M. when she arose and dressed, one morning, and went out into the garden, at the home of a dear friend in the suburbs with whom she had gone to visit for a few days.

In the East the morning Star hung just above the snow-crested mountains, while a crescent Moon was sailing through banks of white, down-like, gracefully moving clouds, toward the west. A gentle breeze stirred the trees in the orchard and grove--wafting the perfume of flowers over all the garden.

Birds called drowsily to their mates and drowsy, reassuring answers were softly trilled and chirped back. All Nature seemed to thrill with love, and anticipation, and reverent falling into harmony with Nature and her Omnisciently ordered laws. "If there is poverty of love in the human heart," she mused, "it must be because a person will not be open-minded and open-hearted; the poverty must be of Mind and Soul.

"I have known real sorrow--real poverty of life's necessities, and real sacrifice; but also, my life has been richly crowded with love, and aspiration, and a fine, fraternal human touch.

"Somehow, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, I cannot believe that Winston Marvel would, or could be a traitor to the message and meaning of the Evergreen and the Star."

And after she had returned to the house and attempted to dismiss the subject from her mind, the thought returned and persisted until she finally decided to lay all scruples aside and write to Winston, telling him of her experience, and of her faith's convictions.

On the 23rd of June his answer to that letter was received. He had unaccountably, and through some overgoverning impulses, undergone a revulsion of feelings, he said. Also, he declared that he had "steeled his heart" against all emotions of love; that he had lived the love part of his life now, and wished that he could unlive even that.

And then he explained how he intended to live the balance of his life outside of the Social realm, and devote himself entirely to Science. "I am in cool dead earnest now, and you will never hear from me again."

If the declaration had not implied force--overgoverning injustice and heartlessness, Phyllis would have felt very much in favor of its meaning the end--unworthy as it was.

But the still implied justifiable antagonism against her, which, of course, suggested the necessity, on his part, of stern, overgoverning resistance against her artful subtlety; served to plunge her into an abyss of doubt, and raise her spirit of self-respect to the necessity of maintaining her dignity, and challenging his right to such an attitude.

She recalled how he had, in one of his very voluntary letters in the past, spoken of Man's wonderful gift of reason, and will.

He spoke of the intellectual and moral responsibility of Man; and many other things, which had led her to believe in his gift of reason, and will; and in his intellectual and moral responsibility.

"I still maintain that there is something back of Winston's strange and unnatural conduct, and revulsion!" she insisted. "I have only known of one thing in the world of human relations that could cause such an unnatural and unethical attitude in a man.

"The only known influence, as far as my knowledge reaches, is a woman. A woman of the undeveloped Moral and Spiritual character--one whose only charm, and power with men is her sex-appeal, and her adventurous spirit. But it is incredible

to even suspect that Winston has given himself up to such an influence.

"It will be impossible for me to accept that version without very tangible evidence; and I intend to find out the meaning of the whole affair before Winston can consider himself Morally, Socially, Spiritually or personally free from responsibility of a nature that will not admit of irresponsible, high handed decrees of force and contempt.

"If I know how to appeal to his better Nature in such a way that he could realize the true situation as he has created it, he would not rest until he had made it right."

And with this belief and this incentive, she wrote even again.

"Believe me when I tell you that this is not right," she pleaded. "It is not even natural! God will help you to understand and realize, if you will only ask Him. You may become Stoic, Cynical even, because of some fancied wrong; and you may sacrifice friendship, and love, and honor, to Ambition and Science; but that won't make things right.

"And besides, you could not, under those conditions, be a real Scientist, because you would lack human and inspirational incentive; and you would lack vision and balance.

"You see, it is my first faith in you that makes me still cling to a belief in the better you; and love--such as you represented to me, and pledged upon your highest integrity, if you were not really thoughtlessly playing with it; just naturally exalts its object, and crowns it with honor; but it never--never humiliates, nor betrays."

Copied from the Diary July Fourth:

"Have been ill all day. Acquaintances have tried to entertain me and cheer me up, but it is no use. There is no sickness in the human category that is half as crushing and disorganizing as soul-sickness."

July Sixth: "A letter came today from Winston Marvel. It was written during

the time that I have felt so affronted and poignantly pained, and its contents were a strange and disillusioning revelation to me."

Then the letter was still between the pages of the Diary, where Phyllis had left the reflections unfinished.

It was a letter very hard to read, for it was soiled, and scrawled, unpunctuated and misspelled all through. "Why did you ever come into my life? You are to blame most for you should have foreseen what such a friendship would lead to, and been firm with me, and broken it off.

"In a vague way I saw it, and in the beginning I remained silent for quite a while with the intention of breaking off our correspondence, but you wrote and renewed the friendship."

"Those who violate faith, and honor, must also misrepresent, and lie!" Phyllis wrote across the face of this statement.

"After all," he stated in another paragraph, "it was wrong that you ever came into the Northwest."

Another statement which she had marked with an erasure of contempt was: "Besides I was ill and I wanted sympathy, and you happened to be the one who was accessible."

Another paragraph which overwhelmed her with almost unbelief in its reality; written in self-extenuation, was: "I felt so sorry for you that evening before you left the Garden City, because you plainly showed that you were very sad because of parting from me; and so, even while the still small voice whispered, beware; I proposed love to you.

"And after you had gone you wrote and asked me to come to Plains, and you know what happened then."

Across this statement Phyllis had written: "Men who have honor are not contemptable--they do not lie!"

The paragraph that followed stated: "And after these things, I was afraid to

be frank with you, or to tell you the truth; so I thought I could be a Martyr. But after all, I am only human, and every man has a right to look out for his own interests, and his own happiness first.

"I am frank, and truthful, now, and acting the part of a man for the first time since I have known you.

"I have tried to be as considerate and as gentle as possible, but this is final.

"I am not afraid to have the facts, from first to last, held up before all the world for judgement; nor to have all of my letters made public; for I feel that they would prove my best exoneration.

"I had never been in love before; and I never had any one in whom I could confide, and who would have advised me; so the responsibility rests with you who had been married once, and who had experience."

"As I sit here and write I am only conscious of deep shame because of the way I have kissed you."

Between the lines of the above, Phyllis had written in very small script: "My returning kiss had been of that quality which is culminent with wonder, and reverence, and a good woman's desire for the high, pure, sincere love of a good man.

"I am thankful that I have no occasion for experiencing shame--but only for regret that I bestowed my kisses upon an unworthy object."

Another paragraph ran: "Of course, if you had stayed I would have married you--I would have managed it somehow; and then after a few months I would have tired, and then I would have had to go on as a Martyr."

There are men who count on a woman's pride being of that quality that submits to man because of his superiority, and that hides the wounds that he inflicts, because that old traditional regime based on the double standard, decrees that she should; or else they consider woman's pride and feelings as being of that quality which is incapable of being wounded or respecting its own dignity.

Phyllis had believed that the friendship and the love between herself and Winston Marvel was high and safe above meddlesome people's tongues, and above carnal minds or desecration by judgements that were based on a low standard; and therefore, the statements in that letter made her feel that she had cast the glory of a sacred friendship and love before the very meanest and most unworthy instincts in a human being.

Her own nature was not capable of entering into important and sacredly binding confessions and compacts without sincerity, and integrity; and she could not conceive of anyone's irresponsibility in such relationships, nor the necessity for one to wisely fortify one's self when entering into them; lest the friend be concealing some weapon of perfidy, or even some unsuspected viper; which he might see fit to use against her if conditions or circumstances should change and demand it; and now she was becoming conscious of a new danger--the danger of cynical unbelief in human trustworthiness, and even in the efficacy of faith in God.

It became a habit with her now to wander away into places of solitude and meditate, and reason about life's mysteries until it became almost an obsession with her.

One day a man spoke to her, as she silently walked through a dense wood above the path used by chance hunters or pleasure-seekers; and asked: "Are you not afraid to wander out so far alone?"

"Afraid of what?" she answered scornfully.

"Of wild animals, and possibly poisonous reptiles," he said.

"There are things I fear more!" she answered cynically.

"Would you mind telling me what they are?" he asked.

"Not in the least," she said. "But if you are a man of intelligence and education, you already know!"

"But there are a number of things to which you might have reference," he said. "Just what do you mean?"

"I have reference to human beasts of prey, and human vipers, and most commendable and honorable Judases in Society!" she scorned.

* * * * *

And then came a day when she set herself to the task of re-reading all of Winston's letters, as he had suggested, and prove to her own satisfaction, the justice and good grounds for his challenge, and his complacent confidence that they were his surest exoneration.

The reading finished, she had relapsed into a state of illness and enforced inactivity; but on the third day she brought the box with the letters in and placed them before her on the table. She placed the three last letters on her left and the box with all the others on her right.

"You both were sent out as representing the truth," she began, still indignant and scornful. "Written by the same person, yet you contradict each other, and are entirely antagonistic to each other in every way."

After a period of contemplating and reasoning, she instinctively rejected the three last ones, and taking up her pencil she poked them over the edge of the table.

"Their influence on me is so sinister that I must destroy them."

And with this, she ground them under her heel and threw them into the waste basket.

"If I had found the promised exoneration," she mused in a disturbed spirit, "I had made up my mind to write to Winston and verify it, and relieve him of further obligation; but now, instead of that, I am compelled to take up the challenge and make it support its own claims, or acknowledge its own falseness and retract its implications, and unjust, untruthful attitude."

And with this conclusion, she drew back the curtains from the broad eastern window, and watched, very wistfully now, the twilight deepen, and the stars appear.

And as she watched, the words, written almost like an afterthought, in that

last letter, came back to her: "And after you have re-read all of my letters to you--from the first one down to the last, go out under the Stars that you have always loved and studied so profoundly, and think it earnestly over, and you, yourself, will see that what I have said is true."

Leaving the room now, she went out to a quiet place where she could contemplate undisturbed, beneath the stars.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain," came to her life a soft whisper on the gentle evening breeze. "And what was meant by that?" she questioned. "In the Universally accepted sense, considered abstractly, or from the common interpretation, it means: Do not use the Name profanely; but as I interpret it, it means, also, not to swear falsely in His Name; and not to deceive any among my fellow-beings by professing irresponsibly and falsely in His Name.

"But he says that God understands any such violation, on his part, and that he feels sure that He does not hold him guilty of any impious act, or violation of any high principle." She relaxed into a pensive, meditative attitude and then in a little while she seemed to set her Spirit and her fancies free to soar among the Stars. "That dream about the large, beautiful Symbol Star being dominated by a bright red star of lesser magnitude was a very strange dream and seems to signify that the Standard of the Symbol Star is being dominated by a Standard of a lesser degree, in the Social-Moral world.

"In the legend, Psyche was condemned to long wanderings and labors; and in real life, Phyllis, because of a Standard and a principle, is also condemned to long wanderings and labors," she meditated. And then softly she quoted:

"They wove bright fables in the days of old
When reason borrowed fancy's painted wings
When truth's clear river flowed o'er sands of gold
And told in song its high and mystic things;
And such, the sweet and solemn tale of her--
The pilgrim heart to whom a dream was given
That led her through the world--Love's worshiper--
To seek on earth, for him whose home was heaven!

"In the full City, by the haunted fount--
Thro the dim grotto's tracery of spars--
Mid the pine-temples, on the moon-lit mount,
Where silence sits to listen to the stars.
But never-more they meet, since doubts and fears--
Those phantom-shapes that haunt and blight the earth
Has come between these two,
And that bright spirit of immortal birth."

"But," she mused wistfully, "that mystical Psyche of the legend finally came into her own estate, which was on a plane which was spiritual and intellectual.

"The stars are telling me this night that when I come into my heritage, it will be upon a plane which is spiritual and intellectual. If I should submit unconditionally, now, to the unhappy situation with which I am now confronted; I would forever lose what, before I knew Winston Marvel, I held very high--my belief in the Nobility and trust-worthiness of fellow-beings, my faith in Divine Overgoverning Wisdom and Love, and my self-respect.

"A plea of weakness and incapacity is not an honorable justification for irresponsible acts, and unredeemed honor pledges; and I feel, even yet, that honorable men scorn such excuses. But I am told by very 'high authority' that when the relationships of men and women are being considered, it is done very commonly, indeed; and that Society always has condoned it, and no doubt, always will.

"But if this is true, there certainly is something wrong with Society--and Society is to blame.

"At any rate, I propose to find out, for myself.

"And with this incentive, and this object in view; I shall not fail to keep a very careful record of all my experiences, my observations, and my investigations; and after Winston has had sufficient time in which to understand everything in the right and fair way of a man whose mind is fair and whose character is of that quality that reacts with integrity; I certainly intend to seek an interview with him and let him verify his sincerity either as a man of honorable principles, or as a Social-Moral parasite.

"I was silent, and thoughtful, during all the time that we were associated together, because the new and, to me, beautiful relationship silenced me, even to reverence. Why; we even were able to communicate with each other in a spiritual and intuitional, perceptive way.

"I did not regard that gift in a superstitious way, but only reminded myself of the vibratory forces that sends wireless messages; and the vibratory law of harmony, as demonstrated in music; and from these, I evolved a science which made these same things, when experienced in the human world, seem very natural, and very wonderful indeed.

"My love was of that quality that cares for a man's soul, and his honor, and his happiness; therefore, men of a certain Social-ethical regime, of a long accepted world standard, would scorn it; and demand what men of this Standard have demanded for ages--and found too; among the women of the physically beautiful, mentally undeveloped, and morally irresponsible parasitic type, who could not decipher a principle, nor understand morals under any circumstances.

Even now; it is my conviction that universal humanity would ask for a better System than that, if permitted to choose, of its own volition, a universal governing system for Society; and unless my Quest proves that I am wrong, my faith calls me to follow the Quest; even though in so doing, I will be led into channels where extraordinary effort will be required, in the maintaining of my position, and my beliefs, and principles.

"I am finding it very hard to believe that Winston Marvel is acting sincerely, according to his innermost Moral convictions; or that he would violate a trust with suffering for it.

"However; this is the testing-hour, and time will reveal all. If the proposition proves worthless now, it was worthless from the first, and I have only been an over generous, over credulous dupe.

"When Crito, the very dear friend of Socrates, was entreating him to take

advantage of a means of escape from a Martyr's death, which his loyal friends had lovingly provided; Socrates as lovingly rejected the plan, and in support of his position asked: 'Is it not true that you would do just what a pitiful slave would do, by endeavoring to make your escape contrary to the treaty you have signed?'

"And then speaking of those with whom the treaty was concerned, he said: 'They would surely ask: Did not we do right in affirming that you agreed to this treaty and submitted yourself to its terms?' But Socrates, like Jesus--the Divine Teacher, and Redeemer of Souls, had to seal up his work to future generations, with his life.

"Today, I wandered through a field, thinking deeply, and questioning; when intuitively and sensitively, I fancied that I heard a Voice. I listened, and presently I fancied that the Voice was of a great humanity who were suffering, as I was, under the burden of obstacles that they could not overrule nor understand.

"I realized, all suddenly and vividly, that my Quest would be useless, if only myself was to be benefited--the Quest was for them too.

"As a great earth shock may cause a volcanic upheaval--so a great mental or emotional shock may stir all the forces within a human being; and cause a mental and Spiritual awakening, and bring to the surface the hidden qualities of mind and heart.

"My own impressions are becoming more clearly defined; but still, the underlying motives in my life, and the thoughts governing the purpose in my life have always been greater than I could express; for I seem always to have controlled by an outward silence, while the inner mind and heart was like deep waters with hidden mysteries; or forests teeming in their hidden depths, with life, and music, and beauty, and mystery.

"I am very tired now; the night has seemed so long, but it is passing now." Then recalling some lines by Edward Everett Hale, she quoted:

"Look eastward--see! That is
Not black, but grey--
Cold grey, hard grey, dark grey;
And yet if one watches it, cold and hard,
He hopes for day.
Whiter and whiter--
See, the night is done."

"Grey mists and shadows now lurk about the foothills, and clouds like rolling seas and graceful ships are above the pine-covered hills --

"And then, as those weird curtains are unrolled,
Cloud mixed with cloud, fold tangled in with fold,
I see a tinge of palest rose--
And then, a flood of gold;
And know the day is here."

"Friendship and love that is ephemeral passes away like yonder mists and shadows; while friendship and love that is real and true, like yonder rising sun, and those everlasting hills, is permanent and maintains its own Sacredness and Majesty."

The next day Phyllis wrote down the reverie, and made a copy; and then with misgiving, and instinctive reluctance, she mailed the copy with a request to Winston Marvel, that he read it and then return the copy.

She had fully expected either an acknowledgement, or a return of the copy, but she was destined to disappointment in both.

Pondering the question one night she fell asleep in her chair. Again she experienced one of those mystic, intuitional dreams.

It seemed that Winston had stood by her chair for a moment, and then in a contemptuous, cold voice, had said: "I care nothing about your foolish, hysterical stories. Why do you send them? I hate them!"

With this, she was awakened, and wearily, she repeated: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured again unto you."

CHAPTER FOUR

As the days went by Phyllis seemed to be losing her self-confidence, and her power of resistance against forces of depression.

There was plainly something gone out of her which, before, had made her ever optimistic, ever enthusiastic and unafraid; and this robbed her of her capacity and efficiency in her work, as well as impelled her to draw within herself and become very reticent and uncommunicative, as though in this, she believed that her self-protection rested. Among the house-guests, in the Hotel Revere, in the City of Moscow ^{Edano} there was a Priest whom they addressed as Father LeRaine: He came each evening from the St. Luke's Academy for boys, and was received very cordially there on account of his cultured personality, and broad education. Phyllis was assigned a place at table next to the Priest, and one evening the conversation centered on Sociology and Ethics. Phyllis took advantage of the occasion, and asked the man to give his opinion as to which was the most potent agency in Moral and Social degeneracy--heredity or ignorance.

"The most potent agency in Moral and Social degeneracy," he replied, "is Spiritual unregeneracy, and Mental inefficiency. The very moment that a man or a woman permits their higher Spiritual and intellectual Nature to be dominated by the lower physical and materialistic Nature, the gates of the lower planes are flung open wide, and the mind and heart are governed by what belongs to these lower planes."

The Company were still talking earnestly when Phyllis quietly left the dining-room, and walked out under the stars she still loved.

Struggling, as she was, against forces of grief and disappointment, she felt better, and was more above to reason about her experiences with a calm spirit and clear vision, when she was walking in solitude, with only her Nature Teacher and Guide, to bear her company.

And so it was that this night, she reviewed, as she walked, a philosophy and teaching of a Reverenced old Patriarch by the name of Bennett Smith, with whom she had talked on one occasion when she felt that she must come close to some humanly and kindly disposed person, of the more highly spiritual and intellectual type.

He had received her courteously, and had listened thoughtfully to all she had to say; encouraging her when she faltered, by kindly words and suggestions. "You are gifted with a sensitive heart and mind," he had told her, "and also with keen intuitional discerning powers. These gifts were given to you by your Creator, in order that you might be able to understand better, the things pertaining to both the heights and depths of life. *HEL PATRIARCHAL BLESSING - ?*

"You should interest yourself in the uplifting and advancement of your fellow beings, because yours is the Nature that never attempts to use your powers, only by suggestion, and persuasion, and benevolence, and human-kindness.

"If you maintain this character against every obstacle and test, you will grow in Soul, and your knowledge will increase; and you will be able to employ your gifts and powers for the good, and happiness of yourself, and your fellow-beings.

"At times, you may be called upon to reprove someone sternly--even with sharpness; but if you ever are, you must afterwards show an increase of love, to show that you are not an enemy, but a friend.

"Let your faithfulness and love be strong as iron bands; and be full of Charity toward all men."

The walk and reverie gave to her the renewed inspiration and strength that she needed, and so, leaving all her cares with overgoverning forces of Good and of Love, she returned to her room, and slept soundly and refreshingly, until late the following morning.

Her first thought, upon awakening, was of the boy-criterion--her boy from whom she was destined to be separated until a reaction within herself, would restore to her the faith, and the beliefs, and the self-confidence that are so essential in parents, if they would fulfil their responsible order of parenthood, as it was ordained. "He is a Boy Scout," she reflected, "and he used to come to me with his Official Guide Book, and insist upon me listening while he read his lesson. Some of the things I remember was that a Scout's honor was to be trusted; that he was to

be truthful, loyal, clean minded and trustworthy. If he were to violate something entrusted to his honor, he forfeited his badge, because the misconduct of one Boy Scout reflected against, or was an injury to the whole Scout body. I asked him one day if the rules and laws really were in force, governing, in reality, the conduct of the boys. "Yes," he said earnestly, "it is not make-believe--it is truly in the game!"

And these memories softened her heart and caused her eyes to overflow with tears. "There is a story I once heard--somewhere; and somebody told it to me," she continued her reverie, as she dressed, and set her room in order.

"It was about two Indians. They were the very insidious spies and scouts, belonging to two very bitter enemy tribes.

"Each one had been sent out by his Chief, with orders to capture or kill the other--and an Indian Chief's orders are obeyed.

"While out on their mission of revenge, a terrific storm came up suddenly and drove them to seek shelter in a cave.

"Instinctively, each felt the presence of a person, or perhaps, a wild animal, and prepared for self-defense--not knowing if he should come in contact with a friend, or an enemy.

"In moving about, presently they brushed against each other; each raised his hand to strike, but instinctively sensing that they were only two men who both were driven into the cave for shelter, they lowered their weapons, and in so doing, their hands touched--met--clasped. They could not see, so did not identify each other.

"They knew, by the fraternal handclasp of the Indian, which is their honor pledge of good faith, that they both were Indians--but that honor pledge to an Indian means--even unto death; so they knew that they were in no danger from each other.

"In the morning the first grey light revealed to each, the identity of the

other. The pledge of the night before stood between them, and the other pledge stood between them and their Chiefs; and an Indian's honor pledge means--even unto death. They stood silently trying to reach a decision that would enable them to keep both pledges unviolated.

"Finally it was decided that they should go a certain distance in opposite directions, and then turn about--return to the pursuit with all the old bitterness and vengeful spirit, and thus, keep their first pledge, as well as their second one unviolated.

"A level look into each other's eyes--another handclasp, and each knew that the trust would be honored--for an Indian keeps his promise."

Phyllis was conscious of a growing scorn and righteous indignation as she concluded her reverie, but now let her feelings have free expression.

"Of course!" she scorned, "no one but an educated, cultured, 'Christianly', Socially superior person of Civilization, would break promises, violate honor pledges, and scorn to recognize any law but a self-law, and reject any Standard of honor or Morality, but a self-determined Standard!

"If Spiritual efficiency could supplement Technical efficiency in our Schools and Colleges," she now conceded, "the high idealism and Morality which it would actually create, through the development of the finer instincts, which would operate in the realms of stronger human restraints, and higher human endeavor, would give us a nobler quality of manhood and womanhood than we have now; and would make us more efficient and successful in spheres of practical endeavor, and educational achievements.

"The Savants of education say that the home and the Church are responsible for the spiritual and moral development; but in both places there seems to be such a deplorable inefficiency system; that in the Churches because of their tenacious clinging to old traditions, superficial conventions, repelling isolation of all who do not profess the same creed as themselves, ritualistic forms which are non-

understandable to the average laity, and dogmatical views and interpretations which criticize, and discredit the dogmatical views and interpretations of other creeds, and--well, it is just as serious a proposition when we consider the average home.

"There are homes where the sanctity of love, and the law of harmony, and cleanliness, and order, are not known; and where reverence, and kindness, and economics, are not regarded as of any importance; and it is well realized that there also must be a movement started from somewhere, to educate even the Church and the home.

"In appealing for a higher Standard of efficiency which would realize a balanced education for boys and girls--for men and women, I realize that we encounter obstacles and deficiencies that loom so large that it almost overwhelms one to even try to grasp the subject clearly; but it is just what we will have to do before we can have a balanced, progressive efficiency, and a nobler quality of manhood and womanhood."

And thus Phyllis reasoned about, and passed upon the things that her experiences, and observations, and studies had revealed to her.

"I would present the knowledge I have gained, freely; for educational development in our schools; and I would cooperate with them in finding a solution for these looming problems; but they could not consider me as authoritative, since I have no Degree, conferred by an Institution of Learning.

"But this does not debar me--only turns me from regular, organized, constructive work in the Schools, and establishes me in the Department of Evolutionary Educational Development, in the School of Life and Experience. And in this School the Ideaists, and the Natural Scientists, and Philosophers, and the Dreamers are developed; and back of the great organized Schools and Colleges are the Dreamers--the ones who point out the way for those who have the Degrees and the Authority, showing them how high Ideals and aspirational dreams can be made realizable."

CHAPTER FIVE

Phyllis had humbled her own Spirit in order to make it possible for her to try to reach Winston's understanding, and arouse in him a Spirit of fairness, for the sake of himself, as well as for the cause of a high principle; but her humility was not self-abnegating nor servile, but it was that humility that can plead for right, and justice.

If Winston did realize what he had done to her life, he was indifferent; and if he did not realize, she felt that it was a just recognition of his responsibility, and his manliness, to give him his opportunity to understand, and to set himself and the condition right. She had finally believed that she was analyzing the situation rightly and was measuring and weighing with intelligent fairness; but now, even her contemplation of these things, in the pages of her faithfully kept Diary, did not serve to alleviate the depressing, cold, dominating pain which was always in her heart, and which drew the grey mist before her eyes, and made her almost pitiful in her diminished self-confidence and faith.

And as time went on, she began to yearn toward a closer, more fraternal association with fellow-beings of her own development on planes of Spiritual, intellectual, and Social activity.

She began to yearn for that nearness and warmth of the human touch; but her diminished self-confidence made that a condition hard for her to realize.

The diminishing self-confidence and faith made her condition very complex; and her ability to realize it made her condition even more complex. "Psycho-analysis may be my surest refuge now," she concluded one day, after a long contemplation and introspection, "for a great deal is claimed by Psychology."

Recalling the name of one Professor in the Sciences, she acted upon her new impulse, and submitted her own case as best she could.

One principle of Psychology, based on human nature, is, that the higher emotions, when linked with, and uplifting our material Natures, are the real

inspirational and constructive agents from which we draw our most potent powers; and Phyllis realized with a numbing fear, that her diminishing self-confidence and powers of mind and action, was somehow allied with her diminishing faith, and her repression of her emotional nature. "However," she reflected, "I am now making an attempt to put the Science of Psychology to a fundamental test. Now, while I am waiting for a response from that source, I will go out more among the people and try to discover a way to come closely and intimately to their lives, and interests, and problems."

* * * * *

Her first experience was with a Professor of Astrology, a College graduate who had specialized in the Occult Sciences. His hair was of a peculiar reddish brown, his eyes were of an amber-grey color and long in shape, with veiled depths that were hard to read. For the charge of three dollars he made her an astrological horoscope.

"Will you permit me to sit in your Studio and watch you at work?" she requested.

"That is a very unusual request," he said, a little surprised. "Are you a Student, or only curious?"

"I am a Student," she explained. "That is why I came here."

After a moment's hesitation, he consented: "You may remain while I draw up the horoscope for you."

"How long will it take?" she asked.

"An hour; or perhaps more--if I explain as I work."

The Professor continually referred to an Atlas, a geometry, a sort of instrument like a compass and a book called "Science of Astrology."

At last the work was finished and the Professor certainly did surprise Phyllis with some of his deductions and forecasts.

"There is a man," he told her, "who had crossed your life in some way that has

not meant for your happiness or well-being.

"He is of lighter complexion than you, and is your junior by--" here he hesitated a moment, and then gave the exact age difference. "And you may as well rest assured that his high sense of honor, and his loyalty to a pledge or principle, will never prevent him from even dealing in a heartless and perfidious manner with you, if he believes that in so doing, he can gain some advantage for himself."

"Even biography and history seems to be written in the Stars; which seem, in some mysterious way to influence human destiny," she said wonderingly, as she thanked him for his courtesy, and left the Studio.

Her next experience was a conversation with a lady of that admirable type of an older generation and School that now seems to be almost obsolete; and her daughter, who was of the evolving new type, of the modern School of progressive education.

The daughter had invited Phyllis to her home for a brief visit, and before any of the three realized it, they were deep in the subject of Education and Suffrage for women.

"Mother, who has never known want, nor the necessity of become self-supporting or, like thousands of women, not only self-supporting but having children dependent on them; does not understand the necessity for practical and constructive education for women," Margaret explained.

"When I was a girl," Mrs. Miller confirmed, "a man felt himself to be lowered in the Social scale, and his ability discredited, if the women of his household went outside the home and engaged in pursuits, or educational training that made them self-supporting, and cheapened their womanhood by contact with the outside world. The girls of my day were educated in literature, and art, and music; and sent to finishing Schools to fit them for Society and for marriage."

"The new education does all of that," Phyllis asserted, "and it does much

more--it trains them efficiently in such branches as Domestic Science, Economics, Sociology, Civics, Ethics, Physiology, Religion, specializing in some Science, or some commercial or professional vocation, etc."

"But," protested Mrs. Miller, such education as that for women makes them common, blase, and unsexed. Women who will poke around such places as Factories, Court Rooms, Offices where one is compelled to work with men, Hotels, Hospitals, Laundries, and even Political and Police Headquarters. They even are compelled to visit the most squalid places and come in contact with the most uncouth people, if they interest themselves in this socalled Social Service work.

"They even wear the most impossible clothes; and ladies of culture, and refinement, could never justly be expected to receive them as Social equals in Society."

"But Mother," Margaret urged earnestly, "Real education, and real Suffrage, for women, does not, as you seem to think, make of them unsexed soldiers of fortune, who are militant, and ambitious to displace men in men's Natural sphere; while they neglect their homes and families.

"Most of the women who will be benefited are those who are compelled by necessity and respectability, to become self-supporting.

"And just because your father and your husband are the type of men whose sense of responsibility, and respectability, and chivalry would have been outraged if their womenfolks had gone outside of their homes to earn their living; you must not believe that all men are like that. Why, Mother--if they were, do you think that we would have the slums, and squalid homes, with the poor, dirty, half-starved, ill clad and illiterate children; or the faded out, worried looking half ill, ridiculously clothed, half starved wives and mothers who, instead of realizing the completing and perfecting of their happiness and their womanhood, in marriage; look as if they had been banished to perdition and given up every hope and every ideal? You always say it is just because they are that kind of people, but Mother; what

makes them that kind of people?"

"What you now consider as women 'soldiers of fortune', you would find to be, upon investigation, women soldiers of progress and justice," Phyllis interposed. "And you would be surprised to learn that the strongest and the most intelligent among men are the ones who are working most efficiently to help women to realize the very things we have been advocating, and that it is the churlish, illiterate, intemperate, unchivalrous, unprogressive men who think that the slums, and the sordid tenements, with poverty and dirt and disease, are good enough for their women and children; who are the bitterest enemies of Suffrage and progressive education for women.

"The true Suffragist is interested, with men, in good homes, good Schools, more sincere religion in the Churches, better conditions for the poor and unfortunate; better food and decent clothes for them, and respectable homes.

"Sanitary, and Moral conditions, for Schools, and places of public employment, and a better Civic and Community spirit which makes for progress and growth. It is from a real home that men and women reach out, and achieve, and construct; and the men of broad experience and progressive spirit are enlisting the cooperative work of women in these various fields, and consider them as their most intelligent and valuable allies."

To Phyllis' amazement, Margaret applauded what she had just said by clapping her hands exultingly and exclaiming, "Now, Mother, you have heard the opinion of a woman whose views can be considered as based on Authority, for she is one of those who would have been benefited immeasurably, by a vocational and practical training in progressive education, and true Suffrage for women."

The next experience in Phyllis' investigation scheme happened while riding on the train the following day.

She had been called to a City some distance away, by a business transaction that had been pending for several weeks. The car was very crowded and, the portly,

prosperous looking man who entered the car, and stood looking about for a seat, noticed that Phyllis occupied a seat alone, and walking down the aisle, he had asked courteously if the seat was reserved. She moved toward the window and permitted the man to share the seat.

"Do you not find travel in this region rather monotonous?" he finally ventured.

"There is no doubt but what I would," she returned, "only I see more than the casual observer. I love Nature, and so I never lost an opportunity to study her in all her varied and wonderful aspects; and so, even in rugged and undeveloped country like this region, I see much of interest."

The man gave her his card and she was surprised when she read the name. He was serving in a very high official capacity in the Civil Service.

The conversation led on, from casual remarks and replies, and finally settled on Social and Moral topics.

The man became quite bold in propounding a Standard of Social and Moral relations which he said was quite universally approved by people--that is--by the people of the more logical and broad-minded class, who are educated, and progressive, intensely human. It was that Moral philosophy of the underworld, that literally preys upon youth, and beauty, and love, and virtue--a philosophy that is a viper, in the hearts of manhood and womanhood.

Phyllis gazed silently out of the car window and watched the panorama of field and stream, and snow capped mountains in the distance, and she listened very attentively to what the man was saying.

In her mental vision, she pictured the very flower of the manhood and the womanhood of tomorrow being influenced and governed by this old philosophy in its new guise, and instinctively, she felt their greatest need.

Then turning to her companion, she asked quietly: "Have you ever cared enough about manhood, and womanhood, and character, and youth, and beauty, and love; to

contemplate the consequences to them, of this philosophy that you have just been propounding? No; you have not! And the youth of the Country never can be safeguarded while people whom they believe represent the very elect in education, and experience, and authority, and success, are actually teaching, by both precept and example, Moral laxity, infidelity, and philosophies which are literally unregenerating; and they, seeing only the outside, and being entirely ignorant of the inside truth; until they learn, only by close associations, and by embracing the regime, that it is truly weakening, coarsening, cheapening, destructive and insidious, look up to many who occupy places and offices of authority, and take them as their example; and when the example leads them to only infidelity, and unregeneracy, they finally settle on these planes and wonder how it was that people ever came to originate the story of a God, and a Christianity, and a Soul, and love.

"I am a student and I draw most of my information from life; and part of what I have just said is based on an interview with a young convict--a young man of only 21, and a Juvenile Officer who had in his custody two young girls who had been sentenced to serve a term in the Reform School.

"This will explain to you why I have encouraged you to be so explicit in the propounding of that philosophy."

"I suppose," he replied, after he had recovered from his surprise, "that you will write a book and undertake Social Service work?"

"Yes," she admitted.

"And little thanks you will get for your effort. My good lady, if you are not too narrow-minded to be advised by one who knows; let me tell you that the world has not much use for the meddlesome, deluded, self-righteous moralists. If you can write why don't you give the majority what they want? Write a good Novel--the kind that Society accepts and makes popular, and your fame and fortune is made.

"You will have to join the majority if you want success, and friends, and fame in this world."

This brought to her mind what she had heard at a Religious Service only the week before. The speaker was a man of rare strength of character, and spiritual and intellectual development. He was relating a personal experience of recent occurrence, in order to better illustrate his condemnation of certain materialistic philosophies and of immorality. The story, as he told it, almost upset her struggling effort to keep faith in her fellow-men.

"A train on which I was a passenger," he said, "was snowbound. In the Pullman and Parlor cars there was a party of men--possibly a Delegation, on some important mission, judging by their conversation and appearance. Wealth, education, position and influence was written in every personality.

"Time dragged on and still there was no relief, and presently the passengers were informed that there would be no relief until the following morning.

"These men talked, smoked, played cards and read their newspapers, until, becoming bored and craving new entertainment; they proposed to turn the affair into a personal experience recital, and sort of challenging confessional.

"It was not long before the Rubicon between good morals and bad morals had become invisible.

"Sensual license was most hideously portrayed in the vain and atrocious boastings.

"Home, Religion, the sanctity and sacredness of marriage, and reverence for God seemed to lose their place and meaning, as though they belonged only to the Mythologies and Superstitions of the Ages.

"By some unwritten code, these men seemed to feel themselves absolved from the necessity of Morals and Religion; and yet, each one was a Citizen of high repute, and at the head of a family."

Turning again to her companion, Phyllis said pensively: "I could give you many real and living examples of what that old traditional double standard regime, and that vicious world-philosophy does to people; but I perceive by your very

There was a tightening about her throat and heart that hurt, yet, that intensified her reasoning powers.

The spirit and philosophy of the letter reminded her of the man on the train and the principles he had upheld.

The Professor regretted exceedingly that such seemingly unfair conditions could be imposed upon credulous and sincere people by the thoughtlessly impulsive, and perhaps selfish act of someone for whom they cared a great deal; but, he said, it is the way of life; and it seemed that the very best we could do was to adjust ourselves to circumstance, and conform to what was universally condoned in the Social and Moral world, with as good a grace as we could, and just go right on making new ties, and finding new interests; and thus, learn to react, and to forget.

There was much more, but she laid the letter aside for more careful reading at a later time. Behind the rather calm and cool exterior of Phyllis' personality lay a deep emotional quality that influenced, to an unsuspected degree, her whole nature.

She had always had her moments of high dreaming, but it was Winston Marvel, who, by his words and acts, had intensified the dreams, until they had vibrated with life, and faith, and the wonderful awakening of aspirations and hopes; and it is no wonder that the culmination of her belief and dream, had overwhelmed her, and forced her into a vortex which almost disorganized her.

In her determination to go to the bottom of the matter and come back to the top with something tangible, and reasonable, and constructive, she had overburdened both mind and body, and so, the next day they found her ill in her room.

The physician whom they summoned diagnosed her case as a nervous breakdown, such as is often caused from great exhaustion, or shock. Here are a few notes copied from the Diary, and written during her convalescence.

"I sat up for an hour today, but I am very tired.

"Sometimes now, I yearn to just go to sleep and rest so, to the end of time.

"The Star shines right across my pillow every night now, and as at first, its influence is uplifting, and cheering, and seems to still inspire a hope. And then, there are voices--like soft compelling music in my heart--the Voices of my children.

"Sometimes now, there is an intuitional, instinctive something that tells me that Winston Marvel has made the same claims, confessions and vows as he pledged with me, to some other woman or girl whose propinquity and appeal was more than his nature could resist, and that she will respond with all the unconcern for the broken pledge, that some women can show, if they are exercising some advantage over some other woman."

Ten days later:

"I wonder if I will ever see my home and my dear ones again.:

"They called in the physician again. He merely took my temperature--felt my pulse--wrote a prescription--shook his head at me, telling me to remain quiet and rest, for upon this depended my recovery.

"How little they know of how utterly futile such rest is, for the weariness which robs me of my powers of resistance, and recovery. They could never guess how utterly tired I am, nor that my mind and heart are much more tired than my body. It is that influence that keeps me ill now--an influence as of hatred directed toward me--influence and Spirit suggests Winston; though I cannot even discern a reason for such a hatred from him. Of course, now, he denies all moral or personal responsibility; and pretends that all the facts in the past, were really non-existent.

"Just an ephemeral imagining; light as down on a passing breeze. I am fighting to keep my faith and my ideals--because without them, my life would be robbed of its meaning and its dignity.

"True love, as my faith, and my ideals pointed it out to me, does not depend

on propinquity constantly, nor erratic emotions even at their most alluring height, nor even to a sense of honor bound; but it is constant and true just because it is love.

"If the one who pledged faith with me and sealed it with his promise of integrity, is unequal, he will presently pass out of my life; and if it has been only a false mask, it is destined to crumble; but my friendship and love will not weakly die. No! it will transcend the unworthy erstwhile friend, and feel free again, and realize its dignity and worth, and feel its independency again; because that which is true and good never dies. It may appear, for awhile, to be lost; but it is a law, that what is affirmed, of good, or evil, returns again to its affirmer, and bestows its blessing, or demands payment; and this is governed by the law of Retributive Justice."

* * * * *

When Phyllis was again well enough to take long walks and commune with the ever-present healing and inspirational forces in Nature; the first tender blades of grass were making a velvet carpet of most beautiful green, for the dandelions, and buttercups, and snowdrops, which were blossoming in profusion in field and hedge; and the robin, and the meadowlark were making spring one joyous song.

She was seeking now, even more perseveringly, for the message of her Star, and the clearer Vision that would point out the way, when the trail of the Quest was barren of companionship, and even obscured by the mist of tears. On one of these days when she had walked a long ways out into the country, her thoughts centered in an analytic mood, upon the letter written to her by the Professor of Psychology, in answer to her own appeal to him; and one paragraph, in particular, stood out from the rest.

"It is not a serious wrong for a man to change his mind, or break a promise, if, upon reconsideration of a matter, he finds that it would be to his interest, and his happiness, to do so." And another paragraph: "And besides, there is no

compensatory redress demanded by Civil or Social law, for wrongs that men commit towards women."

"They would have it rest, as in the dark ages, with the individual inclination, and self-law, of the man," she reflected very seriously, "and they would ignore the Moral law, the honor law, and the higher Spiritual Universal laws set in Nature, in all dealings and relationships with women: thus, they would play with womanhood, on the gaming table of life; but when it is womanhood that is the Stake, no man challenges another man's honor, if he plays with marked cards, or slips an ace or two up his sleeve, in order to win the Stake, even at the expense of 'beating' the game. Cheating of that sort, they witness with a grin, and condone with a humorous slap on the man's shoulder, and tell him that he is a foxy old sport--a regular fellow, and has more 'pep' to him than they thought he had. And, it is decreed by this man-code, that if the woman is the kind of a woman who can be thus caught, and claimed, in this gambling game of life, she has only herself to blame, and the conventions decree that she must abide by their decision; because a demand for redress, on her part, would surely outrage Society.

"The technically superior mind of the materialist is unsympathetic, cold and calculating; and the hidden stream of his life runs through barren banks and between stony walls."

* * * * *

Phyllis was greatly attached to the aged couple who had cared for her, in the room she had rented from them, in the apartment house which they were managing for the owner. The man was of the stately type of Southern men of the Old School--white ^{hair} ~~hard~~, as fine and curly as a child's, black eyes, and a very fine personality. The woman was of that type usually described as very womanly, and Motherly, of the Southern type. The "Virginian", as Phyllis insisted upon calling him; and "Mother" always watched together at their South window, when Phyllis was returning, along the road at the base of the hill, and when she came upon the bridge which

spanned Willow Creek, just at the curve, where the mountain range changed its course, they always waved her a greeting. She always came straight to them in their cosy kitchen with its white pine floor, scrubbed spotless and with the oval braided rug in the center,; and the old fashioned arm chair in the corner by the window, and Mother's rocker close by, with its home pieced, ruffled cushion; and last--but not least; the broad sunbeam across the floor, and Mother served the tea and cakes--or the corn bread--piping hot; or the real Southern gingerbread that was Phyllis' delight, from the little kitchen table set away from the wall and by the outer edge of the braided rug.

The "Virginian", when in a reminiscent mood, told of his varied experiences in pioneering, and in dealing with different classes of people; or else talked in an interesting way of his philosophy of life.

Mother liked to tell of "early-day" experiences on the frontier, and while reclaiming land under the most trying conditions--such as lack of money, lack of water, Indian raids, and cattle thieves who would cut out of their herd, at every opportunity, their best stock, etc.

Sometimes Phyllis would bring her notes and read them, for the criticism of the aged couple. These people did not believe that there was any power opposite to good, with power to overrule and subdue it; because this would mean that the forces of Satan could prevail, even against the power of God.

The "Virginian" said that it was a fact that could easily be proven, that old traditions, and inexcusable laxity in Social customs and Civil laws, were responsible for the maintenance of that old double standard, and for the establishing of such unfair differences between the rights and privileges of men and women.

Men have told women for ages, that intuition, and womanliness, and virtue, are her self-protecting powers and would serve in every exigency; but they have ever blindfolded them to the fact that men do not play fair with their trust, nor their dependency; and so, it is high time that ignorance, on the part of women, was

displaced by knowledge that required equal Morality, equal education, and equal Social Standards; and until then, the very estimable ideal of Men's Chivalry, and fairness, and protective, reverent instincts, and conduct, in their relations with women is misleading and self-contradictory and ineffacious.

Phyllis often sat alone again, in the early twilight, and wove fancies, or contemplated, with a now more clearly defined ideal, what would probably appeal to her belief in a better, more perfected type of manhood; and one evening, as she watched the Star sink in a glory of sunset color, her reverie ran about as follows:

"I see the progressive young man among his fellows in his school days.

"I see him aspiring to excel among his fellows, in good, clean muscle-building blood-invigorating, mind-clearing sports.

"I see him planning eagerly to master a certain amount of Study in a given time, so that he may find time to roam in fields, or woods, or hills; or that he may try his skill in scaling some magnificent peak; or so that he may dash out and plunge into the lake or river; for a test of his skill at swimming. Or better still; if near some beach, to plunge into the breakers--dive through, or swim upon their crest--master the many clever tricks of the Master-Swimmer who conquers, instead of being overcome by the waves: or, to follow a stream and angle for the most gamey fish--or, perhaps; on holidays, to even take the trail into the forests for big game.

"I see this type of man playing the game of life equally well, when his school days are over, and he had entered into the world of affairs with men and women.

"There is always that other type who is inclined to pose before his fellows as a great Student who must sacrifice all of those things to his education--to long toilsome hours in Laboratory--Library--Class, and Lectures; and who hugs to his heart the idea of exclusiveness, and book-excellence; and the belief that fellowship, and athletic activities, and Nature study, are not essential to Scholarship; and that Scholarship is the very essence of manhood; and I see him drawing heavily

on an overtaxed brain, and under-exercised, weakening muscles; turning himself into a clever, efficient--almost uncanny machine, with which he expects to work out a self-conceived scale of Values, on strictly scientific principles--I will not pursue the study of him further because I don't like him: but I do recall to mind one example--the German Savant and Author, Nietzsche; but he died in a mad-house."

The time came at last when Phyllis again felt impelled to answer the Call of the Quest; and it was with sincere regret that she bade Mother and the Virginian good-bye, and went on again into strange fields, and to play her part among the different people, and under the varied conditions, and tests, and experiences--as the trail may lead, until she finally had established the truth of the Golden Mean, or renounced her Cause and passed into oblivion.

PART FOUR

THE GOLDEN MEAN AND THE HIGHER LAW

CHAPTER ONE

"This above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day;
Thou can'st not be false to any man."

It was while at Newport, a small border City of the Northwest, and during a Teachers' Convention of City and County teachers, that Phyllis learned of an organization, the purpose of which, was Educational Development.

Its motto was "Ora et Labora" and its benefits were for humanity. Its tenets taught that when any question of vital issue was at stake, that we cannot be governed by our own ideas, opinions, theories, judgements, or beliefs, and be sure of our position--whether we are in the right or misconceiving, until we have first submitted them to comparison with the ideas, opinions, theories, judgements, and beliefs of other people who are also intelligent, thoughtful, observing and progressive. Religious questions must be considered by religious measures. Scientific subjects must be decided by Scientific measures. Moral Standards must be decided by moral measures.

Phyllis realized more and more, as time went on, that constructive knowledge of any kind cannot be gained by brooding about a problem, nor by suppressing the feelings and silencing the reason.

She had learned that it is necessary to try to express it, and to reason about it; and that the greater self-confidence that is gained through uncoerced, or to be more explicit, self-expression that is free from the overforceful, impelling mind or will of others who usurp authority by reason of their over-dominating advantages, restores to one what the lesser self-confidence takes away; and with this incentive she submitted the problem that had so uncereemoniously precipitated her into the long and arduous trail of the Quest, and when the answer came, the substance of that part relating to her experience with her most trusted and beloved friend, Winston Marvel, was: "First, we want to congratulate you because through this experience you have been permitted to learn the true character and moral

responsibility of the man who claimed so much from friendship, and belief, and love--not hesitating to make sacred treaties, and unusually binding promises, with honor, and truth, and God, as pledges; and then violate them.

"We offer our sincere regrets because you have suffered--and are suffering still.

"We regret that we can only tell you that in the vocabulary of certain natures words and pledges hold only a superficial, or abstract meaning, and support no responsibility.

"There are people who use words freely, and enter readily into sacred relations and binding compacts; but who just as readily violate them. These people are very prone to 'changes' and 'revulsions' in their moods and feelings and they claim the privilege of changing their minds and hold it first, before honor, or responsibility.

"No one can deny them their right of free will, nor prevent them using or abusing their privileges as they see fit; but it is unfortunate that those who are sincere, loyal, and responsible must so often become their dupes."

Two eventful weeks have passed since Phyllis received that letter, and as she reviewed again the signification of its contents, with relation to the nature and responsibility of Winston, she shrank, with a sincere protest, from the realization that Winston really did belong in the class of those who have not the courage of their convictions, nor depth, nor responsibility, if she was to accept his own attitude as a criterion to judge by; and so, when an event, connected with her work, called her to the Garden City again she wrote a note informing him of the fact and suggesting that they meet at some quiet place--away from curious eyes--the old trysting place perhaps would be the best; and try to unravel the unfortunate skein of circumstance, and see if something more ethical and convincing could not be developed out of the unhappy affair. Then she named a time when she would be at the place suggested.

The time arrived and Phyllis felt almost panic-stricken as she waited; but Winston did not come.

As she leaned against one of the great tree trunks that supports the swing, she glanced up, and her attention was caught by the letter "E" carved deeply in the bark, just above her head.

"Winston did that!" she exclaimed, "and said that as long as it remained it would be a witness of our compact and its constancy.

"Perhaps he is one of those who scoffs at the significance of symbols, yet use them more freely than anyone else, to satisfy vanity, and impress others.

"Webster defines a symbol as something animate, or inanimate, that stands for, or calls up something intellectual, or spiritual, or moral.

"It is treason to disregard the significance of our National Emblem--our flag, symbol of honor, and freedom, and unity, and power; while only the grossest infidelity would demean, and cheapen the significance of the Cross--symbol of love, and sacrifice, and atonement. The engagement ring is a symbol of a mutual Covenant, while the wedding ring is a symbol of a mutual union.

"None of these, of themselves, either adds to, or takes away from the Spirit, nor the principle, nor the moral force of the thing they represent; but what they stand for--what they symbolize, certainly does.

"Winston and I mutually agreed that our Symbol Star stood before the ring, and that the Evergreen Emblem was before the Star. Yet now, he can disregard everything, and shield himself by evasion, and unfairness, and cheapening, farcial contradictions."

The following morning Phyllis silenced the protest in her heart and called, quite informally, upon Dr. Von Roche, because she had always been given to understand, by Marvel, that the Professor was his very confidential friend and advisor. "He may be able to help, at least, to a small degree, by throwing some light into the darkest and roughest places. Perhaps he may even be interested; and

if he is, something tangible and enlightening may result from the interview."

Dr. Von Roche greeted Phyllis with cold courtesy; and when she attempted to explain the object of her call with rather timid frankness, he discouraged her with almost arrogant reserve. "I do not care to discuss Winston with you," he said, "for I regard him as a splendid fellow--honest, trustworthy and above anything which would mark him as untrue to principle or right conduct.

"If he, in the past, entered into some understanding with you, and made promises; and then did not fulfill them, I feel sure that he had a justifiable reason. If, upon reconsideration, he has seen fit to change his mind that is his privilege; and in acting as he has, he evidently has done nothing that violates his honor or reflects discredit upon his character."

By this time Phyllis' interest in the interview had turned to a bored and disconcerted feeling, and a desire to leave the place.

"Winston is not in the City now," he volunteered. "He has engaged his services to a Railroad Corporation, and left even before the School had closed. He will be away all summer, most likely."

Phyllis maintained a short conversation for the sake of her own equanimity and dignity, for a few moments longer and then departed--feeling that her feet most surely had been set in paths of materialism, strange and changeable Standards of laxity and irresponsibility.

One evening, shortly after her disillusioning attempt to realize some tangible and just principle in justification of the, to her, apparent treasonableness of Winston's conduct to her, a young man who was identified with the Organization for Educational Development--to be known in these writings as "The Disciples of the Golden Mean," came and insisted upon Phyllis' accompanying him to the meeting that was to be held in the K. of P. Hall, that evening. The subject for the evening was presented by the President--Dr. Ballentyne; and the text was: "The marvelous power of the individual, for good or evil."

"This power," he said, "is given into the hands of every human being. It is the silent, unseen--but permeating, even dominating influence that is the radiation of what a person is--not what he pretends to be. By the power of our wills and wisdom of our actions, we can become masters of our own destinies, and we can also influence the destinies of others."

The meeting proved to be a very interesting as well as a very instructive session, for there was musical selections and songs; and at its close, every member had a cordial greeting for each other, and they did not snub the stranger who had come among them.

The following week was Commencement of the University, and Phyllis decided to remain and attend--since she was relieved of the possibility of meeting Winston Marvel there, by his leaving the City to engage in "Field Work".

She had been attending as many of the Conventions, Meetings, lectures, etc., as was possible--hoping to thus gain a more intimate knowledge of the real position of Educational Institutions--as related to the people and the State.

The influence of an old traditional idea, or belief that Colleges and Universities were the sacred precincts of a favored few whose privilege of attendance set them among the Elect; and development was over-governed from the highest planes of thought and efficiency, by Teachers of established, and unimpeachable education and standing.

The Graduation Exercises were made more important by the fact that the Inauguration of a Chancellor for the State Educational Institutions was included in the day's Programme.

In the course of his talk to the Student Graduates he had said that Educational development must work toward an Ideal, and he advocated an unbiased system for the Institutions of Learning, based on Democracy. In due time the Diplomas were awarded, Winston Marvel's name was called, and he was awarded a B.S. degree.

Phyllis experienced a little shock of surprise, for he had always told her than he was working for the M.S. degree.

She now decided to remain for a short period and take advantage of some special lecture benefits provided by the School. Dr. Von Roche had assured her that Winston would be away in a distant part of the State during the Summer, in connection with his work; and Mrs. Morrissey, the woman with whom he boarded had reiterated the statement, and so, she had given up any idea of an interview with him and had reconciled herself to the belief that the whole proposition would become self-solving and self-adjusting; when one morning as she approached the University she saw Winston just leaving the grounds.

She felt impressed that some evasive, and deceitful dealing toward her was being carried out. "If Winston's absence has been misrepresented to me," she reasoned, "it implies that I have, and am pursuing him, and that he is under the necessity of self-protection." The thought aroused in her a flame of indignation, and on the impulse, she called the Office of the University and asked if Winston Marvel was at the U. that day.

"No," a woman's voice replied, "he is not here any more."

"Could you give me his address?" she then asked.

"No; Mr. Marvel did not leave any forwarding address and we do not know exactly where he is," came the reply.

"I believe that I will follow this up for the benefit of the Quest," she resolved as she hung up the receiver.

Later, she saw Mr. Marvel enter Mrs. Morrissey's. She hurried to a phone, not even dreaming what she would say if he should answer; but she called the number and asked for him, when Mrs. Morrissey answered.

"Winston Marvel is not in the City, you know; and he did not leave any address. Is there anything I can do for you?" she asked sweetly.

"No!" Phyllis said and hung up the receiver.

With scorn, and conviction, she denounced such evasion. "There is the realization of the dwarf of my dream!" she confessed, for the first time, in all the test. "Perhaps after all, he is the type of man that men subordinate and advise; and whom women sympathize with, and shield, and condone, and 'manage'; and I do not admire that type of manhood!" she scorned.

CHAPTER TWO

Is your cause a worthy one? And does it stand for something based upon honor, and truth, and right? If so; be loyal to it. The first step toward loyalty is getting into harmony with truth-principles, as this gives us power of balance between our inner-selves and that which is external to us.

The truth-principle, as we know, is a dominant note in good character, for without truth there can be no sincerity; and without sincerity there can be no moral responsibility. It was the twilight hour--the hour of meditation and dreaming. Phyllis sat before the broad window of her room and watched the full round moon rise over the highest peak on the eastern range of the mountain, and its mellow, clear light threw into distinct outline the forest and the scenic canyon. Wistfully her mind turned from the contemplation of this charming scene to a reverie centering around the parable of the Sower.

"Not all the sowing is done with only the Nature seeds that are sown in a garden and field; or that are carried and scattered by the wind on hill and plain," her meditation ran on. "The other kind of seeds that are being constantly and freely sown are those that we sow in the garden of the mind and heart.

"And how often along with the precious seeds are sown the tares!"

Through this thought her mind was led to contemplate this real and human mind and heart garden and to analyze and separate her subjects into classes on different planes of Spiritual, and Mental, and physical development; and as she considered, and analyzed, and questioned, her whole attitude changed to that of one who is perplexed by the intricacy of the subject under consideration. Finally, with

a gesture of one who has referred a question to higher Authority and accepted the verdict, she concluded: "But the Master of the parable, told the workers who consulted him, when the tares were discovered in the field of wheat, that it would be best to let them grow with the wheat until the harvest, lest in rooting them out from among the tender blades, the wheat might also be destroyed. And so, perhaps, the tares that get sown in the garden of the heart and mind, because of Natural laws--cannot be rooted out forcibly, and so must grow along with the good, until the faculties and spirit have grown strong enough and intelligent enough to discern them, and separate them, and cast them out."

She left the window now and after a moment's hesitation, took from a traveling bag a box of pearl-grey with a spray of forget-me-not on the lid, and thoughtfully opened it and examined the contents.

One small packet was tied with a band of pale rose, and contained the first letters--the first confessions and love pledges of Winston Marvel. With this packet was two others--one contained a spring of evergreen and a rose; the other contained a cluster of blossoms. She smiled wistfully as she recalled how Winston had brought them to her, hidden from curious eyes in his inside coat pocket, and given them to her with a charming reticence which had quite captivated her.

These, she put even reverently aside and took out another package, and began to open and read them.

The first one told of the visit Winston paid to her at the Falls, and as she read, she lived over again the experiences which have been related in these writings.

She put this letter aside and opened another one. These words stood out from all the rest, like Sentinels guarding a sacred relationship: "Everything that has happened since you and I first met stands out in my memory as something very--very beautiful indeed; something that we can treasure always as memories marred by no unpleasant thing."

Tears now overflowed and dropped upon the page. "Couldn't he have been true and loyal enough to have held these things sacred?" her heart cried out. "He told me that he was born and raised in these rugged mountains of the great Northwest and I had understood always, that the first great Commandment of the real West was that a man shall not betray his friend.

"Therefore I had believed that the men born and reared in those everlasting temples of God could only be true-hearted, and trust-worthy, and strong. And so I had believed that I could trust Winston's friendship, and his promise to keep this, and the greater gift, sweet and lasting and true." Phyllis contemplated thus, as she paused a few moments, before reading another letter.

"And then came the beautiful days and even ings," she read, "that you and I spent together, Dearheart; and as time went on I told you a story, little by little, that I can tell only once in this life." Hastily she put this letter aside and took up another. "And now, Phyllis," she read, "I have something of interest to tell you.

"You know I am a member of an exclusive and advanced Scientific Society, and I have even begun to receive recognition to the extent that some articles I have written are to be published in the Journal of Science and Research of which you have heard me speak. Also, I am delivering a number of lectures here, before our branch of the organization.

"The leading students always tip their hats and smile real deferentially when they meet me in the Buildings or on the Campus, as though they regarded me as above the ordinary. Dr. Von Roche has a bill before the State Legislature, to create a State Geological Survey. If he succeeds in putting it through, he of course, would be at the Head, and in that case, his duties would take him away from the University; and, of course, I am the only one here who understands the work of this Department well enough to occupy the Professor's Chair. And so you see what his success would also mean to me."

And then he changes the subject and speaks of hopes for a happy future with Phyllis, and uses the phrase--"Our home" with much tenderness. "I have a confession to make," he continues, "because, you see now there are no secrets between you and I.

"Do you recall the Sunday when we walked up the trail going toward the great letter on the hill; how you were tired and we sat on a ledge to rest? Well, there was a girl passed us--she told me about it the other day--" Then without explaining further he suddenly changes the subject and concludes his letter: "Just as sure as there is a merciful God Whose Spirit overrules all things and Whose law is love, it was through His Higher Agencies that I was prompted that night to confess my love for you and to claim you as I did.

"I was not sure at first that I really understood myself but suddenly, like a blaze of light, I knew that I did, and that it was just, and so I claimed you."

"What conclusions must I draw from a comparison of his performance of yesterday, and his performance of today?" Phyllis pleaded. "When I received these missives and read them in that past, only a little while ago, I wondered--" "Dreams?" I said. Then I remembered a truly philosophical sentiment written by a Noted Author---"Every work of man is first conceived in the worker's soul, and wrought out first in his dreams." (H.B.W.)

"What could I do but trust my friend when I believed in him sincerely."

Drawing one more letter from the packet, and opening it thoughtfully, her eyes fell upon the following:

"You have placed in me that wonderful trust and faith which goes only with love that is true, and I promise you that it shall never be violated by me. If, in striving to do what is right, just, and true I make my mistakes, it will be your love, and your help that will call me back and show me the way. If you only knew, Dear Heart, the heartaches that I have had since you left me, you would know that I miss you more than words can express. These things are too big for words, Dear,

but I want you to remember always when things seem wrong, that God in His Infinite Mercy is ever watching over you; and that even when clouds cover all the sky, a beautiful Star still shines in the depths beyond which symbolizes inviolable things for us.

"And as you read this, remember that it is written by one who loves you as greatly as a human heart can love."

"Words perhaps!" she studied, "words that were inspired by the reading of big thoughts and fine feelings which others have written, and which appealed to his sense of artistic fancy; but the weight and meaning of which, he had not reasoned about, nor felt. Such thoughtless folly as is here revealed is that which springs from the folly seeds which young men are supposed to sow--'wild oats', they call them; which they, by some unexplained philosophy, may scatter broadcast to fall where they may, and with what evil consequences they will; ever mindful of the fact that the sower will be absolved--no matter what consequences others suffer: and so, they forget that:

'By a whisper sow we blessings
By a breath we scatter strife--
In our words, and looks, and actions
Lie the seeds of death and life.'"

There were so many of those letters, and Phyllis, now grown utterly weary with the immensity of the whole problem, put them back into the box and put it away--meditating as she worked: "The world draws a great deal of distinction between the truth and honor which deals with the relations of men and women; and the truth and honor which governs a man's relations and dealings with men, and affairs--Civic or Professional, or relating to Country and Flag. There is one Standard of Ethics for the Church during the conducting of Services and the performing of duties official; and then another Standard for practical, logical, human conduct for the rest of the time--the tenets and example of which shows that in the world and Society--so called; the worst thing that a man can be condemned for, is being so guileless and uninsidious that he lets himself get found out--self-betrayal is the worst treason

a man can be guilty of."

One evening shortly after this, Phyllis, still distressed in spirit, since the review of those letters and the conclusions which followed, decided to call upon Mrs. Morrissey and have a quiet talk with her. Mrs. Morrissey had received her at the door with rather a reticent manner, and in the hall she had explained that she was just then engaged in the kitchen as she had several articles of clothing to iron, and asked Phyllis if she would come out to the kitchen and sit until she had finished.

Later, they had gone out to sit in the porch. The hostess had not proven very hospitable, even in the kitchen--but in the porch chair she soon fell asleep leaving Phyllis to her thoughts.

They had been strangely disturbed thoughts with impressions vibrating as of something hidden and unfriendly, so she had returned to her room at the Hotel feeling even more perplexed and heartsick than before.

In the morning she was wakened with a start, by a sudden vivid impression that she must go back that morning to the house of Mrs. Morrissey, as there was something which she would learn by doing so.

She dressed, ate a light breakfast, stopped at the Florist's for half a dozen roses and then went directly to the woman's house.

She was sitting in her cool vine-covered porch and she had a visitor. Mrs. Morrissey greeted Phyllis as she came up to the porch and then presented her visitor. "This is my friend, Miss Hall," she said simply.

As Phyllis greeted the young woman pleasantly she caught an odd expression on the face of the hostess.

Without any conscious incentive she studied Miss Hall very closely as they talked.

Her personality was of that colorless type--half listless, half elusive, with the subtly mocking expression of vanity and assurance typical of the world-wise,

and physical woman.

She sat in rather a listless attitude, her arms resting limply on the chair arm-rests. The position called Phyllis' attention to the perfect coating of freckles that covered her arms to the elbows, and the smaller, paler ones on face and neck.

"Have you work to do at the University today, Frannie?" Mrs. Morrissey asked. Her answer was affirmative; and then Phyllis asked:

"Are you a student there?"

"Yes," she said. "I am studying languages."

"Are you specializing for some Profession?"

"Oh, no; not for anything like that; it is just for my own benefit. I will use it as an accomplishment Socially, and when reading. I can then read the different Authors in the original, instead of just the translations. Oh no; I do not intend to study for a Profession--I expect to have a home of my own, and my place in Society."

Soon she arose and said that she must go, but that first, she must get some things from upstairs.

"Does she room here?" Phyllis asked as the young woman entered the house.

"Not now," the lady of the house answered evasively. "Her mother has come from the East and now she is with her."

"She is looking after Winston's things--you see, that is his girl."

As Phyllis left Mrs. Morrissey's she was conscious of a feeling of relief, that she did not know who the young woman was until after she had received her impressions. "As is natural with most women, it gives me some satisfaction to see for myself, just what type of woman could displace me in Winston's life, and make him forget--oh; I will not go into that; but I would have felt less challenged, and more self-appreciative had she proven to be a very superior young lady of education, and prominent Social position; but Mrs. Morrissey said that she did

Stenographic work for the School and was a 'good enough girl for Winston at any rate.'

"But the elⁿightenment of this day puts another contradiction into that letter he wrote, declaring that he had 'steeled his heart against all emotions of love,' and that he had resolved to henceforth devote all of his life to Science and Scientific research."

Just here, she stopped in the path she had taken almost without realizing.

"This is the place. Just here at this little bend where the path branches off--one leading up to the Insignia of the U on the hillside--the other leading toward the top of the Mount. There is the ledge where I sat. Royal was hovering over me and talking. A girl passed and turned into that path that leads toward the Mount. The girl of that letter--Winston started to tell about her and then left the subject unfinished. Winston probably was not true to me from the first. That unfinished 'confession' as he called it had not even aroused my curiosity, because it would have been utterly impossible for me to believe then that Winston would, or could prove himself other than with truth and integrity.

"He could have had her from the very first, and he knew it; but man-like, he wanted the one he was not sure of--he wanted to experience the joy of conquest."

Upon her return she talked with some Students from the U. One of the group mentioned the name of Winston Marvel; and a young man said: "The fellows consider him as different from the average University Student and assistant teacher--some what of a sissy. At first we thought he was a 'grind' in the School; and then he surprised us. The last year or so we have met up with him everywhere--especially on moon-lit nights, in company with a Jane from the Office."

Phyllis, upon arriving at her room, did a thing which was impulsively unpremeditated, but she felt that it was just, and the right thing to do.

She wrote a note to Miss Frannie Hall. She said:

"My Dear Young Lady: I know now, that you and Winston are keeping company,

but whether with serious intentions, or not, I do not know.

"However, it is best that you understand some things which he, perhaps, has not explained if you really mean to be his life companion, for in marrying him under present conditions you will also be a sharer of a responsibility that he has not fulfilled with integrity and justice. If we violate a law of truth and justice, it echoes back through all time, and that is what Winston has done in his dealings with me. If you wish to, you may examine certain of Winston's letters to me and then judge for yourself. I wrote you this because I don't want you to be deceived."

Phyllis waited but there was no response, and so at length, she accepted the silence as an acknowledgement that she did understand, but was indifferent.

After this the mist of cold grey was again before her eyes, but even then, her faith would not be defeated, although now she was realizing more and more clearly, that it was loss of the Ideal--the sincere belief, rather than the man as he really was, that now caused such poignant grief--the Ideal that she had centered in Winston Marvel. She realized that she never really had been quite reconciled to a marriage with him--she could not see that far; but because of the extraordinary (apparent) fineness, and trueness, and beauty of their relation and compact, she had been ready to reverently and loyally wait for its culmination, and to accept the final verdict of time and test; but she had not believed it possible for any such development as now seemed evident, because her faith, and the ideal, and her loyalty forbade it.

"Even now," she determined, after a hard fight, in which she had not proven herself the master, "even now I feel like fighting for that Ideal, and for a principle! I will keep my word now, pledged to the Quest of the Golden Mean. I will hear what Winston Marvel has to say; and I will make him say it to my face."

The two forces within--one the indignant protest of a woman's outraged feelings and violated faith; and the other of woman's charity--pleading desperately

for some tangible, justifiable vindication for the one who had represented an ideal and a standard, to her; fought one against the other--while just a tinge of vindictiveness came to the surface in the form of a letter she sent, notifying him of her resolve.

In the meantime, Winston, who was still in the City, had gone to the Hospital to have a slight operation performed. Phyllis waited a reasonable time and then called the Surgeon at the Hospital by phone, and enquired about Winston. He had informed her that there had been nothing serious about the case, and that the patient was to be discharged within a day or two.

She was determined now, to keep her resolution, and for conventional considerations, she determined to interview him while he was still at the Hospital.

She sent a note explaining that his attitude and evasion had aroused such scorn and such bitterness at last, in her heart, that for the sake of what the friendship had claimed to be, she had to be just, and had to understand the situation in its true light.

It was Sunday afternoon, and she was waiting in the little Office of the N.P. Hospital. The house surgeon had gone to call Marvel who was sitting out on the veranda with some other convalescing patients.

Presently she heard him coming down the hall. As she watched him approach she marked a great change--the personality was more mature, and subtly nonchalant. The old grace and frankness of manner was gone and the countenance seemed veiled in a something undefinable. He offered his hand in a confident patronizing manner--she permitted hers to rest unresponsively for a moment then quickly withdrew it, for his personal radiations were repelling. She felt overcome by a feeling of misery--she wished that she had not come. Her eyes searched his--his eyes flashed back defiance--insolent, cold defiance.

He invited her to his private Ward. She entered and stood by the window. There was a pause--an embarrassing pause, then Marvel said:

"I am expecting Frannie. You have met her--she told me about it."

Phyllis was amazed at his nonchalance and chose to ignore the question. "My call concerns only you and I and needs no explanation, for you understand perfectly why I came. There are some little mistakes you made in dealing with me--some statements that were worse than unfair--they were positively hideous; and I am now offering you a chance to set yourself right with me."

A cynical, challenging expression spread over his countenance as he said: "I have done nothing of which I am ashamed and I consider that I have acted as fair as any man would have acted, and I consider myself a gentleman."

"That is to imply that you consider that you were imposed upon?" she questioned.

"I consider that you are the one to blame and I am sorry that I ever met you. Now, you have it from me, face to face, and I hope that you are satisfied."

Phyllis was dumfounded at the cold brutality of the man's speech but she was not entirely unprepared for it, and so she determined to go through with it, no matter how distasteful it was to her. "No," she said, "I am not satisfied!"

Winston made a contemptuous gesture by shrugging his shoulder, and said, "Take it from me; I am certainly glad to be rid of all that bunk--that morbid rot! I suffered the tortures of hell before I was able to do it--and my, how I hated you!"

"You hated me. But why? I knew instinctively, of your unreasoning hatred--even at so great a distance, its influence was like a blasphemy against everything that is high and pure and sacred in human life. It was because of this that I wrote to you again, even when my whole nature protested. I wanted to change your mental attitude, so that you could be just."

Upon a small stand was a vase of faded and drooping pink roses. Not the pink roses, and white roses with the spray of fern, that she had sent as a peace messenger. She watched Marvel silently as he crossed the room and with a morbid sentimentality, buried his face for a moment among her flowers. As she watched,

she reasoned, and analysed swiftly.

"I instinctively felt his hatred, but I opposed it because I knew that he had no grounds. I could never have really credited such a thing until he told me himself. But he could not justify that hatred. Proverbs:XXIII, Verse 28 says: 'A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin.' And then, arrogance and pride and selfishness surely does rob a man of his instinctive honorableness, and truthfulness; it even estranges him from his God, so that he does not fear to deal falsely, even after professing in the name of Honor, and Love, and God."

"Winston," she said at last, "did you really expect to win honor, and place, and realize worthy ambitions and true happiness by such performances as you seem to uphold in yourself?"

"I have done nothing, only what I had a perfect right to do; nothing that is not done by men constantly, by thousands of men. It is you who is unconventional and unreasonable," he defied.

"Are you dealing with this Frannie Hall under the same standard that you have dealt with me?" she asked.

"Frannie understands everything, and she is satisfied," he answered confidently.

"You mean that she is satisfied with one side of the story--yours; and with you two, that is all that counts. I let her know, as graciously as I knew how, that there was another side--mine; but she ignored that," Phyllis protested.

"Yes; she told me about that, and asked me to advise her. I told her it was of no consequence," he explained importantly.

"Oh, I see! And she is your mutual ally in all you have done. Yes, I am beginning to understand now," she declared.

"She is the one I love, and she is to be the mother of my children," he defended.

"It sounds very strange to me, to hear you speak in that way with reference to another woman after what you said to me; and after the convenient you made with me, pledging your highest honor! I do not envy your present position, nor hers, no matter how confident you both feel," she answered pensively. "You even demanded--you used the word 'demand', that I place implicit faith and confidence in you under all circumstances and conditions. How did you dare do that and then straightway violate your honor and my faith? 'Mere words', you can say now; but just the same, Life and Death are in the power of the tongue."

"Well, I was sincere then; but after you had gone away, I reconsidered everything, and then I realized that I had changed; I felt differently about everything, and I wrote and told you so, and no one can say that I did not act the part of a gentleman and an honorable man," he replied coldly.

"I reasoned with you, and protested that just what you claim now might happen; I pleaded to leave the question open, and you free until you knew and was well founded and firm. You refused, and forced the issue. You said that I was rebelling against a God-principle, a Divine gift. You said you knew and that God was your witness. You pledged your word as 'absolutely irrevocable' and you vowed that to even think of transferring your love to another woman was sacreligious. Mere words, again! Man's heartfelt confessions, pledged upon his honor. And it is upon such truth, and such honor that the welfare of a whole world, and the advancement of Civilization depends," she reasoned wistfully--earnestly.

"Well," he replied depreciatingly, "a man cannot be expected to remain irrevocably true to a first love--few men ever do. I was sincere at the time, and willing to go to any length, make any promise, do anything to get you. I was mad about you!"

"According to your standard of ethics, when a woman anchors her all in the truthfulness, and integrity, of the man who represents to her all that is good, and trustworthy, and sane, and moral, she must, at the same moment, fortify herself

against a possible traitor. I cared enough for you to care for your soul, your honor, and your character. And I believed that you were strong," she almost pleaded now.

"Yes;" he challenged, "but it was my first love--I wanted you; and so, I would not listen then. It was my first love and I wanted you; but it was only a boy's love!"

"Only a boy's love!" Phyllis repeated. "Yet many boys at the age you were then are married and holding important positions. And that is not all--I now know that you told me you were older than you really were. You have the inconceivable meanness and lack of self-respect to refer now to all you did and represented, as 'Bunk'--'Morbidity', etc., and you even misrepresented about your religious creed. Why, when I realize what you have done I am inclined to doubt your belief in either religion or God."

"Your ideas and mine are different," he defied. "Besides you had been married once, and you were supposed to understand; and by every conventional rule, you who were the senior one, and the most experienced, are the responsible one and I am under no obligations whatever, to you."

"When a person is capable of regarding a friendship so cheaply that he will impose upon that friend an indignity that no human being has a right to impose upon another; to say nothing of his violation of his own integrity, he can always invent excuses, and he is not particular upon whom he fastens the blame for his own fault--but of course, Society and the Conventions support men in the belief that because a woman has been married, and is therefore 'experienced'--according to whatever meaning they place upon the term; they are legitimate prey! I did not pursue you--I did not even encourage your attentions, only under a sacred friendship pledge which I honored--believing it to be very estimable and based on integrity. You admit too, that Frannie Hall is quite knowingly and understandingly a condoner of your principle and a supporter of your Social and Moral Standard. Even after you

learned through my actions that you certainly had done something that had pained me and affronted me deeply you only took that as an excuse to add hatred to disloyalty and violation of faith. One of the reasons that I am here now is to try to find out your justification for hating me. You are not dealing with an ignorant woman--but with a woman who thinks and reasons. I could not submit to your terms because in doing so, I would have suffered an irreparable loss--affecting my self-respect, and confidence, and faith, and beliefs. That is the reason why I wrote to you as I did, and even appealed to your sense of fairness, and loyalty, and justice. I was trying to make you understand."

"I did not read your letters," he replied with a cold, negative shrug. "They were all thrown away unopened; or, at any rate, Dr. Von Roche took charge of them, and I believe he destroyed them."

"You mean to tell me that Dr. Von Roche would do that?" Phyllis questioned, amazed. "Do you mean to tell me that a University Professor would shield and uphold cowardice and dishonorable conduct in one of the Student-teachers?" she asked incredulously.

"Why," he explained with that look--or expression of the worldly wise when they are disproving some Moral or Spiritual principle, "Dr. Von Roche told me himself, when I talked with him, that the breaking of an engagement was of no consequence; and even told me that he had broken several."

"Did he explain whether these engagements--so called, were mutually broken, only because it was mutually agreed that a mistake had been made--or; perhaps he told you that he just acted the part of a cad and gloried in it?"

Winston now assumed his most important, over-governing attitude, and with what he evidently had learned through his education, and office of authority in his School to be the attitude of superiority--he narrowed his eyes, and pointing his finger at Phyllis, commanded, "Silence!"

Phyllis fixed his gaze calmly and replied, "That sort of thing does not

impress me--at least, not in the way you thought it would. Your dominating influence, and even power over me, is dead. But your arrogant and false dealings with me will revert back to you and follow you and yours, until you have atoned--yes; paid to the last farthing.

"Your Professor is not the only one who considers broken engagements and violated honor of no consequence; but the fact that thousands break a law, be it a moral, or a legal, or a social, or a spiritual law; does not invalidate the law. No one can prevent anyone else from prostituting his own honor, nor bringing himself under condemnation of the Moral law--that rests with the free agency and will power of the person--but it also determines his character.

"I feel that your Standard could not be accepted by the best people--I still feel that really honorable men would scorn it; even though there are many in the Student bodies of Schools and Colleges, and even those among the Faculty members who do embrace it."

Winston now regarded Phyllis with a peculiar, defying, cynical expression, and drawing his mouth down to one side, he drawled, "You think you know a great deal."

"It would have been far easier to deal with me by fair means than by unfair means," Phyllis said, even regretfully. "You could have had Frannie Hall, too, without violation of honor or principle--by dealing fairly and honorably with me--"

"When Frannie comes," Winston interposed, confidently, "I want you to be considerate of her feelings for she is very sensitive."

"Sensitive! Really? Why of course; you see, so unsensitive a person as I am could hardly appreciate how sensitive the feelings of Frannie must be--almost as sensitive as the feelings of Winston Marvel. Why, you were so sensitive in your feelings that you could not bear to discuss our problem with me--you were even afraid to be honest with me for fear of hurting my feelings."

"I knew there was no use. I had made up my mind." Then, snapping his fingers he derided, "It was nothing anyway but a lot of morbid bosh--just bunk. All that

ails you, is religious hysteria!"

Phyllis now realized that further effort was useless, and hastily, without even a word of parting, she hurried from the place.

CHAPTER THREE

"There is a growing, moving spirit that is making itself felt and is becoming ever more active and over-governing in its influence, not only in Moral realms, but in religion, and in affairs Civic and Political," Phyllis reflected as she hurried from the vicinity of the Hospital.

"Make them play into your power and then govern them; thus, they will not be able to interfere with your schemes nor overrule you in indulging any of your desires. If the person or people with whom you are in competition, or conflict, cannot match you--or even conquer you; but instead, proves himself your inferior by his inability to fortify himself against your designs and motives which, of course, are outlined, planned and executed with the greatest secrecy, and behind your back.

"Only people who are believed by the people of this philosophy, to be morbidly moral, or religiously hysterical, reject or condemn this great philosophy of Self, and superiority.

"Today, Winston Marvel showed me the utter coldness, and nonchalance of that spirit and its influence on the minds and hearts of men and women. The very things, even, that I had appraised, as being vibrant with poetical vision, originality and imagination--all so essential in the world of creative work--art, science, literature; and in the world of romance, and idealism, and love, he cheapened and degraded and labeled as 'bunk', 'morbid rot', 'mysticism' and 'bosh'.

"No two persons could possibly understand each other when they discern, and reason, and feel, in separate spheres--on different planes.

"Oh; he only acted emotionally, and without due consideration. He did only what men have done through all the ages. Why every woman, instinctively, and intuitionally should know that it is only a phase of every man's nature, to do just

as Winston did,' this 'natural' sex philosophy teaches us; and if a woman is not smart enough to fortify herself--that is her misfortune!" All unconsciously, Phyllis had taken the path that led through the wood to the old trysting place.

She felt the urge in every fibre of her being, to put away forever from her mind and consideration the conflicting, contradicting, unjust philosophies, and standards, and doctrines; and only recognize the teachings and the promptings of the Omniscient, Over-loving, ever inspirational Mind and Voice of the Divine Teacher and Guide.

As she grew more calm she felt sure that Wisdom, and truth, and knowledge, would come to her and that she would, in due time be able to meet all her experiences, and tests, and labors with fortitude and courage. "The man might at least have recognized the truth and been moved to an appropriate finesse of feeling and courtesy of speech. He could hardly help sensing instinctively my inability to associate and reconcile the Winston Marvel of yesterday and the Winston Marvel of today, and at least to have respected the womanhood of the order that could be so affected; but NO! he must cheapen, and degrade, and mock with his 'advanced' Social-Moral philosophy, and superior, world-balanced standard, which he felt, raised him up and released him from responsibility, and more; that established him Socially and Scientifically as a very honorable near-Martyr." With these reflections, indignation flamed up again, and she walked on past the trysting-place with averted eyes, and on, into the depths of the wood.

"Under that world-wise Standard and philosophy," she meditated as she walked, "after the fascination of pursuit and conquest is ended, there is no guarantee that one may not tire, and wish to reconsider, and even change one's mind. A revulsion of feelings may occur at any time; and in such an event, of course--all obligations, all relationships, all covenants that are entered into between a man and a woman are just annulled on 'natural' principles and become void." With this reflection, Phyllis stopped. "Ah yes; I am forgetting. Men have their allies--

women who embrace that standard, and learn that philosophy, and who are just as insidious and ruthless as ever any man could be!

"Men know that it is not necessary for them to live true, and high, and clean in order to have the companionship, and endorsement, and love, of women, and their knowledge is well founded. Women will have to raise the standard of their womanhood higher, and eliminate the vainglorious, irresponsible, parasitical, baby-minded class from their midst before men will recognize that there is any need for them to raise the standard of their manhood to a higher plane."

The sun was sinking behind the hills and the western sky was a glory of color--bronze, amethyst, old rose and soft grey when Phyllis retraced her way back along the path, and coming to the rustic bridge that spans Rainbow Creek, paused for a moment to admire the enchanting scene; for as the twilight softly deepened a full moon rose over the highest peak, to the east, while just above the neighboring hills to the west the Star shone large and bright. "If two people who are responsible, enter mutually into an honor contract--one calling for the exercise, or practice of truth, sincerity, integrity and loyalty, it stands inviolable and irrevocable; unless, for a good reason, the two recognize a reason, afterwards, why they should mutually reconsider the matter, and mutually decide upon some new and more appropriate arrangement. If I have been deceived in a proposition by someone who has misrepresented something to me, I have the right to demand revocation.

"If I have been self-deceived, and through this, have deceived my friend, I am responsible and must not impose upon my friend, but must retract the wrong at my own expense.

"The worst sort of meanness is that by which one person lets another person bear the blame, or suffer for something that he has done and is alone responsible."

The twilight was deepening into night when she roused from her reverie, and leaving the bridge, followed another path, across the river-bridge and onto the narrow board walk that led across the bit of open field--right up to the little

side gate that opened upon the University Campus.

She hesitated a moment, then entered.

Close by in a hedge she noticed, by the clear moonlight, that some violets were blossoming. She gathered several blossoms and pressed them to her lips.

"For thoughts," she whispered, then as she stopped a moment before the Library Building she resumed the reverie of an hour before, directing her review as to a companion, more than within herself.

"I am beginning to realize how the world measures its ladies and gentlemen.

"Technical education may serve in place of character, and snobbery may serve in place of true superiority.

"One, of course, must be able to talk very artistically and fluently about nothing, because serious or deep subjects are taboo.

"Lack of keen wit, or a wholesome sense of humor are not even noticed if one can dance the latest steps and wear the very latest mode in clothes.

"A lady's mentality or morals may be of doubtful quality and be ignored if she has physical charm and can pour tea artistically, and wear her soft filmy draperies, and cosmetics, aesthetically. Even cigarettes and fancy, popular intoxicating drinks are good enough for a lady--conventionally condoned, of course, if only the lady can maintain herself with sufficient assurance, and refined nonchalance. Oh; everybody who is anybody does it, you know--that is, those in the smart set. You are considered odd and uninteresting if you don't do as the others do; because among interesting people who are up-to-date and not morbidly scrupulous it is quite regular, you know.

"But there is another Social superiority of which I also know." She brightened, as she visualized it. "This is different to the degree of difference one sees if he first tries to view the great vault of the sky with all its mystic grandeur, and the surrounding scenic hills and lovely valleys from a narrow, cluttered street in some City; and then goes out to the scenic mountain and ascends

the heights and then from there stops and views again the scene.

"It is the same City, and hills, and sky, and plain that he tried to see before, but oh; how infinitely, thrillingly, wondrously different. What a reward for his climbing! It is to be regretted that for many who only see from the narrow, cluttered street, the effort of climbing is considered too great and only silly, and so they only scoff at, and discredit what the others have to tell him about the heights.

"And just so, the dreams of the great soul are always most real, and true, when the mind is on the heights; even in the face of the materialist's philosophy which loses its tenets on a lower plane.

"And this true social superiority is in the blood and in the breeding--nor can ignorance, nor poverty, nor great wealth, nor snobbery, change it, nor destroy its stable and gracious character."

Phyllis now felt suddenly very tired and lonely, and an irresistible desire for human understanding, sympathy and companionship. She had made no intimate friends there, and there was no place to go, only to the Cafe connected with the Hotel. She selected a table at the head of the dining-room and facing the Lobby of the Hotel. Soon groups began forming at some of the tables, some meeting and entertaining friends; while at another table a woman had ordered her meal, then read the evening paper while she waited to be served.

At another table a traveling-man was hastily checking up a report, and across the aisle a thin, nervous little man was reading from a magazine that he had propped up against the sugar bowl, and eating at the same time.

"I really am not the only lonely one," she mused, "and I feel sure that many come here, as I did tonight, yearning for friends and the human touch of fellowship and fraternity; and then go away again without so much as exchanging a nod or a smile with anyone." Not even the rather arrogant and very neat waitress who served her meal had responded to her pleasant "Good evening."

As one viewing a landscape scene sees with a clearer vision when he stands upon an elevation, detached from the limitations of the byways and marts of life, so Phyllis is now beginning to see with a clearer discernment, both the lovely, and the unlovely, which both are representative of the great new West.

"It is the huge melting-pot of all classes, intelligences, moralities, nationalities and creeds. The great resources of the country with its treasure hills and forests gives back a chance to even the most unfortunate, or even the most unregenerate who wishes to turn his feet into a new path where he can start again, and working side by side with his fellows, has another chance to regain his confidence and manhood. The whole region, in fact, is only in its evolutionary stage--crude and desolate in some parts, but all over-governed by mysterious and Infinite forces which ease each and all into the great crucible of tests and separations.

"And some prove invincible, and true, and strong, and some just fail and are classified with the weak, the incomplete, the unfortunate ones of humanity's children," she reflected as she stood upon the bank of Rainbow Creek, in a quiet glade where trailing vines had climbed to the tops of the highest branches and then trailed down in graceful showers of soft green, with tiny white blossoms, some even touching the water. Somewhere, just then, she heard the frightened chirp of a squirrel as he frisked across an open space; and then--yes; it was the glad song of a lark over beyond the wood, in a field. She listened to Nature's many sounds, and most of all for the Voice through the silence that whispers hope to the weary mind, and inspiration and incentive to the drooping soul.

"Truly, it must have been the aim of the Creator to bring the elementary forms of human life to a higher development, and so He created a Nature School which is full of inspiration, and Scientific and philosophical truths." Her reverie had not led her up to a higher religious atmosphere and into realms of peace, and poetry, and strength, and instruction.

CHAPTER FOUR

Students of life and Nature soon begin to realize that the two greatest books known, are the Bible, and Nature.

In Nature, ever, the Voice of Divine Love speaks from over beyond the Stars and reveals Superior Truths, in the language of Celestial worlds.

The earnest, reverent, believing Student of Nature soon comes to the realization that humanity inflicts cruel injustice against the beautiful, symbolic Spiritual language offered to sorrowing humanity--wandering lonely and sensitive, on the Terrestrial plane.

Many Scientists who are real Tories in their Chosen Profession attempt to interpret and measure and analyze the Universe, and Life and its origin, by only theoretical and technical measures--believing that Spiritual measures are of no value; and thus, they defeat the very knowledge that they have set out to gain.

These people stigmatize as heretics and mystics, those who believe in the discerning powers of the Spirit, and in Divine guidance, through intuitions, inspirations, and actual revelation.

A very learned Author--a Dr. Quackenbos, says that anyone who even stops to think or reflect, must realize the guardianship and presence of an Over-Something different from the material body and expressing, through these bodies--insight, will power, judgement, noble emotions and Christian graces.

Socrates believed in the significance of dreams, as is proven when he, being under sentence of death and waiting in his prison cell, tells Crito, who is his friend, that he has had a dream.

His executioners were awaiting the arrival of a certain vessel and Crito brought tidings that it was expected that day.

"I do not think the vessel will arrive this day," he said; and when Crito asked why, he said: "I'll tell you: I am not to die until the day after the arrival of the vessel. That vessel will not arrive till tomorrow, as I conjecture

from a certain dream I had this night."

"Well, what was this dream?"

"I thought I saw a very gentle, comely woman dressed in white, who came up to me, and who, calling my name, said: "In three days thou shalt be in the fertile Phthia."

"That is a very remarkable dream."

"'Tis a very significant one, Crito," replied Socrates.

Many find a great religious atmosphere when out close to Nature; but, again, there are those pantheists who believe that Nature is the only god. It is remarkable, however, that the ones who find their only religion and god in Material Nature, most always are found to be on a low plane Morally and Spiritually.

It was in one of those Rural hotels so dreaded by the traveler, on account of the innefficient heating and lighting conveniences, that Phyllis was seated with a number of guests around a huge heating-stove in the combined reception-room and Office. As is usually the case, various subjects were broached and lightly discussed, until someone introduced the subject of religion.

One man who, it was learned, was a graduated College man, and who was employed by the leading Barber of that town and vicinity as an assistant, contended that religious faith was only a form of mysticism based on tradition and superstition.

He insisted that every Student of Biology, Evolution, and Geology knows that this is true, and also, that they can prove it by tracing the origin of the human race back--back down the ages, centering finally in the lowest forms of life--even being traced to a form of cell life which was first. "These," he explained, with an air of assurance, "have come up to their present form through forces of evolutionary laws in Nature. There is no Soul as these millions of people are believing."

"But what is back of these Nature-laws, and these evolutionary forces?"

Phyllis questioned. And then she challenged, "You would-be Scientists rob your

evolution theory, even, of its base and you blindfold us and lead us up to a bare, cold, blank stone wall and say, 'Remove the bandages now from your eyes and look; before you is the answer.' And I tell you with conviction, that such Science is of the sort that creates infidels, and cynics, and scoffers; and you know, it is claimed that we shall know the worth of the tree by the quality of its fruit."

Assuming an attitude of superior tolerance for one who was very ignorant, he said, "You don't seem to realize that Science is authoritative! It is known to Scientists that this Church and Bible stuff is only really accepted by the primitive mind of those who are uneducated, and therefore that needs this mythology to bolster it up and support its ignorance."

"I am wondering," Phyllis half mused and half questioned, "if you materialists really believe in the theories and doctrines that you, oh, so logically, offer to your fellow-beings."

"We do; and our reasons are logical and based on knowledge which the believers, in spite of their faith, never have been able to disprove."

"Your science, with all its logical conclusions based on Scientific knowledge and research, has never yet been able to defeat the Scriptures nor efface the mystic, symbolic revelations from the Book of Nature."

"Your imagination is very keen and you are unquestionably gifted with a poetical nature," he conceded patronizingly, "but your mind is not logical nor trained, anyone can see that."

"I have conversed before now, with some, whose minds were trained and who were educated; who believed that it is because the materialist's mind is not instructed in true Scientific principles, that he believes his failure to prove God by his measures is proof positive that there is no God."

Someone called the man just then, and everyone present seemed relieved, for they had instinctively sensed the Spirit that is spreading its awful contagion over the land and depressing the spirits and disturbing the normal minds and hearts of

humanity.

"Is it possible to become an educated person by developing and training the intellect, while the developing and perfecting of the Spiritual and Moral Nature is neglected?" Phyllis questioned, leaving the question open to anyone who felt competent to answer. Miss Ramsey entered just then, and being the principal of the Forest High School, the company referred the question to her.

"No;" she replied, "it is not; because real education has other bases besides just intellect and Science. As the spirit of investigation develops, superstition, and tradition and unregenerate doctrines lose their influence over the masses and they realize more and more the dangers of Social delinquency, and even Moral anarchy developing as a result of that unfortunate drifting toward only half education.

"According to the true teacher's Psychology--knowledge only affects the reasoning faculties, conception, and will; the feelings, or emotional nature is not cultivated; yet it is generally conceded that pure intellect cannot of itself, perceive truth or determine action, but is dependent also, upon the feelings."

"What would you consider one of the most important qualities in Morality?" Phyllis asked.

"Responsibility!" the teacher said. "And if a person lacks capacity for feeling he will be guided by his impulse to seek his own desires, because his deficiency in feelings would destroy in him the power of reflection."

"If it was Morally and Socially the duty of a person to deliberate and psychologically he was unable to do so because of his inaptitude, and inferior judgement, what then is the value of his responsibility?" again Phyllis questioned.

"If it is not incumbent upon humanity to be self-governed, truthful, honorable, dependable and healthy minded, what is the use of a morality in theory? What good is a theory that proposes an ideal to humanity and rules for systematic and orderly conduct, if it is not essential that they be made realizable? If it is not

vitaly important that we have some guarantee of stability in morals, and if these rules and this system have only a provisional value subject to change or revision to conform to the individual, instead of the individual conforming to these; why of course, there would be no guarantee of right, or honor; or of dependability; therefore, there would be no value in a person's moral responsibility.

"Some seem to take the attitude that morality and religion are obsolete relics of a primitive age when people were enslaved by mystical and erratic teachings; and yet, if these same people would take the trouble to inform themselves, they would learn that invariably, the men and women whose influence was strongest, and whose efforts worked most potently in the advancement of Civilization and Christianity, were, and ever will be, those who have held religion and morality to be fundamental and essential as a corner stone for the building of character. I believe that Shakespeare wrote a beautiful truth in his lines--

'This above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day;
Thou can'st not be false to any man.'

* * * * *

Two forces are constantly at war upon the unseen battle-field of Life--the forces of good and evil.

As the sun rays were slanting across the western sky, lighting up the cloud banks with rainbow colors, Phyllis sat at her window and watched; and as she watched fancy and vision wove for her a reverie. "Thousands who are truly sincere and earnestly endeavoring to conform to Christian teachings and the Higher Law, are questioning if one must yield their personal freedom and well being to the demands of a selfish despotism in others, or permit one's self to be forced into situations that are humiliating, before he would fail to conform to the precept, 'Return good for evil.' Many have learned through some sad experience, that often, the person whom they have benefited--even at such a sacrifice of self-interest in behalf of the interest of fellowship, or brotherhood, or fraternity, only regards the service

lightly and takes advantage of it for his own benefit, but exposes his friend to scorn and imposition as his reward. Peter asked the Divine Teacher: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him--until seven times?"

"Jesus answered: 'I say not until seven times but until seventy times seven.'

"Many people boast that if a person wrongs them once they never forgive nor trust them again; yet, those very people believe and expect that God will forgive them their many repeated sins and failures all through a lifetime, and trust and love them just the same after each offense. The servant whose debt his master forgave--or, we would say, cancelled--went out and took vengeance upon a fellow servant who owed him. When his master heard of the unchristian act of despotism he called him to a reckoning and required that the man pay his own debt, to the uttermost farthing.

"If such a law was legalized and written into our Statutes many there are, who would be called to severe reckonings. Honor and Truth are the very cornerstones of our Civilization because without honor and truth there is no stability in a human character."

Phyllis recalled now, how in the last few days her grip of some very essential facts had seemed to be slipping--leaving her rather shaken and timid; but now she felt impressed with the test of Loyalty. "Loyalty to any cause for Honor, and Truth, and Humanity, involves much of self-sacrifice, and many disillusioning and often very crushing experiences; and these disillusioning and crushing experiences pierce deeply into the hearts of those who are faithful; but it is through sorrow and the threatened loss of a cause or an ideal, that our hearts are stirred, and our minds resolved to even greater loyalty and devotion to that cause or ideal.

"Thus, even when the body seems to be conquered, the spirit arises and not only reforms the story but writes into it visions of what is yet to be; and through these visions the whole being is stirred to even greater effort and greater loyalty; and then the spirit hears the Voice which whispers like a prompter risen

above the limited and confused and distressing condition saying: 'Work, and pray, and watch, for ye know not the day nor the hour when the triumph of the Cause will come.'"

The sun had set in its glory of color, behind the western hills and the soft rainbow colors were now fading into dull mauve and grey, when Phyllis remembered that this was the night of the last meeting of the disciples of the Golden Mean, until the coming winter.

Glancing from her broad window she saw that already the Hall was brilliantly lighted and that the people were gathering even then, and so she hastened to join them.

Besides the members, she noticed that quite a number of visitors and investigators were present. After the usual reports had been read and passed upon, the remainder of the time was employed, to the benefit and pleasure of all, by the presenting of a very entertaining programme.

A trained quartette sang some of the old fashioned folk songs which carried the audience into realms of the romance and loves and youth of yesterday; and a youth of about 21 who had recently been bereaved through the death of his girl-wife sang, by special request, one of the most beautiful compositions in the classics.

And then young Delbert Stoddard spoke for half an hour on the text--The Higher Law. He said: "This Higher Law is God's Law of Eternal Truth and Justice. It is a law self-operating and self-vindicating. It is over us and around us--the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. To violate it is to bring punishment by the operation of the Law itself.

"There is an over-ruling Divine Force of which everyone who is of an open heart, and mind, is conscious; it is over us, and around us, and within us.

"It manifests itself in various ways such as discernments, intuitions, prophetic dreams, vision, and inspirations, etc., and the beneficial influence and power of this Force is by the Grace of God.

"Today, however, there is such a tendency toward materialism--aye, to question the reality of God, even; and the influence of this tendency is to wrap one in an almost impenetrable cloak of grey--cold grey.

"The worst of this tendency is that it does not limit itself to self-injury, but it reaches out its cold, ruthless tentacles and fastens them upon the minds and hearts of human beings and drags them down to its own level.

"'By their fruits ye shall know them.' And this materialistic, cynical wave that is sweeping the Country like a plague is fatal; destructive, and is scattering the seeds of infidelity, and darkness broadcast, for it springs from doctrines that we now hear exploited everywhere with such imprudence--these doctrines which have their foundation in the writings and teachings of such savants and philosophers as Neitzsche, Lichtenberger and their Colleagues and disciples.

"The disciples of these 'great men' believe that every superior person is a law unto himself--creating his own scale of values--his own truth--his own Standard of Morality; and this, in complete freedom, regardless of what Universal moral, or spiritual, or civil laws say is right or wrong, and quite indifferent to what these same laws say is truth or error.

"These persons believe that those less gifted than themselves should be thrown into servility, and be subject to them socially, morally, and spiritually.

"'Let us have courage not to help those who fall,' they say, 'but rather push them farther that they may die the quicker; and thus, purge society of the unfortunate--the pitiful.' They believe that one should never trouble his head about any pain or humiliation, or injustice he may have inflicted upon those who are not as high as himself, for they say--'Who could feel greatness if he had not the courage and the will to inflict suffering?' They believe that if these people or individuals cannot defend themselves by a skill or reason that is equal or superior to the skill or reason with which they are forced into conflict; or by a brute force that is equal, or even more terrible than the brute force with which

they are forced into conflict; why, of course, they become by divine right, their subjects, and tools, and slaves. No Christian, nor humane person could countenance such doctrines, and no democracy could permit it. It is anarchic, and unchristian, and inhuman; and while it dwells in the midst of humanity it disregards humanity. According to its principles, whatever enables a people to dominate and shine, even to the horror and envy of its neighbors--that is regarded as the high. 'Why is there so much disavowal and abnegation in your hearts?' this great Nietzsche demands. 'Become hard!' he admonishes, 'for all creators are hard.'

"The disciples of this regime hate Christianity and Morality because of the restraining influence which these exert upon the minds and hearts of humanity, and this is why they refer to those who do believe in and uphold them, as 'The most dreaded type of people--the sickly ones,' 'the domestic animals', etc., and this false philosophy, if it succeeds in establishing itself in the hearts and minds of humanity, has the power to throw the whole world into conflict. But over all this the Higher Laws are operating, immutably, invincibly, for the triumph of Eternal Justice, and Truth, and Love."

At the close of the meeting an especially delightful luncheon was served by the ladies of the organization, and then, after close, friendly hand-shakings and wistfully lingering adieus, the meetings were discontinued until the late Autumn.

CHAPTER FIVE

After her departure from the Garden City Phyllis became interested in the Indian School at the old St. Ignatious Mission, and so arranged a visit to the Flathead Reservation.

She had read a book--a most wonderful book which reveals the history of, and contains a prophecy for the future destiny of the Indians. It is called The Book of Mormon. It is recorded that the Indians were not always as they are now, but were once children of light; also, that they lost their heritage because of disobedience and transgression.

The prophecy is that they will be given their chance to redeem their heritage and again become Children of the Light.

That first evening at the Mission was one not soon to be forgotten, for she was privileged to witness, for the first time in her life, that beautiful Nature phenomena--the mysterious Northern Lights. Sunday morning dawned bright and clear and at the first ringing of the Church bells at the Mission Phyllis prepared to attend Service in the unique and beautiful Church.

There are paintings in that Church which represent the very best in art. They are symbolic and mystical and are intended to tell a story of the birth, and the loving service and sacrifice of Jesus our Lord, as the teacher-monks try to teach it to their congregations. It was a unique experience for half of that congregation was composed of Indians--the other half of the white people living on the reservation.

The Indians were all dressed in their own Native dress--a very best blanket, moccasins of buckskin beaded in very clever and ornamental patterns, hair smoothly braided and fastened at the ends with odd, and some, very primitive ornaments.

The squaws wore kerchiefs of bright colors on their heads while the bucks (as they call themselves) wore a regulation broad brimmed service hat. The Priests were very men whose personalities were charming and kindly and dignified. They were of the Jesuit Order, she was told, and had come as pioneers to that region many years ago.

One of the Fathers, as they were called, addressed the congregation--first, the white members in English, and then the Indians in their Native tongue.

The text of the Sermon was--"The Sinful Lie."

He explained that there are many kinds of lies, but that there is one kind that is more sinful than all the rest--the lie that is uttered to damage the good name or well being of an innocent person. That is the lie of hatred, of prejudice and malice. That is the lie that forces the victim in a false position and crushes

his spirit, and wounds his heart," he said.

It was one of those sunny, though crisply cool late autumn days that sends the blood tingling through one's veins and the color to the cheeks. The ride by auto across the Reservation was one long to be remembered; the clouds, snow-white and as light as down were banked in majestic forms above the rugged saw-tooth mountains, craggy and sharply outlined, with their several glaciers glistening in the sun. As the stage-auto entered the town of Phyllis' destination, and which is situated on the shore of the beautiful Flathead Lake, she noticed quite an eager excitement among the natives--again, both Indians and white people; and upon enquiring the reason, she was told that the Steamer from the North was due, and that it carried the mail.

Just then there was a shrill, prolonged whistle, and looking over the lake she saw the graceful outlines of the Steamer as it emerged over the horizon. That night as she sat at the window of her very charming room and watched the twilight deepen and the stars come out, she suddenly felt overwhelmingly lonely and unfortunately for her, that crushing soul-sick, and over-powering heartsick feeling that she had hoped was now in the past, fastened its influence upon her again. "I have attended services in many Churches," her reverie ran, "and always, it was the same--I seemed to be seeking, seeking constantly and earnestly for one whose personality and strength, and vibratory influence would speak through all the other personalities and voices and bear me a message.

"I went expressly in search of the Good Shepherd of the Savior's human Sheep, but somehow, those whom I tried to reach by coming as near as I could, in public places, seemed occupied; and even reserved toward only a strange woman within the gates.

"What could such a one possibly want of them? What was her business, and how important was she socially and financially? And what influence did she have in the select, superior set who really are worth the bestowal of one's attention and time?

was the seeming attitude of all but one.

"One day at the Library I came very close to the 'Little Minister' and looked straight into his eyes, but there was no response of spirit or mind, and so I went upstairs to the reference rooms and stood before the broad window facing the east.

"The view was charming, and the hills I loved looked even more majestic and beautiful through the avenue of fine trees. I stood for a long time dreaming, and gradually the dream fancies wove themselves into living characters. Now the hills became the hills and mountains of my own native home.

"Several flock-masters wandered over them tending their separate flocks of sheep. Over a ridge appears a man--one of the 'sheep-herders', leading a fine young ewe that is blind.

"Approaching his fellow 'herder' whose 'camp' is just over the ridge from his, he says: 'I found this blind sheep where she had fallen in a gulley, and knowing that if she was left there to find her way as best she could, prowling wild animals might destroy her--and noticing that she has your brand, I brought her over to you.'

"I wonder if one would be justified in believing that a Shepherd of the Divine Master's flock would be as mindful of a human being if they found one wandering perilously among the rocks and crags in the hills of life, alone, blinded with grief, and doubt, and fear; and return him or her, if possible, safely among their own.

"Quite involuntarily, I am thinking of the 'Little Minister' this night, and feel prompted to choose him from among all the others, and write something of what led up to my own Quest and precipitated me out alone, to wander and work through all the mist of doubts and fears; in order that I might help to establish a precedent and prove a principle in the world of Ethics, and human values; and I am presuming to hope that he will understand and perhaps prove the one who can help me find my way safely and without suffering any after blight because of the world. Of

course, this will involve Winston Marvel, and he is a member of the Little Minister's congregation. But is it not in just such causes that the Ministers are especially called to give their services."

One week later, in Diary: "The appeal is yet unrecognized."

A meeting of Capitalists was being held at the Splendid Lakeside Hotel, for the purpose of discussing ways and means for the promoting of a new Railroad enterprise, which would open up a broader field for the development and prosperity of several towns, and much valuable land on the Reservation.

The meeting was to conclude with a banquet--such as only the Lakeside knew how to provide.

After the banquet, several touring cars, which already stood at the curb, were to convey the party back across the Reservation.

Phyllis, learning of this, arranged to go back with them.

She left the party when they came to that little town of the Plains, and registered at the Northern. As she entered the little room assigned to her, she was reminded of the past, and instinctively drew back. In a moment she had recovered her poise, and entered. "To me, there is no force, no repudiation, no cheapening reaction. No! What was sacred to me then, is ever sacred and fine and worthy of esteem. To Winston Marvel only, and her, it is different.

"When he wrote that letter telling me that he was coming here, he said: 'You may not be able to comprehend it yet, but I understand.' Then he emphasized: 'I have given into your honorable keeping the greatest thing I have--my love! I am coming, dear, so that we can discuss everything mutually and make our final decision. I am doing this because I hold your happiness above everything in this world; and so, you see, it is for your sake, dear, as well as my own, that I am coming.'"

She recalled how sincere he had appeared, and how earnest; and again that intuitional premonition that all was not in harmony now with his inner self--that

his sudden change and unwarranted attitude issued from something on the outside rather than from sincere inner promptings softened her for a moment and brought the tears to her eyes.

But the solution being so far beyond the horizon of her discerning powers she again resolved to put it away; but still believing that the future held the answer, and would, in its own way reveal the real truth, in the regular course and inevitableness of life and events--of causes and their effects.

"My ideal of education means learning how to adapt oneself to a truer and a higher conception of life, and the development of efficiency spiritually, intellectually, and physically." Her reverie was now leading her back to realms of home and loved ones.

"I have dreamed rosy dreams of the education of Elmo--the boy who from the first, weighed in the balance of Mother love on one side, and of friendship on the other. Winston Marvel asked me to tell Elmo all about him, and explain that in the near future they were to become very close friends, and perhaps co-workers; for, he said that he hoped that Elmo's mind would develop in science.

"Elmo is now on the borderland of a new, and wonderful, and critical plane of life--the adolescent age which is the formative period, where boyhood and manhood meets.

"It is an age of dreams and expectations, and adventure in that fairyland of illusions and anticipation that only a boy-man knows about--a period when he is usually exalted by a curious youthful egoism, and oftentimes is governed by a quaint wisdom which is instinctive and quite worthy a philosopher. He still descends a stairway via the bannister route, and leaps over a fence instead of entering the yard through the gate; and more than likely is he at any time to begin the performance of some startling song and dance--or piece of mimicry, to the consternation of the more quiet and sedate members of the family; and when reproved for it, his blue-grey eyes begin to twinkle as he assumes a very decorous attitude

and affects an egotistical drawl: 'Do you like me better as a sissy?'"

Phyllis paused here while an indulgent, half wistful, quite approving smile spread over her countenance. "He joins his fellows in athletic sports, and he whistles--loves to whistle!

"And now, as I did at first, I weigh the boy in the balance of Mother love on the one side, and the man in the balance of real friendship on the other. The man's Ethics and Standard does not balance between extremes, in the test of the Golden Mean; because any Standard which supports less than truth, and integrity, and loyalty, with high idealistic motives, and sincerity, is a betrayer, and will not remain true to either friendship or love.

"I would gladly have evaded that interview with Winston, but it revealed facts to me which, had I not seen, and heard, I surely would have discredited; but involuntarily, he also taught me a new lesson that day, and that was, that we should not place our friends on pedestals and idealize them, refusing to think of them only as we would have them be; instead of measuring and judging them as they really are, and then esteeming them, and loving them, and believing in them as they merit.

"Under any other rule some are sure to get better than they deserve, while others are sure to be imposed upon."

As the hours passed, Phyllis became more and more distressed because, added to the memories, was that insistent, silent, intuitional Voice calling and pleading for loyalty to uphold the first measuring and judging of the man--young and estimable, who pled for a friendship compact and pledged integrity and faith in friendship's high relation; and when she tried to put it all away as inconsistent and sentimental, the Voice became even more persistent.

"Through all the experiences of the Quest," she finally concluded, "I have been led by promptings--not knowing why nor always where--but obeying that force which has always been so much stronger than my outer-self, at least; and it has always proven a lesson of guidance; and so, perhaps it is best that I again obey

the prompting and go back for one day, to the Garden City--not trying to find a logical reason for so doing; but trusting that events which develop may present a logical answer."

* * * * *

It was evening when Phyllis arrived in the Garden City, and registered at the Hotel Tiloren. Next morning as early as was consistent, she called at the home of the "Little Minister", but she was informed by the Minister's wife, that he had gone out of town for the day.

"Would it be convenient for me to call this evening?" she asked.

"I do not think it would," she said, "for his services are required this evening to officiate at a wedding.

"Is it the wedding of Winston Marvel and Frannie Hall?" she asked--a sudden intuition prompting her.

"I do not wish to give out names," the lady replied.

"Is there something about this marriage that makes it imperative that their friend should keep silent?" she asked, a little scornfully.

The lady quickly rallied to their defense. "No; I believe that those of their set have known for some time, as several showers and teas have been given in their honor and it was announced in the Society column of our paper," she said.

"Then it is the wedding of Winston Marvel and Frannie Hall," Phyllis affirmed with finality.

"Yes," the lady answered.

Phyllis bade her good-morning and hurried away.

"But Winston's Rector sees nothing irregular in the affair; this night he will verify this conclusion, when by the authority of his office, he sets aside consideration of a precontract and covenant that he knows has been violated; and performs that marriage ceremony." she concluded, as she entered the Post Office.

A letter was handed to her, and as she noticed the handwriting on the envelope

she gave a start of surprise. "It is from Lydia!" she smiled. And then, with a serious, wistful expression, she mused: "I had almost come to believe that I was the only one of the four, who, with the evergreen, pledged each other lasting friendship; who was unsophisticated enough to attach importance to the pledge and to be sincere. Play-acting and superficiality had not been written on the list of my accomplishments." Now hastily she opened the letter and read:

"My Dear Sweet Friend: I am wondering, after all this silence, where you are and what you are doing, and if Winston and you have made new plans. This letter is for you and him. He is such a splendid fellow that I am much interested in him as well as in you.

"You would not confide in me, and tell me the truth about you two. But he did, and I was so happy. I shall always think with great pleasure of you and the good times you helped me to have. I remember the first time we met--it was in the vestibule of the M.E. Church; of how we saw each other, spoke, and after, became close friends; and that day in the hills and on the mountain side; the Evergreen and the friendship pledge. Winston asked me to write you a long letter, but I have delayed from one cause and another. Tell me how far he has advanced and--oh, everything. I used to wish that I could be with you a great deal for you are such a sweet girl, and you would have kept me balanced up. I picked Winston from all the fellows at Mrs. McBride's, as being the best of them all--so true, so lovable, so ambitious. I love you both and want you to know that I am very happy to know that you two can have each other always because you can be a wonderful help and inspiration to each other, and who knows what splendid things you may accomplish together. You each hold the other in such high esteem that your future can only hold happiness and success for you both. When you answer this be sure and tell me how high Royal has climbed in the big and worthwhile things, and if he is there with you when you receive this you are to read it together. If he is away you are to give it to him after you have read it. I appreciate the fact that he confided

in me and wrote and told me about your engagement, even if you would not.

"I shall remain always a true friend because I love you both."

"Oh, Lydia! Could you but know the truth you would feel grieved and be rudely disillusioned. Winston would tell you now, that he was sincere then when he wrote and told you that there was an inviolable compact between he and I; but that after a later reconsideration of the matter (on his part), not a mutual reconsideration, I assure you; he had suffered a revulsion of feelings, unaccountably; and had changed his mind.

"To me, that is the moral standard of the world--the ethical regime of the egotist--the imposter--the traitor-heart!

"And, you see, dear Lydia, I cannot give Winston your letter to read because he is gone--our Winston has passed!" Phyllis had endured so much, and now she realized that her own strength alone was not adequate to bridge the chasm between that which we believe in, and that which is, in this great world of diversities of standards, and religions, and moralities, and philosophies.

Glancing up just then, she read the sign of a Law Firm, in the entrance to an Office Building.

"Shall I go and talk with them?" she considered. "I tried to reach the understanding of those whom I believed were ethically under obligations to be interested, because of circumstances; but they could see no worthiness in the appeal, and so, with only a prejudiced consideration from one side only, unhesitatingly placed their seal of condemnation upon the other. Yes, I will go and talk with these men."

Two men proved to be the occupants of that Suite of Law Offices, who were very unlike, yet very harmonious. The Senior partner was also Instructor to the Junior partner.

The Senior partner was Mr. Moulten, a man whose personality would always inspire confidence, for he was alert, kindly, intuitional, and had a high standard

for morals and a sincere belief in God.

The Junior partner was wonderful--a young, slender, intelligent-looking Law Student, who was blind. Phyllis told her need as best she could, her newly found friends listening attentively and respectfully, and encouraging her when she faltered and almost failed.

"The lady has suffered an inexcusable affront and a great injustice!" Mr. Moulten told Mr. Ellis. And then, addressing Phyllis, he said: "There is no law which vindicates such conduct in human relations, only the law of weakness, selfishness, and ignorance. One who is willing to be vindicated under such a law is not worth troubling about. You can punish legally if you feel that that would recompense you for what you have suffered."

Phyllis considered silently and then answered: "I can only receive justice and fairness by leaving all to the invincible operation of Higher Laws."

Sha had sat there silently considering and trying to reason about it all, but now she asked: "Mr. Moulten; can anyone honorably make one person happy at the expense of principle, or another person's happiness?"

"No;" Mr. Moulten answered. "Nor could anyone who believed he could, vindicate his standard in the eyes of those who hold honor, and trust, and truth, and love, and responsibility highly; but only in the eyes of the vain and superficial and selfish nature. Such persons as embrace unethical and unfair standards never see any wrong in anything they, themselves, do, but usually they are very critical and intolerant of others."

"I could not embrace, nor submit to any standard that cheapens, and plays with, and mocks life, and the God-principle of love, and morality, and justice, and truth, and trust," Phyllis declared with finality.

"Real men and women never do!" Mr. Moulten answered, "and I want to say to you--if you are convinced that you are right in upholding a principle, be loyal to it; and keep faith in yourself, your fellow-beings, and your God!"

"I will go now," Phyllis said simply as she offered her hand. "I am glad I came to you because you have helped more than you know; and so, I shall not forget you men who have not been too busy nor too important to pause and listen with ready sympathy to the story of a stranger, and speak the healing word even in the midst of your professional business of the day."

CHAPTER SIX

Face to face with stern reality--cold and stern because stripped of the ideality and poetry and dream-illusions of the full, strong human nature, and surrounded by materialistic visionary thought, Phyllis is realizing with a new understanding--but there in the mystic loom of life is the fabric woven under the inspiration of that dream-ideal.

It is a fabric with a unique and difficult pattern which even she, the weaver, cannot fully understand until after it is taken from the loom and examined in perspective, and as a whole. "But I will understand it," she affirmed, "and then there will be other fabrics to weave from new materials and new patterns; because I must go on weaving--weaving dreams, weaving high ideals, weaving the woof into the warp and then present the completed fabrics, with the unique and mystic patterns reading themselves into the work like a theme and interpreting themselves in symbolic language. But I must keep the heart-dream, and the Ideal, and the vision, for without these I would fail utterly because I would not be able to put into the fabrics and patterns the threads of golden, and rose, and blue. As I sit here and write tonight, the wedding of Winston Marvel and Frannie Hall is being celebrated in the new Church across the river and the 'Little Minister' is officiating.

And as I sit here and meditate I am conscious of a close compelling touch like the hand of the mystic Spirit over humanity saying: "We have elected you to follow the trail which leads to the fountain of Truth, and we shall wait for your return, hoping that when you come you will bring us back a message."

"And so, as I follow the trail, I note as I go, the many divergencies of

characters, and individualities, and intelligences, and I have come to recognize these as the outward expression of inner divergencies; and the evidence thus obtained, shows me why there are so many diversities in humanity's conception of what is right, and what is wrong--of what is fair, or unfair, honorable, or dishonorable; it is the outward expression of the inner person.

"If a person sows his garden with only swamp-weeds and briars, no need to seek there for a rose, or a violet, or a lily."

As Phyllis finished the last paragraph she felt suddenly weary--oh, so weary and alone. She laid aside the Diary and, leaving the room, walked out into the silent night.

And as she walked her heart ached with the realization that it is but a step from the rose and golden garden of dreams, to the cold, stern realities in the garden of materialism. Upon the great world-plane they are endeavoring to persuade themselves to believe that intellect and science are the real powers behind all human accomplishment, and the people are carried away by the great importance of accepting as truth only what is scientifically affirmed. But the fact remains that this system never has, and never can create in the minds and hearts of the multitude of unwanted ones--those who are unfortunate and under Social condemnation, that incentive, that faith, that self-respect, that self-realization that is essential to the development of Soul and Character and the upward progress of the human being."

And contemplating thus, Phyllis came to the great red bridge that spanned the river. Just then a faint light became visible over the crest of the highest point of the mountain, and in a moment more the large brilliant Star flashed through a rift in the gathering storm clouds.

"I was played into a false position unforeseen and overwhelming, but tonight that erstwhile friend and I have come to the parting of the ways--here we say farewell.

"Between he and I and his world the things that were, only for a moment, are now in the past. Under the Evergreen and the Star our friendship and love could have been true and real, and there could have been no falseness, nor pain, nor would the Standard of the Golden Mean have been violated!

"As I stand here tonight beneath the Emblem Star my heart refuses to repudiate or dishonor one thing that I agreed to under the Evergreen and the Star, and I refuse to recognize any Standard or regime that permits it--being sincere in the beginning. I could not be false even because of the ending.

"Just ahead a light that has been very dim is again gradually growing brighter, and a realization that he who has not failed within himself has not failed in the world.

"There are things that I would bury in the oblivion of the past--disappointments, disillusionment, losses, sacrifices; but I realize now, a little poignantly, that even these had to be, before I was able to separate the false from the true.

"It was said by one of the Savants that: 'Only in the deepest grief wilt thou find the greatest truth.' The worst thing that I suffered, was, after all, the fear that I might come back from my Quest through the marts and by-ways of life with the mind of the materialist, and the sneer of the Cynic.

"And so, I rejoice now, because I can still see beauty in the world, can still appraise values in people; can still be thrilled by the song of the lark, can still marvel at, and love, the harmony of the Spheres and retain my love for Nature beautiful; and because there were things in the past to which I could go back for reassurance and which proved a connecting link, also an anchor and compass when I had almost lost myself in the lives and doings of others.

"And because this is so, I know that it is the things in our past, as well as the things in our present, that makes us weak or strong.

"God is not the one to blame if human beings digress from His laws, and pervert their natures with the delusion that through the processes of intellect and

science one may become a Creator of his own law, and set up his will above the Divine Will and the Higher Law; if coldness, and emptiness, and disappointment is in their lives."

And thus, Phyllis contemplated in retrospective mood as she returned to the Hotel, and when she was again before the small table by the window she began to write.

"Endurance, for a principle, or to uphold an Ideal, or to prove a truth, oftentimes makes disappointment better than immediate success--because some functions in the human nature cannot be stirred to the best and strongest without encountering pain and bitter failure repeatedly, with such natures pain and failure give incentive for greater effort toward self-perfecting.

"Only weak characters make treaties with the passions they cannot govern.

"There are those who believe that success means doing only what one wants to do--in one's own way, with what he deems his own, but true success or happiness was gained at the expense of a principle or a friend. True success is the achievement of a worthy purpose by an honorable means.

"'Once to every man and Nation, comes the moment to decide
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the Good or Evil side,
Some great Cause, God's new Messiah,
Offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right
And the choice goes on forever, 'twixt that darkness and that light.
(James Russell Lowell)'

"The woman who is pursuing her quest for the Golden Mean pleads that none will permit disappointment, failure or bitter disillusionment to depress them so much that they lose faith and hope and confidence.

"And never, oh never allow temptation to whisper that you may dissipate your sorrow by embracing the philosophy of the materialist; nor by indulging in thoughtless and illicit pleasures; for it is only a treacherous comfort that is so purchased."

The local morning paper contained an account of the wedding of Winston Marvel

and Frannie Hall, stating that the young couple would take a two weeks vacation and celebrate their honeymoon upon Mount Murphy. "But why Mount Murphy?" Phyllis marveled. "It is cold and bleak and rugged up there, he told me!"

It was also stated that upon their return he would resume his work at the University as Assistant Instructor under Dr. Von Roche, while Mrs. Marvel would be engaged as Stenographer in the President's Office.

"I cannot reconcile the two persons--the young man who stood upon the hill above the beautiful valley, that eventful day in the past, admiring the beauty of the snow capped mountains in the distance, standing there outlined against the horizon and reminding me of a tall, free young prince of the hills; and the one who could betray a trust--disregard one's chosen and pledged friend and underrate a principle, and humiliate a fellow being whose greatest failure had been in her believing in his word, his worthiness, and his integrity--but nothing else can a vessel yield except that with which it is filled.

"Perceptive powers unfolded through pursuance of the Quest have shown me how to penetrate the mask of coldness, and arrogance, and incredulity encountered in dealing with, or approaching people in whom I had placed great trust, and whose office proclaimed that questions within the province of their calling would be reckoned with and balancing proportions obtained for those approaching them who were under the ban of social, moral and religious standards of materialism.

"I should have fortified myself with references, credentials, and even authority as an over-person; but then the appeal, and the response, on a basis of human values and relationships, and a balance on a scale of justice under the Standard of the way between the two extremes, never could have been presented--but they did not understand, nor did they wish to be understood."

Indignation flamed as she reviewed, and prompted under provocation, she was impelled to send the letters back discredited and dishonored.

"He has dishonored them, and discredited them, and it is said: 'Lies like

ravens, fly backward to their home, or the place of their origin, to roost.'

"They may only laugh scornfully at first and say it is one more evidence of woman's artful obsession; but later, when the finer instincts and better judgement have cleared away the mist of their own obsession, they will care.

"No one has ever yet evaded the moral law and reconciled it with the way between the two extremes. It is natural that the finely toned feelings and the highly organized physique of those whose minds and hearts are sensitive should become greatly disturbed, and even disorganized, by unusual situations, and by experiences which stir every emotion and every fibre of one's being.

"Hearts so sensitively moulded, strongly fortified should be.'

"One is disorganized by forms precipitating forces which oppose each other--each contesting for supremacy over the way between, and a chaotic condition develops. Now, this is a crucible in which true and false elements are separated--the great melting-pot of right and wrong.

"There is an unseen battlefield in every human breast

Where two opposing forces meet, but where they seldom rest.'

"If the elements of right obtain men and women become more strong, more capable, more free--but should the false prevail there will follow another period of darkness and disorganizing propaganda, and chaos, until the condition is ripe in anarchy and treason; then back into the crucible--the melting-pot of Right and Wrong for dividing of the elements again; until reaction proves the worth of right and truth, and perceiving minds rise above the false and weak, and lo; a man or a woman is presented for the way between the two extremes--the way of the Golden Mean."

The Quest is almost finished and Phyllis is yearning for her family, home, and people, in that far away beautiful Valley of the Sun, with its mountains circling round--mountains with their peculiar tints of soft fawn, and amethyst, and red, and pervading under-shadows of dull blue, and enclosing within its circle the shining

waters of an inland sea, evaporating slowly, but iridescent with the lights of morning, noon and sunset, effervescing through its waves.

"No one has ever yet evaded the honor law and reconciled it with the way between the two extremes. There is a real honor, which is often silenced and crowded back by the honor standards of the two extremes; but before which, the false honor of the extremes ultimately and invariably dissolves like mist before the sun; and so it is with the love that is real; writings of Sir Walter Scott reveal its worth--

"'True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven,
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes even as granted, fly;
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it does not die;
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.'

"I had thought at first to follow along conventional and well marked paths, depending much upon standards traditional for the obtaining of balancing proportions, but the trail of the Quest has led me away through strange by-paths on many different planes under as many different standards, and the furnacing processes have even changed, very subtly, and released under different types, the ones formerly chosen to represent my Golden Mean, and the vision of the dream-child has ceased to represent a creation of the physical being, but sustains itself as a creation of the mind and soul.

"I have learned to be tolerant in reading human nature and judging people--and still believing, can forgive even the most aggressive personal enmity--if it is open and honest and free from double-dealing; but I cannot easily forgive a person who deceives me, and underbalances me in secret."

CHAPTER SEVEN

The twilight hour is the hour when pausing and releasing our minds from

occupations and worries of the day, we may give ourselves up to moments of quiet meditation and dreaming. Phyllis is sitting and waiting alone in the early twilight of the Autumn afternoon, and as she waits and meditates there is a sense of peace--of assurance and of mental and spiritual exaltation.

Before her the vista of the trail was unfolded--scenes set in the Cities large and small, and in the lumber and mining camps of the Northwest where she had studied with keen interest the strange characters and varied personalities and social gradations in the human drama which had unfolded before her; and which had often inspired, and often depressed her observing mind. The passionate object of her Quest had been knowledge--knowledge that was free from limitations and traditions and tenets of organized creeds or Societies; and now in review, she sat comparing the reconciliation, and peace and dawning understanding and poetry of the trail's end, with the prose and routine, and sacrifice, and disillusioning experiences of the Quest; and though unfoldment now made her realize that she had often reasoned illogically and even inconsistently about human nature and the nature of the Universe, she realized equally, with the thrill of exaltation, that her Star of hope and inspiration had ever retained its first inception; and even when observed behind mists of grey its soft irradiance beckoned to her, reminding her that the things it symbolized do remain permanent under every outward change; and that while each person has his or her own trials--each life its pitfalls and snares--that each was subject to turmoil and unbelief because of not having acquired between the ways a true technique of conduct and of love. She also realized that it is the delusion of superior self that makes people hard with one another--that makes the egotist and the arrogant intolerant personage--self-exalted.

In her long struggle with circumstance she had acquired fear of the malice of circumstance, and often a negative questioning attitude toward Christian tenets--resenting them as probably being the philosophies of visionaries and idealists; but her Star of hope and inspiration had ever bade her pause and weigh and measure them

by her standard and scale of values of the way between.

And now, softly the Voice of her ever present, Omnipotent Divine teacher-guide permeated her perceptive mind:

"The time is here; you are to finish your education on the trail, and receive your Degree; and remember--to believe evil because it pretends to be wisdom is a great Sin! God is Love, and He cares for you! Only believe, and Love will teach and guide you."

"But does love regenerate, chasten its subjects and then upon perceiving their discomfiture, does regenerate love chasten them still more?" she questioned with a challenge in her overburdened mind.

"Refusing Love one cannot enter into true relationships of love with God, nor with one's fellow beings. Deceit and imposition and usurpation have obscured your vision, but the wisdom of the Golden Mean, with your scale of values, will redeem My words. One of the great world-sins is fear, and another is to doubt one's higher self. Believing Faith points out the way--God cares for you. Forces of Love and of Good are over you, and around you, and within you; if you can now believe, Providence will bestow Infinite love and good."

Phyllis, reviewing the past, and visioning before her the remarkable version of the trail's end, gave herself up to the prevenient influence of the Voice which to her perceptive mind, was the voice of her Divine Teacher-Guide of the Quest, on the ways between.

Her openly avowed enmity towards all things based on mystic illusion, or enervating superstition, or the over-governing of wills by hypnotic usurpation, or the proselyte of unauthorized religious tenets and practices, had made it hard for her to review, and receive instruction with an open mind; but the Voice on the trail of the Golden Mean, through Providence speaking, and permeating her perceptive and receptive mind, ever retained the personality and authority, for her, of the Divine Teacher and Guide; and so, as she meditated and reasoned at the trail's

end, the Voice preveining said:

"From the ranks of God's Universal womanhood you were chosen to represent womanhood--the womanhood that is pleasing before the face of her Creator; for you are one whose powers are feared but whose love is coveted. Know now, that your honor and your well-being is of Sacred importance to Christ your Lord, who is your Teacher's Voice and guiding Inspiration of the trail of the Golden Mean.

"Are you still anxious to redeem your pledge toward the Social and Moral uplift of your fellow beings, obtained at the beginning of your Quest?"

"Yes!" Phyllis affirmed.

"Then redeem your own woman's faith, and love, and womanhood, for Jesus, your Lord."

"I have felt very sorry because of the retaliating manner which I used in returning the book and letters of Winston Marvel. I wished to expose him--to show him up before his School just as he had revealed himself to me. Had I taken time for meditation I would not have done that."

"You did that," the Voice prompted, "because you should have done that very thing."

"But why?" she questioned.

"There is your Scale of Justice as represented by the Law of Retributive Justice. You were the indignant womanhood representing the Higher Law. Your regretful questioning is prompted by your over-tender and sympathetic Nature--you wanted your rebuke to reach its mark, yet you held very tenaciously to your Standard for a Golden Mean, symbolized by the Star, and the Higher Law, symbolized by the Cross."

"When they rejected and crucified him who came to them with a ministry of Love and Service," she affirmed, "he raised his Voice and prayed: 'Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do.'" Phyllis meditated upon this profoundly, then with conviction, she summed up her final word.

"He meant those who did not believe that they were crucifying Christ but believed that they were silencing a false prophet. He meant that those who sin in ignorance are not personally and morally guilty as those who sin knowingly. His was the Supreme Sacrifice of which it is said: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend.' He is the Perfect Model for humanity, whose Standard is the only one that will eventually lead the world out of Chaos; and if humanity attempts to insert principles into His Standard, woven of tenets less prohibitive, and materials that are cheaper; they cheapen, and distort, and profane the whole Standard. If we scale the heights, there are always the visions, broad, and free, and inspiring, which awakens the song in our heart; but upon the lower planes there are only the delusive, deceptive lures of folly, and ignorance, and indulgence, and selfishness, and egotism, and infidelity.

"There are master-deceivers there who lure their victims with sophisms and corrupt philosophies--and these masters are very cold and pernicious and they have no compassion nor brotherhood of fraternal love, and they exact extortionate treating and fees from their victims. Sometimes it is a soul--at another time it is a human life; and then again--it is one's faith and belief in God and in his fellow men; and at another time it is one's honor or reputation.

"And the way of returning from beyond the borderland, back to the higher planes is difficult indeed; because it is the uninstructed mind, and the undisciplined heart of the person himself, which is the cruelest barrier in a human nature, or a human life.

"At the top of the trail, beyond the place where the way divides, the Cross and the Star maintains the Standard of the Golden Mean; and before and above is the Scale of Justice of the Higher Court.

"We will not be summoned there and given the opportunity to boast of our superiority--our skill--our learning, nor our ability to prove that we have lived as well, and done as much good as others of our class, and learning; nor to show

how we have been as sincere as most professing Christians or Church members; but we will all be judged there according to our own works--as we really have lived, and by what we really are.

"If we have lived as near in conformity as we could, to the Standard precepted by the Perfect Model, it is well; for His law is the Eternal law of Truth and Justice--of Faith and Love."

Estelle Jenkins Pratt

(Transcribed by Marilyn Pratt McDonald, granddaughter; April 3, 1987, Salt Lake City, Utah)