

## THE LIFE EXPERIENCE IN PART OF OVERAH

The doctor and professors of this band have asked me to give in writing this, a part of my life's experience, and so I shall be very glad to do so if you would like to listen. From the earliest hours of my childhood I can remember of being very happy because I naturally loved everything that I saw of human, animal or vegetable kingdom.

My father was a very prosperous planter in the earlier days of slavery in Georgia. I was my mother's seventh daughter and also the last. The plantation on which we then lived was situated a little way from what is now known as Atlanta. When I was yet very young I can remember wondering if every little girl in the world could look about her and see a yard full almost of little and big pickaninnies. They were my constant playmates, and I was taught to drive them like beasts, but when I grew a little older I saw the tearing of their hearts by the careless dropping of some unkind and cutting word, and many times my heart smote within me, and bowed me down. They were my faithful friends, my ready slaves to obey my every wish and I used to listen to the pouring out of their long pent-up woes, and grieve at the misery of the little world in which I lived. Often and often as I grew older by day and month I saw my mother watch me with eager tender eyes and oftentimes when all was still at night and she thought I slept she would tell my father that I was a curious child and that they might not raise me. I did not know it if I was in any way out of the ordinary for I thought all people must be alike, since the world was so beautiful, and I thought then that everybody, like myself, could hear the voices of the trees, the birds, the flowers, and understand them, for often in my play in the wide branches of some gnarled old tree I would suddenly hear a chorus of voices singing or talking in tender tones into my delighted ear. But I reckoned it all out! It was the trees themselves—or the waters of the tiny lakes close by, for what else could it be, for these forms of life were all that were then visible to my natural eye. I was content. My childhood passed like one shining dream filled with the breath of the sweet magnolias.

And all the years of my childhood went blissfully by, warmed by the radiance of the Southern sun and watered by the tender fall of Georgia rain. At last I was seventeen and more frail, my mother said, every day. I could scarcely feel that I grew weaker, yet I knew that I did for now I could only walk a little way each day in the catalpa grove with Mammy Lucy, and then big old Joe would carry me back to the house. I was never quite sick, but weaker and weaker until a hacking cough confined me to my bed. One May day as I lay pondering on the wonders of Nature all about me, I suddenly dropped my half open testament to the floor, when a strange set of little noises came pattering on my pillow like the hopping of the tiny sparrows I saw nesting in the trees outside. Then a voice very gentle and very near to me, said: "Dear child, I guard and guide you ever, do not be afraid. I am your guardian spirit!" Guardian spirit! I raised myself quickly and looked behind me. All was as empty as air, and, I sank down again with a violent fit of coughing. I did not know who had spoken to me, and almost too weak to care I fell asleep. When I awakened my mother was bending over me and father was talking in low tones to Mammy Lucy, who was crying. "No, Marse Claire," she was sobbing, "dey never does lib when dey is dat a-way, dey can't no wise." Ray Middleton was there, too, and he had brought a great fresh bouquet of jasmines. I saw them and their odor so filled my senses that I wished I had not awakened. Those were strange, sad days of pensive apathy. One still moonlight night I lay looking out at the full Southern moon, and a strange sadness rose within me. There was something I wanted to tell my mother and Mammy Lucy, but I couldn't make out what it was. I had suffered a great deal that day with ghastly hemorrhages, and was wishing, oh, so much for much needed rest. Without knowing it I had fallen asleep and was dreaming, dreaming that I was well again and oh, with that new feeling of strength I climbed out of bed strong limbed, and happy, and stepped lightly across the room in a shaft of moonlight that fell streaming across the floor from the low window. I was just beginning to enjoy my beautiful dream when I heard a low wail and turning quickly I saw my mother kneeling by my bedside, and my father's arms about her. Mammy Lucy was at the other side of my bed and what, oh, what did she have in her hand? My own hand, for there

was my body lying on the bed. I shuddered and started, for now I knew that I was not dreaming but that I had died! I looked down at myself in puzzled wonderment and remembered somebody had said in my testament, "We know not yet what we shall be!" I walked close to my mother and knelt beside her. She was moaning and shaking with sorrow, and my father's voice was stifled and broken as he tried to comfort her. Mammy was rocking to and fro and groaning like a lost soul ! Then my sisters came and they fell to weeping until a great wave of sorrow passed over me and I wept as I had never done before! I called and begged my mother to hear me and that if she could control her grief I could stop crying, but her ears were deaf, and I crouched beside my poor dead flesh and cried as if my heart would break.

Presently I heard a voice, the same one I had heard once before : "Dear child, I, your guardian spirit, have come to bear you to my world." I looked up and beheld a form and face, of such ravishing beauty that my senses were dumbed and stilled. All about the glorious one I saw a light growing brighter and brighter and advancing she almost touched me, and would have only that I shrank away. She spoke again, saying, "Come, make ready, see you have already performed the duty of leaving that shell of flesh that was too small and shattered to bear you any longer. See, I have come to take you to the really true country, the home of the Soul, the Summerland of the Spirit. These are your earthly relations and ties I known, but you shall know them again from time to time, for even as we go, we shall come again." The voice of my guide was like the sounding of some strange sweet music, the music of flutes in the tamarack groves. As she ceased speaking, I commenced to look around me and to bid farewell to all the well loved spots of my childhood. I looked out of the low windows into the garden, and as I saw the great clusters of yellow climbing roses that Mammy Lucy and I planted a great swelling came into my heart, and I thought it would almost thump itself out of my bosom. For all my feelings prompted and actuated the same results as when I was still in the flesh. I looked about me at the fairy daintiness of my room and at the open testament on the table, a present from my mother, and I

could see again her sweet glad face as she laid it on my pillow the morning of my fifteenth birthday.

A swift pain went quivering through me, but I turned and bidding them all goodby, put my hand into that of my spirit guide's and we turned toward our journey home. She told me her name was lahara. We walked straight to the door and I started to open it but lahara drew my hand back gently and we passed through the closed door as easily as we had walked in the room. I looked up into her face and smiled. Our gentle half walking, half floating motion eased and happified me. We paused a moment on the veranda.

Although this newly found guide of mine was so beautiful and so good, and I felt that she must have come from some more lovely land than mine, yet I did not wish to go with her. But with all my heart I wanted to turn back and go to my mother again, for I began to feel that her grief was terrible and that my father might not comfort her. But the spirit beside me said that I could do nothing at present for my mother and that I must obey the voice of the Death Angel, for in so doing I would find life for myself and teach life to the world. This I could not understand, but I let her take my hand as we started down the veranda steps. But to my surprise we did not step, but our bodies rather swung than walked until we rose higher and higher in the first rays of the morning light, 'till I could look down and see the earthly objects I had left, and they were growing smaller and dimmer until the world we had left resembled a tiny dark ball in space below us.

Everything around me now seemed to be great rolling clouds of blue and white vaporish smoke and always as I looked about me I saw points of light appear in these floating clouds like tiny rays of lightning and soon they were not light at all but faces growing brighter and closer and forms white and shining. These soon came in great throngs, mostly floating above us with that gliding easy movement of a bird in flight.

I asked my guiding spirit what and who they were and she answered: "They were once living on earth like you until at death they entered this

new life which is the real life. They have performed all their duties so well that they have now become messengers to the world to carry the news from the spirit realms to the people of the earth you have just left, who are willing and ready to receive it." I was just thinking how very sweet this was when I began to see mountains and rivers, brooks and trees and flowers, such oceans of them. I was delighted beyond words!

Soon we entered a wonderful country where every one was clad in shining garments, and where laughing children played and cooed and sang! I was forgetting the sorrow I had left on earth, the joy of this new land completely shutting it out of my life. Soon my guide conducted me to a most joyful spot. Stretching up from a green sward was all manner of Southern shrubbery and a great profusion of bloom! In among the trees was a shimmering white house, small but exquisite in makeup. Before us and at the foot of the rolling green ran a clear dancing brook, and as I bent to look into it I clearly saw my face, and the shining pebbles in its bed. The sight of all this filled me with a new and glorious strength and I asked my guiding spirit to show me all the beauties of this new land; but she replied, "No, not yet, soon you will be weary and here you must rest, for this is your home, your very own, and as you fulfill the duties that are set apart for you so will you enlarge and expand it for the reception of your loved ones when they come from the earth. Rest here, and abide. I will go now but at the right time I will come again." So saying, she walked or rather floated away, and was out of sight before I could speak to her in answer.

I walked slowly up the tiny path and into the cool shady porch, and the smell of lotus bloom was everywhere. The door stood open and as I entered a sweet young old face came meeting it. It was—yes, it surely was Aunt Agatha, my mother's maiden aunt who had died when I was a baby, and now as I saw her in the gray silk frock and lavender at the throat I remembered how often my mother had spoken of her and cried. She smiled placidly and took me warmly into her arms. All silently she led me into a room almost precisely like my own bedroom I had left at home. There was everything apparently just as I had left it and on the table was the bouquet of jasmynes I treasured so. My aunt kissed me, and some voice, I knew not whose, kept crooning until I fell asleep.

When I regained consciousness there came a sense of some sweet music being played at a distance, but as I awakened more fully I knew that the melody was very near, even all around me. I raised myself and gazed around me, for now I was very strong. There were a great many people present and many of them bore familiar faces, faces that I had looked into when a child and loved. Many who were present played on musical instruments so much different and very much sweeter than those I had seen on earth. "Is this my new home?" I asked, "and is this the land of the dead?" "No;" a soft voice whispered, it was Aunt Agatha's, "it is the land of the living, my child, the place of the heart's desire." "Then death really but makes a change in life after all." "Rather only a happy episode," my dear old aunt answered. I was charmed with my new life, and asked as I was led into a beautiful apartment where a long table was filled with a sumptuous feast, "What is this, where am I, and do spirits of the dead eat?" They answered me with smiles benign, and placed me in the most comfortable seat at the table that I ever sat in. I saw immediately that spirits did not eat in any way like mortals for these were none of the coarser, meaner foods of earth before us, but just great quantities of fruit of every known kind and much of varying varieties that I had never yet seen . There were also many fragrant and delicious sweet wines and tiny white cakes that delighted me.

Each new thing came upon me with such astonishing surprise that I did scarcely think one wonder was natural until another presented itself! Such a smiling, such a happy, happy feast as we did have, and they told me it was all in honor of my coming to live in the spirit world! I felt so glad, so overwhelmed with joy that I could not voice my feelings, but when one by one the guests slipped away and left aunt and me alone, I kissed her softly and crept into the garden and sat under the magnolias and had dreams as I used to have when I was a little child in Georgia. I do not know how long I sat there drinking in the fullness of newly found joy, when suddenly I felt that some one was standing behind me, and looking up quickly I saw the old colored slave, Black Dan, who passed from earth when I could just toddle. His face broke into a broad smile and I greeted him gladly. He said he had come to

tell me that my guiding spirit waited for me to go on a mission to earth, and that I must hasten!

A mission to earth! I asked him what the mission was, and he said it was time for me to pay a visit to my father and mother, for they were struggling hard in their affliction. The thought of my neglect shot through my breast like a knife and a great wave of the old sadness clutched my heart and held it. I had been so forgetful, so very neglectful of those who loved me most, my thoughts ever had been on other things. I had wandered far from home and had been happy in my selfishness! I would find my good guide and go immediately!

My guiding spirit was waiting at the gateway when I came seeking her and as she looked down into my face the radiance of her countenance almost startled me, for she was so ethereally beautiful, and her loveliness was brightened by that supreme lovelight which gleamed out of her eyes. I told her all that was in my heart as we rose gradually and then floated out and away and down slowly toward the earth plane. I asked her how it was that I was so full of selfishness that I had not taken thought, until reminded, of my loved ones still on earth? She said, "My child, there is yet so very much for you to learn before you can fathom any one of the Eternal's ways that you can not begin to find out too quickly. If the grief that penetrated the hearts of those of your loved ones left on earth had so affected you as they continually do, it would not have been possible for you to have entered Paradise when you did, but you would yet have been bound to earth by the chain of foolish sorrow, as many thousands of spirits are earth-bound for a time more or less. But in your case there came a happy difference. Your friends had gathered together in the spirit world and there in the restful peace of your Aunt Agatha's spirit home they planned the little reception which you have already enjoyed. I was sent by the Eternal Spirit to conduct you to our land on the instant of your body's death, so that you might have a little season of rest and pleasure in the Realm of Souls, and in the meantime be prepared to meet this mission which we are now starting upon. You are now in a position to do some little good to those most dear to you for you have been strengthened in your absence from earth and the spiritual strength you have gained will

benefit you greatly when you come again in contact with your parents and sisters."

All this seemed very strange and wonderful, yet within me I felt the sweet truth of her words. I asked my dear guide what had so perceptibly brightened her countenance since last I saw her, and she told me that because of the place she had just come from her whole soul was brightened and glorified so that she was of a mind to sing all the while, that she was so entranced with the surroundings of that happy spot that some of its joy had just shinned into her heart, and came up into her face she said she supposed! Instinctively I turned my eyes backward but we had gone too far to even see any object in the spirit world, save dense clouds of rolling ether which formed in great cloud groups along the course we took. "What then is this wonderful place called from which you come?" She answered, slowly and pensively, as if she longed to be there even now. "The realm of heart's desire." All the meaning that the name implied suddenly rushed over me and I was filled with a celestial joy! But now we were very near the earth and as we went swiftly forward I began to see its objects quite distinctly. It did not seem an instant more until we had actually drew near and were hovering over my father's plantation.

Oh, such a longing, dear and clinging, filled my soul to see them all once again! I did not have long to wait for my guide and I, hand in hand, were walking up the veranda steps with a great many people, old and young, who were going slowly into my father's house. When we entered I felt with a chill the awful stillness of the place! There were so many there and yet no one spoke save in subdued and slow whispering accents which sounded like hisses in the death-like quiet of those strangely silent rooms! My good guide told me to go where I would where I might wish most and I left her and sought my mother.

As I started in alone I suddenly saw my mother, in a solitary room kneeling over a white casket praying and sobbing out her very life in terrible grief! As I hurried on to her, the picture suddenly closed and I was standing just outside the wall of the back parlor. I knew that my dead body was in the casket, and the terrible longing in me to see my



mother again suddenly made me just step into the wall—and very easy it was to walk right in, where I did see my mother just as before! I walked quickly up on the other side of the casket facing her, and whether it was my steady gaze or something she might have heard, I do not know, but she looked right up full into my face steadily and calmly, while a great light fell over her countenance, and beamed out of her eyes! She sprang up, and murmuring softly, suddenly stretched out her arms to clasp me, but I was drawn away so quickly that she could see me no longer, and she left the room instantly, I following. She went on into the living room where my father met her and tenderly proffered her an easy chair. All the wildness of her grief had suddenly left her, and as my father bent over her she whispered softly, "Do not fear for me any longer, David, for I have seen my little lamb. Our child that has died is alive!" My father started and looked wonderingly at her. "What do you mean, my wife?" he asked strangely, pitying her. "I mean," my mother answered, "that our child whom we thought dead has come and stood before me even a few moments ago, but when I would have embraced her she vanished, and flew back into that new life which is hers. We have been grieving over the death of her body, David, for she lives indeed!" My father struggled hard over the problem of my mother's words, but finally I saw a faint satisfying light come into his face, and he patted my mother's shoulder lovingly as he said, almost too low for mortal ears to hear, "Well, well, Judith, if your heart has found rest I am well content!" And they looked into each other's faces, too full for speech! It was, of course, the occasion of my funeral and my guide, my dear companion, remained with me throughout the long tedious service. Oh, how my soul longed to let all the old friends I saw there, just know that I lived and was happy, how it would have saved all the long useless funeral service and the terrible grief and wailing of all those saddened hearts, that vainly sought relief under such dreary and woeful condition! As we passed out I touched Mammy Lucy, who was so bowed with woe that she could not look up, and she felt the touch, for her sensitive soul started and she looked quickly behind her! It was a certain joy that dwelt in me when at last I left them, after my body had been left in the family vault, and I started homeward.

The evening shadows were just drawing over the earth when we left it, and as we sailed swiftly upward and onward away from it we began to see more and more the Eternal light of the Heavens. This light of day in the spirit-world never grows dimmer save in a momentary condition when a spirit is weary and wishes to rest. The burial of my body in the earth was such a shocking experience to me that only as we left farther and farther behind us the earth and its conditions," did I feel the pangs of this experience leave me, and the sweet restfulness of peace come into its place! Almost before I was aware of it I was at the very portals of my spirit home again, and dear old Aunt Agatha smilingly awaited me! My guide told me that at another time not long distant she would come and take me visiting into different and very interesting realms of Spirit. She had told me of some of the great Lecture Halls and Temples of Knowledge where spirits who wished to progress swiftly were going constantly and so preparing themselves for higher and nobler work as they toiled upward!

I was very much enthused about these places and begged to visit them as soon as I might be permitted. After my good guide had departed I spoke to my aunt about this and asked her if she had been to any of these wonderful things, and she answered, "Yes, my child, I went twice to The Palace of Intellectual Light where some kind ministering ones led me and told me that I might gain strength and go onward very rapidly. Well, it was a grand place indeed, where there sat many ancients robed in yellow and purple and gold, but the light of the place so dazzled and confused me that it seemed I could scarcely comprehend what was said. A great many mighty men spoke, but for the life of me I could not remember enough that they had said to make me really wish to go again, and when I came home here again that one thought troubled me! That I did not want to go again!

"And one day as I was walking alone in the garden, plucking rosemary and thyme, I kept saying my thoughts out loud over and over in this wise: 'Why, oh, why should I not wish to be dutiful to God, the father, in doing all that I can to increase my knowledge and so perfect myself in His sight?' I was sore troubled and it was not long before I felt the touch of a hand on my shoulder and looking around I beheld a

wonderful sight! A man a little above the average in height, and slender, and with the tenderness of a woman in his youthful face stood before me, clothed all in robes of dazzling white! He spoke and said, 'My child, the acquiring of much knowledge, where the flowers of real goodness do not grow will not be sufficient to move forward any soul! Rest in peace where thou art! Stay here among thy beautiful flowers and they will teach thee the greatest lesson of love!' I never knew, my child, who this man was but I do know that what he said helped me always and soon I will be ready to go upward and steadily onward!"

I thought much of Aunt Agatha's words and I believe they helped me, too!

Soon my gentle guide came and escorted me on a visit to some other spheres in the spirit world. "Where are we going first?" I asked her as we glided away from my spirit home. "We will first visit a little in the Land of Rest," she answered. This place called the "Land of Rest" she kindly explained to me as we entered it, was one where all manner of earth's hardest toilers (who had labored without reward and almost without sustenance, who had passed through the hardest ways of privation and had kept themselves honest) came just when they entered Spirit life.

Even as we came into this place I felt distinctly the sense of peace and all-prevailing repose that encompassed the atmosphere! The air was soft and moist and fragrant with the rich perfumes of the profusion of simple old-fashioned flowers growing everywhere. I saw snowy white cots stretched under green waving trees and these with occupants whose souls had passed the troubles of the earthly life and now were securely resting, resting in the righteous peace of Heaven!

I saw a green sward off at the bend of a tiny stream where a great band of children were playing and singing, and in their midst was the shaggy presence of a huge kindly faced old Newfoundland dog! These were the slave children of "child-labor" in your great cities of earth! Now, at least, could they find a play-time of their own. When we departed I expressed my joy at being privileged to visit such a place.

Then I returned home and remained with Aunt Agatha until such time as my dear guiding spirit would see fit to come and fetch me away to see and know more and more of the beauties of my sweet new life!

After these various and oft repeated visits I would always come home to Aunt Agatha again. One day as I stood under the magnolia trees plaiting and tying sweet smelling grasses, suddenly a great desire to know what my future would be came into my mind and chained for an instant all my thought, so that I caught myself with eyes staring straight ahead, and looking at nothing but vacancy. As I gazed, there grew a luminous cloud before me, and to my astonishment it parted and a man, tall and strong, stood before me. His face was firm but gently sweet in its expression and he was older than I. He had the look of an Italian I had seen a picture of on earth! He had that fine high look about his features which only genius lends to her petted favorites. He was like poetry! He put out his hand and smiled wondrously but just as I put mine out and spoke to him he suddenly was visible no more and I could not see where he had gone! "Won't you come again?" I cried as I looked vacantly in the place where he stood.

I could not understand it, but his visit had given me so much pleasure that I resolved to come to that same spot and see if he would not be there also. I seemed to feel that this man was a great person.

Now I had come into the garden but three times more and each time I had seen the wonderful stranger, who had conversed with me and taught me such great and glorious things that I almost felt sometimes I wanted to leave the little sheltered nook in which my aunt dwelt and seek a higher and a wider plane of life. These longings grew within me until a great desire came into my soul to seek a higher sphere of life. Was I then really to leave this beautiful spot and not stay to help enlarge and beautify it for the reception of my father and mother still on earth? This thought troubled me, and through it all my spirit was sore grieved. But as I absorbed the lessons I received from my frequent visitor, the handsome stranger (who now came so often

I had grown to feel that we always knew each other though I did not yet know his name) a great peace settled within me and about me, and I was ready for whatever life might bestow upon me. One early day, in the full sweet morning light, I sat listening to a nightingale and such sweet music I had never heard! It seemed to me as the bird-song came out upon the air it was very much like a human voice that called loudly in sorrow, and moaned in tortured pain! My sympathies were aroused and I listened intently! The bird-notes grew fainter and sweeter, then changed and rose into a wonderful joy melody, and slowly sweetly died away!

This song of the nightingale somehow had told me of my discontent, my sadness at leaving, and of my sure change of abiding place! And when the wonderful music sighed itself into silence, I knew that I was going to leave Aunt Agatha and seek some other home, and I was at peace! Straightway I told her on entering the house of my revelation and she laughed and patted my head, saying, "You are the most imaginative child I ever saw, Overah. Now that I have just learned the joy of your presence, you think you are to leave me. No, child, I can't see you going yet, if ever!" Soon after that (I know not how many hours or days, for time is eternity with us), I met with my frequent visitor, the Italian gentleman, for so I had found that he was. He told me so much of the sunshine and the flowers and picturesque scenery of his mother country on earth, and at this time he was saying to me : "Beautiful spirit, do you not know that there are other climes here than this one in which you dwell?" I answered yes, and he continued: "About some of these spheres I can tell you much but you would be more benefited to see them." Whenever he spoke his voice was like a soft distant flute and his face was wreathed in smiles.

"Yes, my friend," I said, "I want to see these wonderful places, for I have been visiting but little and that was with my guiding spirit " and as I mentioned her name I saw a curious glad light of recognition leap into his eyes. "Do you know her?" I questioned. "Yes and no," he replied, trying, I thought, to avoid me, "I have heard much of her!" He was looking straight into my soul with his deep dark eyes and what he found there made me conscious of a like something that dwelt within

the depths of his soul—and we two gazed and gazed, the knowledge that we gained in that rapt gazing was too deep, too sweet for normal utterance ! While our eyes still held each others he vanished as usual from my sight.

The knowledge of so mighty a sweetness filled me that I did not know my aunt was standing near until she touched me, smiling as I looked at her, a little sadly, I thought. "So, Overah child, is this the nightingale's song?" "No, no auntie," I faltered, "this—this is—" "Is why you are going to leave me," she replied with quiet gravity! "Each soul must in earth or Heaven have a mate, and when that mate is centered and attracted no power can prevent it from finding its other half. There never was a soul that was complete in itself, my child, but finding its other self, it reaches at last, a whole within itself. Then the two selves, or twin souls, are ready to progress together!"

"But auntie," I said, "where is the man-soul then that belongs to you?" I wanted that we talk of Aunt Agatha's future than mine just then. "He is still on earth, child, and that is why I linger here, waiting always waiting for him!" My aunt was looking afar off when the last word fell from her lips, and her look caught and held my gaze. Somehow her face had grown all young and flushed and a great sweet flood of light overspread her countenance! "How long will you have to wait?" I asked hopefully. "Until his earth life is ended ?" She said, absently and simply, "Do you ever see him?" I asked again, fondly thinking of my visits to my loved ones still on earth. I suppose I had been in the spirit-world now some few months of earthly time, but which seemed of momentary passing in this fairy land of souls. My aunt looked full into my face and smiled a happy wistful smile. "We always see those we love best when we wish to, dear child!" she said quietly. Then she told me how when she and the man-soul her other part, were in the flush of their young girlhood and boyhood life, how very happy they had been and that the months and years almost numbered the day of matrimony for them, only a shadow passed between them and gradually grew and stretched into a gulf so wide and deep that neither of them in earth life could ever cross it, and so in dreary bitterness they had parted! She told me how he went away thousands of miles, and at last became a

wanderer on the face of the earth! Slowly but how surely her grief had claimed her, until on hearing of his marriage, she died suddenly and awakened to sorrow in the first experience of her spirit life. She told me how she had toiled and wearily, sadly worked her way up to her present gradation in the spirit world! How that she could not be contented to try to live until she stole out into the world again and sought out the love of her youth, and in his presence learned her peace of heart! Then she had found her way into this spot and with the aid of others had builded her little cottage here in which we dwelt. "Sometime," she said, "he will come to me and then we will be happy together. He feels already that he will come to me but he knows not how or where. He is not happy in life, but very miserable and often he cries to his Maker to let him die, and be done with all! How little he knows of the life he will meet here, but my child I am prepared to aid him and lift him up into the blessed Kingdom of Truth!" I thought much of this and felt deep compassion for them ! For her waiting here, for the lingering mortal of earth, and for him in the darkness of that lower life! I was learning speedier what life really means! I heard them as we conversed together, a mighty chorus of distinct voices above us, and looking up saw indistinctly a throng of floating spirits singing joyously as they sped along! "Who are these, and where do they go?" I asked Aunt Agatha. "They are blessed messengers from the Band of Mercy on their way to the earth on missions," said my aunt, gently. "Do you know on what kind of missions they are going?" I asked my aunt, much interested. "Yes," she answered quickly, "the messengers for the Band of Mercy always go to those who are afflicted with bodily ills and help them so that they may gain health again and if they cannot do that they escort them into this world, this land of Promise. There is a Band of Hope who go to those afflicted mentally and to those who are in any struggle, or terrible trouble and see them safely through!" How steadfastly I was thinking of how I wished had I known all this before I came to live in the Spirit world—how much good it could have done! Even while I was in this silent and deep meditation, my aunt slipped away to attend the presence of one who had just called, and was waiting. She called me and said, "This spirit who has just arrived has come for you, Overah!" I went instantly to where they were

standing, and as I drew near I perceived that our visitor was a woman, clad in shining white garments and glittering with precious gems! She spoke almost instantly, saying: "Overah, your dear guiding spirit has kindly sent me to you, to tell you that she awaits you not far distant, where you are to go with me and join her. Make ready, bid your aunt farewell, and come!" She spoke so gently, sweetly, and yet fully imperative that I felt ready to comply with her wishes at once. As I kissed my aunt good-bye, and took my leave with the messenger, I felt that I was going away not to return except that I might come back to visit Aunt Agatha sometime. I told her this on going, but she only smiled and waved her handkerchief, as we sped so hastily away. My escort conversed with me as we traveled along, and told me that she knew my guiding spirit well—and often times went on errand missions for her! I was rejoiced at this for I loved any one who would do a kindly favor for my gracious guide! Soon I saw her standing a little distance ahead smiling and beckoning us on! When we drew nearer she came running toward me, and patting my cheek said, "You are a dutiful child, Overah, to come so quickly when you are bidden; did you like to come?" "Yes," I answered, simply. "Do you know where you are going?" she asked again. "No. I do not, neither do I care so long as you are leading me! I only know it is right for me to do as you bid me, and I am so happy in doing so that I cannot begin to express it!" She bent very close to me and touched my forehead with her lips, and such a wondrous soft light crept into her beautiful face, that I could have wept for sheer joy! This was indeed to me an example of the love of Duty!

She spoke again, "Did you feel no pangs at leaving your aunt, my child?" "No, dear one," I replied, "yet I will never see her again only as I may go to visit her or until she comes where I am going to go now!" "My dear Overah," she answered, "you are all that I would have you! But how did you know you were coming away to stay?" "The nightingale first told me in her happy, sad song!" I said quietly. This seemed to please her, for she said, "That is very good, child, but I have yet to tell you what the nightingale left out. You are now going with me to meet your other part, you must now enter into a completeness of self that will prepare you and enable you to progress and unfold as you



should do." "My other part, what is that?" I queried. "It is the mate of your soul, the man-soul that belongs to you. Your aunt has spoken to you of this before." I did not look up at her, for now I understood the full meaning of her words, and I did not wish her to know the conflicting emotions that filled my soul! I had been so full of love and duty an instant before and now just this condition had shaken my resolutions and my pleasure to atoms! I did not dare to speak to my guide of these wayward thoughts of mine, and as I only said, "If I am to meet the mate of my soul, where are we going for this meeting?" I raised my eyes to meet her full innocent gaze, as she replied, "To the Land of Heart's desire!" I knew that in the one deep look her mind had touched my very depths and had read there my secret! I knew now that I did not want to go to the Land of Heart's Desire, because I believed I was to meet a stranger that I would dislike! She saw in my heart another picture, of a handsome dark face, with the sunny eyes of Italy shining there! How I had tried to hide this face in the very depths of me, but the eyes of my guiding spirit were the seers of her soul, and could fathom the deep! She was prone to test me further, so she said. "Overah, do you still wish to go where I lead you? Are you content in your journey to the Land of Heart's Desire?" "No, dear guide," I faltered, "I do not wish to go there if I am to meet a stranger, one that I have never known, for I could not feel that he was my soul's mate, no never!" "Where, then, would you rather go ?" she asked quickly. "To my mother!" I almost sobbed. "Surely not." she made answer, "for in the Land of Heart's Desire lies all your future blessedness !" I could not comprehend her speech, but I shut my eyes and prayed ! I felt a strong and steadfast truth taking hold of me, and I felt suddenly at peace! All calmly then I put my hand in hers and sending her young messenger ahead of us, we glided forward toward the Land of Heart's Desire! The sweetest perfumes burdened the air, and loaded it with billows of varied and rich fragrance ! As we came into the borders of this ideal country, I was amazed at the marvelous beauty of everything! The loveliest flowers, the purest, clearest waters, the grandest mountains and trees, with the happiest of women and children, the kindest fathers, and the bravest men! We did not stop to make inquiry of any one as we passed, but floating over a tiny brook I caught a sight of my face, and I knew my

looks did not belie my feelings; I was happy! Almost before I realized it, we stopped before a huge old pile of a mansion, whose towered splendor was like the tales of old, where sweet flowers bordered the rustic walks, and birds sang sweetly to each other in the tree-tops all day long. As we entered we perceived a pure crystal fountain, gushing up in the midst of crimson roses! My guiding spirit guided me safely up the massive steps to the mansion entrance, and there as we stood expectantly waiting the great doors opened of themselves, and she, my good guide, led me down the long corridors, through the beautiful rooms, until at last we stood in what she told me was my chamber, the chamber of Jasmines! Any place that I looked I saw Jasmines embedded within the walls and floor of this wonderful room! I started to pluck them but I found them to be made within the materials themselves! I felt someone drawing near me and as I turned I saw the beloved form of the handsome stranger who was so close to my very soul! I looked intently at him and he gently put out his arms and took my hands in his! "I am the terrible mate of your soul, my dearest Overah!" he said, smilingly, and I could not answer at once. I looked to speak to my guide, but she had gone somewhere I knew not! At last I found my voice, "I was afraid it would not be you!" I said slowly, but he reassured me, "It could have been no one else, you were mine and I was yours from the beginning!" "I knew it!" I answered, happily. As we stood there, seemingly alone I saw again the radiant face of my guide. "God bless my children," she was saying! As we made our vows, Burri Caspello and I, great and mighty strains of music filled the chambers of that old castle with holy sweetness? The Heavens and their mighty bands of spirits proclaimed us one, and so we have gone on in our labors side by side, reaching up into progress as we go on and on! So it is that now I come to tell you, world of mortals, a little of my experience in the Land of Souls!