

My Travels in the Spirit World

Caroline D. Larsen



MY TRAVELS *in the* SPIRIT WORLD

By CAROLINE D. LARSEN

I think the book, is valuable.
SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

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Introduction

Now, when speculation and research concerning the life after death are arousing more interest in the public mind than at any other time in human history, it seems peculiarly fitting that I should publish my "Travels in the Spirit World."

So far, every attempt to lift the curtain that separates us from the realms of the spirits has been carried on through a "medium." But in this little book, I shall describe scenes of the Spirit World which I have witnessed with my own eyes, and I shall relate conversations with spirits in which I have actually taken part. I have been enabled to tell you of these marvelous occurrences by virtue of a rare faculty which few possess: the ability to leave the physical body and to live for the time being in the astral, the power of being a spirit though there has been no actual physical death. So, because of my additional ability to reason and to reflect on the meaning of all I saw and heard, as well as the power to retain it in the memory, I have garnered the knowledge of the life hereafter which I now present to the public—a knowledge which must be considered as first hand evidence on the subject; a knowledge obtained, I believe, by the only process possible to mortals.

This ability to detach oneself from the material and to live in the astral is not a power peculiar to me. There are many records of a similar facility. In my case, however, disassociation from the material was purely involuntary. As the reader will discover by reading the opening chapter of the book, I did not seek or foster any such power. It possessed me unawares. Furthermore, I do not claim any superiority or supernatural gift because of my unlooked-for power. I regard it merely as a "facility" —an additional power which some persons happen to possess. One hears little of revelations by virtue of such a power because those who have it pay no attention to it or suppress it altogether.

To my readers I commend the results of my observations of the life hereafter, for I believe that even to those who will not see fit to accept them as credible, they will at least prove to be of more than ephemeral interest. As for myself I have no doubt what I have seen and experienced is real, very real. Nothing in all my life has made such a lasting and vivid impression upon my mind. And I am positive that no traveler could be more certain of the reality of his experiences than I am of the reality of my spirit travels. I do not claim to have seen all of the life of the Spirit World. In fact I have seen only a very little of it. But I am sure that I have seen something of each of its multifarious phases. At least, my experiences have been so varied that my readers will be able to obtain a reasonably broad conception of the conditions which will confront us when we leave our present sphere.

If my account should be found somewhat disjointed, the cause must be attributed to my refusal to elaborate or pad my material. I am determined to relate only those occurrences which I actually experienced in these strange adventures of mine. This being my only object, I am convinced that the reader will not be unduly severe in criticizing this little volume for its lack of literary value or for any other of its shortcomings.

C. D. L.

My Travels in the Spirit World

In the fall of 1910, while living in Burlington, Vermont, I had, one evening, retired rather early. In addition to the usual thoughts running through the mind I was much interested in listening to the music floating up from downstairs where my husband, who is a violinist, was rehearsing a string quartet for a coming local concert. The musicians were playing a quartet by Beethoven, my favorite composer. I was enjoying the music exceedingly, regretting that my pleasure was occasionally marred not only by the playing of the second violinist, a young Frenchman, who, although a very good amateur, had the misfortune of playing out of tune now and then, but also by the too-loud playing of the cellist, a local merchant. I had been enjoying Beethoven for some time in spite of the faults of these two players, when suddenly I underwent a very strange experience. A feeling of deep oppression and apprehension came over me not unlike that which precedes a fainting spell. I braced myself against it, but to no avail. The overpowering oppression deepened and soon numbness crept over me until every muscle became paralyzed. In this condition I remained for some time. My mind, however, was still working as clearly as ever. At first I heard the music plainly, but soon the sounds began to slip away from me by degrees until finally everything became a blank, and I was unconscious to life and the world. How long this state lasted I do not know. What happened during this period I am also unable to relate. The next thing I knew was that I, myself, was standing on the floor beside my bed looking down attentively at my own physical body lying in it.

I recognized every line in that familiar face, pale and still as in death, the features drawn, the eyes tightly closed and the mouth partly open. The arms and hands rested limp and lifeless beside the body. I gazed at that material form of mine for a few moments while mingled feelings passed over me. Strangely enough, they were not feelings of great surprise. I experienced no shock at finding myself in this peculiar situation. It was chiefly curiosity that possessed my mind. I was perfectly calm and composed as I viewed the mortal form I had just previously inhabited. I now raised my eyes from my body, and looked around the room. Everything appeared to me as natural as ever. There was the little table with books and trinkets on it; there were the bureau, the dresser, the big arm chair, the smaller chairs, the green carpet on the floor, the red wallpaper with its patterns of urns and flowers— those figures which I had often counted over when sleepless. And there was the little partly-shaded electric lamp which lighted my bedroom, burning as usual. While my eyes observed these familiar objects the music from downstairs kept floating up to my ears. I glanced once more at my body which, to all appearances, seemed dead. Then I turned and walked slowly towards the door, passed through it and into a hall that led to the bathroom. As I walked towards that room past the stairway, I heard the music coming up with increased force, and I delighted in the lovely adagio from Beethoven's Op. 127 Quartet, a special favorite of mine. As I entered the bathroom the strains gradually diminished in volume. I now approached a large mirror hanging above the washbowl. Through force of habit I went through the motions of turning on the electric light, which of course I did not actually turn on. But there was no need for illumination for from my body and face emanated a strong whitish light that lighted up the room brilliantly.

Looking into the mirror I became aware for the first time of the astonishing transformation I had undergone. Instead of seeing a middle-aged woman, I beheld the figure of a

girl about eighteen years of age. I recognized the form and features of my girlhood. But I was now infinitely more beautiful. My face appeared as if it were chiseled out of the finest alabaster and it seemed transparent, as did my arms and hands when I raised them to touch my hair. It seemed as if I could see through them. But they were not entirely translucent, for in the center of the arms and hands and fingers there was a darker, more compact substance, as in X-ray photographs. My eyes, quite strong in the physical body were piercingly keen now. They shone with such lustre that the mirror reflected their penetrating beams. My hair, no longer gray, was now, as in my youth, dark brown, and it fell in waves over my shoulders and down my back. And to my delight, I was dressed in the loveliest white shining garment imaginable—a sleeveless one—piece dress, cut low at the neck and reaching almost to the ankles. I looked down at my legs and saw that they were as beautiful as my arms, neck and face.

I walked forward and backward before the mirror reveling in my newly-found beauty. When I looked myself full in the face I became almost frightened at the strength and brilliancy of my eyes. I raised my hands before my face and closed and opened the fingers. They seemed so airy and delicate. Yet I felt no lack of strength in them and no change of sensation in moving them. My joy and enthusiasm were unbounded at seeing myself so beautiful. Eagerly I drank in the glory. It was also an exhilarating sensation to be conscious of the fact that I was out of my physical body and that I lived in the astral.

This realization never once left me. During the time that I was occupied before the mirror I had followed, more or less carelessly, the music from the quartet. But now I forgot my vanity and listened attentively. Suddenly I heard the strains of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto. I knew at once that the Frenchman was playing the solo. It was a habit he always indulged while the music was being changed on the stands. But, as always, he played it out of tune. As usual I felt disgusted and for the moment forgetting all about myself I muttered angrily, "Oh! I wish my husband would tell that Frenchman to play that Concerto in tune or not to play it at all." Fortunately the quartet now began to play again and the soothing music of Beethoven calmed me.

Once more I turned to admire myself in the mirror. Not being content to enjoy my beauty alone I wished that others might see it and share with me the joy. A block away from us lived a Miss B., a friend of mine who had often complimented me on my taste in dressing and on my general appearance. I conceived the notion that I would go to her and show myself. "Won't she be astonished!" I asked myself. "If she complimented me before, what will she say now?" "But first," I reflected, "I will go down and present myself to my husband and the other men." I thought with amusement of the expression that would sweep across their astonished faces. I did not fancy that had I succeeded in getting up to Miss B., or down to my husband and the other musicians, none of them would have been able to see me at all, unless perchance some of them possessed the ability to see me as "a ghost."

No sooner had I conceived this intention than I proceeded to carry it out. Turning away from the mirror I walked out into the hall. Enjoying in anticipation the success of my plan, I stepped on gaily. I reveled in the feeling of bodily lightness. While in the physical body one has to move the legs with conscious effort, now I moved with the freedom of thought. It was a delightful sensation. No one could be happier than I when I began the descent of the stairway. The Beethoven music sounded lovelier than ever. It increased in force as I advanced step by step.

But, alas, my pleasant plan was not to be realized and my hopes of exciting admiration and wonder were to be dashed to the ground. Just as I came to the little platform which divides the stairway into two flights, I saw, standing before me, a woman spirit in shining clothes with arms outstretched and with forefinger pointing upwards. There was a look of strong determination on her face as she spoke to me sternly, "Where are you going? Go back to your body!" Whether it was that on this, my first experience "out of my body," I was not to be permitted to enjoy more than this short trail or that I had broken unwittingly some rule governing such experience I knew instinctively—that from this spirit's command and authority there was no appeal. I must obey. Reluctantly I turned, ascended the stairs walked through the hall into my bedroom and up to my bed. My physical body lay there as still and lifeless as when I left it. I viewed it with feelings of loathing and disappointment. I knew that I would soon have to enter it again, no matter how ugly it seemed to me, or however much I shrank from it. The music rising from below also helped to sadden my spirit in that it reminded me of my failure to present myself before my husband in my changed form. But no time was left me for reflections. In another instant I had again joined with my physical form. With a gasp and a start I woke up in it.

Somewhat confused at first, I soon regained my usual composure of mind. And there the strange experience I had just passed through stood before me in all its vividness. I was now in a position to confirm through personal knowledge the truth of the possibility that one can leave the physical body, taste life in the astral and return again to the earthly form. Now I heard the music once more through my mortal ears. But soon the rehearsal ended. When I related to my husband the story of my supernatural experience and we compared notes as to what had occurred downstairs, that which I had heard with my astral ears agreed to the smallest detail with what he told me had taken place at the rehearsal. This was my first experience "out of the body." But since then I have often been accorded the privilege. I have traveled far and wide in space, visited heavenly bodies; visited many parts of the Spirit World where I have seen and heard things which I believe have never been given to the world.

In the preceding description of my first experience "out of the body" it will be remembered that I was confined to the limits of my home. For some unknown reason a woman spirit prevented me from leaving the house. But as time went on and these experiences continued I was gradually allowed more and more liberty and soon I wandered rather widely about. At first I traveled only through my immediate neighborhood but as I gained experience in handling myself in the astral I took more extensive trips which covered the greater part of the earth. In these trips I gathered a complete knowledge of the spirit existence immediately after death: how they live, how they act and think. Let me say in passing that most spirits, until they gravitate to their proper realm, remain for a time in the environment where they spent their earthly life. Then with the aid of guides I was permitted extensive travels into the great realms of the spirits where I learned about the conditions governing their future existence, observed spirit existence in all its diverse forms of life. Finally, most remarkable of all, I was granted the unusual privilege of a trip into the very abyss of space to witness the wonderful spectacle of the universe ablaze with life.

If all of the information concerning life hereafter which I gathered on these occasions could become generally accepted, the present dread of so-called "death" would entirely disappear. Our grief and despair at the loss of our loved ones would change into a calm

resignation in the face of the conviction that as the "dead" are more alive than ever, the separation is but momentary, the reunion is close at hand.

Without further preliminaries I shall begin my narrative of life after death. I shall divide my story into three parts. First, I shall describe the manner of life here on earth immediately after death. Secondly, I shall picture life in the real realms of the Spirits; and finally, I shall give my observations of the surging life which fills the entire Universe.

SPIRIT LIFE ON EARTH

The phrase, "there is no death," used through ages for the consolation of mourning relatives and friends, is actually and literally true. For no sooner has the physical body been stilled in death than out of that mortal form, now of no more avail to him, steps the personality which had so recently inhabited it and used it for his manifestations in this life. He stands now in the full glow of another existence having exchanged his short and limited life in the prison of earthly clay for life eternal and infinite in possibility.

A human being may be said to be composed of three distinct parts. First, the ego, the real I, the actual personality, or to employ a better-understood term, the Soul, which resides in an astral body, which again is encased in the physical body. When death overtakes the mortal form the spirit continues life in the new body. Hence there is no death as far as that personality is concerned. There is only transmutation from one form of life to another. Materially-minded as we are, we are apt to think of this change as something vague, with no real foundation to it. We see a graphic instance of this common error in the illustrated papers where the spirit is often depicted as a spiral column of smoke at the top of which appears the picture of a strangely distorted human face. Nothing could be further from the truth than this misrepresentation. A disembodied spirit appears, feels, thinks and acts just exactly as I did in my first experience "out of the body." The spirit body, which in form and appearance is an exact duplicate of the material body, is composed of a substance as fine as that of the material body is coarse. Its fine substance is attuned to vibrations whose rapidity our bodily senses cannot perceive. Moreover, to the spirit, the astral body feels just as natural and substantial as did the material body when it was inhabited.

When I stood before the mirror in the bathroom and admired the appearance of my new body, I felt just as real as I felt when I was inside that mortal form that was lying on the bed in the other room. As I clenched and unclenched my hand, as I turned around, as I walked through the hall, I felt power and vitality surging through every part of the body. There were no new, terrifying sensations. The only perceptible change was a strange, rather delightful lightness and buoyancy. Not only are all of the sensations of the former body—sight, sound, touch, taste and smell—present in the new body, but they have become greatly intensified. The spirit sees everything in the material life as well as everything in the spirit life, but in the spirit life there are not the limitations of vision characteristic of the material life. As with the spirit eyes, so with the spirit ear. It can detect sounds that would completely elude the material ear.

In like manner the other senses are growing keener. To my astral ears the sounds of music from downstairs took on a new beauty. I had never before known such clarity and

delicacy. Moreover with my astral eyes, I perceived my surroundings with clearness and vividness previously unknown. Furthermore I could stand up in the bathroom and see clearly my husband and the other three men downstairs through all the intervening material barriers. But though the senses by an increased susceptibility react to the change from material to astral, the mind undergoes no transmutation whatsoever except to take on the added facility of being capable of reading others' thoughts. One wakes in the astral as one left the material. So far as my state of mind was concerned I was merely continuing earthly existence. So with all spirits. Many of them, because of this condition of mind together with the natural feeling of their astral body, are deluded into believing that they still live in the material and they endeavor to carry on life as they had always done. Nor does memory suffer in the passing over. In the astral, I could remember every detail of my past material life. I was perfectly aware of my own identity. I knew exactly what had transpired up to the time when I assumed the astral. Such is the case with spirits. This fact was often demonstrated to me by conversations with spirits whom I had known in earth life. They, too, were able to recall even certain trivial details of their past existence with which we were both familiar.

In the Spirit World there is no age. The astral body cannot grow old, hence there is no senility. When a spirit arrives in the astral world, he assumes the appearance characteristic of the full bloom of his manhood. Children entering the spirit life grow in the astral body until they reach maturity. As the astral body is an exact copy of the physical, so men and women remain men and women in the Spirit World. All their characteristics and peculiar masculine and feminine qualities remain unchanged. Spirits, like humans, wear garments: that is an unalterable regulation in the Spirit World; no spirit can ever appear without covering. The appearance of clothes is affected in the following manner: From every spirit emanates a strong aura, a pseudo-phosphoric light. This aura is completely controlled by the mind. Out of this substance is moulded the vesture of the body. At first, right after death, the moulding in most cases is an unconscious act. For no sooner is a spirit separated from the physical body than it is in some manner dressed, even though the garment be only a sort of a shroud. But as the mind gains control of itself, the act of dressing becomes a conscious act and the fashion of the wearing apparel is largely governed by the individual's taste. Hence, just after death, when the mind is still completely dominated by earthly ideals and habits, the spirits generally effect the fashions of the clothes which were worn previous to passing over. So the first thing to catch my eye in my first wandering in the astral was the strange spectacle of spirits who appeared as mortals in earthly raiment walking everywhere.

In the Spirit World, the color of the aura defines the quality of the spirit. All darker colors denote a low state of development. As the spirit progresses upward the colors of the aura become continually brighter. These aura colors of course determine also the color of the spirit garment. Hence the character, quality, and development of the spirit are denoted by the color of the garment.

Some of the departed spirits are at once fully aware that they are able to reflect on their condition just as I was able to reflect on mine. Other spirits suspect dimly that something strange has overtaken them but they refuse absolutely to accept the realization and in order to shut it more completely out of their minds they deliberately continue their familiar activity of the world. Thus with their minds ill-attuned to their conditions they seem unable to reason clearly about

their state until by slow degrees they are adjusted to it. The majority of spirits however are in so confused a state of mind that they do not suspect at all the great change they have undergone. No sooner are they out of their earthly form than they proceed at once to live their life along the old familiar lines. The business man immediately starts for his office to direct affairs, wondering constantly at the delay in the execution of his orders. The traveler laden with baggage, as he thinks, looks for the train which shall carry him on his usual route. The judge places himself on the bench ready to listen to the pleas. But somehow matters do not concur to his satisfaction. The lawyer hunts for his client, but either he is unable to find him or else he makes no connection with the proper court room. The professor eagerly lectures his class and wonders angrily why the class does not pay him the customary attention. The hostess anxiously attempts to gather her guests together for the party she had planned, but success does not crown her efforts. The mechanic and the worker trot cheerfully to their places of work, but nothing seem to go right. Here some spirits will enter their accustomed stores to purchase something only to lose sight of the clerk or to discover that they have forgotten the money wherewith to effect the purchase. Others will enter the old familiar restaurant, sit down at a table and give the waiter the order for their favorite dishes. But they find the waiter so disrespectful that he either ignores them completely or fails to bring the desired food. Disgusted with such service they leave the place to try elsewhere. But a similar result greets every effort. So they all continue in their diverse customary activities of earthly life only to find constantly some inexplicable barriers existing between them and their desires. They live as in that dream in which one attempts accustomed actions only to find oneself bewilderingly baffled in every futile attempt. They are filled with surprise that relatives and friends ignore them, and that their usual aims fail completely. Yet no one attempts to disillusion them. First of all, it is not permitted to do that as the sudden shock of such information volunteered to an ignorant spirit would have disastrous results. Furthermore most spirits would not listen to such talk; they would stoutly and angrily deny that there was anything unusual the matter with them. Therefore at first there is no questioning and everyone must there, as here, dispel his own illusions and slowly formulate his own ideas. For the mind suffers no change in death.

Everywhere in my journeys I found these new citizens of Spirit Land thronging the streets of cities, passing in and out of houses, traveling on trains and voyaging on steamers. In fact, wherever mortals habitate there are to be found also denizens of the Spirit World. So in reality, there are as many spirits inhabiting this earth as there are mortals. It was a strange sight to me, able as I was to reflect on the strangeness of the situation, to look down a busy street and to see spirits and mortals intermingling with one another. Occasionally I would follow into the houses of spirits I had known in the flesh. They would lie down on the bed they had always used, recline on the couch which had so often been a comfort to them, take the usual seat in the easy chair and occupy the old familiar place at the family table. But there was always a troubled expression on their faces because none of those whom they had loved seemed to recognize them. Restless, they would rise, and wander aimlessly out among the crowd in search of something or somebody that could be of some assistance to clear up the mystery. I often talked with such spirits as well as with those who understood the truth of the situation. In almost every instance however they spoke first and then approached me. I shall relate some of these incidents and conversations as they are both interesting and a help in understanding the condition of the spirit mind.

At one time a Mrs. C., a pleasant acquaintance of earth life, approached me. She was

conscious of having passed over. With a gentle smile she said, "I saw your kind feelings for me and realized how you mourned for me when I died, and I thank you so much for the beautiful roses you sent me (meaning to her funeral). If I had known and seen what I do now, things would have been different." She referred to some misunderstanding between us that had been caused by the jealous talk of some of her relatives. Having said this to me she went on her way. I did not reply but felt very pleased. She was a beautiful spirit. Her aura was bright and her dress white. This denoted spiritual development. Another friend, Miss M., was present in her own home when her funeral was going on. I had wandered there out of curiosity. Her mind was very confused and she seemed dazed. She did not realize that she had passed out. Hence she did not comprehend that it was her own body that had been laid out in the coffin. She evidently knew that her parents were grieving sadly because of her. She tried frantically to make them understand that she was right there and that everything was well. Very much puzzled that her parents so completely ignored her, she walked up to me and in a very excited manner inquired, "What is all this fuss about? I am here! I am here!" I could not utter a word to set her right about her condition as it is impossible to volunteer such information to a spirit which has just passed over. Such knowledge must come to them through their own efforts by slow degrees. Finding she could get no assistance from me, my friend turned abruptly and left the house in great distress.

One man I met made a good impression on me. He had been my lawyer in Denmark for many years. He was a man of splendid qualities and sterling character. In addition to being my lawyer he was also a man whom I was proud to call a friend. After I came to America he had faithfully taken care of my affairs in the old country. But suddenly his letters stopped. Although I had never been informed of his decease I felt certain he must have died, for I knew that otherwise he would never have failed me. To my great delight, in one of my wanderings, this friend, Rosengard by name, came right up in front of me. With eyes smiling in sincere friendship he looked steadily at me for a while. It did not take me long to recognize him although when I last saw him on earth he was a man of sixty years and now he was as he had been in the full bloom of his manhood. "Do you remember" he spoke up, "that when you left Denmark I promised you that whatever happened and wherever you were I should always stand by you faithfully?—I kept that promise," he continued, "until I could do so no longer. For when your last letter came I had already passed over. That was the reason why you never received any answer." I knew before he had finished that he had spoken the truth and had acted honorably with me in every way, as a true friend should. With the same kind smile still playing on his face he turned and left me as soon as he had delivered his message. In much joy over having met my good friend under such conditions I stood for a moment watching him disappear. He seemed to be in fairly good condition spiritually as his aura was quite bright. But since he had not been over there very long, he still adorned himself in the fashion he had always followed, namely: a cutaway with the customary striped trousers. Our meeting proved that true friendship exists and lasts beyond the grave.

One woman spirit whom I came across, a Mrs. B., was still ignorant of the fact that she had left earth life. Her mind was full of anger and bitterness because she had found that her husband's professed love through a long married life had been false. "Now," she said, "he lives with a woman who squanders all I helped him to save." I was not interested in hearing more and I quickly departed from her.

I had a rather amusing experience with a man spirit who in earth life had been very prominent in society, business, literature and art. This Mr. H. I had grown to know very well, because of mutual interests which he and my husband possessed. Both of us had been on very friendly terms with him, as well as with his family. Although I had always highly respected this man, I had nursed a certain antipathy for him. This feeling made itself felt again in spirit life. Just as I was crossing an open field I became aware that someone was treading closely upon my heels. Turning around whom should I see but my old friend Mr. H. eagerly watching and following me! Although he had been a very old man when he died, he now appeared young. But I had no difficulty in recognizing him. Strangely enough he still wore his customary gray sack suit. As soon as I had recognized him I quickly and with determination turned my head, quickened my steps and walked straight ahead. However, this snub of mine did not seem to deter him because he kept following me. So it went on for quite a while. Finally I crossed over into a garden where I sat down on a bench, thinking that my unwelcome companion must now be quite ashamed of himself, and that he would leave me. But I was mistaken. He walked right to the bench and took a seat on the other end. Bending forward, and with eyes twinkling, he looked me full in the face, evidently intent on making me regret my coolness and probably hoping that I would condescend to speak to him. But this appealing action of his did not soften my mood. I sat cold and indifferent as a statue. At last he began to speak: "We were well acquainted and friendly in earth life; why can't we continue amicably here?" But without deigning to reply, I rose up haughtily and walked away with grave dignity. For a while my friend followed me but soon I discovered that he had disappeared.

I met and recognized a woman spirit who on earth had been a Royal Queen of modern times. She had enjoyed much power and wide popularity in earth life. Her present life contrasted drably with her former existence. Although her aura was of a fairly bright hue she had adorned herself in the simplest possible way with a kind of shroud which covered her head and body. How different from her royal splendor on earth! She walked around in seemingly stunned bewilderment, ignorant of having passed over. Her power was gone and no attention was paid to her. She simply could not understand her present predicament. Her state of mind seemed so confused and dazed that thinking was impossible. She did not notice me. I simply watched her for a while out of curiosity.

In strong contrast to the appearance and condition of this royal personage was the bearing of another Queen who on earth had been greatly beloved for the kindness and generous deeds which had filled her long life. I met her in that palace where she had always lived. She had stayed there until now because, as I understand it, she had evidently not yet completely disassociated herself from her past life of well-doing. She confided to me, "There is some little work yet I would have liked to have done and I am sorry I did not get it finished." It was delightful to be near such a lovely spirit. Her aura was very bright and she was clad in a pure white dress of beautiful design. I had the feeling that this noble spirit would not stay much longer there but that she would gravitate to the spirit regions where she would fit in better and where she would be given opportunity to continue her noble work, thus furthering the development so well started in earth life.

I received a different impression from the appearance of her husband, the former king, who came into the palace while I was with her. His aura was not bright. Indeed it tended to be

dark. He was dressed in a frock coat with striped trousers. He did not seem to realize fully the conditions under which he lived. He carried himself with royal dignity and seemed rather surprised to see me with his queen. The one thing that he instinctively realized was evidently the benefit which he might derive from association with the lovely spirit that was once his queen. But in a kind yet firm manner, she refused him the privilege of staying near her. With seemingly wounded dignity, he went from us with heavy steps and soon I left the presence of the former queen.

A terrible state of mind was evidenced by the spirit of a young boy who on passing sneered at me. "I will split your head open and let out your brains," he said casting a frightful, malicious look upon me. This boy had just passed over in the midst of awful crimes. He still believed himself in the flesh and evidently wished to continue his devilish pleasures. His color was very dark. Fortunately the laws governing spirit life restrain one spirit from promiscuous interference with another spirit. If such were not the case this boy would have carried on his fiendish crimes in the Spirit World as well as on earth.

The following incident was extremely interesting to me because I actually witnessed the personality pass in and out of the physical body in question several times and finally leave it. Mr. G. was well known to both my husband and myself, although it could not be said that we were on friendly terms with him. He was a man who indulged liberally in liquor, a failing which mastered him time and again. Through some special trouble not necessary to state here he lost his head completely and started a career of drink and dope to which he finally succumbed. On the night he died, I happened to be out in my spirit body. Passing his home I went in. In the bed lay Mr. G. in terrible convulsions caused by an overdose of dope and liquor. Beside his bed stood two men who, I knew, were also trying to do something for him. (This was later verified through the effort of my husband.) Suddenly I saw Mr. G. rise up in his astral body and step out entirely from his physical counterpart. At once he started an eager and thorough search all around the bed for a half-filled bottle of whiskey and a small bottle of narcotics which he had secreted. He found them and endeavored to lift them to his mouth. Failing in this, an expression of chagrin spread over his face. Then he went up to his body and swiftly he connected with it once more. In a short while he again stepped out of his mortal form only to go through the same performance. This he did several times and it was strange to observe that every time he left his body it became still in death and that as soon as he connected with it, it writhed in fearful convulsions. Finally he came out for the last time and just as he started to look for the bottles again he suddenly caught sight of me. Straightening up he looked me full in the eyes with an expression of stupefied surprise. Then turning away, he staggered out of the house completely confused in his mind and ignorant of the fact that he had left behind his physical form which he was never to inhabit again. It was significant that each time that he stepped out of his body his aura instantly covered him with a dress similar to a sack suit he always wore. But it was of brown color, denoting the lack of any spiritual development.

Mr. R., a young spirit who on earth had been a well-known actor, seemed perfectly happy and blissfully ignorant of having passed over. He was dressed in a fashionable greyish sack suit with the same fastidious care which characterized his costume in earth life. As he came towards me he began an elegantly exuberant tango, waving what appeared to be a beautiful flower in his hand. This he had evidently picked as he thought from his own estate. As he danced past me he

looked me full in the face and lavished upon me a most delightful smile. Turning I watched him disappear in the distance in great haste. Wondering to what destination he was heading at that speed, I decided out of curiosity to follow him. Presently we were in New York City and straight forward he went to a well-known night cafe which he had frequented when in the flesh. Entering, he placed himself at a table, crossed his legs and nonchalantly began a survey of the guests present while at the same time he endeavored to attract the attention of one of the waiters. There were present a good many mortal guests and quite a few spirits, some of them seated at tables. A couple of them were standing behind the chairs of some mortals resting their elbows on their shoulders. And one woman spirit had perched herself on top of the piano. I had taken a seat in a corner where I could better observe Mr. R., who kept turning his head, eyeing everybody, and still waiting to be served. Having satisfied my curiosity I now rose to depart when suddenly Mr. R. caught sight of me. Evidently my looks must have pleased him, for with a smiling face he came rushing over to me and in a boyish enthusiasm he quickly enfolded me in his arms. Just as indignant at such an impertinence as I would have been in the flesh I tore myself free and hastily left the place.

Highly significant was the following encounter with a spirit who found life in the spirit world entirely different from what she had expected. I had been well acquainted with Miss W. I had liked her very much and felt much grieved at hearing of her death. On one of my astral journeys some time after her decease I was drawn by a strange power towards the house where she had lived. I entered it, passed up the stairway and went into the room that had been her bedroom. There reclining on a couch I found my former friend. She gave me a recognizing glance but otherwise she evidenced no sign of animation. It did not take me long to discover that she was in a fearfully depressed and dejected mood. Filled with much sympathy for her, I advanced to her side and placing my arm around her shoulder I inquired concerning the cause of her troubles. At this she broke down entirely. Dropping her head on my shoulder she gave herself up to bitter grief. After a while she slowly gained control of herself and in a halting manner she began to relate to me that she had just come to the realization that she had passed out of earth life. With this came the shocking discovery that life in Spirit World was not at all what she had expected or what she believed it would be. Furthermore through knowledge already gained by experience and from information volunteered by more developed spirits from whom she had inquired she found herself ill-prepared to tackle the problem of that life. She discovered that she was almost totally lacking in the development of those very qualities needed for advancement. She found herself all alone, facing a life of stern realities where everyone carries outside oneself, in full view, the evidence of his or her spiritual qualities and exact state of development in the color emanated. To add to her distress, she now could see that all her friends of earth life had been false. Not a kind thought from them had followed her and in her bitterness she blamed them to an extent for her sad predicament. "I hate them all!" she exclaimed, for she had a great many friends and had been very popular. "With their false and lying flattery they helped to mislead me." Not knowing just what to do to be of help to her I exclaimed impulsively, "Well! W., don't you know how much your mother loves you and how much she grieves for you?" "Yes," she replied wearily, "she is not to be blamed for this. But—what of all the others?" And then she relapsed into her former silence and gloom. With no further response from her I kept on talking, advising her as best I could. I told her that by setting herself right and by study and by hard work she could develop herself and thus she would eventually succeed and be happy. However, my advice did not seem to be of any avail. But my friend seemed to be benefited by the sympathy I

had shown—a sympathy she knew to be genuine. Rising from the couch she placed her head on my shoulder and I threw my arm around her waist as if to support her. In this manner we slowly descended the stairway, left the house and soon we parted, she seemingly as despondent as when I first found her.

The length of time which some spirits spend on earth was effectively demonstrated to me by the following rather humorous episode: I was visiting in New York City, and one night just as I was on the point of going to sleep I became conscious of a strange sensation. It seemed as if some one was fingering my hair or, rather, as if an electric apparatus giving off a slight current was being moved all over my scalp. I quickly fell into the condition usual to me when I was about to leave my physical body and immediately I stood on the floor beside it. To my great surprise I saw the whole room filled with Indian spirits, all dressed in their customary garb of two or three hundred years ago. They had been attempting to scalp me, according to their usual custom. Now in the astral, on the same footing with them, I took advantage of my superiority over them spiritually to order them to leave the room as quickly as possible. They obeyed instantly. In a helter-skelter fashion they tumbled out of the room and building gesticulating vigorously while they angrily swore and cursed at the White Man. They talked so rapidly in their own dialects that they sounded like a whole army of geese frightened by some strange occurrence. Although they spoke in their own language I understood perfectly what they said because as soon as one is in the astral one becomes a linguist. One understands perfectly any language spoken on earth. Curious to know where all those Indians would go I followed them. The way led down town and into the centre of what is now called "the roaring forties." There, into the basement of one of the theatres, they all went. I stepped into the place. It was packed with these spirits squatting or lying on the floor or standing up, all excitedly taking part in what I assumed to be a war council. On the walls of the basement of this theatre, in the men's smoking room, are depicted scenes of Indians and early settlers of Manhattan, conferring and dealing with each other. I learned later that the site of the theatre I have mentioned marked the spot where an early Indian tribe had pitched their camp. These Indian spirits had haunted the earth now for almost three hundred years and they believed even yet that they were still in earth life and that they were ill-used by the White Man. That is what I understood from their conversation. They were angry because the pale-face had taken every bit of Manhattan away from them. Frantic in their wrath, they started out regularly to scalp somebody. So if the patrons of this theatre should at any time, providing they are "touchy," feel a queer sensation in their hair, they will know the reason.

Now let me tell you of one of the strangest incidents in all my astral wanderings on earth. One of the recent Presidents had died. The whole country had taken a special interest in all the news pertaining to his death and funeral. This aroused in me a strong desire to know how he might feel in the spirit body. So upon the first occasion when I left my physical body, I headed straight for the White House. Instead of immediately finding the spirit of the recently deceased President, as I had expected, to my surprise I came across the spirit of a President who had departed this life more than a hundred years ago. He had been one of the first Executives of this country. He appeared to be a stately, aristocratic-looking personage, fastidiously dressed in the height of the fashion of his time with knee breeches, silk stockings and buckled shoes. His elaborately embroidered waistcoat was half concealed by a delicate lace ruche which fell from the collar of his coat. He was seated in a huge chair, cross-legged, conversing with his wife who

sat in front of him. She was also garbed in a highly fashionable attire. A long wide skirt fell from a wasp-like waist and tight-fitting bodice. Her hair was done high on her head. Her every movement was marked with the exquisite grace and refinement of the aristocrat. As I passed through the room the old President looked at me with cold hauteur, a glance of mingled annoyance and of curiosity, as if he resented my intrusion and questioned my purpose. But my presence was speedily ignored by the old President and his wife, as still another spirit entered the room—that of the recently deceased President. He seemed in a perfect daze. I could judge from his stupor that he was absolutely unaware of what had actually happened to him. He seemed unable to reason or to think clearly. He evidently tried, with great effort, to collect his thoughts that he might comprehend his predicament. He could not understand why strange visitors were present without his invitation. But the tense situation did not last long, for the old President now rose slowly to his feet. Advancing a few steps, and assuming an authoritative air he placed himself directly in front of the newly arrived President. Without any display of ceremony he addressed him: "Well, I am not going so far as to order you out of here; you may stay until you find yourself, but after that you must depart." However, this abrupt greeting of the old President did not seem to ruffle the newly arrived spirit, probably because he seemed unable to understand clearly what was going on about him. After this spirit had left the apartment, the old President condescendingly confided: "I do not like this spirit and I have never liked the way in which he ran the Country." Then he turned and left the room. Sizing up the situation quickly, I realized that this spirit couple had been bound to the White House all these years and had prevented themselves from advancing simply because their minds had been and were still securely linked to that environment where they in the flesh had enjoyed so much power and glory. They were jealously regarding everything which had been and was even yet happening in that famous place. Until they develop a more idealistic conception of existence, they will remain in their old limited environment. Yet they were guilty of no great or malicious wrong; they were earthbound simply because of their low ideals.

I might recount many more such conversations which I had with newly arrived spirits. But I think that I have presented sufficient material to give the reader a clear idea of the state of mind, of the ideals, and of the conduct of those spirits who are in the first stage of their new life. As the reader has already seen, the time spent by the spirits on earth before they gravitate to the sphere of spirit life varies greatly.

Before taking final leave of the earth they all hover about their old environment. For those generously endowed with highly developed spiritual qualities, the period of transition to large attainments is short. Others less developed are chained more firmly to the interests of their old life. But the majority of spirits remain earthbound for protracted periods because they are unaware that any change has taken place. Some faintly suspect an alteration but they refuse to acknowledge it because of their love for all that which savors of the past. There are many, also, who return from the spirit abodes to spend more time on the earth because they have made no progress there. To the earth return also numerous evil spirits who find there larger fields for their insidious practices. These spirits of evil become more or less permanent residents. Counteracting the malefactions of these zealous evil spirits there is a great army of highly developed spirits who constantly pass and repass between the spirit realm and the earth on errands of mercy. These spirits constitute the army of the good. The good and the evil spirits are continually at war, and

each struggles for domination over the human race. Thus the spirit population of the earth is greater than the mortal population, and its life is as cosmopolitan and multifarious.

The places where the spirits journey after leaving the earth are great spheres or planes arranged in a descending order of development. Each of these planes is an independent world of enormous dimensions. I do not know how many such worlds actually exist for I have never penetrated farther than the fourth. To the first of these planes all spirits eventually gravitate. As far as I can perceive, this plane is situated in close proximity to our solar system. In my travels to these spheres and in space it was necessary for me to be accompanied by a guide. As soon as I passed from my physical body ready to go on these journeys a guide, always the same individual was by my side.

What interest this spirit guide may take in me or what laws govern his guidance, I do not know. But he is always at my right hand; he directs my way; and from him comes my knowledge of the realms we visit. He carefully fixes the time for my return to my body, lest an absence too prolonged should make return impossible, and lest death of the body should ensue. It is as if a current of mysterious influence united astral and physical body, a current which gradually weakens as the period of absence from the physical body is prolonged. My guide is a figure of much stateliness, tall and well-proportioned. He is dressed somewhat in the fashion of the old Roman nobles, in a tunic reaching to the feet. He is distinguished by an air of great authority, recognized wherever he goes. He calls me Carollo for Caroline.

THE FIRST SPIRIT PLANE

My First visit was not to the plane where spirits arrive immediately on leaving earth, but to levels of higher life and development. What I saw there led me to ask to see the first plane, and it seems best to describe that first plane before I picture the glories of the third and fourth plane, which as I have told you, I actually saw first. The first plane is the place of those just released from our life, where they may learn the way to higher levels, and it is also the place of earthbound souls, some of whom seemed never destined to go farther. It was when I was about to leave the fourth plane, that I asked to be taken to the first plane. All that I had seen overwhelmed me—the life of the spirits, the wonderful beauty of their surroundings, the love that governs their relations, their dignity, grace and serenity. The cry of delight that rose to my lips was stifled by a sudden thought of pity for those who knew not these glories. "Where," I asked, "are those spirits who may not enter here? Where dwell the evil spirits? And where do spirits first arrive?" My guide answered, "You shall see." In a moment we were speeding through space, through endless voids of darkness. The phrase "A great gulf is fixed" passed through my mind. But no word was spoken. At last light appeared in the distance, and soon we set foot in a world, dark and dull compared with the sphere I had just left, but not unlike this world in which we live, with its open country, its cities with streets and buildings, and its life moving in familiar paths. This similarity, I learned, was due to the fact that many of the newly arrived spirits are still ignorant of their mortal change, and strive to continue their wonted (habitual) activities, until they are disillusioned by the failure of their hollow pursuits. Everything at first conspires there to confirm this mistake. Even the light, though brighter than on earth, is not so bright as to dispel the illusion.

I found myself in a city of gigantic size, its streets running between continuous buildings in seemingly endless lines, save where they led on to great open squares. The traffic was denser than in any earthly city. Throngs of spirits hurried past in every direction. Multitudes and more multitudes of them pushed by the spot where I had stationed myself. They were, I learned, newcomers. They seemed to me confused, disturbed, endlessly seeking. On their faces I read bewilderment, agitation, and vague desire as if they were set upon reaching an uncertain goal. Most of them, still unaware they had left this earth, were seeking to discover why they were suddenly surrounded with strangers in a city like any earthly city, yet somewhat more than strange. Puzzled surprise, wonder, distress, incredulity, and a dawning apprehension, peered from these passing faces. A few who understood or suspected their state sought only confirmation and to reach their destination, as yet unknown. All were dressed as on earth, for the aura from the astral body, shaped by the spirit mind, clothes the spirits with the familiar vesture of earth, and these newcomers were still completely governed by the ideals of their former life. So the multitudes of beings, dressed as on earth, moved by the purpose of earth, pressed through the streets lined with houses of all kinds and for all purposes as in an earthly city. The action of the surging throng seemed earthly too. The many newly arrived spirits evidence their desire to pursue their life as they had pursued it in the past. Most of the spirits come to the realization that they are no longer on the earth only by continued disappointments, which gradually destroy the values they have been accustomed to place on earthly things. Thus this plane seems as a kind of clearinghouse for the newly arrived. Those most highly developed spiritually on earth pass almost directly to higher spheres; others less developed but anxious to advance prepare for advancement by intense training under the guidance of spirits from higher levels who have voluntarily chosen the task of helpers. Finally there linger here, perhaps permanently, the earthbound souls—those whose minds are open only to desires and influences of earth, having no wish for spiritual development; those also who deserve the characterization of the Lady in Comus: "Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced!" The different classes of spirits on this plane live in separate places, and the spirit helpers see that no class mingles with and hampers any other class.

These helping spirits are to be seen everywhere and are easily recognized, for their aura envelops them in a ball of white light which indicates their high spiritual state. They are commanding, yet sympathetic figures, whose faces reveal their spiritual qualities. All are clad in long white robes reaching to the feet. The men usually wear a form of tunic, and the women a simple but very feminine dress with a head covering which flows down the back to the bottom. The duties of these helpers are manifold. They are always ready to help, whether it be in the way of instruction, or of giving strength, encouragement or sympathy, or by performing any of the deeds that spring from the pure spiritual love which fills their minds. No cry for help or assistance goes unheeded by them, but neither is their help or work forced upon any one.

In that world as here everyone is left free to carve out his own destiny. Before assistance can be given, the seeker must possess a sincere desire for improvement in terms familiar to us on earth. Self-mastery, truth, justice and principally pure spiritual love—those are the qualities of character on which rests the life of the higher spheres. Gain in these qualities here is gain there. Mere intellect, culture, and knowledge are there of no value except to give those higher virtues force, and to advance them to a greater effectiveness which ripens into the fruit of high responsibility, service, and authority. To this end new spirits must direct their efforts and prepare

themselves for the progress they desire into the sublime life of higher spirit worlds, ere they are directed and assisted on their way.

A large proportion of the spirits dwelling on the first plane are those who are struggling by hard and sincere effort to raise themselves to a higher level, to master the ideas that prevail in more advanced spiritual states, and to conform to newly-formed ideals. But there are also many who have no desire so to improve and indeed no comprehension of what improvement means. On earth these spirits had no vision of spiritual things and they were wholly absorbed in material pleasures, worldly success or base desires. Those aspects of life which were at best of only passing value had absorbed their efforts. With the eyes of the soul still blind, they now try only to live again their earthly interests and joys. And those whose desires were evil strive to attract others, both spirits and those still in our world, to their own false standards. With them life does not advance, but only futilely repeats itself. Among these earthbound souls are the suicides. These, by nature of their crime, must have been those for whom hard conditions of existence on earth swallowed up all else till black despair cut off every ray of spiritual light. They bring hither the same state of mind, and, deaf and blind to higher consolation, they struggle back to earth to undergo again the horror of self-murder at the very spot where the extremity of despair formerly overtook them. The same retribution overtakes those who have committed murder or other crimes of atrocious violence. For the earth-bound souls bring with them their world as they have made it.

Such is the permanent population of this realm. Anxious to see for myself the details of life in this sphere, I sought the dwelling places of the earthbound souls. The contrast between their existence and that of the progressive spirits was startling. In the faces of the earthbound spirits is expressed all their evil passions and desires, all their low or earthly aims. Their aura is very dark in color, contrasting strongly with that of progressing spirits, amongst whom light colors prevail—white, cream, pink, pale blue and many others. For as the spirit becomes brighter, the aura expresses the change by its increasing brightness. But among the earth-bound spirits one sees only dark auras and dark clothing, and always of the fashion worn on earth, just as their faces carry still the plain stamp of earthly lusts and weaknesses. The dark cloud that rests on their faces seems heavily charged with the despair and malice of their evil deeds. I entered a house and found that room led on to room in a straight and seemingly endless line. Every room was the home of a spirit when not seeking the old haunts on earth. Many of the dwellers were strange and terrible. In one room sat the squat and ugly form of a woman who on earth had kept a house of ill fame. She had been the ruin of the body and soul of many an unfortunate girl. Now, though in the Spirit World, her one horrible desire was to continue her former infamous career. She could still influence young girls to go astray and lead them to a gutter life, or she could take possession of them and compel them to ruin. As I passed she appeared to be sitting before a mirror painting her face. She was wearing the style and form of dress and finery of her profession on earth, and her face was dark with vulgar malice. She gave me a vicious look, as if to say, "Who are you and what do you want here?" Then she turned insolently away to continue painting her face. I shuddered as I hurried from her presence to another room, where I found tenants of many types, pathetic, or repulsive, or horrible.

In one room a lady was pacing the floor with slow deliberation. Her stately figure, her aristocratic and refined manner caught and held my attention. She was dressed as a fashionable

lady of the middle of last century, and was tall. Her face bore evidence of having been very beautiful on earth. Her personality aroused in me a sympathy so strong and immediate that I exclaimed, "Why is she here?" "You may ask her," said my guide. Approaching her, I asked, "Why are you here?" With a graceful gesture she replied with regret, yet with apparent resignation, "How could I leave these?" I looked down at the point she designated and saw with surprise a wonderful collection of sparkling jewels on which she fixed her eyes. I understood: the jewels which she had owned on earth still possessed her soul. They held her now as then, and linked her to earth with a chain that only she could break. Hence her residence among the earth-bound souls. I looked at her sympathetically and went on my way. Such spirits can look forward only to an existence of despondency or misery. They have made their own conditions, and only a realization of the worthlessness of their ideals, and a sincere desire to free themselves from them can release them to a brighter existence. Too often among the earth-bound souls no such desire exists, for many are wholly dominated by the desire of evil.

I came across many such. One of them particularly attracted my attention because he was such an unusually horrible specimen of this type of spirits. Evil seemed to have actually deformed him. His face was ill-proportioned—far too wide for its height. There was hardly anything one could call a nose, and the mouth stretched from ear to ear. The ears, abnormally large, hung below the chin. Beneath an extremely flat forehead nearer the temples than the nose, was set a large pair of eyes that shone with a diabolical malice which froze the very spirit within me. His face expressed only evil, low lust and ruthless hatred. I clung to my guide for protection. The arms of this misshapen spirit dangled loosely from the grotesque frame. His fingers, gnarled and rough, resembled the claws of an eagle. The color of this spirit was dark brown, the most undesirable color in the Spirit World, for it indicates the lowest state of existence. His robe of the same color was caught at the wrist in such a manner that, when he lifted his arms, he resembled a huge flying bat. My guide explained to me that such a spirit spent most of his time on the earth, endeavoring to win over mortals to a life of sin and evil such as he had himself indulged in. Such are the army of evil spirits whose only work is to sway mortals to low desires or to possess their minds for purposes of malefactions. They are the army of wrong, in whom love of good has atrophied until they recoil from the high things of the spirit as from an element deadly to their nature. Change from this state is hard indeed, but not impossible, for there, as here, everyone is left to carve out his own destiny. In himself repose the seeds of change. He alone can make them grow. But the farther such a soul has departed from good, the harder it is to return. Every evil deed demands its compensation, and the balance must be struck in the soul. In this sense only is there Heaven and Hell. "What we are is what becomes of us!" Yet the slightest sigh for change is heard and guidance given.

While passing through the realm of the earth-bound I came upon scenes yet more pathetic and tragic, which I would gladly erase from my memory, were that possible. A woman spirit helper approached and silently motioned me to follow. I felt her authority, and followed her through densely populated parts alternating with empty spaces. As we passed along I studied her silently, for no word was spoken between us, she seeming engrossed in her own reflections. Her flowing dress was shining white, her head covering fell gracefully down her back; and her hands rested on her breast. In form and face she was very beautiful, and a bright white aura enveloped her with radiance. But it was of her spiritual qualities that I was chiefly conscious. Purity, love and sympathy seemed to emanate from her as the perfume from a flower. Strength of intellect

and high authority clothed her in dignity. My mind was divided between admiration for my guide and speculation as to where she was taking me. Presently our journey ended before the huge gates of an enclosure of prodigious size. Before the gates stood a tall, silent, and motionless figure, evidently a guard. His expression was austere and passionless and added to the impression of desolation that pervaded the whole scene. Only the presence of my guide gave me courage to remain. On an order from him the two ponderous gates slowly swung back and as slowly closed behind us. What I beheld was strange, and no less depressing and horrible. The vast enclosure was a place of detention, a hospital, a house of correction for those spirits who arrived with minds clouded or shattered by the use of drugs or liquor, or by indulgence in their evil passions on earth. Here their minds, and often their astral bodies, remained crippled as on earth. On couches, on the floor, or huddled in corners lay or crouched these wrecks of humanity, blind of spirit and shrivelled of limb, often entirely unclothed, with stupor or dull hopelessness written in their eyes. The atmosphere of death, desolation, and despair filled my soul with anguish. My woman guide suddenly stopped. Here before us on a bench lay a shape twisted and deformed. Its motionless silence seemed horrible; the face was terribly distorted; and the limbs a random heap. Yet I recognized with horror the face of one whose life once closely touched mine. I looked at the helper. Why had she shown me this man, the thought of whom brought up such painful memories? The helper's grave eyes met mine. "Can you not help him?" she said. "You once stood close to him on earth." For sympathy and love are necessary for even a spirit of highly developed nature to assist an earth-bound soul. "Yes," I said, "I was once close to this spirit, but I am so no longer." Yet, not to neglect a possible chance to be of aid, I conquered my antipathy sufficiently to touch him three times upon the head, calling him by the old familiar name. It was of no avail. He remained sunk in his stupor, and the helper said sadly, "I fear you can do nothing," knowing well the reason for my failure. For on earth I had contracted intense dislike for this person, nor could I yet shake off this repugnance. Hence there was between us no point of contact, for sympathy and love is the first step to spiritual help.

The helper motioned me to follow and again we slowly passed on towards the gates. Here my eyes caught sight of the figure of a young man, apparently of Latin race, reclining against the wall in a half-sitting posture. His features betrayed the terrible sufferings he had undergone and which he was still experiencing. His eyes roved from side to side with an expression of sneering, malicious resentment which did not veil the hopeless despair in their depths. He had undoubtedly been scrutinizing those who entered for a long time in the hope of some assistance. Now his supplicating gaze was turned on me. But my recent experience told me that I could offer him no aid. As I was passing out, I turned and again reviewed the harrowing scene, and exclaimed, sadly and perhaps with a note of protest in my tone, "But why are all these here? Who has brought them into this terrible place?" "No one but themselves," said the helper gravely. "Their deeds have placed them there." I asked no more questions but followed the helper in silence.

I had now left behind not only the abode of highly developed spirits who wait only to be guided to higher planes; the thronging dwelling places of those earnestly striving for further spiritual growth; but also the depressing realms of earth-bound souls. And now I came to the dwellings of a multitude of quite different type. Here dwelt those who are not bound by material things of earth, but who are yet of but rudimentary spiritual development. On earth these people were respectable, trustworthy, and even kind. Evil did not tempt them. They lived the pleasant life of the pleasant portion of the world. If they thought of their spiritual life at all, it was with

approval, for were they not good citizens, good neighbors? But on the whole they gave little consideration to the things of the spirit. Most certainly they did not prefer the unseen things to the seen and known. Their souls were fallow (uncultivated) fields season after season. They did not grow noxious weeds, but neither did they ripen the golden wheat of the soul. Hence, though now in a realm where infinite possibilities open ahead, their progress is slow. They live as on earth in pleasant houses with delightful gardens, surprisingly like their surroundings here, in touch with friends to whom they are courteous and neighborly, dressing as they did on earth, and distinguished by the bright and cheerful colors of their aura, in strong contrast to the earth-bound souls. But they are content with their earth-made ambitions, and with the easy virtue of pleasant, unheroic life, unmindful of the spiritual struggle that marks everywhere the upward road. Sometimes because of mutual sympathy they live together in groups of three or four or more, but more often man is attracted to woman somewhat as on this earth, though there the bond is purely spiritual. Here I found living an aunt and a cousin of my own. On earth this lady had long presided over the house of my cousin, a wealthy banker, who, like her, never married. Their long and harmonious life together had produced an ease of intercourse that made its continuance natural. So in the Spirit World I found them again living contentedly, and reproducing as far as might be the details of their earthly life. Even the good-natured superiority of the aristocratic class that they represented was reproduced in their new life, its narrow human sympathies, its entire respectability, and its rectitude. No atmosphere could well be more hostile to change, and their development had been slow though my aunt's was clearly somewhat more rapid than my cousin's. He knew me, and evidently knew the conditions of my visit to the Spirit World, for drawing me close to him he said, "Caroline, you have done well." "Where is Aunt Herlig?" I asked. "She is out doing some work of mercy. She often goes for that purpose," he replied. Evidently she had progressed far enough to set her feet on the right path.

Here I also came across a girl recently arrived in the Spirit World, who on earth had been one of my friends. She recognized me and seemed interested to see me. In talking with her I felt that her mind was in a peculiar state of haziness concerning her own position. She had joined a number of friends and acquaintances from earth who had all lived in the same city and had all attended the same church. All of them were in the same confused and uncertain condition of mind. They had evidently banded together as would a number of people from the same place when stranded in a strange country surrounded by strange people and conditions. They kept together for mutual encouragement, advice, and to help each other solve their new problems. They gathered at regular intervals in the same meeting place, carrying on endless discussions in an attempt to arrive at some conclusion concerning the meaning of the whole affair, what they ought to do, and how it should be done. At their gatherings they observed some of the ceremonies and formalities which they used in their church services on earth. But these meetings always ended in a free-for-all discussion. I was present at one of these discussions and it was interesting to see how eager all were to propound their own theories. One tall man would get up and, beginning with "Well now, let me explain. This is the way I think it is," would go on for a while, when another would interrupt him with a "No, I don't believe it is so. Now I am certain this is the solution." And he would for a time propound his ideas emphasizing his words with the pounding of his right fist against the palm of his left hand. He would have gone some way in his discourse when a woman would interrupt and express her doubt as to the preceding speaker's views. And so it went on until each had had his say. When they all had said something they were

no further than when they had begun. Then they would disperse in all directions only to drift back again to find out if anyone had received any new information.

One thing I noted with particular interest: Many preferences and prejudices of earth still prevail there, though not intensely enough to hamper development. Thus the lives of race and nationality commonly prevail but in a spirit of friendly mutual agreement. These seem the more closely to reproduce the ways of their former lives. I learned this when I asked why I saw no Orientals. Finding that they naturally preferred to live together, though they are under no compulsion to do so, I was impelled to visit their quarters. I found them living here much as they lived in their own lands, with houses and gardens in Oriental style, exercising the characteristic courtesy, grace and hospitality which appeared in their delightful attentions to me. They gave me delicious fruit and a delectable drink. It was exceedingly delightful to walk in their lovely Oriental gardens, filled with specimens of exotic flowers, and I was delighted beyond measure with their entire treatment of me. I thought to show my appreciation by leaving with them some slight gift. This I quietly did, and believed I had succeeded in my plan, but on reaching the confines of this quarter, I was embarrassed to find one of my Japanese friends standing before me with my little gift. This he handed me with a smile and a low bow, and disappeared before I could protest.

I did not, of course, see all of this first plane, but I saw enough to know that there every spirit is free to follow his own ideals and inclinations. His destiny is in his own hands, limited only by his past life. But since spiritual barriers are the strongest of all, class cannot mingle with class. Should an earth-bound spirit stray into the region of higher souls his darker aura would betray him and a current, as of electric energy, proceeding from the first spirit he would meet, would sweep him back to his own place. There is but one path upward—that of personal effort to become fit for a higher type of existence. To this the activities of the place are directed; and for this end order and discipline prevail. For no one is permitted to interfere with the efforts of others. On the whole, life is good and pleasant among those on the upward path, but words cannot express the dark hopelessness of the completely earthbound souls. I found no "Heaven" nor "Hell"—except as it exists in the spirit.

THE SECOND SPIRIT PLANE

With my guide I now passed on to the second spirit plane. This great realm I found to be merely a continuation of the first plane, except for the fact that there were there no earthbound souls. Its inhabitants were working for higher attainments and there were many spirit helpers to teach and assist, and guide the steady flow of newcomers through their varied periods of residence, until these learners were ready for higher planes. Thus the inhabitants were constantly changing, as those who move upward were replaced by others. Life there was pleasant, and varied to suit different tastes, some choosing to dwell in cities; others in the open country among the fields, delightfully established in their beautiful white houses of highly artistic architecture and ornamentation situated in the midst of charming gardens filled with masses of the loveliest flowers.

The higher spiritual attainments of this plane demonstrated itself by the bright and lighter hues of the aura as well as by the elevation of the ideals of the new inhabitants. The dress of the

women, I noted, resembled closely that of the spirit helper of the hospital, while the garb of the men was similar to that of my guide, a flowing garment like a toga. For there is, in the second plane, no desire to garb oneself in clothes of the general earthly appearance—an evidence of the weakening of earthly ideals. We spent little time there. As I have explained, I visited the third and fourth planes before I went, at my own request, to the lower spheres. Hence these two realms were the last I saw in the Spirit World.

THE THIRD PLANE

The third plane was a fair and glorious world, impossible of adequate description in the terms of our worldly speech. Those who there resided were highly perfected spirits; for to be admitted they must have reached an advanced stage of development. Nor was it possible that others should enter, for their mental states would have betrayed their presence.

The light of this plane was of surpassing, all-pervading brightness, and, united with that given by each spirit, was dazzling in its brilliancy. Wonderful beauty everywhere enthralled the eye. The place was like a great garden, with bushes and shrubbery of gorgeous hues, and stately trees, some like magnificent palms, others of forms unknown on earth, as if Nature and Art had been perfectly blended to charm the eye. About the houses of the happy ones bloomed a wealth of flowers whose rare and delicate colors vied (competed) with odor (scent) surpassing those of "Araby the blest." There were no large cities there: the homes were placed in little groups of two or three like pearls in a rich setting of lawn and garden too fair for human words. Here and there rose stately edifices where large gatherings congregated to feel the influence of guides and teachers from higher planes, an influence exerted by speech or by subtler means.

The dress worn there was very simple: only a flowing robe sufficiently varied to emphasize the distinction between the men and the women. It was colored, as usual, by the aura of the wearer, the lighter and paler shades alone appearing, such as pink, pale orange, creamy, pale blue, white, and others difficult to describe. The delicate hues of these robes, and the multitude of colors in the blankets of flowers massed against the olive green of the landscape charged the dazzling air with beauty till the eye of the beholder was rapt by the harmony of sight, as in great music the ear is rapt by the harmony of sound. In this happy plane the inhabitants had solved the puzzle of universal brotherhood, here on earth the subject of centuries of debate, and still impossible of full realization. Not only were they dwelling in complete harmony; the dream of the altruist had been realized! Each lived for the other, since in that pure sphere the interests of all were one. There was, it is true, room for envy and jealousy, in the great authority of the more intelligent, for in a perfect world all merit must be recognized. But the spirit from which envy springs did not exist there, for envy implies a selfish aim. In that spirit realm each knows that he has been accorded full justice, and each gloried in the greater merit of his fellow while those of superior gifts humbly regarded their heritage as a privilege. Indeed, in that purer sphere degrees of merit must have seemed trivialities compared with the boundless heights which beckoned beyond. Love and sympathy would permit no discord. From this plane come the helpers, teachers and "angels of mercy," who work among the less fortunate inhabitants of the lower spheres. This service, however, is an act of their own volition proceeding from their sympathy and desire to serve, a benefice which results in their own further development.

SPIRIT CHILDREN

My keenest interest in the Spirit World was aroused by my visit to the realm where dwell the spirit children who come thither in childhood. Around my experience in that realm cluster the most beautiful memories. There the spirit children grow through all stages of childhood and youth. All small children pass directly from earth to the third plane, to continue there their bodily and spiritual growth. My experience there was a wonderful revelation. The place was one vast garden of heavenly splendor, in which stood numberless magnificent buildings, for utilitarian and recreational purposes. Women helpers, who have known motherhood on earth, cared with tender solicitude for the babies and little children. Older children were taught and guided with minute care and that never-failing kindness which, however, does not neglect discipline. Men and women helpers of various qualifications, superintended by superior spirits, carried on their appealing work. Naturally no more perfect system could exist, nor could more ideal surroundings be imagined. Nothing but beauty met the eye, no ugliness could there distort the mind. Flowers of gorgeous hues in beds of rare designs, trees of perfect form and beauty, birds of varied plumage, fruits of delicious flavor are but the more obvious privileges of that delightful land. Paths through shrubbery and across parks divinely planned led to playgrounds where those fortunate children were seen at play beside their helpers and teachers. It was an atmosphere of beauty, obedience and love.

I saw that the study of plants and flowers was an eagerly-followed occupation, which was supplemented by the care of gardens, in perpetual bloom. No sooner had a flower faded or been picked than another blossomed from the same stem. As I passed through the beauties and wonders of this place, my mind constantly sought for comparisons from earth, for earth of course was still my home. I found no satisfactory comparison, all was different. I thought, for example, of the ground on which I walked: was it solid, as on earth? To test it, I stepped from the path to the loose soil of the garden beds, and jumped lightly up and down. The earth seemed to give way like swampy ground, but my feet did not sink, nor did they leave footprints as on earth.

As if to fill my cup of joy in this lovely spot, I recognized among the children a sister of mine who died when but a few years old. As I was passing down a beautiful path, enthralled by the wonder of color and fragrance, I saw this young girl kneeling to pick a flower. Something about her held my attention, and I gazed on her intently as I came nearer. She looked to be sixteen or seventeen. She was clad in a simple white dress reaching just below the knee, and leaving neck and arms bare. The sweet and serene beauty of her face was framed in a mass of blonde hair that fell loosely almost to her waist. She made a picture of appealing beauty as she bent toward the flowers, her transparent fingers encircling the stems. As I approached she half-turned her head, and for a moment we gazed into each other's faces. Instantaneously I recognized her as that little child who had died on my lap, now a young woman of the Spirit World. The look on her face was one of intense surprise, as if she were saying, "What, are you also here?" Tender love shone in her eyes. My feelings seemed to overpower me. I strove to pause and speak, but some strange power held me silent, and urged me on. I could not stop, but I turned several times to gaze on her, standing motionless, forgetful of the flower, looking intently after me, with that same mingling of love and sweet surprise till I passed from sight.

Once more the curiosity of the earth moved me, and I wanted to taste the fruit I saw growing so beautifully there. No sooner had I wished than a hand reached out from the thick foliage and presented me with an apple. I did not see the owner of the hand. I tasted, and found my senses thrilled with a delicious flavor like nothing on this earth.

Leaving the Land of Children I passed through other parts of this plane, where I moved among the throngs of exalted beings, the mansions without end, in the midst of stately gardens. My mind was full of amazement at the extent of this wonderful world and the saying of Christ came to me, "In my Father's house are many mansions." The glories of that wondrous spirit land were incomparable. It seemed the best of all possible heavens with its atmosphere of universal peace, sympathy and happiness. Love hovered over all. How delightful it was to pass abode after abode, watching the spirits enjoy the blessings reaped through victory over the evils and the tribulations of the past. Thrilled and enchanted by a scene of extraordinary tranquility and charm, I could not refrain from speaking to a spirit who was sitting in his garden resting against a tree entirely surrounded by flowers and luxuriant vegetation of exquisite hue and fragrance. His eyes bespoke an equanimity of mind beyond mortal power to experience or conceive. From his face shone a radiant happiness. As if in reply to my expressions of amazement he said, "Yes, what an inexpressible joy it is to be permitted to dwell in these glorious realms after so much mortal agony, so many trials, such great tribulations, such piercing sorrows."

Another desire came to me—to hear music. I was guided to a high structure of artistic architecture, whose entire top, arranged like a platform, seated a huge orchestra composed of all varieties of instruments, some familiar to me and others strange. Every musician showed himself a master of his art in the frequent concerts given by this as well as by numerous similar organizations. The music began, and immediately I was held entranced by its sweeping majesty, and by its overwhelming emotional appeal. I could not endure it, perhaps because I was still of earth. Completely overcome, I had to be led away.

My guide now wished to conduct me to a distant place, where there awaited something of great interest to me. Rising a little from the ground, the body at a vertical angle, we passed swiftly through space, impelled only by the agency of the will. Below us a marvelous panorama unrolled, as we traveled on. The delicately colored spirit houses, with their varied architecture and wonderfully artistic ornamentation, seemed bathed in brilliant light of unearthly splendor. Around them spread gardens with flowers and shrubbery and trees, surpassing in color and design the most perfect creations of human landscape artists. At intervals the great mansions and palaces for large gatherings rose among the trees, impressive in size yet delicate in color and beauty of line. Against the vivid brilliance of flowers and olive green of the level lawns on which multitudes of spirits enfolded in their robes of light and many colors continually moved, these perfect creations rose to mould a harmony of form and color that caught and held the spirit like perfect music. Arriving at a wide flat of open ground, we saw in the distance what appeared to be a great bed of varicolored flowers. We descended and approached. On nearing the spot I discovered that what I had mistaken for a bed of flowers was in reality a great throng of women spirits, clad in brightly-colored robes. They were standing before a huge arched structure, apparently awaiting some event. I learned that they were the "Helpers" waiting to be sent on their errands as "Angels of Mercy," both to the earth and to the lower planes. Since I learned that this was but one place among many where the Helpers received their directions. I concluded that

there must have been myriads of these ministering angels always ready to serve in the hour of need. Deeply interested, I approached to look more clearly at the spirits nearest me. I felt that they were indeed well fitted for the task for which they had volunteered. Their lovely and serene faces were eloquent with warm sympathy. The divine love and kindness that looked from their eyes spoke clearly of the principle that animated all their actions. Words and demeanor told of their impatience to hurry to the work of service that irresistibly called. They made a splendid and delightful picture standing draped to the feet in robes of different colors, wearing a head-dress also colored by their auras. This variety of the lighter and brighter color, and the brilliant white light streaming from their faces, together with their exquisite feminine grace, produced an effect of marvelous beauty.

A hush now fell on the gathering and every eye turned with expectation toward three figures of authoritative presence, which now appeared. These were male spirits from the higher planes who had come to direct the helpers. They were clad in shining garments and bore themselves with high dignity. They passed below the arch standing in front of the gathering and appeared upon its top where they issued directions to the helpers, who immediately, singly and in groups, went eagerly on their way. I felt deep gratitude to my guide for the happiness of beholding this scene, which was to me a "heaven" far more real and comforting than any which I had conceived on earth.

My time for leaving the third plane had now come, and I knew that soon I must return to reinhabit my earthly body. But before that should come to pass I implored my guide to give me at least a glimpse of the glories of the fourth plane. To my joy, he consented, saying, "You shall see."

THE FOURTH PLANE

As we descended in our approach to the fourth plane, my eyes were almost blinded by the glory of the spectacle. From every direction thronged troops of spirits, apparently converging on a great building of amazing size, beauty and splendor. Each spirit seemed enveloped in a ball of flaming white light, emanating from himself and giving to the brilliant light of this plane an additional splendor and force that to me became almost overpowering in its brilliancy. There the spirits were dressed in aural garments of varying colors which the emanating light did not conceal; the women in robes falling in rich folds, the men in closely-fitting garments. The scene was of marvelous beauty and indescribable brilliance. Almost at once my guide brought me to the lines of the moving procession, and soon, with the rest, I entered the majestic hall toward which the spirits were thronging. It was an enormous auditorium, arranged in a semi-circle about a raised platform. Without apparent ushering, or other show of authority, the great throng found their accustomed places in the most orderly fashion. Seats were assigned to myself and my guide, and while we were waiting expectantly there was opportunity to study the assemblage.

The foremost impression was that already mentioned—of the inexpressible and overpowering brilliance, produced by the natural illumination of this plane, the white splendor of the faces, the light about them, and the aura which colored their shining raiment in a multitude of hues. Not less striking was the mental impression produced by their faces, vivid with intelligence and power, and glowing with sympathy, love and understanding. For these spirits had not only

triumphed in self-mastery; they had attained wisdom and a knowledge of mysteries of which I could only faintly guess. Conscious of my own unfitness, I felt myself fading into utter insignificance. Conversations and discussions engaged groups of spirits about me—discussions that appeared weighty and of intense interest.

I noted here, as elsewhere, in the Spirit World, that men were in authority, but this gave them no actual dominion over women, for both take their proper places, and both have their missions. The work of the men is more creative;—women conserve and apply. Men are administrators; women inspire to beauty and sweetness, and are angels of mercy, comforters, teachers, and mother spirits. Thus in the Spirit World the contrast between masculine and feminine is sharply defined in manner and custom as well as in dress. The modesty and grace of women is set over against the strength and authority of men.

A hush now fell on the congregation as five men in garments more shining than any I had yet seen ascended the platform and in turn began to speak. All present listened with rapt attention, hung upon their words and unconsciously pressed closer, eager to know the wonders being unfolded. I could understand nothing—it exceeded my powers—but none the less I felt the influence, and struggled to approach the wonderful strangers. My movements in the throng created some confusion, and I was rebuked and eyed with reproving looks, particularly as any spirit there could see and know that I was out of place. One spirit nearest to me exclaimed sternly, "This is the Hall of Learning and no one is permitted to create any disturbance!" However, my guide explained on my behalf: "This spirit has not yet passed over, for special purposes she is permitted here." This seemed to satisfy those about me, and I heard murmurs of understanding.

I forced myself to master my excitement and remained quiet until the speakers finished. The great concourse broke up in orderly quiet and my guide and I went on our long journey to the first plane, in accordance with my expressed desire. I saw little else of the fourth plane, but I was informed that life there was similar to life in the third plane, though more developed, more perfect, and more glorious.

MY VISIT INTO THE ABYSS OF SPACE

My trips to the various parts of the Spirit World, it must be understood, were at different times, for otherwise I should have been too long absent from my body, which would have meant bodily death, and I would have been compelled to remain prematurely in the spirit realms. Thus the last journey I made into the immense spaces of our universe occurred some time subsequent to my return from the fourth plane. This seemed to me by far the longest journey I had made, as the four planes I had visited appeared to be not far distant from our solar system.

Accompanied as always by my guide, I passed first through the spaces of our system. As we made our flight towards Venus, I beheld our earth at such a distance that it appeared like a great big black ball. Saturn we passed so closely that we could perceive the little globes that compose its rings speeding about the larger sphere. Soon a huge black globe passed, or appeared to pass, as if pursuing Saturn." Like a lover following a dancing girl," I exclaimed, lapsing into human levity. My guide did not deign to notice my mild joke. "That," he said dryly, "is what you call Jupiter." When we passed over Venus we floated in a horizontal manner with face

downward, close to the surface. When part way across it we came to a complete standstill. Thus I was afforded a splendid opportunity to observe this planet at close range. It appeared to be a dark and dismal world covered with a strange stunted vegetation which showed gloomingly through the clouds of steam that rolled up from the surface of the planet. Myriads of insects flew about in great clouds. "What steam! What a mass of insects! Why, nobody could live here, I exclaimed. Other than the insects I could perceive no evidence of life. I saw no seas nor mountains—there was only barrenness, sterility. The whole scene was overpowering in its awful dreariness and utter desolation.

We now left the solar system and penetrated far into the abyss of space, among the countless stars moving with incredible speed and unimaginably multiplied in brilliancy because of our close proximity. The sight challenged imagination. But much as I marveled at, this nearer view of these enormous material worlds, I wondered infinitely more at the countless living beings that filled the universe. Spirits of high superiority and authority such as I had never seen even in the fourth plane passed in every direction, singly and in larger or smaller groups. A white light of intense power emanated from each, and enveloped them in a flaming radiance, that varied in intensity in proportion to their spiritual power. All were garbed in glowing white. The combined brilliancy of the light thus produced flooded all space. The great whirling globes were as nothing to this awe-inspiring spectacle. The mere sight of these majestic spirits even from afar was enough to convince the beholder that they were the rulers and controllers of the whole universe, of matter and of spirit. The overpowering dominance of their personalities subdued my spirit so that, staring and stupefied, I trembled and shrank at their presence. Two in particular, a man and a woman spirit, burned with the light of two flaming suns dimming all others near them with the intense lustre of their white radiance. As they swept majestically by me there flashed across my mind the words, "And there shall be no darkness in them." Dazzled, I cowered, raising my hand to my forehead in an involuntary tribute of humility and awe. It is impossible to say how far I was from them since space does not limit the astral body. But, near or far, I could clearly distinguish every expression of their countenances. They were dressed in magnificent robes of pure white. The dress of the female spirit was a long flowing robe rippling from her form in loose and graceful lines, as she floated in a perpendicular position, inclined with knees slightly bent. The dress of the male spirit was a close-fitting toga that reached to his feet. He moved in a similar posture, but his head was thrown further back. His eyes, following the direction of his outstretched hand, were focused upon some great distant star. As he expounded to his companion some great mysterious truth, he seemed the embodiment of authority and wisdom. But on his features played the soft light of spiritual love which tempered his austerity with its ethereal glow. To me he seemed all-powerful, fitted to command instant obedience from any forces, material or spirit. His companion, though possessed of much of his spiritual power and authority, displayed these same qualities but they were subdued by a feminine grace and loveliness which rendered her face sublime in its serene nobility. They appeared to be gods rather than perfect spirits, yet I was informed that they had once dwelt in human form somewhere. Whether their union began then or later I did not know, but now they were bound for eternity by the ties of spiritual attraction and love. By spiritual development they had risen to the highest power, and, as my guide explained, they were now a part of that Supreme Power that rules and guides both the material and spirit universe. The host of spirits gazed intently after them with respectful admiration and awe. It was a glorious moment for me when I beheld these marvelous beings, and knew the happiness of their close presence. For a time I stood motionless

and gazed after the disappearing glory, which lessened as these two beings passed from sight, till my eyes beheld in the distance only the white light that enfolded them.