

WRITINGS FOR A BETTER WORLD

BY SARMATIAN DE CASPIANYA

BEZZARI

OUR DIVINE BAMBINO BOY

**A FASCINATING STORY OF REAL LIFE REVEALING
THE WISDOM OF A GREAT CHARACTER**

EDITION HEAVEN ON EARTH



Dr. O.Z.A. Ha'nish

Founder of the international and interdenominational
Mazdaznan-Movement

By
William Mc Lean & Co.
240 Hope Street, Glasgow
1924

This volume relates an interesting and instructive experience in the life of the Rev. Dr. O. Z. Ha'nish, the world known Leader of the Mazdaznan Movement. Great spiritual truths are enunciated and unfolded by the principal character – Our Divine Bambino Boy.

FOREWORD

Some years ago, while repacking, we found among many other manuscripts including "*The Gathas*" a portfolio containing "*Bambino*" written over forty years ago. Placing the missal on our writing table, the breeze passing through the room scattered a few of the loose leaves on the floor. Mother Vahda, in re-arranging the room for us, picking up the scattered pages from the floor, was prompted to scrutinize its contents, and became fascinated by the theme disclosed.

She asked if she might be permitted to read the "*Episode*." We did not object. When finished reading it, she asked if permission to publish it would be granted.

We could not give our consent at the time. Years have passed and only recently we were informed by Mother Elizabeth that she was prompted to have the manuscript go into print. Our only wish is that the contents may be of as much profit to the reader as the "*Episode*" has been to us. The book appears in our family name as originally intended.

Further revelations are unfolded to the reader by reading the lines, and much more between the lines. Any errors should be gracefully overlooked. In the words of Omar Khayyam: "*Let Thy grace be greater than my shortcoming.*"

DR. OTOMAN ZAR-ADUSHT HA'NISH.
Amsterdam, Holland, June 16th, 1924.

MUSICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

OH, THE SORROW

'THERE'S ONE TO MAKE THEE GLAD

SELF-WILL ONCE BROKEN

BEZZARI

OUR DIVINE BAMBINO BOY

I.

It was not a momentum, but rather a succession of ordeals, bordering on the phenomenal – ordeals exceeding in value anything heretofore enacted on *terra firma*.

In spite of extreme frailty of body, to say nothing of being harassed in childhood days by kidnapping plots, pursued by the fury of envious, malicious, jealous fiends; and scenes of political and ecclesiastical intrigue, depicting horrors before our very eyes – we managed to outgrow our first teens, and enter upon our second decade, again to be greeted by uprisings, disasters, war cries, bombardments, and a series of accidents, which eclipsed in intensity all the years of the first period of life.

With a few broken limbs and shortened cords left in testimony of the endurance of mortal man, we continued to add year upon year, years filled with adventures and experiences that find analogy in lives of other beings as fortunate, or unfortunate. So eventful the daily walks of life became, that a state of calm only irritated or else turned into an omen, prognosticating new disaster. While coming events cast their shadows before, according to the general trend, to us not even a little cloud appeared; whenever exceeding joy and happiness, tranquility and peace would come to us, mingled with visions of angelic hosts, it was a sure sign of an approaching calamity.

As this is not to be a biography, but a single episode, we shall not attempt a resumé of the most important events, but confine ourselves to the minor, or more believable, plausible, and possible occurrences, lest a grain of doubt on the part of our kind reader may weaken the points we propose to make. Nevertheless, we shall have to mention that upon leaving the Institution of Learning, with a large inheritance at our command, we sailed to regions previously unknown to us. It was our good fortune to see the cargo of gems sink to the bottom of the sea, and with but a night shirt at our command, we floated upon a raft, until after many hours of indescribable agony, we were picked up and found ourselves in a new country.

But that was not to be all; a second tour two years later, repeated itself with almost equally disastrous results, yet leaving us an income sufficient for our needs. Later on, the experiences in a great flood of the Volga only proved that water was in pursuit of us; although we were so fortunate as to rescue a pair of twins, found in a bundle hanging upon a tree. These foundlings we left in charge of peasants, leaving an allowance for their education. One of the twins is a great statesman, or was, up to recently, the other became a leader of legalized robbers.

The life of big cities alone attracted us, and had it not been that we had learned to leave our finances with the Imperial Bank, we might have been stripped of our annual stipulation, as a big fire left us minus everything but a pair of trousers.

The real object of our globe-trotting was that of a Mission, undesired by us, knowing of certain results that were sure to follow. Although accustomed and perfectly willing to pass the ordeals of Kismet, or predestination, we hoped to find through free-will, or divine agency, the path void of historical repetitions.

Well repaid for the various experiences with human kind, and their correspondences to the strata or classifications as laid down in our studies in Radiology, our heart ached and bled until it turned from men to dumb animals. So absorbed we became in that direction, that dogs, cats, birds and beasts provided quite a field for study and recreation, assisting us to idle away

precious time. Hardly a day passed that did not bring us in contact with a stray cat, laden with sores. Our original Mission became a second consideration, if not last.

Then came war, driving us back into the mass of humanity, sharing with them sorrow and pain; and administering *materia medica* wherever needed, mingled with words of sacramental comfort – the only comfort left a dying soul.

With the latter ordeal left behind us, we turned our weary feet to scenes of art, either to admire it, or to wish for inspiration. Napoli, With Vesuvius in the distance, appealed to us, and once cosily quartered in a magnificent suite, overlooking a well-kept square, it required no effort on our part to discover the rendezvous of foreigners from all parts of the world, each and every one having his own particular axe to grind. There were artists and virtuosos, literateurs and political intriguers, spies and reduced royalists, marquis and reformers, Kropotkinites, Tolstoites, Gabrieleo witches – interspersed with Lasalléites, Marxites, and "*tight-frocks*," no one knew what category the latter were to be classified with, as they were neither man, angel, nor devil.

The appointment, as we were prone to call such a conglomeration of social offspring, was a rather transient one. It was a constant coming and going, the figures always being replaced by correspondences in type and purpose. We would meet them everywhere, Paris, London, Genoa, or Rome; Vienna, Bucharest and Moscow; but particularly throughout France, Switzerland and Italy. As to the intentions of the varied promoters, we were convinced that they were noble, each and every one of their themes calculated to eliminate despotism among the nations, and raise the standard of democracy. We doubted the efficacy of the latter very much, owing to the fact, that wherever evident in stringent measures, there the "*tight-frocks*" appeared most prominent, playing a high hand with the dexterity of professional gamblers. Our sympathy was on the side of true democracy, free from the red tape of political diplomacy and intrigue.

Although an ardent admirer and ready spectator in the world's drama, we felt our time could be used to more profitable advantage by setting the soil in order, instead of rivetting splinters in human skulls. We preferred to prepare pastures for sheep and cattle rather than to attempt to feed degenerate humanity on the bread of heaven.

II.

It was "*All Souls' Night*," and our mind reverted to the veiled past of former days when we prepared "pottage" unto the memory of the departed, and recited the family register of a lineage proud of its family tree, the roots whereof entwined three continents, while the branches furnished protection to the weary souls of a misfit society. To the cold intellect the ceremony had but little or no meaning, but to the ethical side it at least furnished the comfort that opened the fast closed doors of mysticism, and revealed the possibilities of a future promising the realization of ideals, ideals that cannot possibly enter the mind unless there is a correspondence somewhere with in this vast realm of ether, purporting materialisation in due time and season, or under riper conditions than those of the subjective state.

The study of biographies of great men and noble women, if honestly pursued, frequently brings a new impetus to an aspirant, and furnishes an inspiration that tends toward the realization of highest expectations, assuring success. Even so the recitation of the genealogical register calls to mind the beacon lights of characters that seek correspondences in future generations, thereby redeeming the promise of blessings that are sure to follow the faithful worshipper.

Thus we recapitulated the many instances from the mental mirror which reflected the impressions once drawn, and thought of the beauty in Symbolism when the latter remains undefiled by foreign hands, even though these be thought divine.

As we said before, it was "*All Souls' Night*," and returning from one of the great conclaves, destined to revolutionise the world, while crossing the square shortly before midnight, we heard a doleful sound, a muffled sob, a cry. So intense, so vibratory was the cry, that it fairly paralysed

our marrow. Like a galvanic battery it stirred our nerves. Startled, we halted to listen, when the moon, sweeping aside the curtain of a lamb cloud, appeared in her luminary garb, casting the reflex of her silvery beauty upon a sweet angelic face bathed in tears. Heavy straw-coloured locks, disclosing the charming features of a most beautiful and feminine face, a face set in a golden frame. Large violet eyes, shining through a bath of crystal tears, like a sapphire set in diamonds; nose, chin, brow and neck so perfectly formed that we would have believed it a statue chiselled by a renowned artist, rather than that of a human being. The shirt was ragged, the trousers beyond redemption, held in place by a single cord that was fastened in front and back over the left shoulder. A slouch hat of unmistakable aristocratic origin lay before the charming figure upon the cold pavement, and the picture before us as we stepped nearer, revealed to us a boy.

He might have been twelve years of age, he might have been less. The face was that of an angel babe, and, therefore, beyond judgment as to years. As we looked at each other, his eyes held us with their bewitching magic. The former electrification, which at first enchanted our being, disappeared; and a feeling asserted itself like that with which two long lost friends meet again.

"Who are you? What are you doing here? Why are you not at home or in an institution?" We stammered these short sentences, betraying the foreigner.

The boy seemed to realize the poverty of our vocabulary, or the uncertainty of our grammar. Judging us by our clothes, he quickly made his deductions, and we were surprised to have him address us in the most select English: "I am not a beggar, sir, although my appearance may be much against me."

"Come with us," was all we could say, and as we walked side by side we wondered what the future had in store for us.

We have heard evil tongues by scores, reveal to us a certain condition of life we hoped never to believe in. Thousands of waifs and semi-orphans were as common in Italy as locusts in Egypt—the origin of the former largely attributed to repro bates and "*tight-frocks*," the latter not in the least denying 'it; while mothers paraded their illegitimacy with pride. Shame! Thrice shame upon us, to allow these suggestions of evil tongues to force themselves upon our mind at such a moment and in the presence of so beautiful and innocent appearing child.

We had a square to walk, still thousands of ideas whirled through heart and mind, as whirl countless worlds through ether. Another shock was about to vibrate our being, for in approaching the *porte-cochère*, we involuntarily looked at the child beside us, when, to our surprise, we found "*his hand in mine*." We must have walked thus, side by side, perhaps unconsciously to either of us.

The porter seemed as if waiting for us, for ere we found the button, the door opened. There and then the boy halted and said in a whisper: "Illustrious Sir, I am imposing: I can wait outside until the Morning Mass."

"The Morning Mass? Do you go to Church?" we said, somewhat in a tremor.

"Only to get warm," he answered with a smile, "And to meditate upon the fall of man."

At such an answer all our scruples disappeared: and we assured him that all the apologies were on our side.

III.

WHEN, with the first rays of sunlight peeping through our window-pane, we awoke, we heard the landlady arranging for our breakfast in the adjoining room. By these maneuvers we knew that we had overslept and felt greatly embarrassed, owing to the great sense of honour and pride we still retained, in spite of vicissitudes. The boy must have passed through our room on

tiptoes, as there was no other exit from his room to the salon. That he had passed was evident from the fact that our landlady was heard to say: "And your name?"

For the first time it dawned upon us that we had not inquired for the boy's name. It was not our intention to listen to, or to overhear a conversation, still, to our ears floated upon the waves of ether, in a most melodious contralto: "Bezzari."

"Bezzari?" We repeated to ourself. We could not recall to our mind of ever having heard that name before.

After a light repast, it was necessary to look about for proper raiment, which was procured with but little difficulty, as money is the strongest talking point from throne to gutter.

Bezzari felt perfectly at home in his new attire in fact, we never would have imagined him otherwise; although, as the "*Beggar Boy*," he was by no means less attractive.

Owing to the sweetness of his baby face, we called Bezzari "*Our Divine Bambino Boy*," or for short, "*Bambino*."

At first he did not take kindly to it; he seemed to resent it, a frown upon his brows betrayed it, a frown immediately followed by a smile. Still, back of that smile there was mystery, occultism, mingled with an indescribable sadness, revealing experiences that may have been forgotten, though time is said to be the only remedy to heal all wounds. He never laughed at anything, he simply smiled. Nothing would irritate him, and: at no time would he show the slightest sign of displeasure, except when we called him "*Bambino*." It was then that we would see his eyebrows twitch, just for the twinkling of an eye, and then the frown, would dissolve into a smile.

Not until we went to Rome were we to learn the reason of Bambino's resentment at being, called "*Bambino*." We thought it strange that: he should have been so reluctant in packing, when we suggested Rome for our next stampede. Not: in the least did he display the joy he usually did: whenever we planned outings to the sea or nearby mountains. But he said nothing.

In Rome we found him growing despondent, melancholy, depressed; his eyes frequently bathed in floods of tears; his hands tightly clenched; the whole frame of his being passing through indescribable agony. When questioned he would answer in diverse languages, but never in the language of the country.

"This is no place *pour les hommes*," he said one day. "I have lived here before; it is *les Champs de l'Inferno*."

We would watch him closely at such moments of what we thought to be tantrums, thinking the outburst to be due to foreign influence. We attempted to discover the source of his versatile knowledge, or fathom the realm of his inspiration. As we said nothing, he continued:

"My tongue shall never utter the abominations of those to whom we look up for guidance: in this life. My mind shall not take into consideration the deceptions played upon the human heart, a heart: tender to every word, and in hope of solace. God forbid that I should ever disclose the secrets imbedded in my being. The last word I heard father say was that I should never utter a word of testimony against saint or sinner, but to ever retain my own counsel; while from mother I inherited the impression to always hold my dignity. But I shall tell you why I did not care to be called Bambino, although, with your permission, I am reconciled to it."

He then drew closely to us, and like a military dispatcher, gave a short synopsis of a story, as follows:

"Bambino is a sacred idol with a fabricated history. An artist carved Bambino, the holy Christ Child, and in attempting to take it from one city to another by boat, the boat capsized; the artist drowned, while the wooden Bambino floated into the harbour. The Church bedecked Bambino with jewels that the wealthy might consult its oracle when in sickness. With much pomp it is presented to the patient. If the cheeks of Bambino appear red, the patient may live; if pale, death follows quickly. The latter is manipulated when it is more desirable that the life of the patient ebb away. My Father. ... "

Bezzari suddenly stopped. As we looked in quiringly into his eyes, he smiled, saying: "This ends the story."

"All the more now you shall be our Bambino," we answered. And politely he said, "As you like it." We now seemed to see volumes of romance and drama back of Bambino's life. At times we hoped that some day we might know more about it, and perhaps be the instrument of unwinding a spool of mystery that would outdo the Egyptian labyrinth of a thousand mazes; and then again, No! Why constantly dwell on the past, the events of which are beyond remedy? Why not make the most of the present, and thus avoid possible troubles in the future?

IV.

WE were right in the midst of the holidays. The Cathedral announced much display and condescension for the benefit of the many rich visitors ready to lay their treasures, which they never laboured for, upon the altar of obscura.

We, too, made our reservations, and with Bambino at our side, went to witness the display with which there was no fault to find; for who, would not enjoy a well planned performance, even though the theme thereof be void of morals.

The Pontifical Benediction was about to be imparted, and as the High Dignitary descended the altar steps to pass through the main aisle, there was prostration upon all sides, and striking of breasts.

Bambino and ourself were the only ones standing close to the Sanctuary; here and there a foreigner of uncertain nationality, or a heretic Englishman who believed the Canterburyian a duffer, retained their standing positions, no doubt void of the knowledge of the old adage, "When among Romans, do as the Romans do."

The Dignitary bowed and cast a few extra sprays of his *aqua celesta* upon us, seeing which Bambino stepped hastily in front of us, taking a most defiant attitude toward the Dignitary. We were as though electrified, paralyzed at such a sudden turn. With force we grabbed Bambino's arm, drawing him close to our side. The High Dignitary with mitre and cymbalum, caught sight of Bambino who was pale as death. The Pontiff stared, turned pale, and 'in the attempt to take another step, stumbled, dropped his jewelled sprinkler, startling all the attending ministrants who were at a loss to know how to proceed. The private secretary, noting the predicament, quickly assisted the Dignitary into the sacristy, while the choristers sang: "Te Deum Laudamus," accompanied by music approaching closely the heavenly harmony.

"Bambino!" was all we could say, looking at him inquiringly.

"*Depechon-nous*," he whispered, "This is no place for us."

He took the lead; we mechanically followed.

Once back at our quarters we looked at him for some explanation: "Bambino! "

Bambino's eyes were filled with tears, so lustrously sparkling that the scintillations thereof vied with the brightest rainbow colours of a mighty cataract. His face was still pale, and a line of sadness was drawn about his curved lips. Back of "it all there was the smile that grew into the circumference of a radiation disclosing a halo above the region of the epiphysis. As in a nimbus, the emanations grew into a circumference. The illumination increased until Bambino appeared surrounded by a supernatural glow like that of a glowing sunset.

How we fought our inner senses; how we denied the outer! Would we believe in phenomena? We who had been reared to have faith in but one God, and His unchangeable Will through Obedience; we who have had it expounded to us that all else is illusion, and when proven otherwise, it is because of the Will of the Lord.

Most forcibly came to us scriptural texts: "And in the last days there shall be many Christs and many false prophets to deceive, if possible, the Saints of God on earth." This sentence would ring in our ears until we seemed surrounded by angelic hosts repeating: "Yes, they shall appear like angels of light." And again, "And if an angel from heaven appeared to proclaim an evangelion different from what I have taught you, believe him not."

Our head reeled, and our heart burned; our soul sank into a sea of uncertainties.

The more we thought of the golden text appertaining to Christ's second manifestation, the more perplexed we grew, while Bambino's violet eyes, bathed in the dew of sorrow, gazed at us, followed by that indescribable smile, all his own.

Bambino was the first to break the silence: "Pardon me, Illustrious sir, why in such deep contemplation of things that are not?"

We turned more perplexed than ever; we are called to mind our days at the Brotherhood where in addition to magic, prestidigitation, illusion, and alchemy, we practised muscle reading, thought reading, telepathy and psychic phenomena, until we seemed to have reached perfection in psychic research. It was then our Illustrious Teacher proved to us our folly, and determined the utter uselessness, nay, degradation of such practices, which, he said: Make man unfit to follow the daily vocation, "To reclaim the earth, to turn the deserts into a paradise."

In the short time of our acquaintance with Bambino we found him sensitive to every thought wave. Our minds and hearts were en rapport. But that he should read beyond the objective of daily occurrences was beyond the compass of our wits. Perhaps he was one of those dual beings, who obsessed, attempt to get a clue to one's thought waves, and in the course of conversation catch the principle ideas, clothing them in such allegorical language as would lead one to believe he knew.

For this reason we looked at him rather sharply, searchingly. At this instant, his rosy lips opened, and with a smile he whispered: "Illustrious sir, you doubt me?"

"No, Bambino, we do not doubt you; we simply marvel and attempt to unravel the mystery that envelops you. We would almost believe. ..."

"Believe me to be one of the Initiates?" he broke in, taking his seat upon our left knee, the weak spot in our anatomical make-up. As he sat there, neither pain nor weakness was felt. It was rather soothing and quieting.

He continued: "Your philosophy and the strenuousness of your studies, as well as your un tiring efforts to be obedient to the very letter of the law, has made you *detailliere* in your reasoning, too keen, sceptical and investigative; while on the other hand, your heart is too big to ever find joy in this world."

"Bambino, you are not over twelve, what do you know about our life, our past, our credentials, our family, or whence, where, and how we happen to be here?"

"And you would ask when you, too, reached realisation at my age, while writhing in agony of soul before the fire altar, repenting of inherited tendencies, seeking Illumination. Did not the Patriarch say to you that night, "Neither prayers nor ordinances, ritual nor libations, reveal the Infinite. The heart fixed upon the single indefinable divine atom within transfigures the entity into the presence of eternity, and draws the flames of illumination into the circumference of being, disclosing the celestial charms into ad infinitum."

"True, but .where did you get your illumination, Bambino?"

"You, Sir, received yours at the Temple, for such was your lot; I received mine as an outcast while lying outside the Cathedral gate at night."

We then remembered the words of the Patriarch who also added at that time that: "Any one attaining to psychic phases through strenuous efforts does violence to heaven, while if it is within the designs, God grants these gifts as Blessings for the good of His Elect, be they of high or lowly station."

"Bambino, we shall not pry into your life, for such is not within the province of true aristocracy, but we are a trifle baffled to think that you, as a waif, should be conversant with several languages, choice in selection, perfect in construction, able to enter the psychic without effort, proficient in sculpture and music, as well as many other talents, and apparently without the aid of tutors, or opportunities."

All he said was: "I was not always thus, sir."

What did he mean? Was he perhaps a theomaniac, or the child of highly evolved intellects, aroused to sudden passion, embodying the ecstasy of their psychic powers to the unrestrained osma at the moment of nuclei? In him were to be found all the properties and characteristics of the superman. We questioned ourselves, Is it prenatal? Is Bambino the product of eugenics, applied with understanding? Or, is he the result of nature's momentum, attempting to usher in a new race – perchance, the Coming Race? Or, and here we almost feared to find the key to the fast closed door of psychic realms – Yes, or is he an instrument of psychic forces?

His knowledge would lead one to believe that he must have been an ardent reader of biographies of great men and women; a passionate student of classics, and a reader of human nature. However, he was only a little boy, while his understanding of things proved an aggregation of patriarchal years.

He delighted to converse on whatever topic we would select for him. Technical problems which scientists would shun to broach for a topic of consideration, seemed child's play; and whenever we thought we had him pinned, he would go one better and keep our mind suspended in realms beyond the wildest anticipations.

If he is not divine, we mused then he is a psychic phenomenon. But we had vowed, in connection with all other vows, at the shrine of the unfathomable, that we would never deal in psychic phenomena, but forever deny the hypnotic and spiritualistic influences and their power on us, and here we were confronted by an unicum we seemed unable to fathom.

Our mind could have gone on in speculations, when, brushing our hair from our forehead, we heard Bambino say: "Father, you doubt my sincerity!"

We were unable to answer. We could not speak. And he continued:

"Some day you will know. It is not well for men, even the greatest of them, to fathom every thing. For this reason a veil is woven about them, lest they fall prey to their own powers. At times we seem to see and understand, and again, we know not whither we should turn. There are moments in our life revealing naught but a blank, a vastness, depth, eternity .."

For some time there was dead silence. The very objects in the *salon* seemed to fade away. Twilight appeared, and with it the butler attending to the candelabra, drawing down the shades, and announcing our dinner. We were not aware we heard or saw anything. All seemed a blank, vastness, depth, eternity ..

Bah! We would have become angry with ourselves. The idea to allow one's mind to be carried away by a train of ideas, bordering on hallucinations, image creation, the result of a feverish brain induced by spiritual propensities insufficiently controlled by reason or intellect! It is a weakness of heart and mind to allow one's soul to be influenced, and to be driven into a state of somnambulistic delusions that border on insanity, though mild and apparently harmless!

We began to reason with ourselves, introspectively: "We are willing to recognise certain states of psychic relation, but we deny their superiority to man's intellect, illumined by divine influx. To yield to a state controlled by spiritual propensities, opens the portals of delusion that lead into the abyss of untold uncertainties, swallowing the entity of being into the bottomless pit ..."

We might have gone on in our mental wanderings had it not been for the melodious voice of Bambino that startled us into sensibility.

"Father, when you get back from the '*Bottomless Pit*,' we shall celebrate together at the table now waiting for us."

Bambino was still upon our knee, with his right arm around our neck, his hands gently brushing our locks. We could not help smiling; smiling because we thought we had at last discovered the source of Bambino's powers. We could not say it to him, but we were convinced that by contact he was able to read the mind. Either trained, or gifted to follow thought waves, he was able to interpret them into language.

Rising to his feet, taking us by the hand, and leading us to the table, he said: "Even the wisest on earth are often made fools, were it not so, the dual side of creation Would never disclose the right from wrong. And again, right and wrong are nothing but fluctuations of our mental

perception. Once we are beyond suspicion and doubt, neither charity nor concessions enter our path. Love conquers all; for, "God so loved His Own that He gave the Very Begotten of His Attributes, that all having Faith in Him might consciously enjoy Life Everlasting."

"Thus reads the Coptic version of the text," we said.

He answered, "Yes, and the Johanitan Evangel, as well."

We could not remember the Evangel referred to, as much as we searched our memory, when he broke in:

"Abbas Stephani read it to you at the time you compared with him the secret gospels known as the obscure. He revealed to you at the time the cunningness of the Roman Ecclesia seeking, to destroy the authenticity of Coptic, Maronitic, and the Johanitan scriptures. Having failed to bribe the monasteries, and experiencing fiasco in the attempt of securing these writings, their 'secret service,' especially trained in forgery, succeeded in gaining entrance to the record chambers; and received permission to read these valuable scriptures. Not being allowed to make any copies or memoranda, they, nevertheless, succeeded at unguarded moments, in erasing the most valuable texts, in most instances replacing the same original words, thus clearing their conscience. Then boastfully, they put forth the claim that owing to the fact that erasures had been made, the text must have suffered interpolation by later librarians or scribes."

We remembered, for it was Abbas Stephani who held in trust the string of beads, the sacred shroud and the original cross, together with the seal of Nebuchadnezzar, and Zarathustra's last will to his Initiates.

"And if we remember, Bambino, it might be well not to admit it."

He answered: "Such is our inborn right-to speak or to hold our tongue. Though scourged or mangled, distorted or lashed, pierced or pitched, burnt or torn to pieces, there is no power that can make us speak; in fact, any method calculated to wrest from us our heart's secrets is of the realm of Hades. God respects the Voice, and we must protect it."

V.

AFTER dinner we excused ourself that we might take a walk alone, leaving Bambino to entertain himself with his violin. As we stepped out of the vestibule we thought we saw a dark figure slowly receding into a corner covered by a marble column. Accustomed to spies in a country of "Holiness unto the Lord," and "Apostolic Sue cession," conscious of the necessity of evils, we paid no attention. Crossing a square we noticed in turning around a "tight-frock" crawling along the side of buildings, seeking refuge behind post and pillar whenever fearing discovery. Although smiling at any and every move made by the breed of purgatory and possessors of hell's safety lock, it came to us that we would better return to our quartiere, which we did. The lanterns burned but dimly and we chose the street for our trottoir.

As we neared the mansion, the most wonderful, exquisite, heavenly music floated upon the air. It seemed supernatural. We knew that two masterly virtuosos were lodged in the same house as we occupied, and naturally concluded that they were either entertaining, or going through their repertoire, preparing for some future event. Imagine our surprise, when in our apartment we found Bambino running over the strings of a violin with the prestidigitative dexterity of a Bellini, unconscious of surroundings; his locks flying in every direction as if carried upon the notes he drew. We stood in the doorway for some time, before we could collect ourself.

In our presence, Bambino would usually confine himself to the practice of etudes or play a few sonatas, and now he displayed the most difficult masters with such elasticity and ease as was not only phenomenal, but supernatural, the interpretation of his selections disclosing liberties only the most proficient artists would dare to take. With the last notes sweetly dying and dissolving into eternity he stood beside the highly illumined candelabra, with his eyes fastened

upon the ethereal mirror, as if following into infinity the harmonic vibrations sent out by his masterly strokes.

For a moment there was a sepulchral silence, and then the room seemed to be filled with voices which only a heavenly choir can possess. With a desire to pacify our mind as to the real or unreal, we tried to step forward toward Bambino, but an irresistible power held us back.

"Ah," we reasoned, "the presence of Bambino makes us sensitive and susceptible to phenomena; it is illusion, delusion, hallucination."

With force we compelled our limbs to move, and as we stepped nearer, we were to be disillusioned of our sophistries, our intellectual solution of spiritual problems.

Bambino had his lips gently parted and hummed a melody we had heard before. Stronger and mightier his voice grew, until it seemed that not a single voice, but a complete choir accompanied him. The tremolo, interspersed with xolean, called forth an undertone which all vocalists strive to attain, that the soul may gain the power of expression and with it electrify listeners. As if rivetted to the floor, we stood listening:

*"Lead, Kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on! The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on!
Keep thou itty feet; I do not ash to see
The distant scene; one step enough for ine."
I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
Should'st lead me on!
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years.
So long thy pow'r hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."*

Was Bambino conscious of our presence, or was he in a state of transfiguration? Perhaps the Sufis have much in their favour when they claim absolutism in ecstasy, an ecstasy that brings solace to the heart and imparts peace to the mind, but in the daily walks of life becomes annulled, as in coping with conditions and environments we find spirit and matter in constant conflict with one another. For this reason, many a soul has lost its equilibrium, unable to find a compromise in the illusionary.

Bambino sang every one of the strophes, until we felt agony and sorrow, affliction and disappointment, hope and doubt, submission and surrender, resignation and final demise, all in a state of dispersion. Before us passed the panorama depicting life, lived over and over again, disclosing scenes of dire disappointments.

We had, in the meanwhile, dropped on to a divan for support. The power of song was more than we could bear.

We have had similar experiences before, but hoped never to have them repeated, as our heart would only suffer, a heart fate had marked with an indelible weakness that was never to be trifled with. That it stood and withstood all the tension it had been exposed to for many decades, was due to the knowledge and powers of demonstration. Our life, in itself, was testimony that "In the weak God is mighty."

The last note finished, Bambino became conscious of our presence and immediately took his seat upon our right knee.

We were the first to speak: "Bambino, you must love this song; 'it's Cardinal Newman's poem."

"Yes," he said, "It's his composition before he lost himself entirely in ritualism. He thought it was symbolism he was going to discover, a symbolism disclosing the Final Path unto the Divine. But great was his disappointment; greater still his regrets. If we do not find God within, we vainly seek Him in company."

We were by no means in a mood to extend such a conversation, and for this reason related to Bambino our ideas about suspicious characters, citing our experience of the evening.

He only smiled, and to divert our attention, joyously said: "Let us go to see the sights."

"On a holiday?" we asked.

"Why not?" Is it not the best time to see mankind in their folly?"

VI.

THE equipage was ordered; and, as we entered it we heard Bambino say to the cochère: "To the Casino." We resigned ourselves to the inevitable, and silently sat in the vehicle, "his hand in mine." Over cobble stones and ruts we went at a gallop, accompanied by the feeling suggestive of a barge upon a storm-tossed sea. Then came a jolt, a sudden halt, and we alighted. The driver was told to wait.

As we entered the barn-like edifice, we felt the cords of our solar plexus drawing into a gordian knot, while the membranous lining of our throat throbbed with a vengeance. What a sight! What a scene! Men and women carousing; dancers displaying their uncanny figures, void of the customary veil; the only stitch of clothing on them a pair of stockings. Void of morals and shame, they exercised their unwholesome looking bony figures and distorted limbs without grace of rhythm. Wine flowed in torrents, while clouds of tobacco smoke filled and polluted the air. The music alone was enough to turn virtue into licentiousness and reduce Heaven to Hades. Bambino worked his way close to the orchestra, the occupants of the stall being ousted the moment the proprietor saw us heading for it. Once seated we resumed our poise, yet all we could say was: "Bambino, it's a predicament. These people expect us to give an order for occupying this space."

However, you could not move Bambino, for naively he said: "We can place an order, still we do not have to consume it."

"But that would be waste."

"There is less waste in consciousness than in unconsciousness. Look for yourself; is it not waste as far as your eyes can see?"

The scene was sufficient to confirm Bambino's deductions. We made a most careful selection, running up a bill that made all the other waiters envious of our man, who smiled, confident of a fat tip.

Musing upon our surroundings, we concluded that Bambino was a greater conundrum than we ever anticipated. We decided that the boy was a spoiled genius; and for this reason, we felt prompted to engage a tutor or two for him, without any further delay, and pass him through a rigid training. We would not be held responsible for his future. We must have the assistance of others to help mould him for society, and the usefulness of the world at large; otherwise his talents would go to waste, and he, himself, eke out the existence of an adventurer, an impostor, or God knows what.

That moment Bambino looked up at us, for he sat vis-a-vis from us, and in a musical tone he said: "Your deductions are due to the influence of your surroundings. Conditions and environments affect every temperament, some more, some less, and a few not at all. Let us go."

And we went. Entering the vehicle in waiting for us, we heard Bambino whisper to the driver something we did not understand. Once on the way we became oblivious of everything. Only when a jar from the vehicle threw us from our seat did we glance at Bambino to find "his hand in mine," his face beaming, his eyes sparkling.

"Father," he said, "Once we have reached the 'Plains of Peace,' our heart is set at ease, and we have no need of thinking, for thinking is a train of undeveloped ideas, void of intelligence. The realm of contradiction is paved by thinkers and by thinking. God never thinks, He is Intelligence, and everything that issues from Intelligence is spontaneous."

For the first time we felt aggravated. "Non sense," we broke in, "even electricity is not spontaneous, but has to be conducted."

"I beg to differ," he replied, "by spontaneity alone, the electrons manifest; the before and after effects are simply phases, though the positive ion is conductive, but only when in the presence and in contact with a negative ion."

We said no more, we only felt small because of having allowed ourself to be aggravated, a thing we abhorred as much as we would incivility.

Suddenly we came to a halt, and the porter of a fashionable hotel opened the equipage door, a score of attendants receiving us in great style. We had learned to submit to the inevitable, although feeling a little piqued to think that with all the pedigree back of us, and the consciousness of divine illumination, "A child should lead us."

Were we expected here in this palatial hall that the gentleman should lead us to a place reserved for two, a place carefully arranged and decorated with the choicest of flowers?

There was no fault to find, for the decorations everywhere were the most select and artistically appointed. One thing we did notice, that in our immediate surroundings, gentlemen as well as ladies ceased smoking, many a dame gazing at Bambino with coquettish eyes.

"Do you draw any comparison between this and the former place?" Bambino asked.

"It is refined," was all we could answer.

"Only in appearance," he said, "at the core, the occupants are by far more degenerate; this is the place where his Satanic Majesty collects all his secret service to plan the destiny of human prey. Under the cloak of usurped authority and the halo of hierarchical deceptions, the hearts of men are passed through the final test and sacrificed upon the altar of hypocrisy. True, only a few know of this; the rest are dupes to cunning devices; if all of them knew, it would be most difficult to play the rôle to a finish. Of course, Satan, though unable to deceive the Saints of God all the time, nevertheless knows how to use them. He announces the Saints and sets up altars for them that his own identity may remain screened. For this reason, the millennium is deferred, Saints of God lending their support to the adversary for the mere trifle of flattery, praise, admiration, and canonization."

Bambino had no need of emphasizing his language, for among the immense audience we recognized faces we had seen before, and under circumstances that are best left unsaid.

Every now and then, we thought we overheard a conversation concerning us, and for this reason we allowed ourself to listen.

"Yes," said a feminine voice, "the Prelate was unable to bring to a close the Benediction; the strenuousness of his service overpowered him to, such an extent that his weak heart and frail body gave way, and in a swoon he had to be taken to the palace. The last bulletin announced him to be in a most critical condition. When the Secretary suggested bringing the Bambino to the Prelate, his Apostolic Excellency is reported to have said: 'I have seen the living Bambino; my soul is grieved unto death!'"

"Ah," said a masculine voice, "such speech is the result of a high fever. His Apostolic Excellency has been suffering from overwrought nerves ever since the tragic death of some relative, to whom he was greatly attached."

Just then a "tight-frock" passed our table, throwing a vicious glance at Bambino.

Returning home late that evening, nothing further of importance transpired, and we retired immediately, feeling the need of rest.

VII.

EARLY next morning we found, to our surprise, Bambino in company with the valet, carefully packing our luggage.

"Bambino," we called; he came to us with an exceptional smile, kissing our hand as customary. Without giving us time to inquire, he precipitately said: "We leave this morning by the next train." We said nothing, but arranged our toilette, and entered the carriage which was to take us to the station.

Once seated in our coupe de première, we glanced at Bambino in search for a tangible explanation.

He smiled, and said, "Father, forgive my liberty; it looks as though I were taking advantage of your immeasurable kindness and your noble heart. Appearances are much against me. There are things I would gladly disclose to you, but my promise was that I would not speak. I only wish to announce to you that I have been discovered. The Prelate died at an early hour."

What connection had Bambino with the Prelate? We questioned, we speculated in our mind. But, we concluded, Bambino talks Truth, the very wisdom of God. His understanding -is marvellous; his knowledge fabulous. Yet the more we attempted to reason, the deeper we fell into the occult sea of perplexities, and exhausted, we leaned back in our seat. We even forgot to ask where we were going. We never bought our billets; Bambino handled the situation. And there he sat, his eyes fastened upon the scenery, as the train jogged along.

"Bambino," we at last broke in, "where are we bound for?"

"Ville de Paris," he answered, in as dry a voice as that of a commissariat.

"But, Bambino, we have most of our luggage at Napoli."

"Not so loud, Father, two 'tight-frocks' of the secret service of His Apostolic See are in the adjoining coupé. I have attended to the luggage. It will follow us."

"When did you attend to it?"

"After your Excellency retired." "Have you known of this before?"

"I shall counsel thee, and point out the way thou shalt pursue, is in my blessing; to it I cling," is all he would answer.

Whenever he would quote a text, we had not the courage to go any further in our questionnaire, having always had reverence for the scriptures, whether Avestan, Hindu, Chinese, Islamitic, the Old or New Covenant.

We had to make many changes, and whenever we did, Bambino would always whisper "depeeherosi."

Sometimes we could hardly follow him. His swiftness and his maneuvers got on our nerves. At one of the stations we lost him, or he lost us. We searched in confusion. One train pulled out and another pulled on; we still searched. Again we went out to the perron, gazing about almost distracted. Such an experience. We had traveled far and wide, and often under most difficult conditions, conscious of a certain trust and responsibility, but never had we had a feeling so indescribably nerve-racking as this. Was it fear?

"Fear of what?" said a voice.

As we turned, there stood Bambino. His eyes glistened like morning dew, and once more he said: "Fear of what?"

"Bambino, you do not fathom the agony we have passed through. It seemed like an eternity. We feared for you and your safety."

"Ah, ye of little faith; that you would concede the power of creation unto God, and yet doubt his ability to care for His little ones."

"True, but you told us we were watched!"

"I have ditched them. We will go by the direct route now."

"Ditched? We do not understand some of your vocabulary! "

"There are two languages, Father, the court language and slang."

"Slang? What is that?"

"You will acquire it once you get away from the academic to the Ademic, and learn more of the other side of life. Slang is parodic; and when I say "ditched," I mean that I have misled the 'tight-frocks' by a manipulation unknown to them. They are on their way to Paris, arriving to-night, we arrive at six in the morning. Once there we shall be unmolested."

VIII.

TAKING in the sights of the "hub of the universe," Bambino said one day: "Paris will not be taken again, although the continent will be held in an iron grip for a great number of years, and all the world suffer unrest, revolts, revolutions and chaos, realizing utter helplessness which will lead the haughty to humbleness, followed finally by mutual agreements between the nations, and, lastly, all races. There is no other way to settle up the accounts of men, but by vengeance and destruction. It is not in the designs of God to enter into conflict; such is the work of man. In the design of God's Infinite Operations, there are immobile and mobile laws. When we pray for things governed by immobile laws, such prayers remain unanswered; as even God remains powerless to change His decrees, when that decree belongs to the category of a divine principle. That which is on the plane of mobility needs but a single thought to 'induce a change, although the intelligence of man may not comprehend it. Thus a single thought may move a cloud to bring it down to the earth in rain, or it may change the course of an approaching cloud-burst."

"Certainly, neither God nor any other power can set aside a law of nature. We do not quite agree as to rain coming down through prayer, for at home we used explosives to bring down clouds," we answered.

"To be sure, you were too proud to use the power of thought; your awful independence drives you to the inventive genius. You have a perfect right to do so, but where you lack means, where they are beyond our reach, we may resort to prayer."

"Then to pray for rain, for sunshine, warmth, a bank account, lies within the province of materialization?"

"Yes and no! All are covered by two kinds of laws; immobile and mobile. A prayer to be efficacious must be fervent, free from selfish motives and direct. The less pomp and ceremony, and the more spirit, the more efficacious such a prayer. Inasmuch as we may ask God for Wisdom, who gives to us abundantly and without measure, even so, we may ask for his treasures, be they of heaven or of the earth, be it big crops or gold; as for the earth, 'Out of it cometh bread; and under 'it 'is turned up as it were fire. The stones of it are the place for sapphires, and it hath dust of gold. There 'is a path which no fool knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen. But where shall Wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding? It cannot be gotten for gold, nor shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it. It is hidden from the eyes of the living. God alone knows the way and keeps the place. To love God imparts Wisdom; to have faith in His handiwork brings understanding; to do His Will reveals knowledge.' "

At such answers we thought best to say no more; yet we pondered his sayings 7n our heart.

While in London his time was much occupied citing the relations between nations and the necessity of mutual understanding, leading to final amalgamation of all the nations, paving the way for the millennium. An irresistible force drove us from country to country, each one predicting disasters four decades ahead. At Moscow we decided to turn southward, and thence direct our journeys westward, since at every capital or place of note, he saw nothing but disaster, bloody sweat, and indescribable suffering, so much so that he became sick at heart and made miserable a stay of any length.

Our tour proved a flying trip, so that within less than three months' time we found ourselves in Napoli, the seat of the once world-renowned medical school of Salerno.

Though happy at first, Bambino soon showed signs of restlessness. Was he growing tired of sights, and did the hopelessness of humanity distract him? Whenever we spoke of tutors, he became evasive. He never expressed any demands, and that pained us greatly.

Young as he was, we disclosed to him our real Mission, and he became depressed. Did he think that we would leave him behind, or that we were tired of his company? Surely, if he knows the things that are startling to an academic mind, he must also know that constant association has drawn the cords of friendship into a knot no power could sever. True friendship, like the strength of the cedar, grows until the fiercest storms dash into nothingness before it. We had never loved a human being before. The only love we were taught was the Love of God, and His Will, which is Holiness. We felt for human and beast alike, and were ready to bring sacrifice, even to lay down our life for either. No beckon or call was ever refused. We were here to serve humanity. Our gifts and talents, our ability and Will, our possessions and life were laid upon the altar of humanity, when we took our vow. Not a vow due to suggestion, not because of the will and wish of our association, but a vow voluntarily made. It was the only and last offering we could bring. It was a vow of reverence for Him who gave Light unto our Soul and understanding unto our Mind. What else was there to live for after every opportunity to demonstrate the power of thought had been exhausted? We were willing to continue "To reclaim the earth; to turn the deserts into a paradise, a paradise most suitable unto God and His Associates to dwell therein," but was that to be all? To work and direct others to do likewise is the true purpose of association. We shall remain true to our vow and true to our Mission, in so far as our judgment may permit, and never hide the light under a bushel. The love for humanity shall never be diminished, even though disappointment pave the way. Yes, we seemed to have grasped the situation perfectly.

The proof of the love of God lies in the exercise of good deeds for humanity. Divine Love is the last and highest of all attainments. Can there be any other love? Some say, yes, the love for the opposite. May be so, but is not the incentive, the hope, the desire, thereby to reach, if possible, a higher state of exaltation? The love for the opposite, is it anything more than the means to an end, that would reveal through the creative energy made manifest in offspring, and with it point out the path that leads to the solution of life's perplexing problems? The direct Love of God, would it not assure one as much, and may not in the thought: "A child shall lead them;" even though it be the child of another, be found the end of all endeavour and the goal?

"There is no doubt about it," put in Bambino.

We became frightened. Had we been thinking, or did we speak?

"Why, Bambino?" we quickly retorted, "We said nothing; we were only thinking."

"True, you were only thinking, my dear beloved Father, but thinking reveals uncertainties. My love for you is greater than a Universe can hold; it is equal to the Love of God. We have not met by chance. All meeting is in accordance -to designs. True, we separate for a time, but at the hour of greatest need, we meet again; memory of a terrestrial significance often drops with the fading of mortality, but recognition of entity is -eternal. Because of the immensity of space and variety in matter, we are not able to make it comprehensive to the senses as to how such is possible, but denying the Truth does by no means annihilate it, any more than sleeping through the day ever stops the sun from completing his daily run. Some of us leave terra firma early; others remain here for a long time, in the hope of bringing to a finish the work entrusted to them; but time is not equivalent to accomplishment; neither is it its warrant. The adversary has but a little while to reign; still he hopes to win his goal by multiplicity. Void of intelligence, he knows only of quantity; and for this reason holds to repetitions of history. Whenever the bulk of humanity reaches a point beyond the control of his Satanic Majesty, he rounds them up like herding cattle, to be sacrificed upon the altar of their own ignorance, while the survivors return to the performance of the old regime and their tactics, never learning to yield to the better and

the new. But the day will come when men shall know that in accordance with the designs of God, they are to come here in their regular order that all may have their opportunity of enjoying their birthright, and delight 'in their inheritance. To this end, not beings, but Saviours must be born -into this world to sweep society of its abominations. Man exercises violence upon the heavens, calling, nay, forcing to earth the souls of infinity! Let not your heart be troubled, oh my Father; I love you even more than you can ever love a human, for your life belongs to all. "

"But we do love you, Bambino. Perhaps we have no right to love, but from day to day, we find in you our ideal of perfection. If this is what the world calls to be enamored, we are sure it is a state not to be missed. It is for this reason we begin to become alarmed about your future, and we desire to engage tutors for you; or if you prefer to trip around the world until you find something to your liking, we are willing to yield. The income will suffice, and if needs be, we surely shall always find a way to meet the demand. At the close of your journey we may decide for America, the goal of our wildest dreams and beliefs, as the country of the Coming Race, the Saviour Country, the Promised Land.' "

"Yes," he replied, "The Promised Land, with the accent on Pro-missed." And he smiled, for he never laughed, not once in all the many months of our acquaintanceship.

IX

WITH the advance of the season we began to feel that something had to be done for the child's future welfare. This life of suspense began to tell on us. It was more strenuous than hard labour. No matter what topic we proposed for conversation or study, Bambino had it beforehand written down in his note-book, to prove to us that he did not in any way take advantage of our thought waves. In the morning, no matter how early we would rise, we found him standing before us in an absolutely immaculate toilette, arranging our wardrobe for us, for that part he claimed for himself, much to the displeasure of the valet.

We never retired before midnight, and yet we caught him musing before the window, or out in the court at half-past two in the morning. If he slept two hours out of the twenty-four, we thought him doing something phenomenal. Very seldom would he be found napping at day-time, although he loved to recline in an armchair, his fingers turning pages of books and encyclopedias. He could not have been reading, but if he were, then he was more than the world's wonder, as a book of a hundred pages was gone through in a few minutes. Often the servant had to replace an armful of books within an hour. He might have been a great antiquarian, a librarian, for even the mg-st rare writings he knew of and could give a resume of their contents. No matter what test we put to him, he could stand it. Instead of ever catching him, we had to first make sure of our own ground. Of course every test was simply to convince ourself that we were doing the right thing by him. In less than one afternoon, we catechised him on the Avesta, the Vedas, Five Kings, the Koran, the Old and New Testament; then to simply try his concentration we quickly took up Greek Philosophies, immediately to wade through Swedenborg's "Apocalypse Revealed," until we felt exhausted, while he bloomed like a freshly opened tulip. To turn the tide, we suddenly said: "What does Meyer's Lexicon say about Spinoza?" It was a page torn out of an encyclopedia, which came into our possession and lay undisturbed in one of our securely locked trunks. He reached the climax by slowly and carefully reading, as out of ether, word for word, without missing a punctuation.

We were dumfounded. Such phenomena we had seen demonstrated at the Temples, the Brotherhood Communities, and Divine Monasteries, but never "outside the walls," as our Patriarch would put it. Was -it the chicanery of Hades to test us and our learning, and question the Divine Institution and our connection? "God give us strength, or teach my mind," we would sigh mentally.

And when we did, Bambino smiled, saying: "Amen."

X.

WE now began to turn our attention to Bambino's needs, as generally understood. Anything we thought would please him we procured. When asked to do a thing, Bambino proved very responsive. We had him work in clay; we had him work in marble; we asked him to paint for us. Secretly we presented his works to expert critics. They of course, would say: "The execution shows great talent; but the works are copies. They are not original productions. " Did we dare to tell him that? Not for all the world. But one day we plucked up courage, and asked him to paint us something very original. He promised. After an hour of work, he called us to his room, where he unveiled before our eyes a painting that held us spell-bound for some time. It seemed animated, ready to move. It was the likeness of the Saviour and his Vicar, with the backs of their heads touching. "Bambino, we do not understand. Is it possible that after all you believe in the vicariate?" "Father, know ye not that good and evil go side by side?" "Mon Dieu, Bambino, though it is original, let us not have it in our possession!" "Then you may take it to the connoisseurs for criticism! " Ah, he then knew it, and knew it rightly that we had secretly questioned his works. "No," we answered, "It is enough; we are satisfied; still we are mystified more than ever. Although we know of the limitlessness of God's Blessings, there are times and things that will baffle us, owing to their apparent inconsistency with reason." Bambino speedily interrogated: "Not when the mind is 'illuminated, seeing clearly the indefinable to the senses, which, at best, are insufficient to convey Divine Thought. The more we employ our mind, the more we have to look to the heart for inspiration, lest we grow into an intellect void of the warmth of the spirit, which alone imparts life." "And what is your idea of life, Bambino?" "I have 'long since ceased to form ideas. I take life as I find it pictured in the daily life of les hommes en generale. All 'ideas find their expression in our surroundings, so that none may have a claim, yet each one may find an inspiration in his own fancy. But to judge from appearances -in the hope to find life, is more than folly. True, to fathom life keeps the mind in constant pursuit, and helps in the recapitulation of endless repetitions. Still it neither adds to nor subtracts from the general trend, except in the shifting of scenes, and impersonation of roles. Life itself may be likened unto a playwright who writes the play, but he, himself, has no part in the enactment. The phenomenal side of life appears at one place and disappears at another, like unto the rising and setting of the sun after the course of his duty is run; the run controlled by the length or shortness of the season, yet at the shortest season the run is complete. The real end of man's endeavours no man knoweth; still every development brings us nearer to the goal-Perfection here on earth, a state free from the constant buffetings of ignorance and superstitions, which are the chains bearing man down with their heavy weight, and making it impossible for him to move about freely, since he is lashed into channels of duty, which to perform rightly is utterly impossible and beyond his fettered state. As time goes on, many more souls will realize their true condition and throw off the yoke imposed upon them, and thus pave the way to a more tolerable existence." "Bambino, taking a general view of things, do you think that the condition in the world is destined, or may it not be the result of wilful defilement by those who are 'in the lead, and to whom we look for exemplification?" "With the dawn of reason every ray of light that led unto higher understanding was cherished with reverence by recipients, but in the course of time, confining divine principles to teaching them, instead of incarnating them during the period of gestation, called out theoretic reasoning dependent upon an insufficiently conscious mind, which led to denying the language of the heart and with it the spirit. The pollenating of a forced mentality grew into authority, despotism, and

fabrication of laws that knew no tin-tit. Reduced to a mere commodity, the average man had but little to hope for, except what intrinsic value was placed upon him, a law that found its way into every shade or branch of society; in some instances placing greater value upon man, in others less, ever fluctuating like the stock market. To change the present state of society will prove a great task. It will fare as it does with children, once you give them playthings, you never dare take them away again lest you cause untold misery and heartaches that know of no comfort. Some outgrow their playthings, others supplant them by newer ones more or less foolish in their nature. Some of these playthings, once of a material sense, grow into playthings in the spiritual and even the intellectual realms, and such fancy and fiction are just as real to the full-grown as tin soldiers are to the baby boy. The fewer playthings, the better; nay, a child born into this world as a saviour-child has no need to be entertained. It will find enjoyment and entertainment, leading unto higher attainments, through the freedom of intercourse with God, Nature and reason."

"And you never have had any playthings „Bambino?"

"I can enjoy play without taking part in its acting! "

"But is it not more satisfying to have all sorts of things one's heart desires?"

"We can have them without possessing them. Do we not enjoy our apartment?"

"Yes, but then we just live in rent. Would we not feel much freer if we owned it?"

"No, we would feel incarcerated, tied down, have greater responsibilities, and do not forget the original cost, the investment. Do we have to own the park, the stream, the sea-shore to enjoy them? What is there to hinder us from enjoying them whenever we are prompted to do so? „

"Bambino, you rage like all reformers, philosophers, Platonists, altruists, communists, and revolutionists."

"N'est ce pas?" said Bambino, as he smiled. Then he added: "God is in all, and all is God; each and every one of these is attempting to express a stray ray of divine intelligence with the desire of planting hope, even though it be but a faint hope, in the human heart."

"When you grow up, Bambino, we fear you will be an agitator."

"What a thankless prospect; but as God wills."

"So God directs even that part in our daily walks?"

"In some instances, yes; in others, no."

"How are we to tell then, whether we listen to one called by Providence, or one self-appointed?"

"We are never to judge man by what he preaches, but by the lesson we gain from his message, since the mouth-piece is but a servant, receiving the tip of a messenger boy."

"Exactly, as in thirst 'it matters not whether the water is gotten from a hydrant, a pump, a well, or a spring. True, there are some who carefully strain it, others distil it. But the Saviour said: 'I shall give you of a water that you will thirst no more.' "

"He referred to the fruit of the Spirit, even as in the carnal, we may find trees by the living stream, bearing fruit throughout the year. Has not God planted these trees that the fruit thereof may quicken our bodies and keep in tune our spirit?"

"But we cannot live on fruit alone."

"Neither by bread alone; but by the word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

"Not everybody could live that way."

"It is merely the change of a letter from could to would." And with that he politely excused himself and retired to his room.

XI.

MORE than ever we became alarmed and felt for Bambino. For less display of intelligence than possessed by him, men were burnt at the stake, entombed alive, dragged in chains into a

dungeon, persecuted by means that defy description, harangued shamefully; unless the talented one submitted to be used and serve the diabolical ends of persecutors.

Bambino would either have to submit to the dictates of terrestrial rule, until through cunningness he had risen into power, in turn using the rounds of a human ladder to serve his particular ends and revenge himself upon the principals; or, he would have to be lost in the shuffle, perhaps eking out an existence in isolation and misery. Then, again, he might lose illumination, and readily adjust himself to governing conditions, living the life of the average man who surrenders his ideals.

Think as we would we found no way out of the dilemma which grew upon us as we looked into, or rather attempted to pierce the density of Bambino's future. Among many more, Omar Khayyam's quatrain flitted through our mind repeatedly: -

*"There is a door to which I find no key,
There is a veil so dense I cannot see!"*

We might have gone on in our contemplation, had it not been for an interruption from the adjoining room, for upon waves of ether floated the sweet voice of Bambino, accompanied by his violin, carrying to our hearing the refrain: -

*"Oh, the sorrows when we tarry,
Oh, what needless pain we bear;
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer."*

The interpretation he placed upon notes and words was something that touched the innermost chord of one's heart; so magical was the force that we had to yield. Yes,

*"All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer."*

But then pride arose within us that would remind us of beggarism, were we to surrender - everything to God. And then again the thought would come to us, that, after all, we do build walls about ourselves that screen the presence of the Infinite from our sight. Is it weakness, or is it stubbornness, or perhaps both, that we would 'halt between opinions'?

And again, but still sweeter, and with an ardent appeal and tremor in the voice, came the words:

*"All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer."*

And in the words of Bambino, we too vowed: "As God wills."

XII.

WHEN Palm Sunday came, we proposed to View the processions and the great jubilee, but, for the first time Bambino declined.

"With your kind permission, I prefer not to witness display."

"Why not, Bambino?"

"Because it makes my heart ache beyond endurance. I cannot tell why – I must not speak of it."

"Then let us have our boat-ride."

"As you like it," he answered.

The waters were calm, a light refreshing, breeze fanning us gently. The air was very invigorating, the sky above us clear with but a little cloud here and there to add to nature's beauty. Bambino loved to recline in a mass of pillows, and let his eyes gaze into ether. Musing? Perhaps! Of what? We did not know. The very elements seemed to admire and love him for now and then a breeze would play about him, and throw a lock of hair across his face. He would then smile, while his cheeks would encarmindine. We tried to read his thought, but not a clue to his

mental operations could we discover. It seemed as if he knew our intentions, for whenever we would grow intent on watching him, he smiled all the more.

Turning toward the shore, fearing the incoming tide, he startled us by saying: "The artist drowned, but the wooden Bambino floated safely into the harbour."

What does he mean by that? It recalled to memory the strange incident in Rome, but we dismissed the thought from our mind, for why borrow trouble when it comes soon enough?

At the apartment we spent a most enjoyable evening between entertaining and playing chess, he always winning. Looking at me sharply, he said: "Such is your lot; you will always be on the losing side. Your only gain lies in giving and sacrificing. The end will be no better than the beginning; there will always be some one to empty your milk bottle and fill it with water for you."

As we never had told him a word of our babyhood days, or of that black-haired boy to whom we owed our *régime* of starvation, nearly proving fatal, it startled us. We never cared to have it known-never wanted it to find mention in our biography.

"What a blessing, though!" Bambino continued, "to have developed a happy disposition of taking everything that comes your way in good grace, and to be thankful for all you miss. In that way no one will ever be able to understand you, or discover your origin. You will be much envied and much loved. At the darkest hours and the fiercest struggles, one ray of comfort will guide you into the future, and on through eternity ..."

"Bambino, our future has been depicted to us with the fixitives of predestination. We have the choice of three paths, or all of them. None promises felicity. The one leads through mazes; the second is a labyrinth of dark tunnels; the third an abyss."

"Well, you shall have them all that none may be jealous of the others."

"That is comforting, indeed, Bambino."

"It is, when you are conscious of: Not mine, but Thy will be done."

"But is it always the will of the Lord?"

"Yes, for even death is better than suspense and misery."

"But death does not end all."

"No, but 'it changes the current of thought in friend and foe, which brings us to a better understanding, and thus shortens the days of calamity! It brings us always one step nearer the goal."

Not able to quite see through this trend of thought, we found it best not to speak on the subject, but to let it rest right there.

Bright and keen as we admitted Bambino to be, a phenomenal genius, that had no equal anywhere, we were led to the idea that after all the boy might be a theomaniac, and yet we could not reconcile ourself to such a suggestion, since Bambino was so evenly tempered. There was no guile in him; he was beyond reproach, even holy. He knew everything, and yet he was as pure as morning dew. Free from any and every desire; ready to serve without showing the least fatigue or dislike for work – what more was one to expect from a human? Over and over again we had to admit that Bambino was the perfect child – *Transparency incarnated*. Whether by accident, premeditation, or eugenic laws fulfilled, mattered not. There he was, a living example.

XIII.

WHETHER it was just to please us, or prompted by higher motives, we inquired not, Bambino was always ready to join us in our exercises, prayer and service. But candle and lamp he would not light; neither attend to the censer.

When on Good Friday we had our improvised altar with all the tokens of remembrance in full array, he looked more severe than ever.

"Say something," we said.

"Not to-day. I would say, though, that *'There shall be no sun by day, neither moon by night, for God shall be their light.'*"

Out of respect for him we put out the lights,
and did not start the censer.

"This is more than the Saints of God on earth would do for you," he said in an appreciative tone.

"We would not expect them to," we responded.

"Neither did I expect it of you, but you did it just the same, for you read the heart and mind, not catering to the senses."

And together we recited:

*"Open, O thou world-sustaining sun, the entrance unto Truth
Hidden by the vase of dazzling light,
Soften the radiations of Thy illuminating splendours that
I may behold thy true being.
From the unreal lead me to the real,
and unveil the magic illusions of the phenomenal worlds,
That I may see the path unto Realization, AMEN."*

"In this prayer there is song, sermon and service," he said, smiling and radiating like a sunbeam.

"Bambino, you should have been born among millennialists or non-resistants, you would have found greater appreciation and admiration there than among the orthodox."

"Impoliteness would return to you the compliment. Have I not found the greatest friend? What more can I ask beside? One true friend to admire, appreciate, and love is quite sufficient. And that friend gone from us – we still have one in whom we can confide – God!"

After some silence, he said: "Many friends mean many sorrows. They are like terrestrial possessions, when neglected they grow up into weeds, inviting many insects, pests, vermin, and destroyers."

We were not in a communicative mood, consequently decided to say no more.

It being fast-day, free from table-setting, there was nothing more to do but to retire for the night; Bambino working on some models, using the greatest care not to make the slightest noise. When he walked you would not have known it, we could never hear his steps; when speaking, it was always in a whisper or very soft voice.

Early next morning we went out into the open, and oh, how he enjoyed the singing of the birds, although a cricket was no less interesting to him, while the hopping of a frog would delight him, so much so, that we were always happy to spy one for him, as it gave us joy to see him enjoy himself, as far as enjoyment went.

It being silent Saturday, we again fasted; and after midnight we took a Calvary walk into the country, taking our dip in the rolling waters, emblematic of rebaptism; this took place at about three in the morning of Easter Sunday.

This was to his liking. He loved the water. Yet we would always draw a line there, and even when he showed great desire for boat-rides we would either go along or send a servant with him. We did not know why, but omens and forebodings which we could not overcome, would take possession of us. At times we felt it was weakness on our part, and saw the great contradiction of mind in matter, when aware of the fact that Bambino was no ordinary child, and was a protection to us rather than a charge.

XIV

RESURRECTION DAY proved a day of great delight to both of us. As he would not eat anything, but simply take a cup of hot water with a little sugar, we decided for a drive.

Often we marvelled how it was possible for a rapidly growing and maturing child to subsist on as little as he did and retain firmness of flesh, normal proportions, and develop strength. True, we, too, had never been given to indulgence, as a child, still his wants were phenomenally small. Could it be that vitamins increase within the laboratorial chambers of a highly evolved entity, and its immaculate human organism? May it be that the very elements inhaled deposit and increase vitalised substances within the dynamics and charge both blood and nerves? Can the water and the saccharine induce a process akin to the creative energy, multiplying tissue formation through a mere change in denomination. With mind fixed upon every morsel, and salivation controlled by undivided attention, thus respiritualizing every particle of food, conscious of the creative energy and evolutionary possibilities hidden within the elements consumed, could there be such a thing as multiplying the zoe within vitaminous substances, and consequently subsist on less matter where there is a high state of life's realization? We wondered, for Bambino consumed less than twenty per cent of the usual ration accorded a child.

Returning from an extensive tour, we made ourselves cozy in our apartment, dismissing the servants for the evening, that they might follow their own promptings, while we were to be given freedom of speech and play.

Bambino selected the sofa to recline on, while we had to sit beside him.

"Speak to me," he said.

And we were going to tell him of adventures, the days of our studies, work, and duties, in fact, everything that might interest him – but he fell asleep.

There he lay like a bouquet of flowers; not a blemish could be found; the skin was as velvety as the petal of a lily. In vain we looked for a speck or a freckle. The hair was like the finest cocoon silk, falling in masses of rich golden curls. Even our wildest imagination could never have dreamed of such beautiful, charming, bewitching eyes, now closed in sleep. Those lips, always rosy, aroused much comment, they really seemed as if painted, but such a healthy red, where could you find it? The delicately rounded chin had a slight dimple which added to the perfect lines of the profile. The ears looked as if they had been moulded, while the neck would have added to the charms of fairies. Arms and limbs, hands and feet, could not have been more perfectly formed. The trunk of the body measured absolutely normal in proportions; the chest large, the waist small with hips of gradual descent. The face would have proven a study to physiognomists, while the proportionate measurements of the head would have been the envy of a phrenological institute. Base and inclinations were equal in their relation to one another. The heart and pulse beat in unison, never hesitating nor missing. The blood test showed a remarkable balance, while the mental index and the ganglionic action proved harmonious, and a blending that would have aroused surprise among medical authorities, and disabused one's mind as to man's impossibilities. All the best groomed and aristocratically born, and all the most favoured beings whose fame and good fortune it was to enjoy world renowned recognition as to form and beauty, would never have been able to stand comparison in the presence of Bambino. Holding his hands to the light, they would appear absolutely transparent. His body was practically luminous, for even in the deepest darkness you were able to see his form, as if emanating a pink light, slightly diverging into a lavender or violet hue. Even a magnifying glass did not disclose pores, so closely drawn were the cells. The nose was of a Roman type, so exquisitely shaped, that the more you looked at it, the more you marvelled as to the power which created it. In every tissue there was intelligence marked so strongly that Bambino appeared to us more supernatural than human.

The mental index disclosed utter impossibility to anger, fear, or coercion. He could be a great artist or an exceptional inventive genius, a marked statesman or an orator, a promoter or leader. It was difficult to tell just wherein he would be the greatest. The thorough balance would have made it possible for him to adapt himself to any environment, and follow any calling. The

intellect showed a perfect blending of all the groups; the spiritual or moral propensities showed him so well balanced that It would have been impossible for him to ever become a theomaniac, while the physical endowments would have sufficed him to fight his way among wild beasts.

The only thing that did baffle us was why he should be given to crying in secret when there was no indication of any organic deflection conducive to melancholia. Was it soul condition? Was 'it recollection of possible past incarnations? Perhaps it was caused by the thought of mother, or the feeling of disappointment that there was no father with whom to share his affections. He was very affectionate, still with it all there was a reservedness. Was it the self-consciousness of an aristocratic pedigree that made him use consideration, mingled with hesitancy? Truly the pendulum of his being swung between ripe manhood and babyhood, seeking the love of a mother or the affection of an affinite soul.

He seldom turned his head, his eyes would roll instead, and that rolling would emanate perfect beams, perceptible to every spectator. We, for this reason, avoided contact with the outside world as much as possible, for whenever we did take a stroll, every man, woman, and child would stop on the street, looking after him, bewildered at the sight of those glistening eyes. Children in the streets would stop playing and put their fingers, even fists into their mouths, then turn into a most bashful attitude and remain speechless, paralysed, gaping after him until out of sight.

When in conversation with him, all we could think of was: Jesus in the Temple, surrounded by Doctors of Learning; although whenever such thought pictures presented themselves to us, we felt as if it were a form of psychologisation, and we forcibly brushed such panoramas from our mind.

And here he lay before us in sweet repose; not a muscle twitched, while breathing full and deep, void of any dynamic friction. Had it not been for the rosy cheeks, you might have thought him a piece of Carrara marble. The light of the candelabra added much to the atmosphere of sanctity. We felt a sacred calm fall upon us, and the satisfaction that Bambino was a perfect child, demonstrating the Coming Race, and an immaculate type of transparency. No longer did we interrogate ourself as to whence, where, or how he came. His character and talents spoke for themselves; what further witness or proof did we need? In finding, we found each other. The thought of possession should never become evident in either.

Had he been feminine, it would have been love at first sight, followed by romance, *perhaps*. True, that might have been disastrous to us, because of our vow; but "*God moves in most mysterious ways His wonders to perform,*" and has power to annul vows, as much as kings can declare treaties a mere scrap of paper, or presidents have power to amend constitutions so as to have full sway in handling a situation.

"Would you have annulled a vow?" We have never been put to such a test. All we know is that if Bambino had been feminine, and love had been reciprocated, we would have been in duty and honour bound to annul that particular part of the vow.

It seemed as if we heard Bambino's voice saying: "*God is love, and whosoever abideth in that love, abideth in God, and God in him.*"

With that text flitting through our mind, we looked closely at Bambino. He was growing pale; his chest heaving, his breath growing laborious. Perhaps his position is beginning to become awkward, we thought, carefully adjusting his pillows for him, when with a smile his eyes opened wide, and with parted lips, he said:

"I am going home!"

"Bambino, this is your home, we leave to your disposal all we have. Surely you would not leave us, now that we have learned to understand and love one another with a love akin to the love, of God. Wherever you go we shall follow. Is there anything troubling you? Confide in us; we shall do as you command."

He raised himself slowly and laggardly into an apparently comfortable position. Every moment seemed to increase our painful suspense.

Bambino was always quick to answer. This time he had to think. For the first time we saw a deepening frown; he looked at us with a strange look – but smiled. Tears filled his eyes.

"Why do you cry, Bambino?"

"I do not cry because of sorrow; these are tears of joy. You have shown kindness and love to me which I have never before found in others. I know you seek no return, but I wish I could do something for you. I see absolutely nothing for you in this world but the repetition of past history. As you are to walk through the Garden of Gethsemane all alone, I shall not interfere, but I shall at least have the privilege of enjoying your company while we are together."

Then came a painful lull before he resumed his speech, and slowly, with emphasis upon every word, he continued:

"One favour I would ask of you; never turn away a waif; harbour and assist all who call to you for help, even though they be unworthy of your blessing, for you perchance may entertain angels unawares."

"Bambino, you shall have the assurance that by nature our heart goes out to one and all, be they great or small."

"Whenever sorrow and grief pile upon you, Father, will you never show signs of regret?"

"Never, Bambino, for whatever is in the designs we shall not try to alter ... we shall go through it all with joy in our heart, no matter how long and dreary the path."

"And you will not sorrow, even if it so pleases Providence that I be no longer in the flesh?"

"Bambino, surely Providence would not mete out so painful a decree!"

"We have no right to dictate to man, still less to God."

"But Bambino, surely there is nothing wrong with you. All our investigation of your body shows absolute perfection."

"But the heart," he breathed.

"The heart, Bambino? Why it is the most perfect of all the organs; we find its pulsations absolutely normal "

"It is so through conscious breathing; but if I were to neglect it, I would swoon away."

"We are more than baffled!" we replied.

He leaned forward, and in a whisper said: "The day preceding my birth Mother learned what position my Father held; and it was such a shock to her that after delivery, she died of a broken heart. Every part of my being is perfect, as you say, but at certain periods the heart suddenly contracts, and the thought of mother in all her agony makes my whole being writhe with physical pain; it is a struggle of Jacob with the angel of the Lord."

"And what do you do at such moments?"

"I just breathe, and carry everything to God in prayer."

"Bambino, this is not the climate for you. We shall seek some better quarters. This malady surely must be reparable."

"If it were a physical trouble, yes; but it being of the soul state, the higher consciousness; alone can keep it in check. I was not going to, speak of it to you, but as you sat beside me, drawing deductions as to what might have been were I feminine, it came to me that I had better tell you I would have been a source of much trouble in later years. As much as I wish I were feminine I am glad I am just a '*Little Beggar Boy*,' to share joy and pain with you."

"These heart attacks are less frequent since, we have met, and when you see me in tears, it is., because of joy, or that I feel for humanity and my utter helplessness to alleviate their sorrows. The world at large never cares for principle; people are content with momentary relief. After all we can only live for one another, bearing in mind the trust of God. Forget the trust, and complications are sure to set in, prognosticating no end of terrors. Let it therefore be a proof to us that where there is pure love, there, need be no introduction nor explanation."

"You have not asked me, neither have I asked you ... and yet our souls have grown together as if controlled by one heart – that one heart is *God*. Life heretofore seemed tasteless, but with you

beside me, I am about to resolve as to my future; but 'As God wills.' If it is not to be, then 'I shall see thee through eyes of others,' for remember, 'A child shall lead thee.' "

For a considerable time there was perfect silence. Bambino seemed to have regained absolute normal poise, and smiling, he asked if he might be permitted to take his customary seat upon our left knee, which was granted without reserve.

His large sparkling eyes focused upon ours, he looked as if searching for a trend of thought that he might make connections. Then he said:

"What a comfort to possess the undeniable assurance of the indestructibility of the atomic worlds, and though caught in aggregations unto a carnal state, we forever remain inseparable. We may come and go, be far or near, the principle of Infinitude continues to guard our destiny. Though space or time may intervene, we continue to be attracted to our own, while those distant 'in transcendental relation, even though invited unto blood ties, fail to hold us, as Spirit alone determines eternal relation. Those nearest to God's Central Sphere continue to hold their place, and likewise do remain in their respective distance those who originally have held positions in the remote realms of Infinite Circumference. However much we may mingle with one another on earth, or on other worlds, and the passing from sphere to sphere, divine consciousness within the ego always demands return to the original state. Everywhere the Eye of the Almighty guides us, and within His Sight we forever abide. Even to the remotest regions His Voice reaches us, and His Hand continues to lead us, while a single heart throb of ours reaches His Throne."

We said: "But, Bambino, is not this idea somewhat hyperbole; how can God be Interested in detail appertaining to many, when in numbers they are as numerous as the stars in the nebular vastness ?"

Bambino answered: "Oh, God does not have to answer the demands of every individual want and prayer, any more than the atomic or organic worlds need to be looking up to Him for the supply of their needs. Inasmuch as the Creative Energy perpetuates the Cosmic realms, and the Evolutionary laws attend to the processes in nature, each and every object partaking of what it is primarily in need of, even so the Transcendental Magnitude has its principles according to which all of the needs of man are destined, and man only needs to choose. Inasmuch as the terrestrial objects select their supply in accordance to their corresponding relation, even so does man attract unto himself in accordance to his powers of application. As he chooses, even so it is sanctioned by the Infinite, and in so far as he fails to use his freedom of choice, the existing laws of limitations have to yield and meet the conditions. Ere a prayer is uttered the answer to it already stands out before us. True, a prayer of mere words, lacking the power of spirit, returns to us with the valuelessness of a dictionary shelved away in a bookcase. Like begets like. For all desires there are endless supplies within the store-house of Infinitude; and none need feel neglected, or need to expect special attention. Only those who are free from desires, conforming to designs and of close communion, may enter into special meditation, and individually reach the throne of the Almighty 'in conference.'"

"But, Bambino," we said, "Considering God as Pure Principle, we cannot think of Him as in the Great Beyond; we rather believe that God to be such must be mine, all mine, and consequently in me."

"True," Bambino answered, "Still it is the sunbeam that proves beyond all doubt the existence of a sun 'in the remote regions of the solar world. Even as the Divine Spark within us reveals beyond all doubt' the reality of God within a sphere all His Own, and even 'With these eyes of flesh' we may see Him. But inasmuch as a solar ray does not manifest except it first pass through uncountable realms, meeting its destination greatly modified, and in other instances intensified, the spiritual too has its many phases. Thus God stands *en rapport* with His Elect throughout the Infinite, the Cosmic, and the Universal realms by virtue of divine audions, vibrating His Wish and Will unto each and every individual, and in turn receives the heart's longings from His Elect here upon this Earth. Whenever the Elect of the outer circumference grow anxious With a desire to reach the Central Sphere, foreign to established law, over-

vibrations shift the audion, compelling a radio-active change in the atomic world, affecting at the same time and in the same degree the mentality of their relative correspondences throughout ether and on this earth, which process extinguishes the divine spark in the heart, and leaves man to grope in a sea of uncertainties. To the same degree the very messages intended for man, in answer to his prayer, may be Intercepted by celestial interlopers and appear in a code difficult for man to decipher, while in turn our prayers may never reach the throne of the Almighty, but go astray in the vastness of ether, and caught by the adversary, answer the selfish ends of his ilk. For this reason man is to seek channels unto the application of his talents, prompted by a thought, conscious of the Ever-presence of Providence, while his heart is fixed unto free communion with Infinity."

"Bambino, your ideas are rather Pantheistic and spiritistic, which would lead one to believe in star-hopping, transmigration and reincarnation as the only goal, and have us ending up where we first started."

"Maybe so," Bambino answered with a smile. "But do you know that inasmuch as there are innumerable cosmic worlds, each one differing, in evolutionary executions, controlled by laws of their own relation, due to difference in their position as to space, even so there are innumerable transcendental regions, each and every one claiming his own? Any effort on the part of one realm to win another over to their side brings on a tidal wave within the spiritual ether, and simultaneously plays orgies within terrestrial worlds. Thus, proselytizing outside of one's own relation is improper, be it here or there. Void of the knowledge as to cosmic origin, delusions take possession of mortals, each one attempting to exercise such methods as characterize the sphere from which he has proceeded. To end all strife man must first recollect origin, remember purpose, and submit to Divine destiny; otherwise, the future will reveal no more than the pages of historical records of the past. Thus souls go on from earth's purgatory into domains more or less congenial to their liking, taking up their operations where last they left off."

"Bambino, we think you are too much of a transcendentalist. We hold that we are on the earth to reclaim it and prepare for a future state."

He answered: "As you like it. Still, the earth needs no reclaiming; it will go on exercising its uncountable powers of production while man is present, and after he is gone. It is man himself who needs adjusting here on this earth, that he may go, on from sphere to sphere, enjoying the great works of God, as wise tourists enjoy the sublime scenery on their journey around the world. The planets are not to try out slavery; they are for the enjoyment of freedom and the exercise of talents. To first create and entertain grievances, and thereafter invent measures to remove them, profits neither God nor man. To side-step or overstep the boundary lines of relation by no means removes a stigma once imposed. Humbleness before the Lord, and respect for His designs alone shall heal all *malheur*. The spark of recollection alone may kindle the divine atom within the heart, and create rays unto a circumference that shall reveal to us the Sun-clothed Day. The entities of God's immediate presence always remain conscious of God, even though operating in the remotest regions; while the souls of the outer circumference measure the distance to the throne of God, and, consequently know of Him only from afar, and as if in regions above. The Elect of God's Own Centre find less enjoyment in the carnal, and all the more delight in the Knowledge of Eternity."

Being aware of the fact that such topic would lead us into mind wanderings *ad infinitum*, we kept silent.

Although the hours of evening were advancing, we proposed a drive, to which Bambino willingly assented.

Next morning we ordered riding horses, knowing that such exercise goes a long way to, correct heart action, and to stimulate the nerves. Bambino enjoyed the change. He rode like one who had never been off a horse, and as if brought up in a saddle. At times, it seemed we heard him laugh.

XV.

FROM day to day we noticed perceptible changes in Bambino. Every few days we marked his growth on the wall, and we mused, at this rate Bambino will be, at least, six feet four inches tall. Of course, he will soon decide in favour of having tutors, and prepare for the university. He must decide in favour of one or another branch in science, perhaps *materia medica*, and thus revolutionize the world on these lines, or he might take up technological branches, and give to the world the means to harness "*free energy*." While he pursues his studies and his laboratorial work, we can still attend to our Mission. The thought to have one as a living example will inspire us all the more to advance the Message.

Our heart went up to God every day in gratitude for the blessing of having sent Bambino to us. Bambino, too, seemed pleased. At times we let him go out alone on horseback; although he would beg us to accompany him, assuring us that our presence added greatly to his enjoyment. Only when it came to boat-rides we would accompany him and remain beside him,; but even in this instance, we gradually lost all scruples, and at times he was permitted to go alone; although we did impress his mind by saying: "Bambino, please do not go out too far, and do not fall into a trance. Better have Genero follow you in a boat."

He would then recall to our mind that: "Thoughts are things, and as a man thinketh, so it is." Consequently, we resigned to the inevitable.

Bambino grew perceptibly and showed marked interest in daily events. We decided on *materia naedica* for him as a profession, and mechanics for his recreation. We decided in favour of *materia medica* because he could then use his gifts advantageously, and to an extent, at least, alleviate the results of ignorance on the part of humanity, and perchance devise ways and means of eradicating disease.

When we announced our programme to him, he seemed delighted, and said: "As you like it; but, of course, I am not constrained from showing interest in metallurgy or astronomy?"

"Of course not, only it is within the designs of' this world to follow one particular vocation as a means inspiring our purpose and end, making it possible for us to redeem our trust."

"Some professions and vocations excepted."

Fearing that it might lead to definitions, unpleasantly wearing upon our heart, we said nothing.

With a turn of his lustrous eyes, he caught the thought, and smiling, said: "With your permission, I will resume *mon leçon*."

XVI.

WHEN from his room notes vibrated through the air, his touch wresting hidden powers of harmony from the strings of his violin, we felt overwhelmed with pity at the thought that such a talent should remain in obscurity, and perchance, be lost to the musical world, in so far as delight to audiences was concerned.

But a public life is a life of servitude, coterie, meanness, envy and chicanery. With every laurel gained, there are a hundred daggers of malice, and with every bouquet comes a stiletto. Music and song are too sacred to be offered unto a world and to be trampled under feet of the public. It should remain with us as an asset of a perfect home.

It is needless to say we had to marvel at the dexterity Bambino displayed in playing the most difficult operas. In his improvisations he drew out notes upon his violin we never knew existed in a musical scale. At the Brotherhood we remembered a musical genius who composed in quarter notes, tantalising our ears, and discouraging the rest of us ever thereafter to touch a violin. But Bambino dissolved quarter notes with a tremolo, while picking xolian with a single finger, running into a high pitch with the softness of distant echoes. Such high notes as he produced

did not exist to our knowledge, a knowledge by no means to be underestimated, for we took pride in the musical atmosphere which we were reared in, beginning with our practice at four o'clock every morning for many years.

"Bambino," we said to him when we entered the salon, "how is it you never played at the operas?"

"I have not come to entertain, but to demonstrate," he said; and then, as if he felt remorse for so short an answer, he added: "With your kind permission, I place myself at your service."

"Never, Bambino, never; for we may say we have not come to dictate, but to fulfil the Will of the Father. In the first instance, we know we shall succeed, for we shall never dictate. As to the latter, we shall have to follow your counsel and bear in mind: *'Carry everything to God in prayer!'*"

"I shall, play it for you," he replied, and ere we could advance another word he stood in the doorway, Violin in hand:

*"Oh, the sorrows when we tarry ;
Oh, what needless pain we bear;
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer."*

Constantly changing variations, while picking the melody with the thumb, alternating crescendo with pianissimo, he repeated the refrain, singing with a voice that seemed as if coming from distant spheres and re-echoed in numerous canyons. Our heart would melt, and again it would freeze, for freeze it must. The teachings forbade sentimentality and sensations. We must control every phase of the emotional. Did not Abbu Kara say that: "To give way to emotions showed weakness and screened God from our sight?"

"If we thus suppress all feeling would not eventually the cold intellect control the heart and close the door unto the spirit, leaving us to struggle in a cold unsympathetic world," broke in Bambino, as he took his seat upon our knee.

Like an electric shock it passed through our frame, Bambino's words came so unexpectedly. We were not aware that he had laid away his violin and approached us. We thought we had watched him all the time, for though absorbed in mental reflection, we at the same time attempted to discover the trick of his musical manipulations.

"Unsympathetic world," we repeated. "Why, it boasts of nothing but sympathy, and prides 'itself of many institutions as the result of such nursing."

"Father, you would tempt us to speak, but I must not speak. Furthermore, you know this world as well as I do, and for this reason we shall agree never to recapitulate anything that is phenomenal to whatever age and generation it may have been conceded. Although a part of the mobile laws, and therefore quashable, we shall no longer cite the unpleasant before us. The endless string of institutions is like a piece of rubber, if you bring pressure to bear at one end, the mass of rubber runs to the other, and *vice versa*."

"We agree," we said quickly.

And he smiled, adding: "But at times we must disagree."

"But, Bambino, how can you say that, you who are so perfect; is it possible that at times you may be subject to outside influence?"

"Not I, Father; I know the laws of earth and spirit, but were I to allow myself to take seriously this world with all its diabolical ways, I would empty divine wrath and exercise vengeance upon all I could reach. Do you know that all the sweet faces about us, as they grow in years, meeting with disappointment, lose their innocence and turn demons? Not demons in the ordinary sense, for whatever they do, they do not do it out of themselves, but simply because of their environments. For this reason, the world may adjudge them, condemn them, kill them; but God seeth the heart, and in His Sight they are absolved of all the illusionary."

"Then even a murderer may find remission and have all the blemish eradicated without further account?"

"Yes," Bambino breathes.

"Bambino, I do not like that part of your philosophy; it savours of Buddhism. Your bitter experiences in boyhood have chained you to the rebel side of humanity; your sympathy is with the plebeian."

"Father, did not God create thieves, libertines, liars, murderers? Are they not the result of conditions, of environment? The product of society? *IS IT NOT PRENATAL INFLUENCE, INDUCED THROUGH SURROUNDINGS, INCREASING IN NUMBERS AS INCREASE THE DAYS INTO YEARS?* Are not many causes effective to collective results, as many ideas lead to doubtful deductions? There are more thieves and murderers active within the law than in the slums or the common walks. The latter are hounded that the former may enjoy protection. Whatever evidence this world offers is merely circumstantial, assumptive, and framed. *IT HAS BEEN STATED, THOUGH FALSELY, THAT SIN IN THIS WORLD IS BECAUSE OF SATAN'S COUNTEROPERATIONS. IN THE FIRST PLACE, ALL POWER IS OF GOD, AND EVEN AN INFRINGEMENT IS UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE AS THE CREATIVE ENERGY UNTO MATERIALISATION LIES WITHIN THE PROVINCE OF GOD; SATAN POSSESSING NOTHING OF HIS OWN, BUT THE RIGHT OF SERVITUDE UNTO DESTRUCTION. UNTO MAN GOD ENTRUSTED HIS DESIGNS, AND EMBODIED THEM IN HIS BEING. TO THE EXTENT THAT MAN ABUSES THIS TRUST SATAN APPEARS TO FURTHER ALL OPERATIONS IN OPPOSITION TO INFINITE DESIGNS UNTO FINALITY. IT IS MAN THAT DESIRES AND INSTIGATES DIABOLISM, AND SATAN IS DUTY BOUND TO FURTHER EVERY PSYCHOLOGIC MOVE SUGGESTING ILLUSIONS THAT TEND TOWARD FRAMING OF LAWS DELUSIVE UNTO SAINT AND SINNER ALIKE.* For this reason, it is a hopeless task for God's Divine Message to ever make an impression upon the world at large. The hearts of single individuals may be reached, but the world, void of a heart, cannot be cultivated for heaven; its mind is being cultured for inferno. Redemption will not come through the proclamation of the gospel, but by the powers of destruction."

"But, Bambino, this world is advancing very rapidly on ethical lines and in economics. Socialisation is quite evident; the Star of Democracy, or Refined Socialism, and Ideal Collectivism is rising like the Star of Bethlehem."

"It is true; still, in the case of the Star of Bethlehem, the sight was limited to but three wise men, and even these had to come from the Far East."

"Bambino, we are discouraged enough in regard to our Mission, but you are still less a comfort. Our Mission is not our own; we do not seek it; but rather seek the one to whom we may transfer it. The only comfort we have is that we will deliver the message, though the Messenger may never return. Still the message is of more Importance, and like in the play Fiesco: *'The Moor has done his work; the Moor may go.'*"

"That is sad, but why should a message be given to a world not sufficiently matured to receive it? Even a Saviour confined himself to a few," Bambino observed.

"Yes, but His command was: *'Preach unto all the world.'*"

"To preach is one phase, to teach is another. But with all our preaching, it shall avail us nothing if God does not Himself teach us. He alone shall teach, and when the lesson comes to us by divine influx we only just begin to awaken to the realization of a life that needs to yield to the Will of God; not until then shall come to us our divine memory which discloses the past and reveals the future."

"But why the past?"

"That we may know how to direct the present, and thus build a more solid foundation unto our future."

"We always had the idea that the present alone was to be considered; and that it sufficed to pave the way unto the future. If the future is dependent upon the present and the past, why do we not recollect the past?"

"Therein lies the wisdom of God, that with each incarnation, recollection of the former state is withheld, lest the mind, steeped in matter, turn into confusion. The mind moves in realms of recollections only when the objective side is sufficiently under control of the soul that sets the

higher nature free. Once the carnal side is fully controlled, and the desire for understanding announced, the entity comes forth like the luminary out of the depth of Aurora, clothed in the garment of Illumination, conscious of the Sun-clothed Day."

"Is such a state vouchsafed to every soul?"

"It is, but only a few attain to it."

"Why but a few?"

"Because the sacrifice is greater than the average heart and mind can bear."

"But if the benefit to be derived is so great, what matters sorrow and pain, which at best are but of short duration?" we asked.

Bambino answered: "True, but the objective side of life is so powerful and weighty that the soul cannot see through the density of illusions, and is not sure as to life everlasting. We are not all as Socrates, to drink the cup with a smile, nor a Jesus to ascend the cross with a heart full of forgiveness. We are not a Pythagoras, Plotinus, Euclid or Platus, to consider life a mathematical calculation; or a Lucilius, Petronius and Phaedrus to take the walks of life with a vengeance or submission; neither are we Quinus, Andronicus, Khayyam, or Voltaire to treat the illusions of this world with contempt, satire and pity. Fear of death holds many from asserting the Esau right to their inheritance and birthright, as in surrender they are certain of mercy for an existence, while in the encounter for justice they fear possible defeat, culminating in death. Rather than die heroes for a cause that holds out life eternal, they prefer to remain cowards for the mere bagatelle of half a loaf and a jug of wine, with the permit of existence for a little while. Divine recollection is the blessing unto the saints of God on earth to enter the arena of daily struggle with defiance for death, and resignation to the Will of God that none may ever grow tired of his task, but hold out until the last of God's enemies is put under foot. For this reason, every available means is justified in a great cause."

"Are we not apt to violate the sacredness of means?" we interrogated. "No, for every struggle, no matter of what nature and by whom the battles are fought, tends towards final emancipation."

"Then religious and political wars, inquisitions and reformations, persecutions and diabolism are in perfect order?"

"They certainly are. They all pave the way toward advancement, progress and civilization."

"And is that *modus operandi* to continue?"

"Until all the means of matter are exhausted and all the atoms harnessed; then shall strife cease and men realise that all is naught. The powers that be, once their destructibility unto final annihilation are exhausted, will be utilised for the common good. Such a time cannot be hastened by any measure of teaching or education, but by the inventive genius."

We said: "But why should there be so much suffering in the world, and why meekly submit to the thousands of impositions, and be taken advantage of at every turn? What does it profit us after we have been sorely tempted and tried?"

Is it possible that an Omniscient Intelligence judges by appearances and awards accordingly? Can there be such an award as to raise into position of greater exaltation the ones who have suffered the deepest mortal pangs, while others are placed into a minor state?"

Bambino smiled and said: "It would seem so. At least, such is the belief of the majority, while the minority would dictate to the Lord, as favourite jurists dictate the verdict to a modern judge, and at the same time laud Solomon for his own good judgment. Delusions in society are so well organised and bolstered with the seal of authority that an attempt at reform only adds as many more branches to law, as in the case of uniting two religious sects, identical in tenets but differing in name, a third, fourth and fifth is the result. In unison there is strength, but that such may be proven a fact, authorities only too well know that first there must be dissensions among the masses, so that at an hour of convenience their own appointed emissaries may dispose of 'leaders,' and teach the masses a lesson that will last long enough for usurpers to plan a new move. All the philosophies, religious creeds, economic theories, and scientific schools are more or less tinged with a spirit of shallowness and intolerance, so characteristic of modern society."

There are no *awards* nor *rewards* in heaven; there are no positions of exaltation. In the sight of God all are equal, irrespective as to what their walks on earth may have been. The Apostolic See is no more than the sore-laden Lazarus, if anything, he may have to exchange seats with the '*rich man*' in the parable of the Saviour. A Czar may have to exchange places with a Siberian unfortunate, or an Emperor become a fugitive. The farther we get away from God and His Divine Will and designs, the more lines of demarcation are drawn in a Commonwealth, and the greater are the distinctions and classifications in society. True, all positions in society are, at least, a necessity because made so by wilfulness. In the face of all these varied social complications, there are but two ways whereby a change may be attained: To society – war; to the individual – death."

"And then what?" we asked. "Wander in a weary abyss of uncertainties throughout eternity, or perchance, return to earth again? Why not live for centuries, and thus limit the number of incarnations?"

Bambino answered: "There is greater joy in being fondled as a babe in mother's arms, than to be the old man to whom the bowl of broth is begrudged by his own family whom he reared with care. Better to be rocked in a cradle than wheeled in an invalid chair."

XVII.

ALTHOUGH the days were growing unbearable from the heat, Bambino never complained. In fact, he was not sensitive to heat or cold, rain or shine, thirst or hunger. Perhaps he did not know what it was to offer complaints. Under the most strenuous difficulties, he remained sweet and proved equal to every occasion, not only ready with wise counsel, but with immediate action that would turn the undesirable into channels of miraculous relief. He had the understanding and power to nurse belief in miracles and wonders although he himself called it "*the mobile laws*" used to advantage.

Each day brought new surprises, and with it grew our confidence that Bambino was about ripe to prepare himself for his Life's Work. His affection grew into adoration, almost into worship, until the first and last thought was for us and our happiness.

"To live for each other is the end of all endeavour," he said one morning, after finishing a composition of two hundred foolscap pages on: "*The Divine in Man*," or, "*The Links of Incarnation*."

He placed it before us for our criticism, and after many pats and kisses he retired to his room. to play on his violin. When finished he entered the salon to play his favourite on the grand piano_

XVIII.

CONSCIOUS of the effect of this song upon us, he improvised and ended up with the "*Rhapsodies*." We thought he would break the key-board, the way he thundered out the fantastic measures. An audience would have gone wild over it. Artists would have congratulated and carried him in their arms. To us it was startling beyond measure. We feared intrusion; already the virtuosos above us had sent invitations and begged his assistance at the symphony. Of course, he declined with the courtesy of a well-trained diplomat, taking care never to implicate us in any way. One exhibition would have sufficed him to win fame in the whole musical world and gain favour of all critics.

When he struck the last note, he turned towards us, sweeping with one hand the mass of hair screening his face, while the other hand still rested on the last chord. He looked absolutely

supernatural, a "Celesta Cecelia" clothed in a divine halo. He smiled and said: "Do you love me?"

"We do, but why the question? Is there any doubt?"

"No, but the more we love as mortals, the oftener we have to have our love affirmed in the language of mortals, that the seal of testimony may be affixed in accordance to recognised law.

Do you really love me?"

"Why do you ask?"

"The more we love, all the greater the sorrow when the object of love, the magic form, fades at the hour of eventide, for '*what at night in death is doomed, once at sunrise sweetly bloomed.*' But once the night is over, with all the gruesome phantoms of morbid emotionalism, the day of reconciliation appears with the first fruits of resurrection, and born of spirit, life's thread is taken up where we last left off. And you love me with the Divine Love of God?"

"Bambino, we assure you of that love. The only proof we can offer is that of devotion to you and what we are able to do for your future. What else can we do? We give ourself to you, convinced that through you we shall be able all the more to redeem the trust entrusted to us."

He moved slowly toward us. Again his eyes filled with tears, but not a muscle twitched; his face was calm; still within it all we seemed to see a smile. Oh, such indescribable combination of joy and sorrow framed in illumination and an atmosphere of sanctity filling the aura of his being!

The mid-day sun was streaming into the south exposure of our salon, and fell upon Bambino, passing through the region of his heart like a dagger. Was it an omen, a foreboding, a sign? We felt a pain, while our brain began to tingle and then freeze.

Bambino smiled, taking his seat upon our knee. With much affection he stroked our hair, placing his hand upon our forehead. It was well he did so, for what he said would have broken the last fibre in our brain, the barometer of the epiphysis would have fallen to the point of paralysis. But he stroked the forehead and soothed the feverish brow, speaking in a poetic strain, a strain that was characteristic of his temperament; he was able to speak in any metre, preferably hexameter, for hours. What he said we but faintly remember; not until his voice changed the rhythm did we recollect ourself, and just in time to catch the following, spoken very slowly.

*"Once out of the carnal, would'st then thou miss me?
On entering my room, not find me to kiss thee?
Would then thy heart in spirit still love me?
Still at thy bosom enraptured caress me?
Would'st thou be willing to love me immortal,
As once thou hast loved the frame of the mortal?
Gazing, where sun, moon and stars are portals
Unto the realms where we walk with immortals?"*

And then there was silence; nothing stirred or moved. Except for a feeling of a heavy band around our head we seemed empty. Our heart contracted and struggled in its beats, while Bambino's heart made neither bounds nor leaps. Suddenly he threw his arms around us and cried bitterly. Not knowing what it meant, we cried with him.

"Bambino," we said, "We had better make a move. This seems to be a country of untold sorrows. We shall plan for a departure shortly, perhaps to-morrow."

*"To-morrow may never come;
Man, he thinks he planneth wise;
But God decrees it otherwise."*

Bambino broke in, his eyes rolling and gazing into oblivion.

"Yes, but you have taught us that we fail only: -

*"All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer."*

"We shall leave on the morrow."

"As you like it, but with your kind permission may I go to the sea for a boat-ride, while you are arranging matters at your pleasure?"

With that he put his hand upon our forehead, and smilingly imparted his affection. Could we resist his pleading for a boat-ride?

We said: "Why, of course, you may have your boat-ride, but don't you think you had better taken Genero with you, and keep the equipage at the strand for your speedy return?"

"With your kind permission, may I go alone and send back the equipage for you?"

"But we expect you back by four o'clock."

He said nothing, but kept stroking our forehead, and after awhile he said: "May I have the privilege of sending back the equipage?"

"Yes, of course, you may; we shall never interfere with your designs, for to us you are holy; you are our guide, our guardian angel. True, it is contrary to our philosophy to love a mortal, but it surely must be in the designs that we have found our ideals "in each other."

He was so grateful for the words we spoke that he lost himself In fond demonstration.

"Father, you do not mind when I tell you that the reflex of grand souls announce their presence about us at all times, not that we need their protection, but simply to remind us that there is no separation. God lives:in our hearts while all His Saints hover about us, and to the degree we enjoy their communion we have power to draw upon the gifts and attributes of Infinitude. I have recognised you, but I shall not speak. There is no need of speaking to you nor to the Elect on earth; for we know one another even as we have been known from time immemorial. This earth is nothing but a rendezvous of saint and sinner, a coming and a going. Sometimes we meet early in life; sometimes not until the shadows fall. Still there is no separation. Have no fear for me, I am protected. You, too, have the protection of Eternity. There will be many trials and heart-breakings, but you must mind it not, for at the hour of greatest need, I shall manifest, if needs be, before my allotted time."

He then quickly reached for his violin, and played in a touching strain a most striking tune, singing so sweetly that we simply resigned ourself to whatever Providence might have in store for us. Three times he played and sang:

*"Though friends and saints forsake thee ;
And shadows boldly rise;
While sorrows pile upon thee,
With tears filled be thine eyes;
Though trials come upon thee,
And storms are raging mad;
There's One to stand beside thee,
That One shall make thee glad."*

Placing the violin gently upon the table, he resumed his seat upon our knee, saying:

"You need no counsel. Everything has to culminate according to immobile and mobile laws. You do not mind my speaking thus to you? You know your path; you know the end. Still my unbounded love would comfort you and go before you as a beacon light, guiding your lifeboat into the haven of safety ..."

Then there was silence, and moments of painful suspense. His lips were sealed, and yet we thought we heard him say:

*"The artist drowned;
But the wooden Bambino
Floated safely into the harbour."*

XIX.

THE clock struck one, and impatiently the coachman paced the pavement; the equipage was waiting for Bambino.

"Bambino, be sure no '*tight-frocks*' follow you; be cautious."

"Father, entertain no fear from that source. True, they will shadow you to the very end of this world, in addition to the secret service of the country that last gave you birth, but banish the thought of both evils from your mind, and you will forever keep them mystified. I am safe and enjoy the protection of the '*Wings of the Almighty*.' Let us never think of anything that is liable to pain the heart; let us just love each other, and thus emanate that conscious love throughout the realms of ether until the radiations of that love touch the hearts of mankind."

With exceptional display of affection, he bade us adieu.

Stepping before the window we saw him enter the equipage with the agility of an equilibrist, dressed in the suit he loved best, "*Prince of Romani*."

As he looked back, catching sight of us, he quickly ungloved his right hand and waved it, holding his arm high, his hand pointing to the sky. He smiled so sweetly that we felt pacified. A minute later he was out of sight, for nothing seemed to move fast enough for Bambino.

Once alone we started to plan, but we could not decide definitely. Are we to go to Germany, France, or England, or perhaps America? The more we schemed, the more uncertain we felt. At last we decided we would wait and leave it to Bambino to divine. At anyrate we would have to go to either Germany or France, as in crossing the ocean we would want to secure, the best accommodations. Thus we dismissed the matter from our mind, and went into Bambino's suite of rooms. His belongings were all in perfect order. The jewellery casket was left open and in it all his treasures, even the watch he seemed so fond of. The cord we gave him on Palm Sunday was hanging on the bedpost and we remembered having asked him about the cord just before he left, when he said: "I had better not take it with me, as I do not wish it to get wet." That pacified us, and yet when we touched the cord, a piercing pain went through our heart, for there and then we thought we heard as if coming from the far distance:

*"Oh, the sorrows when we tarry,
Oh, what needless pain we bear;
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer."*

"But we do," we called aloud to ourself, "and because of that implicit faith and unshaken trust in God, we think it a sacrilege to think of God in any other capacity except of praise, adoration, and thanksgiving. But surely we do not want to present all of our occurrences of the daily walk to Him, unless it be in the form of recapitulation at the close of day as the Order prescribes it."

And stranger than before, the melody and words forced their way to our ears, emphasizing:

*"All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer."*

And it came to us. We caught the meaning; never to entrust the secrets of the kingdom of heaven to a living soul, as that part and portion remained as the patent right of God to impart to the Worthy at His own due time and season; while the things appertaining to self should never be confided to another living soul, not even the most beloved, as Love seeks no explanation, while to others we do not owe any.

As we thought in that strain, a perfect calm came over us, and the peace of boyhood days with the experience of Illumination which set our very heart into ecstasy.

XIX.

IT was a lovely afternoon, the sun and sky reflecting brightness; the air exceptionally invigorating. All the plants in the apartment had been replaced by fresh and blooming ones that day, thereby adding to the tropical air.

Whenever our mind would return to the subject of an exodus to "*A land thy God shall show thee*," we resigned at once, adding: "And we leave it to Bambino to be the guide."

The hours passed very quickly, and when the mantel clock struck four, we jumped from our seat with a start. Walking to the windows we saw the equipage standing in front of the building, the *cocher* sleeping.

"Genero," we called the servant, "ask the *cocher* why he has not gone to fetch Marquis Bezzari."

Genero returning brought the news: "The young Marquis has given strict orders for the equipage to remain here until His Excellency should direct otherwise."

"Then tell the *cocher* we shall be ready in a few minutes for him to take us to the shore after the young Marquis."

Just then the hall clock struck in doleful tones: "One, two, three, four." Bambino was always prompt, precise, accurate. What could have detained him; why should he have left the equipage for our pleasure, and to our orders? As we turned, there flitted into the room, Bambino, smiling, radiant.

"Bambino," we called.

But Bambino did not stop. Like a flash he came, like lightning he disappeared.

"Genero, did you see the young Marquis just enter and leave?"

"I have not, your Excellency," and with that Genero helped us into our coat, leading us

Every now and then, we thought we overheard a conversation concerning us, and for this reason we allowed ourself to listen.

"Yes," said a feminine voice, "the Prelate was unable to bring to a close the Benediction; the strenuousness of his service overpowered him to, such an extent that his weak heart and frail body gave way, and in a swoon he had to be taken to the palace. The last bulletin announced him to be in a most critical condition. When the Secretary suggested bringing the Bambino to the Prelate, his Apostolic Excellency is reported to have said: "I have seen the living Bambino; my soul is grieved unto death! "

"Ah," said a masculine voice, "such speech is the result of a high fever. His Apostolic Excellency has been suffering from overwrought nerves ever since the tragic death of some relative, to whom he was greatly attached."

Just then a "tight-frock" passed our table, throwing a vicious glance at Bambino.

Returning home late that evening, nothing further of importance transpired, and we retired immediately, feeling the need of rest.

XXI.

AT the boat-house we learned that Bambino had been helped into the boat as usual, taking cushions with him for his comfort.

"Did he say when he would be back?"

"He said he was expected by four o'clock, but not to be alarmed, as the boat would return with the incoming tide." And the tide was coming in.

"There is the boat," cried Russo, the boatman, "I shall go to meet him;" and with that he was about to strike off, when looking again, he cried: "Holy Mother, there is no one in the boat, unless he is sleeping; but what a risk that boy runs in letting the boat take its own course."

"All you men around here take your boats and go out to meet him; we will pay you a month's wages for it," we shouted.

Lightning-like, half-a-dozen boats worked against the tide with all their might, that the Herculean arms cutting the waves might earn the prize. In feverish suspense we awaited results. The sight of the battle between boatmen and waves may have been interesting to spectators, but to us it was terror. Though close to Bambino's boat, none of the battling tugs could reach it. All alone and untouched by human hands, the boat glided to the shore -- "*empty*."

Many and varied were the opinions. The cushions and other paraphernalia were gone; consequently the boat must have capsized; the bottom held quite a bit of water. Bambino must have fallen out of the boat, everything else with him. Back of the boat, at some distance, the boatman picked up his hat. It was a Borsalino beaver, especially made for him.

We hired men to watch the shore and make themselves busy with searching. Without delay sea-divers were engaged to work by day and by night. One day followed another without results; still the work went on. We do not know how we were able to hold our calm; but we did until one night, with the men on deck watching proceedings, the full moon fell upon the waters in a silvery stream. As we gazed upon the scene serene, it seemed to us that we saw the face and figure of Bambino, beautiful, radiant and smiling, gliding toward us. We reached out for him to embrace him – then a piercing cry, shuffling of feet, a call, the sound of splashing, and – all was over.

"Man overboard."

We heard those words distinctly. What connection had they with Bambino or with us? We did not know.

XXII.

THE sun streamed into the salon with exceptional brightness. In turning our head we found ourself in bed. Genero on one side and Madame Donat, our *rentier*, on the other side. As we tried to rise, we felt a terrible pain in our head.

"Madame," we said, "what does this mean?"

"Tranquille, Monsieur," she said, "it is well."

"It is well – what?"

"That you have come out of the sea safely." "We?"

"Your Excellency has fallen overboard, of course. It was a wonder that you kept up your courage as long as you did. Do you know, Sir, that for ten long days and nights you kept busy at sea, and never allowed yourself rest."

"Thank you, Madame, and now we shall rise, for we feel quite well."

"But, Sir, you should not deny yourself rest, you surely need it."

"We shall take care of ourself, Madame, we shall."

We dressed and ordered the equipage to take us to the office of the divers. There we learned that it was absolutely useless to search any further. "Fishermen will keep their eyes on things," said the principal. "Your reward of a hundred thousand is a boon no man can afford to overlook."

Once we went to the seashore, but the vastness of the waters and the sound of the waves turned us dizzy.

Returning to our apartment, it seemed like entering a sepulchre in the Garden of Arimathea. Hastily we opened all the drawers which held Bambino's possessions, in the hope of finding a scrap of some kind-a message to us. We went through his wardrobe, his books, and lastly, his

violin case, we even looked into his violin which was still resting on the marble table where Bambino left it before going out for the boat-ride with its tragical ending. We searched minutely, nothing there.

Throwing ourself in the armchair, we gazed at the sofa – to find it empty, void.

"God moves in most mysterious ways, His wonders to perform," passed through our mind.

"Wonders!" we cried. "My God, we do not murmur; we find no fault; but why these repetitions of sorrow that have no charms, that lead to nothing more than the self-same pain, varying merely in colour. It's neither for better nor for worse. If this Episode is to shorten our days, if it is to be for our speedy demise, why have we not succumbed in the days of babyhood? Why have we not broken our neck instead of the horse, under whose weight our limbs were broken? Why return to consciousness only to walk the valley of the shadow of death with mended limbs? Why did not the sea swallow us when in the shipwreck? Why had a boat to be ready for us in the big flood, and in the great conflagration, why had we to be saved, while all others perished? Why in falling from a precipice, rally after many weeks? Why could not we have drowned when as a mere child, we fell into the river? Why brought to the surface again the other day? Free from desires, wants and wishes, what is there to hold us to a form that has not even a heart to keep up normal action, but needs attention, and at moments of absolute resignation, instead of opening the portals for the entity to escape, revives of its own accord, resuming its operations that the fulness of sorrow may be ushered in with redoubled force? It is marvellous! But why keep a state of terror that seems to lead to no solution, no purpose, no goal?"

Struggling for relief we had to speak out loud: "We have borne all these incidents from cradle to childhood, boyhood, and youth in the belief that it was all within the designs; we submitted to it all in silent resignation, ever thankful for all we miss. Never have we questioned the goodness of it all. Even now we resign to fate, but why must our heart be tantalised, and a great soul meet a disastrous end, just at a time of greatest need?"

"We shall not boast of our obedience; neither of our readiness in the performance of our duty. Even at times of sacrifice, we have most humbly bowed in submission.

"Does not our heart beat in sympathy with all the Saints and Sages? Is not our heart grieved at the sight of chained serfdom in the world? Direct and counsel us – we have no will of our own. We do not think of ourself even at moments of danger. Our thought lives for others. We are crushed at the thought that another should have been sacrificed for us, when our work is that of being sacrificed for others. Take away from us memory; let us never recollect the days gone by; as to the future we care not to know. If it is within the designs, we shall blindly follow whatever the command may be. We are resigned."

The pride of self-control was broken.

Through our mind flitted the words of the poet, accompanied by the melody of the composer:

*"Self-will once broken, falls afar,
Extinct, and like a shooting star;
Self-will once broken, dropping far,
Leaves neither record nor a trace.
Let God's will enter heart and mind,
The pure, reclaimed, and refined;
Life everlasting, Life everlasting,
Life everlasting to embrace."*

Even under the most trying conditions we have been able to control nerve and muscle. We knew what it was to be nervous and uneasy, but never would we allow a part of our body to twitch. To suppress emotions was one of our accomplishments. However painful, we would laugh it off; though a stray tear would at times force its way through the tear duct, we never allowed it to roll off our cheeks. It was a training by determination, suppression, and the belief in the power of God and His Will.

And now? We felt weak, but we must not give in. For the sake of the philosophy of life, we dare not show the slightest sensation. We must be brave – defy, and be happy in the midst of misery. Thinking it might be a relief to our soul, we ordered every bit of Bambino's belongings to be cremated, even to the hat. As to the violin, we hesitated. Every part of our being fought. Such indecision! Weakness and sentiment fought fierce battles. Are we to retain the violin? Whichever way we proposed the question, the answer was but "No." Still we wavered "twixt two opinions." Out of respect for Bambino we vowed that the things sacred to him no other human hand should ever touch. It was not the thought of possession, or because of the monetary value of the instrument, but selfish sentimentality prompted us to decide, and we said to ourself: "The violin we keep, also the medallion."

XXIII

EVENTIDE was fast approaching, and by the time that the shadows fell upon the city we felt at ease, though we possessed neither strength nor will. All we thought of was entire resignation. Suddenly we fell into a feeling of indescribable restlessness. We must walk, and we must think; think anything. We ordered Genero to turn on all the lights in the apartment in full, for Light we must have – the more, the better.

"The Sanctuary lamp is out, your Excellency, shall I attend to it?" asked Genero.

"No," we answered sharply. We were frightened at the way we said it.

"No," we said sweetly, adding: "For he is now a light unto our heart and mind, while our feet are to be led with understanding."

Poor Genero did not grasp our meaning; with staring eyes, gazing at us, he said: "Your Excellency is not well."

We said nothing, but walked about. The violin lay before us on the marble table, even as Bambino had left it, both bows beside it. We thought we saw first one bow move and then the other. Naturally, in a sensitive, high-strung state we would be psychologised to see almost anything. The things we fought most and cared the least to know would at such moments crowd in on us, and impose themselves upon our mind. We even thought we saw the saints we always had adoration for pass before our vision as -if in procession. We saw all our Scythian and Sarmatian ancestry up to Stanislaus; poets, sculptors and composers, all had their turn; some speaking to us words of comfort. And amidst it all, we heard someone say: "God moves in most mysterious ways, His wonders to perform."

Is this satire, irony, or mockery to our faith, our unshaken confidence in the Power of God?

"Have your burlesque," we thought, "it matters not."

Whatever the phenomenon, manifestation or test, we declared 'it to our mind as part of a category of hallucinations, and pranks of a feverish brain.

Even if there is truth in psychic phenomena, we mused, of what value is it to the world? What does it prove? After all, even at best, it will only be reduced to abuse, and serve selfish ends to answer the common walks of life; serve the purpose of tapping a stock market, races and speculation.

"I resign myself entirely and absolutely to the Will of the Lord," we said aloud, looking toward the table where lay the violin.

The violin moved.

"Genero," we said, "Close and lock all the doors, and go to your room. Get everything ready for the night, and do not enter unless you are called."

Genero did as bidden, and announcing everything in order, he asked, "And the violin?"

"Never dare to touch it," we thundered.

Genero was so startled that he stood before us like one paralysed. Collecting himself, he said: "But, Sir, the violin and bows are moving off the table."

"You idiot! " we cried, "your superstition and gross ignorance, mingled with laziness, leads you to unhealthy imagination. What power should make the violin move?"

"Bambino!" Genero breathed with fright.

"How dare you say 'Bambino,' when the orders were to speak of him and to him as the Marquis?" Even Bezzari was considered too holy. We were the only one who had the right to say "Bambino." And here a servant has the audacity to impose upon our sacred rights, taking in vain the holy name of our love.

"You go to your room, Genero, and only come when we ring," we thundered.

With a bow of reverence, Genero went. In turning to close the door, he threw one more suspicious glance at the table.

XXIV.

As soon as the door closed behind Genero, we quickly stepped before the table. The violin must have been tampered with. It was at the end of the table with bows crossed.

"Nonsense!" we said to ourself. "Even servants are criminals in these days, all of them more or less in connection with police, robbers' roosts, or acting as capers for mediums."

With that we placed the violin 'in the centre of the table. One string after another broke in rapid succession, the bridge falling off in two pieces.

"Due to change of temperature," we quickly said to ourself: "The violin was always in a cushioned case, and now, lying on a cold marble table, naturally contraction follows. It is phenomenal', but in accordance with mobile laws, as Bambino would say."

At that moment it seemed that we heard the salon door open, the door we thought securely locked. In came rushing a figure, bright, illumined. ...

"Bambino," we cried.

We stood as one rivetted and paralysed; Bambino apparently fell into our arms; his violet eyes steadily gazing into our eyes, and as if labouring for breath, he recited hastily in staccato these words: "Oh, my Father, lament not over the loss of mortality. What would it profit you to find my body? Is not my spirit, which is Love, more to you? Right to the spot where lay the shroud of mortality, I could lead you, but why desire to possess that which is given to corruption, when we may inherit the eternal and everlasting? Permit me to play once more, and to sing to you."

Exhausted, weak, and tired, we sank into a chair, while the room seemed to fill with music and song:

*"Oh, the sorrows when we tarry,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer."*

We were touched beyond measure of human valuation, still we explained to ourself: "Owing to a static condition in the transcendental, the mind thoroughly imbued with previous impressions, and made sensitive to conditions, given to, resignation, may be attuned to the re-echoes of song, as well as music. Such phenomena affect the mental audions, and stir the heart; still, it is not real, at least, not to the physical sense, only in so far as we *lend to it our mental perception*.

The phenomenal is real in the phenomenal state, but of necessity the mind or heart has to be *en rapport* with incidents previously experienced, or which the soul reveals by virtue of recollections, relative to a time or state beyond the present. At anyrate, we are conscious of a thing only in so far as we *lend to it our mental perception*.

Again the sound of breaking strings, and the voice of Bambino seemed to say:

"You are quite right, Father, in so far as we lend to it our mental perception, but is there anything outside of that state? Omar Khayyam, whom you revere, and to whose memory you have shed many a tear, what does he say in your much-loved quatrain:

*"There is a door to which I find no key;
A veil, which eyes can't pierce, and fail to see
Behind, where voices speak of thee and me;
Ah, rend the veil in twain, and where are we?"*

After a moment of silence, the voice added:

"To whatever side we lend our mental perception."

And again there was silence, followed by a voice distant and clear. We seemed certain it was the voice of Bambino, as he spoke with emphasis upon every word:

*"I am with you as I agreed,
Ask not why the inevitable happened, for I shall not speak.
Pry not into what is seeming mystery or occult.
Remain content with revelations, as they come from day to day.
Pursue the labours mapped out for you without question.
Though long be the path and dreary,
A ray o f sunshine follows all the weary;
All sophistries, lay them aside,
And in immortal faith in God abide."*

Did Bambino say that, or was it mental perception? Is it the touch of his spirit with ours, due to the congenialities of our entities? Can contact of spirit to spirit communicate to such an intensity that the very senses become conscious of the vibrations from the divine atomic world, and by soul audions transfer the meaning of a message within the compass of language? There is no doubt about it. Yet, the danger, the risk we run to allow ourselves to fall into a state that would catch the waves of spirit-ether. What a sea of confusion, were we to tap the wires of the divine worlds, or eavesdrop on messages intended for another, although on the same party line? And what a heap of annoyances to be called to the atomic 'phone, only to learn it was the call of a wrong number. Direct communication would be the only safeguard, but even then we would want to see the party speaking to us, and make certain of their identity. Intervention, mediation, presentation, or introduction must be denied, and never allowed to enter into so serious a subject as that of dealing with phenomena. At anyrate, we must possess reverence and unbounded love for the transfigured entities, bearing them in our heart and mind, but never wilfully cite them into our presence, or impose our trifles and questions upon them, as they know their part and portion within the stupendous drama of life, and at the hour of need communicate the Will of the Lord, should the latter not reach us directly, or by virtue of the divine spark -within us.

We shall not be guilty of using violence upon heaven, for the reason we shall not pray for help, assistance, favours, deliverance, blessings, or success, but rely absolutely upon divine guidance vouchsafed to us from eternity, and in accordance with Infinite Design, continue to follow the magic finger pointing out destiny or fate throughout all Eternity.

Though we may possess the knowledge of ethereal or spiritual domains, we shall not avail ourself of such advantages, as the opportunities offered in the daily walks of life shall be quite sufficient. For the mere satisfaction of phenomena hunters and psychic reprobates, we shall not allow ourself to be made subject to psychic demonstrations, or to please theorists, for the mere purpose of adding delusions to the annals of psychic research.

If we are entitled to an inheritance and a birthright, then this Temple of Being *is all mine*. If such it is, then we must inhabit it with all its endowments, calling out the latent powers in accordance with divine order. We may communicate with the beyond in so far as its entities come our way, and in the same sense as we would greet all whom we meet in our daily walks. But to seek

company, turning a slave to entertainment, seances, research – never. As long as we hold to the monistic thought of Infinite Intelligence we shall know of the open path and open door with the veil rent in twain. Take away this unshaken faith, confidence, and assurance in Divine Providence, and you shall fail to impose any other belief upon this mind and heart of mine no matter how persuasive or enticing the offer to mind and senses. As our heart is quite content never to call upon the one, it has no need of the other. We would hold with Omar Khayyam:

*"For knowledge, longing, Oneness questioned me;
Commenced to spell the alphabet to me.
And I began: 'Alif then Oneness said;
Enough, for he who knows Alif, knows Me."*

The quatrain had scarcely passed through our mind, when a human voice reached our ears perceptibly, distinctly, and clearly, saying: *"I am Alpha and Omega."*

We quickly turned to see whence the intrusion; we were not going to allow any further additions to our over-wrought state of mind. We strenuously objected to being taken advantage of while in a state of suffering untold agony, and a dilemma no power could avert, save Providence. We hold that it is unlawful to play upon a mind whose chaotic state battled between unfinished ideas and fractional opinions, aggregating doubt and uncertainty. To become psychologised, whether voluntarily so or through intervention, is an infringement upon the right of an individual ego, a right vouchsafed to him by divine law. If man is destined to experience agony, he should be left to himself to work out his salvation. Any interference, though prompted by the holiest motives, is liable to lead astray the soul struggling between light and darkness, giving rise to rebellion and criminality. Thus we asked in the name of *"self-preservation, as the first law in nature,"* to be left in silence, the state which leads to final emancipation.

XXV.

THE hours of night were speeding rapidly, perhaps in *tempo* with the course of our thought waves. Leaning back in the armchair, we felt impelled to look over toward the sofa. As we did so, we were startled at the sight unveiling before our mortal eyes. We saw Bambino embedded in silk pillows, and in the attitude of a muse. The old Magian adage, *"The closer you watch, the less you see,"* lost its virtue to us, for as we took another sharp look, we saw Bambino in all the outlines of a living being. His chest heaved, labouring for breath, his hands nervously clinching into fists. Suddenly the frame turned over, and keeling, reeling, the body fell lastly upon the heavy rug before the sofa. With a painful cry of horror, we jumped up from our seat to rescue him. The scene was so real that for a moment we forgot all the happenings of the past days. We were about to lift Bambino from the floor when his eyes opened, gazing at us with such magical force, that we had to step back, and we stood as one paralysed. It seemed we heard him say distinctly:

"This too is illusion; nevertheless, based upon reflex and refractive laws, on which photography is founded, only that in this case the convex and concave waves of ethereal globules induce the mirror of the mind to serve as a sensitive plate, even as the eustachian tube is attuned to a series of atomic audions to convert and convey sound from the celestial domains to *terra firma*, and vice versa, while the adjustments in the epiphysis reduce the vastness of space to an infinitesimal fraction of a molecule, revealing to the mortal index volumes of existences."

"Did we hear that, even as the eyes see the form before us?" we loudly breathed.

In answer the lips of Bambino parted and closed; then the form of the body faded, and before us stood a pillar of illumination, revealing the face of Bambino with his lustrous eyes fixed upon us; then the vision vanished.

"Bambino," we cried, "Bambino."

We became frightened at our own voice. We felt ashamed to allow ourself to forget our dignity, etiquette, conventionality. We must be going insane to yield to overwrought nerves, and allow pride to ebb away. We suppress such outbreaks with an iron will. "Noblemen must accept fate with knightly resignation," came to us as one of the instructions at school.

But the more we tried to suppress the flow of emotions, the greater the pressure from the opposite direction.

Looking toward the table, we saw a halo gradually developing, and within it, like in a frame, Bambino's face. We must at least touch it, we determined. "Even though but vapour, it must have communicative force." We followed it, but like the terrestrial substance of the ninetieth degree of the polar regions, where gravity ceases, and the magnetic needle points in the opposite direction, we only circled round and round, while the point of our focalisation remained as fixed as the solar sun in his orbital pivot.

The circle, instead of diminishing, grew larger in expansion, until we found ourself lost in Infinity. We thought we heard something, but we were no longer able to discern. Our mind must have refused to record the imprints of reason, leaving the mental field to the fate induced by brain-storms.

XXVI.

WHEN our eyes opened, we found ourself being lifted. We recognised Madame Donat; all others we could not tell, although we were conscious enough to know that they must be the servants.

"Madame," we whispered, for our voice seemed to have gone, or else the vocal cords refused to respond automatically to the directing intelligence of the 'mind.

"*Tranquelle, tranquelle,*" was all she said, and with that she maneuvered the project. She was going to be the principal of the situation this time.

"Your Excellency must rest," the madame said, and turning to the servants, she commanded: "Do not leave His Excellency for one moment until I return."

A few minutes later she returned with a servant, carrying quite a paraphernalia on a silver-mounted tray. As a daughter of a renowned French surgeon, and her husband a retired physician, Madame Donat claimed *materia medica* at her finger tips, and although believing in drugless healing, she said that under certain conditions, the five specific remedial agents, properly compounded, could be used to advantage if administered electro-homeopathically.

This is the way she expostulated her science before us, as she made her selections from a number of *shatulles* and *botelles*, using as great care as would an apothecary. As to the prescription, no one knew but herself, and perhaps, the renowned Dr. Mattael. But when she bade us take the concoction, we had to reveal to her our religious scruples, and that our Order forbade us ever to partake of anything, even though in the face of death.

"And yet Your Excellency spent two hundred and fifty lires in the attempt to recover a human body!"

"True, but principle is principle. You would not force a remedy upon saints or gods?"

"Not I, but dignitaries anesthetize saints and gods with potentialities by far more deadly than the rankest poisons known to science." "Madame, you talk like a heretic."

"That's all there is in Italy, from St. Peter's Chair down to a street vendor. If you are looking for saintly folks you will have to go to the nebular regions. For the present I would advise Your Excellency to get good care and rest. I feel with Your Excellency; I, too, lost one after many years of care, and in the hopes of giving to the world a great soul in the interest of science and prove the power of Mother's thought over matter. He graduated with the highest honours at a minor age, returning home with the greatest anticipations, and – a week later, he was dead. I have never shed a single tear; I have never murmured once. The shock was so great that I fail

to understand; it is beyond my mental compass; I have reasoned until I can reason no longer; I have concluded that it matters not whether we go to-day or to-morrow – the difference, if any, is but of one day."

And Madame Donat's pearl necklace, with a diamond brooch nestled within the chain, glistened appealingly; while diamond earrings, as they dangled with the movements of her relaxing jaws, gazed at us with animation.

"Madame, since you are so kind as to take care of us, we shall submit, but we absolutely refuse administrations, not even a drink of water. External applications we do not mind."

"*Mon dieu*, but Your Excellency is dictatorial. I have been with royal families, and enjoyed the confidence of dignitaries, meeting all kinds of stiffest pride, but Your Excellency is really haughty, although very kind, and even loving."

"*Merci, Madame*, it seems the best we can do is to take a steam bath, for which we may ask you for a few simple herbs in your possession. A steam bath may break the tension, the fever, and contraction which borders on *la grippe*."

"But, Your Excellency, I disagree. A vapour bath in your nerve-racked state? Your Excellency does not realise your condition. Your *malheur* is beyond description. You are open to brain fever with a fatal result."

"Madame, it matters not, whether we go today or to-morrow; the difference, if any, is but a day." The madame laughed. "*Mon dieu*, but Your Excellency takes everything literally and seriously. *Tres bien*, as Your Excellency orders."

XXVII.

WHETHER the bath was premature, or reaction set in, reaching the highest instance of collapse, is not within our mental compass to tell. Preparing for the bath disclosed to us that we were ears began to tingle, our throat contracted, the brain started to whirl, every joint ached, pained, and seemed to fall asunder, while up and down the spinal column ran a chill – cold, breezy, freezing. Our teeth began to gnash and chatter. It did not do us a particle of good to call upon our mind to assert its powers, or for our determined will to rise. We took the vapour bath, and mechanically directed the procedure. Weak as we were, we still would pride ourselves of mind over matter, or "*In the weak, God shall be mighty*."

The madame later on admitted that it was not only wonderful, but it was a miracle, and that for the first time she had shed tears of joy at such a demonstration.

We still faintly remember how we ordered ourselves to be wrapped in blankets and laid in bed. If we walked to the bedside, we must have done so unconsciously. We only remember the order given, and that was all.

The crisis must have set in. Though in a stupor we were conscious of intense heat, a terrific fire. We have never read anything in all our life that would be descriptive of Hades. Thanks to our education, the fanciful, and whatever may be termed morbid in literature, never fell into our hands. Only what tended toward upliftment and constructive thought we were to study, although even in that direction we have spent but little of our time.

And now, everything vanished from our mind. We knew and thought of nothing, our soul passing through the shadow of death in Hades, a purgatory prepared for us – Bambino and us. Between him and ourselves an endless river of a molten mass, fed and stirred by "*tightfrocks*" who grinning gleefully, worked incessantly, as if driven by furies, realising that their failure meant a far more terrible fate to them than to us. They did not touch us, for even if they did reach out their bony fingers after us, an unseen hand grabbed them with a mighty force and placed them to work on the burning stream. Bambino was on the other side of the melting, fluxing, steaming, spitting, sizzling, smoking stream of fire. About his body were fastened swaddling clothes, held in place by costly bands of ribbons. "Even in the array of a hypocritical ecclesia and all the glad-rags of

canonical diplomacy, Bambino is beautiful," we thought. Yet we could not understand him in this new attire.

To our surprise, we noticed that where Bambino stood there were no "*tight-frocks*" to stir flames into his face – the frocks were confined to our side to stir the melting pot. Every attempt to cross the burning river proved futile; we had to fall back because of the intensity of the heat, but the power within pushed to renewed efforts. To reach Bambino we must cross the fiery pool. There was nothing to lose, yet much to gain. With every failure came new courage. We felt every tissue of our being sizzle and quiver, yet we would make a sudden rush for the gushing stream of fire.

The "*tight-frocks*," whom we expected to stop us with their fiery prongs, fell back, leaving the path to the fiery pool open, grinning, laughing, others congratulating one another, over what? We did not know, and cared less. The heat grew intense. We felt the indescribable flames licking their way into our being, as if attempting to reduce the cellular tissues to atoms. Already we felt mitotic operations assert their claims – tissue dissolving one by one. Still we held to our faith in a Higher Power.

It never suggested itself to us how we ever expected to cross the burning pool without losing ourself in the torrents of reduction. Amidst all the agony one single thought remained: No power was to keep us from joining Bambino.

"Is not Love mightier than Fire, and Truth mightier than the sword," we said to ourself encouragingly, ready to cross the melting mass.

As we were about to take a leap, a voice stopped us, crying aloud: "Yes, Love is mightier than Fire, and Truth is mightier than the sword, but even Satan has power to clothe himself as an Angel of Light."

We looked to see whence the voice, and there stood Bambino, as known to us in life -- "his hand in mine."

As we looked at him, we were startled; our eyes turned toward the Bambino on the other side.

"Is it the reflex of our Bambino?" we mused. Bambino caught the thought.

"Back!" he cried, and pointing across the fiery pool, he added:

"That Bambino on the other side is deception. By deception they would gain favour with the Saints of God. Deception may hold us for a time, but it cannot claim us. The price of love may be untold pain and indescribable sorrow, but where that love increases with equal intensity, the real comes to us in due time to dispel the unreal. Wherever pomp and display of wealth become more evident and prominent, instead of the exercise of God-given gifts and talents, we are sure of deception. Your adversaries would win you and your gifts for their selfish ends, but unable to reach you by legal and illegal means, they would gain your Life by foul means, even portraying Divine Love by images, dragging into the mire the sacredness of the heart, and substituting Love by Idolatry."

XXVIII.

WE felt a hand upon our forehead and our eyes opened. It was delightful to see light and "more light." Our improvised altar must have been moved, for it was placed at the foot of our bed.

Madame, no doubt, developed religious scruples, and out of respect for us, placed it where it would face us.

"Your Excellency," spoke up the madame, "I am relieved; my companion and I have kept our place beside you for nearly seventy-two hours. It looked very critical. We were about to give up when a voice said to me: 'Move the altar to the head of the bed, the ruby light may bring Bambino to his bedside.' And, Your Excellency, from that time on the fever began to break. For nearly three days Your Excellency has been on fire. The pulse and temperature ran a race. I have attended many a person stricken With brain fever, but your condition was highly alarming.

We have taken the liberty of calling three specialists, but they declared that nothing could be done; the inevitable was evident. 'It is a question of hours or minutes,' they said, and went their way. You will pardon our fear for you, I fully believe in the guidance of God; I have experienced more in these three days than I have learned in all my life. I have come to, realise that the greatest blessing to man is to "Carry everything to God in prayer."

"'Everything to God in prayer,' where. did you get that?" we asked.

"Bambino played it for you and sang it quite frequently. Could we resist the temptation to listen to that angelic voice, and were we so deaf as not to catch every word he articulated so distinctly?"

"But, Madame, when he sang he always did so in English."

"L'Anglaise?" the madame retorted, momentarily outwitted, but quickly adding: "May be so, but into the court, throwing his voice in an echo, he gave it in French, and sometimes in Italian."

We said no more. With all the will power at our command we found we could neither rise nor move. We felt as if every cell had been burnt out of our being, leaving nothing but the skeleton. If there was any brain left in the cephalic, it must have been reduced to a mere fraction of dust. The heart felt like a crumpled blotter. There was no need of speaking of insides for the outside bore testimony of "*nobody at home, even the servants out.*"

"To submit won't do us any good," we mused, and back to our memory came the Temple teachings:

"All ailments, though manifest in matter, find their origin in the mind; suggestion as the leading element works upon the energies, and lastly the intelligences of the cellular structure, forcing its way to the brain. Fear for the organic, and anxiety for comfort, abhorring the pangs of disease, reflect upon the limited intelligence in tissue and cell, until by outside influence a mass of unwelded links, unfinished ideas and opinions affect osmotic pressure, and the index of one's temperamental index is shifted, the balance of energy thus ebbing away, in part or in whole, according to the degree of separation, engulfs the relation between soul and body, while estrangements between the cell intelligences throw the cosmic order into uncertainty and chaos."

We straightway arose, arranged our toilette, and ordered a drive.

XXIX.

RETURNING from the drive, the madame reprimanded us for such a dangerous venture; still she marvelled at the agility of our steps.

In our haste to get into the open, we did not look about the apartment, but now, in good mood again, we began our investigation. Imagine our astonishment! There upon the marble table, under the large bronze figure of Don Carlos lay the violin in fragments.

"Genero, explain!" we demanded of the servant.

"Your Excellency, the night you called for the young Marquis, as if in a voice of thunder, all the servants, directed by the Madame Donat, came rushing into the salon, just in time to save Your Excellency from falling; at the same time the bronze, standing on the pedestal near the marble table, fell on the violin with an awful crash. Madame forbade us to go near it or to touch it, for fear it might be a disastrous omen, a fearful sign."

We had our landlord, the Doctor, and his companion summoned. An examination revealed that neither bronze nor table had a scratch. Monsieur, the Doctor Donat, moved his head back and forth, pulling violently at his thin moustache, angry because he was unable to, give any scientific reason or solution of the affair, when Madame Donat looked up to him for a verdict. Evidently she always gave him the preference, or the first opportunity to speak. He polished the glasses of his *pince-nez* vigorously, pulled his nose angrily, placed his glasses over his visionary organs, and once more scrutinised both table and bronze.

"Il fait de la phenomenelle." he said triumphantly; to which Madame added: *"N'est ce pas?"*

At first we thought we would take the violin to an expert to have every piece aggregated with the finest transparent glue chemists can devise.

We personally collected every splinter with religious zeal and fervour. No one should dare to assist us in such a holy calling.

On second thought it came to us that we had vowed no human hand was ever to touch the violin, but we were not to be perplexed. The violin was mended under the direction of an expert violin maker. When finished, it proved to be a work of art, and was declared to be the most wonderful instrument in the world.

No human hand was to touch it, and yet *"Pride ruled my heart."* The exquisite tone, the magic vibrations were tempting. Virtuosos called to see and play the violin, which grew to be an object of jealousy, envy, malice, hatred and covetousness; plots were laid to steal it, since no price could procure it.

A new phase of sorrows was about to force its way into our life, when we decided to: *"Carry everything to God in prayer."*

XXX.

WE chartered a trip round the world. The day of our departure opened with a full blaze of sunshine from heaven's canopy, the sky arrayed in a garment of the most delicate forget-me-not blue. The very air was not only laden with invigorating ozone, but was also permeated with the gladsome song of the winged kingdom. The serenity of nature seemed to affect human beings all about us to a degree of transfiguration, eradicating life's sorrows from their faces, disclosing the avenues which lead to the higher consciousness, revealing God within. Joy and happiness all around us! And in a gleeful mood we entered the equipage standing ready to take us to our destination *de la premiere*.

With bag and baggage we reached the docks. Ascending the narrow ladder, the servant carrying bag and violin case, tripped, slid, reeled, and down he went -into the sea. In the attempt to save life, the baggage was a second consideration. The steamer was delayed for many hours, still, captain and passengers were not at all disturbed, as every one was eager to learn about the magic violin. Diligent search repaid sailors for their trouble. To the surface came the case, and with it the violin, but soaked, drenched, fallen apart.

"Put it in with the rest of our baggage," we said. The porter handed it to the baggage man. Just then a trunk slipping from under the hands of a porter hit the violin case, which fell to the store room below, followed by the trunk, crushing case and all.

The captain fumed; the bystanders were awe-stricken, while we sighed with relief.

*"All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer."*

We heard word for word as case and trunk struck bottom.

XXXI.

YEARS have come and years have gone. The experiences of daily life disclosing nothing more than what our observations have gathered before.

Ups and downs are but the regular course upon the open sea of life; each day adding a portion of eternity and subtracting a fragment from our allotted time.

Are we in wait of something? If we are, we do not know what it may be. To hoard and lay up treasures that rust and moth corrupt what folly. To labour for the gain of laurels, position,

honours, that pass with the flitting hours – what insanity, however mild the index. Nervously eke out an existence in fear of the inevitable – how cowardly.

It is but a question of time to end sensation, that collective state of fragments which play its orgies of illusion, ever and anon adding delusions, while affinities and atoms slowly but surely sink into oblivion, stripping the soul of its garment of unconsciousness, exposing its shame of nakedness, driving it straightway to seek cover under the cloak of materiality, or to take flight into the desert of future promises, hoping salvation and redemption, and a probable reinstatement, at the dawn of a brighter day.

Thus we go, seeking – finding, struggling – keeping; hoping for much, still sometimes receiving less; all of us living within the scope of our mental compass, the index whereof regulates joy and pain.

Whether a matter of science, or scruples of a distorted belief, it is nevertheless certain that earth and heaven with all their treasures, spiritual or terrestrial, are gauged by our mental perception. To that same degree, higher and at times less intensified, we still see Bambino, and hear his voice:

*"Oh, the sorrows when we tarry,
Oh, what needless pain we bear;
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer."*

THE END