# The Bells of Sydney

**by John David Hennessey, 1847-1935**

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# Chapter I

## What the Bells Said to Mark Gunnery.

From the Great Clock Tower which overlooks the busy heart of Sydney there pealed forth in sonorous notes the hour of nine.

Half the city was at breakfast. The other half still in bed woke up to listen. It is needless to say that it was Sunday, for the noise of the street traffic on other mornings of the week drowns even the hoarse roar of that full-throated brazen bell.

It was not a clear struck note which boomed above the quiet city, but one that tripped, as though the hammer fell a second time with less accentuated force. The echoes died away. Sunday morning stillness resumed its sway, and the city munched its breakfast or turned over on the other side to sleep.

Mark Gunnery, however, neither arose nor breakfasted, nor slept. Since four that morning he had counted not only the hours, but also the chiming of the quarters. He knew the sound of them so well that he could tell at the first two strokes which of the quarters was about to chime—whether it was four for the

first, eight for the second, twelve for the third, or sixteen for the hour. He may have dozed, but not for more than few minutes.

The window of the room was slightly open, and the chiming of the quarters and striking of the hours, reverberated among the tall warehouses in the narrow street until the clock seemed to be just above his head.

"How I detest the brutal noise," he muttered. "Every time it chimes or strikes the hateful thing gets louder and more discordant. It goes right through me.

"There!" he exclaimed, shuddering, "it's going to strike again! Liquid, molten, tuneful tones, they call them. I call then cowardly, brutal, implacable.

"There—that's the quarter! I can hear the whirr of the great wheel as the hammer rises. It's the same old hateful thing—'Mark—Gun—ner—y!' Bah! Thank heaven I shan't hear it again for another quarter of an hour.

"And it's not merely that I have to listen to the upbraiding of that bell. There's that thing in front of me on the wall! I can't think how I ever could have been idiotic enough to have hung it there. I don't know why I should detest it so; but I do—the coffin, the plaid, the empty chair—the old hat and stick—and the shepherd's dog resting his head upon the coffin. It's only a picture, true both to art and life. A dog is the best friend most men have in life, and the sincerest mourner, too—perhaps—when dead.

"Now, why has that picture developed into such a hateful, hideous thing, Mark Gunnery? I could drag it down I—I'm strong enough for that. But, no; I can't will myself to move to reach it.

"Ah! there's that fearful clock chiming again—another stave of its hateful message. I wonder whether it talks as plainly to others as it does to me! It's no quarter of an hour since it struck last, I'll swear! There's a fiend up in that clock-tower sworn to torment me! and he it is who chimes and tolls and makes that braggart bell repeat the disgraceful lesson he has taught it. The whole city must know it by this time.

"Ah! Great Powers—there he goes again!"

Before the next quarter chimed again, however, Mark Gunnery lay back upon the shake-down bed upon the office-floor, white and motionless, to all appearance either asleep or dead.

A few minutes after there came a tap upon the door, which was then gently opened, and in the presence of the unconscious man there stood—a child. She was not more than seven years old, but as beautiful as a dream. For a moment she looked around the room. An oak book-case, with tables and chairs and a few ornaments, comprised the meagre furniture.

After glancing around, she turned her face, and looked steadfastly at the unconscious man. What a face it was! Perfect in feature, eyes large and spirituelle—a human child's face: but something in it that reminded one of another world. A wealth of golden curls broke away from the white hat, and rested in rich negligence upon the snow-white dress in which the child was clad. The man lay upon a mattress on the floor, covered over with a white counterpane that might have been a shroud. Still the child looked, but the sleeper, if sleeping, gave no sign.

"That's not my Grandpa Gunnery," she said at last. And, quick as she had entered, she was gone.

The bell in the Great Clock Tower chimed on—four for each quarter and sixteen for the hour, but it no longer angered the occupant of Office No. 24. The city went its usual Sunday way. The old keeper of the chambers dressed himself, and passed the office door, and left for his Sunday's dinner and outing with a friend. The street door banged after him, and the echoes reverberated through the silent passages and found their way upstairs, and shook the office door: then died away in silence, Mark Gunnery was dead!

On Monday at mid-day, the postman, bustling into the office to deliver a letter, nearly stumbled across the corpse. Alas! child and letter had both of them reached Mark Gunnery too late.

The next day, after some inquiry, they interred the body. No one seemed to know anything about him. A few lines in the newspapers recorded a sudden death and lonely burial. And that might have been the end. But something happened. It was this. A fellow tenant of the chambers bought the old bookcase at a sale after Mark Gunnery's decease. Before making use of it, however, he had it thoroughly cleaned, and in doing so a secret drawer was discovered, It contained a closely-written manuscript.

# Chapter II

## Recollections of Home.

The manuscript bore evidence of having been written in haste, for it was smeared and blotted in places, as though the writer, impatient with his surroundings, had wrestled with himself even while he penned the story of his marred and broken life. In some places the letters were clear and shapely enough, as though in keeping with his orderly arrangement of incidents and thoughts; but elsewhere it was interlined and corrected, and in parts obliterated, and its singular changes of style and calligraphy seemed to depict the writer's changing mood.

The opening pages were clearly written with clean up and down strokes and graceful curves; but in parts the manuscript was painfully difficult to decipher.

It read as follows:

About four years ago a thing happened to me which sealed my destiny and damned my life.

I was in England then. I had been married over five years to a woman of considerable beauty. We had one child, a daughter, three years of age, who was the pet of the household and the charm and comfort of my life. My wife, Violet, had been a Miss Freeman, of Long Chace, and was the daughter of a near neighbour to us, an old friend of my father's. We lived pleasantly and fairly kindly together in the old hall, with my father. I never crossed her temper, and was affectionate to her after a sort; but we neither of us pretended to much love for each other.

She was in her way an ambitious woman, and had married me for money and position and a name that was known and respected throughout the whole south-west of Derbyshire. No doubt I was regarded as a good catch, or Violet Freeman would not have married me. I was not particularly handsome, but education, travel and society had done something for me, and certainly made me to differ somewhat from the bulk of men of the well-to-do farming class around us.

I have no recollections of my mother. My father, Ambrose Gunnery, could trace his ancestry for centuries. He used to laugh sometimes, when in a more than ordinary social mood, and say, 'You must marry, Mark; you are my only son, and there has always been a Gunnery at Church Consett Hall. He was a man of good presence, gentlemanly bearing, and fine, open, genial countenance; hair iron gray; age about sixty years; and well worthy of the respect in which he was universally held.

It should be said that after the death of my mother he had come under the influence of the Swedenhorgians, and ordinarily, at home, he was quiet to a fault. He spent his money freely upon my education, kept on my old nurse as a privileged servant of the household, and when, at twenty-four, I came home to settle down for good as a gentleman farmer, I had travelled the Continent, and had seen most that was worth the seeing in Europe.

"Mark," said my father, as we sat together in the east parlour the night after my return home, "you will have to settle down now; and, as soon as you have made yourself acquainted with the management of things a bit, I would like you to marry. I should be pleased, too, if your choice fell upon Violet Freeman. She would make you a good wife, and her father and myself have been friends from boyhood."

So it was settled between us. I had, of course, had sundry love affairs in my youth and college days, but nothing serious, and had then met with no woman to whom my heart had gone out in a supreme affection. To me one pleasant and attractive girl was as much as another. The young lady of my father's choice was praised for her beauty and amiable disposition. If she approved the plan, and willed to marry me, it would please the Squire—as Church Consett called my father—and no doubt I should be happy enough with her. So, at the time I thought little more about it, but applied myself to the business affairs of the large farm and small estate belonging to Church Consett Hall.

Church Consett lay midway distant between two market towns, in a sort of nook in the main roads of traffic. Within a few miles of us the country side was studded with the seats of old English families of distinction. It was a place, once seen, not likely to be forgotten. Nothing, to my mind, can equal the scenery of some portion of the Midlands: the stretch of corn-laden slopes and valleys; the green hedgerows and white farmhouses, with stately old halls intervening, shut in by the hills on one side, with the far-off mountains purpling the distant horizon on the other. Such was the landscape which met the eye on any summer harvest day at Church Consett.

The hall was a queer, rambling, ivy-clad, old place, built on rising ground a short distance from the main road. It was partly surrounded by an old-fashioned garden, where lilac and laburnum and crimson hawthorn scented the air in spring time, and cabbage roses, pinks, tulips, and scores of other old favourite English garden flowers nourished in the summer. There was a corpse of nut trees and an

orchard between the out-buildings and commencement of the meadow lands, which were usually flooded by the brook in the early spring-time, and bore luxuriant crops of fragrant hay.

The hall was a large building, old, and but partially used, the principal part being used by my father for storage purposes. The large wing that was occupied had a separate entrance, and formed a good-sized house by itself, but the main entrance and great hall and grand staircase, were only used for storing grain, I cannot describe my feelings when, on my return, I went over the place one day alone. The furniture had been removed from the great dining-room on the ground floor, and sacks of wheat covered the whole of the floor space. They were stacked against the wall all up the grand staircase, and from the walls of the ball-room costly oil paintings and life-sized portraits of long forgotten Gunnerys looked down upon similar scenes.

What a shame it was to have the fine old place dismantled and unoccupied. I could imagine the portrait of my great-greatgrandfather Gunnery looking down upon me with satisfaction at the prospect of the house once more being inhabited and restored to proper use—made bright with the presence of family life again, and may be echoing with the gay shouts and laughter of young children, as in days of yore.

Considering the uses to which these and other rooms had been put, the house had been wonderfully well kept; and outside, where the creeping ivy clung to walls and around windows, there was no thought suggested other than that the whole place was fully occupied by Squire Gunnery and his household. The gravelled paths and carriage drive were just as they should have been, except that they were kept so scrupulously neat and tidy as to suggest that they were never used.

I could write pages about Church Consett Hall; the stained glass of the great window overlooking the grand staircase; the delicate stonework of the principal entrance, and the extent of its corridors and suites of rambling rooms looking out upon the quiet English landscape scenery, with the distant river, that formed the far boundary of one side of the escape, at times gleaming under the setting sun like a thread of gold. But it is about people, and not places, that I have to write.

It should be explained that my father's position amongst the gentry of the county was peculiar. He was a Gunnery right enough, but the son of a woman of inferior birth, who had never been received into society. It was my grandfather's second marriage, contracted late in life. He thought more of his own comfort than of public opinion, and sent a curt message one day to the parish clergyman that he would require his good offices at an early date to marry him to Miss Marshall, his housekeeper. Years passed away after the death of my grandfather, and my father, inheriting the diffident disposition of his mother, contented himself with clearing off the indebtedness of the estate and occupying his mind with agricultural affairs and the oversight of cheesemaking on an extensive scale, which was then the great industry of that portion of the county. The old gossips of Church Consett said he would never have married, but that his evident prosperity and well kept lands attracted such general attention that Lady Browning, of Willesden Grange, turned a kindly eye upon him, and somehow brought about his union with her daughter Alice, one of the youngest of a marriageable crowd of girls. She died early, myself the only living issue of the marriage, and my father fell

back upon his old way of life—an occasional ride to hounds, a day's fishing in the Dove, or an afternoon's shooting in the Colton covers, the only recreations that he cared about, apart from his books. He was a methodical and successful man of business, and, as I learned afterwards, made and saved money for me, his only son.

I was soon a frequent visitor at Long Chace, for I had determined, if possible, to gratify my father's wishes in my marriage. Moreover, it had been a favourable theory of mine that marriage was safe and justifiable where genuine affection prompted one of the parties to the union. Like most men of my own age, I was not without personal vanity. I was flattered, and any misgivings that might have arisen about the future were set at rest. Violet Freeman had evidently become very much in love with me. So the wooing time sped smoothly, and the date of our marriage was in due course arranged.

The night before the ceremony I had returned late from Long Chace to Church Consett. It had been an evening of much merriment and congratulation. The bride's home was filled with wedding guests, mostly girl friends of the Freemans, and I had mounted my horse and said 'good night!' amid much good-natured pleasantry and laughter.

Riding past the While Hart hostelry, Church Consett, a tall gentlemanly man entered that inn. I noticed him particularly, for strangers were so infrequent in the village that they at once attracted attention. 'A cheese buyer from Derby,' I said to myself, as I rode quietly along.

It was late when I reached the Hall, and, except for the sleepy boy waiting to take my horse, found that the household had retired.

I was in no mood for sleep, so sat down by the open window, thinking over the events of the day and of that which was to be the great event of the morrow. It was natural, perhaps, at such a time to analyse one's feelings, and—alone there with my heart—I was compelled to acknowledge that the situation was not so satisfactory as could have been desired. Esteem and admiration of Violet Freeman might develop into love on closer acquaintance, and it might not. It never occurred to me that the marriage might, on her part, be one of convenience. If such a thought had intruded, it would have been scouted as disloyal to her who was to be my wife. Then my thoughts turned to the individual who had passed me to enter the White Hart. I had not seen his face, but his gait and general bearing seemed familiar. Our serving-man, I thought, would know who he was. I would make enquiries in the morning.

It was summer-time, and the sweet breath of the night flowers stole into the chamber through the open window as I at last lay down to rest, still thinking of the morrow—and of that stranger. I could not have slept long, when a noise awoke me. The door was opening. Half awake, I asked who was there, but received no reply. Thinking that I had been mistaken, I let my head fall back on the pillow again; but, a minute afterwards, heard someone tread lightly across the room. It was a slippered foot; at each step the heel seemed to drag across the floor.

I waited now in silence, my right hand clenched to defend myself. If necessary, when—whoever or whatever it was came toward the bed, and, with an audible sigh, sat down beside it. I felt far from comfortable, and suddenly reached out my hand to grasp hold of the intruder.

Nothing was there!

I sprang from the bed and obtained a light. The room was empty!

My nerves received a shock; but, after examining the apartment, I blew out the light, and lay down again in no enviable state of mind. My consternation and horror may be imagined, for almost immediately afterwards I distinctly heard someone rise from the chair, and—with the same slipshod step—cross the apartment, and leave the room!

I had lain down partially dressed, and to leap up and follow the retreating footsteps was the work of a moment. On reaching the door, they were distinctly to be heard turning a corridor leading to a part of the house containing a number of unoccupied rooms, at the end of which there was a staircase leading to the servants' apartments. Here, however, I lost all trace. Obtaining a light, I quietly examined the rooms with an uncomfortable and eerie feeling; but the search was vain.

# Chapter III

## I was Charmed with my Wife; But—!

It is not the writer's wish, in this narrative, to attempt to analyse occult forces or explain away difficulties. The task he has undertaken is simply to record facts, or what appeared to him to be facts.

A further investigation, next morning, of the mysterious event recorded in the last chapter and a casual inquiry amongst the servants furnished no clue likely to throw light upon it, and in the hustle of preparation—for Violet and myself were leaving for the Continent immediately after the ceremony and breakfast—the incident was thrust into the background of memory.

There is no need to dwell in detail upon the events of the day, or of the tour which followed our union. We were duly married, and the carriage which conveyed us to the station drove off amid showers of rice and old slippers. For better or worse, we were man and wife; and the following day we left London for Paris.

To Violet the continual change and whirl of pleasure and gaiety—in Florence and Rome and other cities—during our two months on the Continent, had a charm and novelty entirely new to her. Although country born and bred, she had no liking for the country or for quiet pleasures. Our letters of introduction gave us the entree into just the gay crowd which pleased her. For my own part, I should have been a churl not to have enjoyed the revisiting of familiar scenes in company with a beautiful and attractive companion.

We were at Rome for just over a fortnight, staying at the Grand Continental, and had got in with a pleasant circle of fashionable people. Violet's beauty and grace proved irresistible, and we found ourselves welcomed into quite as much of the best Roman Society as we wished for.

Only one incident, however, has particularly to do with this narrative. We had picked up with a rich Australian, who came on with us from Florence to Rome, named Sir Gordon Bassett.

With his wife and two daughters, they, Australian-like, were doing the Continent regardless of expense. I should say that Sir Gordon was the son of one of my father's oldest and most respected tenant farmers. Twenty years' residence in the Colonies had brought him a fortune and a title, and, although a self-made man, he was well educated and well bred, and sufficiently well-known in the Anglo-Colonial politics for himself and family to be everywhere well received. Violet became very friendly with May and Pansy Bassett, and we were almost continually together. Once properly introduced to an Englishman outside of England, and there is a free and easy cordiality, not always extended to a stranger upon English soil.

Besides, Bassett had brought his own carriage and horses with him from Australia, and there was scarcely a handsomer turn-out in Rome. He was a genial fellow, and without being ostentatious knew how to make his money useful to others as well as himself.

The last few weeks had, no doubt, made a change in me. I had begun to think myself actually in love with my wife. She was so affectionate and thoughtful that I found myself anticipating her wishes, and waiting upon her pleasure with almost a lover's ardour. She seemed, during those days in Rome, to have developed a culture and refinement of feeling that, beautiful as she was, I had never credited her before. I began to say to myself—'This woman you have married has never shown herself till now. Her love for you has brought out the hidden fire of jewel; the master passion has awakened the soul.'

I watched her one night, as a master of melody enthralled a large private assembly, and carried us with him, willing captives. The music was uncommon; it seemed to me like the warbling of a song-bird, in the dewy morn, among the hills and lovely dales of distant Derbyshire. The audience listened with almost painful eagerness, the musician had carried them beyond the cold realms of criticism. While we listened the lights, almost unknown to us, were gradually lowered, and the mellow Italian moonbeams flooded the quaint music gallery in which we sat, and then a voice commenced to sing, joining most sweetly in the melody. We saw no one, but the musician played as though that voice had brought fresh inspiration to him. Surely there never was such music! It was only a simple Italian melody, but it might have been an angel hymning the Divine Unseen, only, alas! there was a plaintive undertone in the music (telling of earth, pain, and sin) that rose and sank amid the rich swelling notes—now almost dying away, and then coming back, like a haunting echo—to mar the heavenly joy.

It was a triumph of art, poetry and music. At its close, it was as though applause would have been a sacrilege, and the singer was for the moment rewarded only with a sigh—a sigh that ended in a sob. I am sure that tears suffused almost all eyes. Violet trembled with emotion, and I felt that I loved her better than she wept. The lights were turned up again, and, as the moonlight vanished, a storm of applause shook the gallery. But no entreaty could prevail upon singer or musician to repeat the melody. The former no one could see; the latter gravely shook his head, and simply said, 'It cannot be done.'

Who was that singer? It was an Italian song; but I could have sworn that it was an English voice. Why should it carry me away among those hills and dales of distant Derbyshire?

I was charmed with my wife, I asked her no questions, made no suggestions, I was under the wizardry of beauty, art, genius, and Rome. If not a genius herself, Violet could recognise and respond to it in others. I was already in love, and full-orbed love is blind. Another night of such enchantment, and I might never have seen again. But the morrow, alas! brought revelation; the spell was broken—broken for ever; and the gold, alas! was clay.

Violet was away next morning with some fashionable acquaintances on an excursion to some of the Roman suburbs. I had been writing letters for England, and reluctantly excused myself, for I was lover now as well as husband, and to be with Violet had become the greatest pleasure in existence. I would order a horse round after lunch, I thought, and join them, or meet them if returning.

I missed her. I walked round our rooms restlessly, felt half miserable at three hours' absence; picked up a glove and kissed it, and placed it aside as reverently and tenderly as a hermit might the relic of a saint; then looked at myself in the glass—a sure sign of the presence of the master-passion—and wondered however she ever came to love me, and dower me with the wealth of her beauty and heart and soul.

I sat in her chair, and tried to decide whether I would wait till after lunch-time. Love nearly got the better of hunger, and I was on the point of ordering round my horse and cantering off to meet her, hungry as I was.

However, the first gong for lunch sounded, so I went into the great dining hall, and told one of the servants to serve lunch for me with as little delay as possible. The long tables of the beautiful statued hall were bright with flowers. There was not a creature in the place except myself; so I sat down at the window side of one of the long tables where I was half hidden by a massive silver epergne and a huge bouquet of flowers. I was well screened, for the servant had to look around before finding me to serve my lunch.

I had not been there many minutes when May and Pansy Bassett came strolling in, arm-in-arm. Two beautiful girls—twins. I thought they must have seen me, as they came straight across in my direction; but no, they had not, for they seated themselves, with their backs turned towards me, at a small adjoining table.

I should have risen and spoken to them, but I was happy with my own thoughts of Violet, and disinclined for conversation.

No sooner were they seated than May said to Pansy—

'I am sorry that you were not with us last night; it was one of the most delightful evenings.' She then recounted to her sister the effect of that mysterious song.

'I knew at once who it was,' she said; 'there's no one else in Rome who could sing like that.'

'It was not Harold de Vere?' inquired Pansy.

'Yes, the very same,' replied her sister.

'Ah! he's a wonder,' said Pansy; 'but I should be frightened to know him well. They say he's a mystic, or something, and possessed of occult powers. Did you hear that about him and Violet Gunnery?'

'No,' said May, eagerly.

I made a slight noise, but it failed to attract their attention. I wanted to move, and yet the very name of Violet Gunnery kept me quiet. What could the girl have to say about my wife? There was scarcely time to either move or speak, for Pansy continued at once:

'I had it all from Lady Arthur Burr, who was a school-fellow of Mrs. Gunnery's when she was Violet Freeman. She gave me such a description of him. He's the very man a woman like Mrs. Gunnery could not have helped falling in love with. I believe they were engaged up to within a few weeks of her marriage. Aren't some girls lucky? Mark Gunnery is a splendid fellow. I watched them last night, and it seems to me that he perfectly idolises her. But, then, she's sweetly pretty.'

'Pretty does not describe it,' said May. 'Mrs. Gunnery is a beautiful woman; and yet it seems to me there's something lacking in her face.'

'It was there last night, though,' broke in Pansy; 'you should have seen her after Harold de Vere had sung that Italian ballad.'

'Ah! she's married now,' said May.

Pansy lowered her voice in reply, and I just caught the words, 'But suppose she loved him first—loved him before she married Mr. Gunnery. Lady Burr says she knows that she loved him to distraction—that he could do anything with her. Why, they say he was stopping once at Long Chace, and if he willed her to come to him, a secret and irresistible impulse sent her to the very place he was in.'

'Just fancy haying a husband or lover like that,' continued the vivacious girl, 'who could sit himself down anywhere, and just say to himself—firmly, of course—Pansy, I want you! and for me to have to march off to where his lordship sat to wait his pleasure. I could not submit to that even from a husband; but imagine one man having such a power over another man's wife. And that's what Lady Burr says Harold de Vere can do to Violet Gunnery. They call it by some scientific name, but I don't believe in it.'

'May,' she said, leaning over towards her sister, 'its my belief that Mark Gunnery ought to know about it. If I were he I'd take my wife into another hemisphere, out of reach of such a man. There must be some distant limit to such influences, and I think I'd see him; and really, were I a man, if he got bewitching my wife—that is, if I really loved her—I'd get a gun and shoot him. I would. It's wicked! I believe people were better and happier before such things were known anything about.'

I sat behind that epergne petrified. My heart seemed suddenly turned to stone.

When I looked up, a few minutes afterwards, the girls were gone.

# Chapter IV

## Horace de Vere.

The carrier pigeon or bird of passage will find its way over unknown wastes with unerring instinct, and in the same way do we arrive at some conclusions. Instinct

and intuition take the place of argument, and in such conclusions we are rarely wrong.

What I had overheard about Violet and Horace de Vere, I felt convinced was simply the truth. It was his voice and her love for him, that had aroused the latent forces I had so much admired on the previous evening. If my wife had sworn to me that it was otherwise I should scarcely have believed her.

I left the dining hall like one in dream. I was a changed man. I had almost loved, but not now: all the motives to it had vanished. And yet I felt that I had no right to blame Violet. I had sought and won her in marriage, and must make the best of it, and protect her from this man as far as lay in my power. It was a bitter experience, however. The springtime of love might, and doubtless would, have been followed by summer's warmth, but it had suddenly changed again to winter's cold.

Late in the afternoon the party returned in high spirits, and Violet came into our room with some acquaintances, radiant and happy, to playfully scold me for not having met them as previously arranged.

I looked at her bright eyes and flushed cheeks, and made some lame excuse. Love would have noticed how poor it was; but it evidently passed muster. I learnt that she had unexpectedly met with an old friend and he had been the life of the party. We had an engagement for the evening, and some of our visitors remained for dinner, so that had I wished it, there was no opportunity for private conversation.

That night sleep forsook me. I lay there the prey of thoughts that came and went. In a few brief hours I had passed from the gate of Paradise to the doors of Hell, and that night I entered for I heard her murmur 'Horace' in her sleep. She spoke the name twice as though calling someone, and I swore a bitter oath that if I caught him making unlawful use of his power over her, he should answer for it with his life.

I determined too, that with the least possible delay we would return to England; but first I must see this man to-morrow!—and warn him somehow: at whatever risk of insolence to myself or contemptuous denial, I would warn him.

There was a mystery about him that annoyed me. He was an unknown one, and an unknown adversary is always fearsome, until you have looked him in the face and seen something not unlike yourself. I would stand face to face with this man somehow, and have it out with him before leaving Rome.

"Mark," said Violet the next morning as we sat alone at breakfast, "It was really good of you to bring me here. I cannot tell you how much I have enjoyed it. Everybody is charming, and the dear old place is simply wonderful. Lady Burr says that it will take quite another month for us to see all that we ought to. Do you think that we can stay?'

"I fear that we cannot stay much longer," I said with some restraint, "I'm beginning to feel a bit home-sick, arn't you?"

"No; of course I would like to see them all at Long Chase," she said, "but I am quite satisfied to be here with you?"

I looked at her. Could I possibly after all have been mistaken, and then I remembered how she had called for 'Horace' in her sleep.

"Violet," I said abruptly, "do you know who it was that sung the other night at the Countess of Concello's?"

"Yes," she replied, and as I looked steadily into her face a startled blush suffused it. "It was an old friend of ours at Long Chase."

"Why did not you tell me before."

"You did not ask me until now," was the evasive answer.

We looked into each other's eyes, and in a moment read each other's thoughts, and Violet knew that her secret was a secret no longer.

"We will return home at the end of the week," I said.

"Very well, Mark," said Violet.

I rose without another word and left the room. At the door I turned a moment and looked back. A world for both hung in the balance; had I seen her in tears—yea, a look of pain would have been enough—I should have returned, and who can tell what might have been the consequences; but she leaned over to fondle a pet dog, who leaped eagerly to meet the touch of her dainty hand. I closed the door between us, and as it shut the cold, hard iron door of separation came crashing down in its appointed grooves; settled in its iron bed—to abide for ever.

I determined that before leaving Rome I would see and know something of Horace De Vere. He had been one of the party on the previous day, and must be somewhere in that city. I would find him.

I was turning into the entrance hall when I nearly ran into Sir Gordon Basset.

"Hullo Gunnery?" he exclaimed, and linking his arm in mine he drew me towards the smoking room. "Come and have a yarn. I've been trying to talk Italian for the last two hours, and my tongue is stiff with it. A wholesome gossip in English is about the only thing that will put me straight."

I was nothing loath, and pulling up lounging chairs to one of the windows we lit cigars.

"I've been wishing myself on my station on the Barcoo in Queensland this morning, Gunnery,"'said Basset. "You English people don't understand the exhilarating pleasure of a ten-mile ride before breakfast, with a bit of good horse flesh under you, over blue grass plains, with the dew on bush and grass, and the smell of the fresh gum leaves filling the air. It bears all the antiquities of Rome to my fancy."

"Ah! but you Australians can't keep away from us," I said.

"That's true," he replied. "When men make money out there, one of the first things their women-folk hanker after is a trip home, and we have to do it. Not that the men have no wish to revisit old friends, and familiar scenes," he continued, "but there is the fear of change, which unfortunately is almost always realised. Things are found so very different to what early impressions, and fond fancy, have pictured them, that past memories are marred, and the sweet illusions of boyhood dispelled by the revisiting of the scenes of early life in later years. But we have to do it, if we can spare the cash; for no matter how well we may educate our boys and girls, they lack finish until they have travelled. Especially for those living in a new country like Australia, it's part of a liberal education to have seen the world, which, by the way, big steamers and express railway trains have made quite a small place."

We sat thinking, after this long speech by Basset. I did not feel much inclined to speak myself and we lounged back watching the wreathing clouds of fragrant

Havanah smoke from our cigars, when Sir Gordon suddenly broke in upon the silence with—

"Have you met Horace De Vere yet?"

"No," I replied, "who is he?"

I listened eagerly to the gossipy description which my companion gave of this old lover of my wife. Basset, who seemed to have been favourably impressed with him, said he was a particular friend of Lord Burr's. To look at he is a very fine man, a trifle over six feet, and well proportioned. Basset averred that he might have sat as a model for one of the old Greek athletes. I learned that he was the scion of an old English family, poor and proud; but of brilliant and versatile genius. "There's nothing," said my informant, "that he cannot do, and do well. He came round with Lord Alfred Burr, in the latter's yacht to Leghorn, and the night of the Countess Concello's concert came on to Rome by rail, and startled us all with that queer song that made most of the women weep. By George it was a clever thing to turn those lights down and let the moonbeams in. It was De Vere planned it, I heard; my own eyes were a bit moist that night."

"Yes, he can sing," continued Basset meditatively, "and do a score of other things equally as well. Lord Burr was talking to me about him yesterday, said he wondered sometimes what would be the end of him. He has 600 a year and no expectations. Burr says that he is only six and twenty, and that he will probably settle down and surprise everyone some day. He's just the fellow to do it, I've seen dozens of them in Australia. He was a chum of Burr's at Oxford, but they never knew what he was up to. He would seemingly be studying anything except books; others would be working early and late, and grinding themselves half blind, but De Vere had leisure for any frolic that was going, and yet at the 'exams.' he invariably passed remarkably well, and would sometimes astonish even the dons. They wanted him to take a professorship; but not he. Felt too much of a Bohemian, he said, so he took his degree with honors, and started off with Burr, for a trip in the Emilia, and as the latter said to me yesterday, they have been lounging round the Mediterranean, smoking cigars, and taking an occasional run ashore, or up to London for a few days if the fancy suited them; but now Lady Burr is here, I suppose that they will stop a few weeks in Rome. Lord Alfred says that De Vere is a really good fellow, and that he will wake up and do something that will astonish his friends. It will be in perfect keeping with his past career."

"But, here is Lord Alfred himself," exclaimed Basset, rising from his seat, "and I'll be bound De Vere is not far away."

I turned and saw a man of about medium height approaching us, fair and florid and without any striking or particular aristocratic personality.

He was rich, however, and I found him afterwards to be a good-natured easy going fellow, and who had the reputation of being a good cricketer, a fair oar, and expert yachtsman; his educational attainments were those of the ordinary English country gentleman.

Basset introduced us, and we were soon on easy terms, as I had several times met Lady Burr. On Basset mentioning De Vere, Lord Alfred began to talk about their trip round in the Emilia.

"He's an old college chum of mine, you ought to meet him Mr. Gunnery," he said to me. "I believe that his mother and yours were friends years ago, and he knew

your wife (who, by the way, I have heard a lot about from Lady Burr, and have not yet had the pleasure of meeting.) You were not here when I left to bring round the yacht. De Vere came on a couple of days ahead of me. I wonder you have not met him, he seemed anxious to know you. You'll like him," he continued. "He's a capital fellow, as true as steel, and can do almost anything."

"Ah, yes," said Basset, "Gunnery heard him sing the other night; you know he took us all by storm."

I listened eagerly to the conversation; I wanted to hear and know all I could about De Vere. I made every endeavour that day to see him, but without success.

The next day I heard that he had been called suddenly away to England on urgent private business.

Within a fortnight after this, we were back again in Church Consett.

# Chapter V

## The Face of my Grandmother.

SEASON followed season, and life for the residents of Church Consett Hall was, I reckon, neither better nor worse than for a hundred other homes that nestle upon the country side of the fair English Midlands. Violet was away at Long Chace for a week at a time, and did pretty well as she pleased.

It did not trouble me much, for I had allowed myself to become engrossed with the estate. A polite and not unpleasant courtesy took the place of any warmer feeling, as it does, perhaps, in the majority of homes; it is to be feared that the bulk of married people are mismarried; but, having discovered their mistake too late, decide to make the best of it—admit in silence, their mutual failure, and go each their way.

My father could not help but see that his plans for my domestic comfort, and an heir for Church Consett Hall, had somehow miscarried, and one day took me to task about what he described as my want of attention to my wife. It was the only time within my memory that strong words passed between us, and it possibly had some good effect. I had learnt to do without Violet, and she followed her own bent without even consulting, or being interfered with by her husband, often riding to hounds with one of her sisters and a groom, and in other ways furnishing simple occasion for gossip, of which neighbours made, as is customary, as much as possible.

I was compelled to own to my father that I was not altogether blameless, and our domestic relations were altered somewhat for the better. My old father was delighted when about two years after our marriage a daughter was born in the old Hall. She was named Beatrice after my mother.

As time passed by both the squire and myself grew to idolise the child.

She inherited more than her mother's beauty, but Violet seemed dead to the stronger instincts of motherhood, and the child clung to her grandfather and myself.

To some extent Beatrice brought us all closer together. She was a common centre of interest, and the affection which should have been Violet's, I lavished upon her child. I thought at the time that my fondness for Beatrice pleased Violet, but we never exchanged those confidences which I suppose are usual between well married people; indeed we rarely talked to each other except in the presence of my father. We had accepted it as inevitable, and neither of us regarded it other than as a matter of course.

The fatal mistake of such a mode of life was made plain to me afterwards, but like other bat blind mortals, I did not see it then.

About two years slipped away after the birth of Beatrice. Violet had grown cooler, strangely so, I thought, for I had given her no reason, to my knowledge, beyond our usual go-as-you-please way of life.

I often used to wonder what had become of De Vere, for although I had heard nothing of him for over two years, and as has been previously stated, had never met him, I bore him no good will. It is queer, unexplainable, but this old lover of Violet's had become to me a sort of embodiment of evil. I attributed my wife's increased coldness to his influence over her; and felt convinced that he was resident somewhere not very far away.

One day, just at this time the squire came home complaining he was unwell, the doctor was called in, and ordered him to bed. Violet took charge of the sick room, evidently much affected, and tended my father, with every sign of kindness and affection. Notwithstanding her care, for she was no doubt much attached to my father, within a fortnight he died, his last kiss was pressed on the forehead of Beatrice, and with his last words he pleaded with both of us, to live more unitedly, and for the sake of Beatrice to seek each other's good, and make the home life at the Hall brighter and happier.

We were sitting one each side of him. I was deeply affected and said, "I promise, father." Violet said nothing, but bowed her head over my father's hand in dumb assent.

I can recall the whole scene as if it happened but yesterday. The shadow of death was upon the kind old face of my father, and opposite me on the other side of the bed was the fair face of Violet, tears in her eyes.

The dying day sank slowly to its rest, and night spread its shadowy wings above the breathless landscape until darkness had sealed the vision and with the darkness the calm, brave spirit of Squire Gunnery passed to its rest.

The doctor had come in just before this, and after he had spoken the simple words, "He is dead," Violet left the room. It was the last time I saw her, for she left a few hours after for Long Chase without seeing me, leaving a brief note to the effect that she was worn out, and would take Beatrice with her to Long Chase until the funeral.

Occupied with the funeral, Violet's absence gave me no concern, and it was several days before I drove over to Long Chase to bring her and Beatrice back, and, as far as possible, place matters upon a better footing. To my consternation I was met with the statement that both had left for Church Consett the day following the funeral. Further inquiry made it plain that Violet, taking Beatrice with her, had been driven by someone to the railway station at Drayton, and had

left the same night for London—as far as could be ascertained—alone. They were traced to the metropolis; but there all clue lost.

My first step was to advertise in the Times and other newspapers, and give information to one of the Police Commissioners at Scotland Yard. This was done with care to avoid unpleasant publicity; but all was without avail. Wife and child had disappeared as though swallowed up by an earthquake.

I undertook the search personally, for I was maddened at the thought of losing Beatrice. The woman that had fled from a comfortable and in many respects not unkindly home, I had no sympathy for, but the child was my own, and I would not be bereft without an effort at recovery. If, as I suspected, Violet had gone off with De Vere, she could only have taken the child as a woman's vengeance against myself. I lavished money, neglected everything besides, and night and day hunted London.

Weeks passed, when one evening a private detective—one of several I had employed—brought intelligence of having discovered Harold de Vere in London, but he was returning that night to Paris. It was said that he had been upon the Continent, and, added Thompson, "It's my belief the lady and child we have been looking for in London, are in Paris." It was too late that night, but the following day the detective and myself were on our way to the Continent, where after some delay it was discovered that a gentleman named De Vere, and a lady called Mrs. Ferndale, had been staying at a fashionable hotel in the Rue C___. They had left overland to catch the *Messageries Maritimes'* s.s. bound for Melbourne and Sydney.

I now felt confident that I was at last on the right track, and at once booked for Naples.

Away from from France and Switzerland and sunny Italy sped the express, recalling many a memory of bygone year's, but all too slow for me in the quest I had undertaken. My very nature seemed changed: I was consumed with a fierce desire to punish the man, and upbraid the woman. For the time it even mastered my desire to regain Beatrice.

On reaching Naples I learnt that the steamer had left a few hours previously, and it would be several days before another—one of the Orient boats—would follow; but it was said that this would be a faster ship, and would probably overtake the French boat before reaching Melbourne. "Cable to Melbourne," was the thought that suggested itself, "and have them watched," but it seemed so unnecessary, I felt so sure of them now, besides I hesitated to make my own movements too public—there were reasons why I might wish to be unknown.

There is no need to record the details of the voyage. The fine steamer entered Hobson's Bay only a few miles behind the French boat, and was boarded by the health officer—and to my unspeakable annoyance was put into quarantine. A case of suspected small pox had developed among the steerage passengers; it proved to be a false alarm, but it was several days before we landed.

I had brought a large sum of money with me, and for the next fortnight searched Melbourne with experienced assistance. Harold De Vere, Esquire, and Mrs. Ferndale and child had, we found occupied separate apartments at one of the principal hotels, but had left without leaving any address. They both came and left on the same day. Further inquiries, however, elicited the fact that the visitors had

not been known in the hotel, or upon the ship as being of the same party. It was De Vere right enough, I felt sure, but I could not get satisfactory description of Mrs. Ferndale—nothing that would enable me to identify her as Violet, and the suspicion grew upon me that she must in some way have been disguised.

One evening I stepped into a tram near the Scot's Church Collins-street. There was no one in it but myself, the guard having gone on to the dummy to collect a ticket, when a tall, dark man sprang upon the car while in motion, a few yards further down the hill, and in doing so seemed to give himself a sort of a wrench, for sitting down on the opposite seat he said to himself but sufficiently loud for me to hear:

"I must have trod on a banana skin or something."

The guard came in a moment after, when he gave him the fare, and asked when were we due at Spencer-street station.

It was the voice that rivetted my attention. I had only heard it before in song, but I was confident that although I had never before been able to catch sight of him, the man opposite to me was none other than Harold De Vere.

As I looked him squarely in the face it seemed to me that he started, as though he recognised me. He was a dark handsome man, and his eyes met mine with a glance full of haughty indifference.

There was no mistaking the character of the man, if, as I felt confident, this was Harold De Vere. He was no mean adversary, for in addition to a melodious voice, I was compelled to acknowledge that nature had endowed him with much manly strength, and grace and beauty of person. Education and travel had done the rest. The lines of the compressed lips told of a determined will, that would not stop at much in the accomplishment of any set purpose. I was inclined to address him by name at once, but as he looked at me a queer feeling seemed to come over me, and I voluntarily recalled the night before my marriage, when a stranger had passed me near the White Hart hostelry, Church Consett, and a mysterious ghostly visitant had trod at midnight with slippered feet across my bedroom floor. He looked calmly out into the night, as I watched him and tried to shape my lips to call his name.

But I was spellbound: somehow or other the words would not come!

'Spencer Street!' shouted the guard, and the stranger at once leaped out, followed by myself.

I dodged him like his shadow to the booking office, heard him take a ticket for B___; booked myself for the same place and leaped into the carriage after him. There were others in it, and seemingly he took no notice of me. I had determined to follow him. It was at a suburban station at which we alighted, and he turned out of the gates at a rapid walk. For half-an-hour I followed along the lonely, dimly-lighted roads. It seemed to me we must have walked almost in a circle, when, as we approached a gas lamp, he suddenly stopped just beneath it.

For a moment, only a moment, I hesitated.

As I walked briskly forward, I saw that he turned round, and stood confronting me in the middle of the pathway.

"Mark Gunnery, you're a fool," were the words with which he confronted me. I raised my hand to strike him, for I wanted no further evidence as to who or what

he was, when he stepped back, and threw his closed hand towards my face and opened it, but without touching me.

It was though a galvanic shock had struck me with full force. In a moment I fell senseless upon the gravel pathway.

On the return of consciousness, I found myself the occupant of one of the beds in a ward of the Melbourne Hospital.

Mine had been a very remarkable case, the nurse, after a few days, informed me. I had been there for a fortnight, very ill, and the doctors even then did not know what to make of me. It was a stroke of some sort, and I was to be kept very quiet for a few days, and then might communicate with my friends. The day nurse was a bright, intelligent girl, and seemed to take an uncommon interest in my case. 'You must be prepared to see a good bit of change in yourself,' she said to me one day. 'You know, a severe illness, such as you have had, makes a great change sometimes.'

"Bring me a looking glass," I said.

"No," she answered, "not to-day, but if you improve as much the next two days as you have the last, the doctor says I may let you see yourself on Sunday."

There was no mistaking the anxiety on the nurse's face on the Sunday morning as she brought the looking glass for me to see myself.

I gave but one look.

"Good Heavens!" was all that I could ejaculate. It was an old, withered, white-haired face that confronted me.

"Take it away," I said, as I sank back again upon my pillow.

In less than a month I passed from early manhood to old age.

A few days after this two of the doctors had a long talk with me about my illness. I told them as much as I cared to, but they were evidently incredulous. One thing, however, they were unable to explain; the marks of age were confined to my features. Below the shoulders I was unchanged.

Some days after I got a further shock. I had opened an account on coming to Melbourne with one of the local banks, and wrote a cheque for a small sum, when I was more startled if anything than before; the illness had entirely altered my handwriting and signature, and I had much trouble in afterwards proving to the bank my identity.

I came out of the hospital a changed man and yet as I looked at the extraordinary alteration in my features, it dawned upon me that I might still be recognised as a Gunnery. In the dining room of Church Consott Hall there had been a likeness of my grandfather, painted when he was over sixty years of age—it seemed to me that my face had become the exact counterpart of that picture.

# Chapter VI

## Mistakes for a Ghost.

THERE comes a time to most men when the fact that they are old becomes a new and unpleasant reality to them. But it is impossible for such to understand the painful feelings which fill the mind of a man who has passed abruptly from youth to age. Its effect upon me was to embitter my whole nature and create in me an utter hatred for De Vere. I set myself at once to trace his movements; having followed him to B——, I knew that it would be easy enough to discover his place of residence.

Looking over some files of the Argus I was relieved, however, from any further search in Melbourne, for there, as plain as could be, was the name of Harold De Vere for the departures for Brisbane. He had evidently made no effort to conceal his movements or disguise his name. He had left about a fortnight after our meeting.

I chuckled fiercely when I found that he was moving further north. 'He's getting away from civilization,' I muttered to myself, 'and will the more easily fall into my hands.' I never counted the possible consequences to myself; there are circumstances under which a man's life may become of no value to him, and besides, to destroy such a man as De Vere, I argued, would be a benefit to humanity; only one who had bartered himself to the Evil One could possess such powers as he had.

I reached Brisbane, and found as I had expected that he was a visitor with Gordon Bassett, but I also found to my surprise that Lord Alfred Burr was there too. There was possibly some pre-arranged plan, I thought, with Bassett that accounted for the meeting.

And now fortune suddenly favoured me in a most remarkable manner, and unexpectedly gave me the opportunity that I had planned for and desired.

I was waiting for a train at the Melbourne-street Railway Station one afternoon, when an old man, but vigorous and active, suddenly stopped in front of me, and stared full in my face with every indication of surprise. 'Good God!' he at last ejaculated, 'it's old Squire Gunnery!' The man's face grew white, and I believe he would have fallen, but that I reached out my hand and dragged him to a seat. He had mistaken me for my grandfather!

'Old man,' I said, 'whoever you are, you once lived at Church Consett.'

As I spoke to him he shrank from me as from a demon, and his teeth fairly chattered in his head.

'Who are you?' I asked.

'Don't you know me?' he said.

'No,' I answered; 'never saw you in my life before that I know of.'

'Ah! then you cannot be him,' he replied, looking at me eagerly, but with a sigh of relief.

I asked some further questions, but could get nothing more out of the man. He moved away to another seat, but I determined not to lose sight of him. He knew that I was a Gunnery, and could only have become possessed of that fact, by having known and been familiar with my grandfather. I resolved to know more about him, so went to the booking office and secured a ticket for the terminus station on the line the next train was to travel upon. I would get out at whatever station this man alighted. The mere fact of his knowing my name was sufficient to upset all my plans.

The train ran on for nearly an hour in the direction of the shores of Moreton Bay, stopping at a number of stations en route. The man at last alighted, when I at once followed.

'What is it you want with me?' he asked in a harsh tone of voice, as I caught him up.

'I want to do you no harm,' I answered, 'but you seem to know more about an ancestor of mine than I could wish, and I must have some talk with you.'

'Who in the devil's name are you?' he said, turning sharply round.

'The grandson of the Squire Gunnery, that you knew at Church Consett,' I answered.

'That can't be,' he said. 'Mark Gunnery, the son of the present squire, is not more than about thirty, and you are as old as I am.'

'Never mind,' I replied; 'what I have told you is the truth. But lead on; I am coming with you for an hour's conversation.'

'Why can't we have it here?'

'Because it's not convenient. I have something to tell you that it might be best for your own sake for me to say where there is no possibility of our being overheard.' It was a random shot, but evidently told, for he walked on without another word. 'This man,' I thought to myself, 'has done something that my grandfather was aware of, and which he wishes to forget.'

It was getting dark as he stopped at a cottage residence above a sheltered cove of one of the many bays which are enclosed within the great stretch of water known as Moreton Bay. A good-sized sailing boat rode at anchor a short distance off the shore, and a rowing boat was drawn up under a boat-house. There was a trim garden and small orchard, with two or three small paddocks and stable, and the general surroundings betokened the residence of a man in a comfortable way of life.

Turning the latch, he let us into a room comfortably furnished, with the table set for tea. A dark handsome girl, of four or five and twenty, entered almost at the same time from another door.

'You're back again father,' she said in a not unmusical voice.

'Yes, Sis,' he answered pleasantly, 'and have brought a visitor with me, who, I dare say, will not object to cup of tea. If you bring it in we won't trouble you further.'

The man seemed more inclined to be friendly, so I made no remark, and determined to take the proffered meal with him.

'Now,' said I, after he had somewhat appeased his appetite, 'I have told you who I am. Who are you?'

'Well, if you must know,' he answered, 'my name is Dick Blackmann.'

'Ah,' said I, 'you have relatives still living at Church Consett?'

'I have.'

'And, excuse me, you are the Dick Blackmann that about fifty years ago was transported for a poaching affair?'

'You're right again,' he said, 'now what next?'

I paused and looked at Blackmann, and then came to a rapid decision. It would advantage me to take someone familiar with the place and people into my confidence. There were palpable reasons why this should be the man. His face

contained that which suggested that he might be trusted with a secret. There are some men whose own history make it inexpedient for them to reveal another's secret or crime. Then, too, he knew me, and I him.

'Dick Blackmann,' I said, 'I am going to take you into my confidence. I don't want to ask anything more about you. Probably you hold a good position in this place, and have well nigh forgotten the troubles of your early days. Whatever I know of you and your past history is a matter between ourselves.'

The man made an impatient gesture, but I stopped him from speaking. 'I suppose you were going to say that you don't care what I know etc., but hear me out. I've too much on my hands to be concerned about you, or anything that was between you and my grandfather; but your knowledge of this place and its people may be of service to me. To that extent you must help me, Blackmann.'

He was filling a short pipe with tobacco, and neither looked up nor made reply. I could not help watching him a moment. It was not actually a bad face that the man had. It gave the impression of one that was older than he looked. He was, I judged, cold and hardy by nature, and yet by no means incapable of a generous action or kindly deed when his better self was aroused. Physically his strong, well knit frame seemed capable of much endurance.

'I have reasons for not wishing to be known here,' I continued. 'Not that there's much fear of that,' I said bitterly, as I called my premature age. Blackmann caught the tone of my voice and looked curiously.

'Do you see that hand?' I asked, putting my right hand across the table, 'Does it match my face?'

'Put your own beside it, man.'

'Mine has had to work,' he answered, as he looked at his shrivelled sinewy fingers.

'Yes, but that has not made the difference,' I answered warmly, 'some cursed sorcery has made me an old man within two months; changed me in features, speech, and bodily bearing; changed me so that my bosom friend could not recognise me, and the man that did it added this to a previous injury.'

'He's in Brisbane, and I've come up here to reckon with him. He's staying with Sir Gordon Bassett.'

'I suppose it's that friend of Lord Alfred Burr's you are referring to,' said Blackmann.

'It is.'

'Well I can tell you something about him.'

With some advice and assistance from Blackmann, who I found to be a well-known citizen, whose doubtful antecedents had but very slightly interfered with a successful colonial career, was introduced to Sir Gordon Basset. I as a Mr. Vernon on the look-out for a good station property for my two sons. The metamorphose was complete, and as Mr. Vernon I became familiar with both Harold De Vere and Lord Alfred Burr. There must have been something, however, in my manner which unconsciously to some extent revealed my inner self to De Vere, for notwithstanding all my caution and apparent friendliness, I felt that he distrusted me.

We actually spent a fortnight together inspecting one of Bassett's stations on the Maranoa, for at my suggestion both Lord Alfred and De Vere accompanied us, but

never during those days of bush journey could I get him alone and at a disadvantage. Not that he in any way recognised me; that was impossible, for voice, feature, handwriting, gait, everything about me was altered.

I had during this time made the most careful search for Beatrice and Violet, and at last became persuaded that they were not resident anywhere in Brisbane. Why De Vere protracted his stay I could not guess. He talked of visiting North Queensland and Java, returning by the British India route to England. But still he stayed, as though conscious of some watch upon his movements, or fear of some impending evil. Scarcely an hour of the night or day but he was shadowed by some agent of my own. Before punishing him, I would fain have discovered through him, something of those I sought.

'Mr. Vernon,' said Sir Gordon Bassett to me one morning as I met him in the Queensland Club. 'We are arranging a few days shooting down the bay; will you make one of our party? We will run down in the yacht, and make a week of it among the Islands. There are hundreds of black swans and other game, and we should have some good sport. Lord Alfred Burr, De Vere, and a couple of Brisbane men will he of the party.'

I agreed to go at once. I was desperate enough to seize any chance that would put De Vere within my reach again.

# Chapter VII

## Riding to his Doom.

We had been shooting and fishing with varied luck among the picturesque islands of Moreton Bay, when Bassett one evening proposed a visit to some natural caves of curious formation beyond Bournemouth. He wanted to go ashore at the latter place, as he had instructed his business manager to wire him there that day should anything transpire of importance in the city. It was only six miles ride, he said, and if we left early we could be back again and dine on board. He would send a man ashore to arrange with some one he knew for the horses.

The unexpected happened on the morrow. An important bank in which Bassett had an account had suspended payment, and he, with one of the two Brisbane men had decided to run up by rail to the city. 'Not that I stand to lose much myself,' remarked Bassett, 'but I must do the best I can for others.'

There were four of us left, and we strolled round to the outskirts of the township to a farm where the horses were to be in readiness.

As Lord Alfred and Granby, one of the Brisbane men, were the least accustomed to riding, the two quietest horses were taken by them, and they rode off, saying we should soon overtake them.

One of the two left was a well made and evidently well-bred chestnut mare, and the other a dark brown gelding.

'I'll take the chestnut,' said De Vere.

She watched him, showing the white of a wicked-looking eye as he went forward to take the bridle, and snorted and moved away. He flung the reins over her head as she swung round from him. He was a match for her, however, for shortening the reins he took hold of her ear, and with a free hand held the stirrup for his foot.

'Mind the mare, sir,' said the man, as De Vere sprang into the saddle.

The fiery-little chestnut was off before he had fairly gained his seat, but he pulled her back almost on to her haunches, and threw himself on the ground again.

'Stirrups are too short,' was all he said.

He put them down two holes on each side, during which time the mare fidgetted about and then reared. He soothed and caressed her, and in a favourable moment got his foot in the stirrup and swung over into the saddle, as she at once broke into a smart canter.

'Steady, lass, steady,' I heard him call out, as he disappeared round a turn in the road.

In a minute this became little better than a bush track. He had taken the wrong turning.

By this time I was following him, my horse breaking from the canter into a gallop as he missed sight of his mate. I steadied him with a firm hand, for I felt there was mettle in him that might take me all my time to control; not but that I was a good horseman, but I had had a long spell, and this wild gallop along the Australian bush track was a new experience to me.

How well I remember it, and recall every detail. The horse had an easy swinging stride, the saddle might have been made for me, and the stirrup leathers were the exact length, as we swung along, the trees in some places meeting overhead, I noticed how in the clear patches the grass was wet with a heavy dew. A startled bird would occasionally shake the dew like rain from the branches of the trees, when it would fall glistening in the slanting sun rays like a shower of diamonds. The peculiar aroma which the gum trees have in the early summer mornings filled the air. Occasionally a kangaroo or wallaby would come leaping with enormous strides through the undergrowth and gleaming grass, to disappear with the sound of crackling branches as it made its way through the bush. At times I could hear the clatter of hoofs as De Vere crossed a harder piece of roadway, but although I had now reached a fairly straight and open road, he was not in sight, and it dawned upon me that I was being left behind. The pace was a fast one, and I felt sure that the mare must have bolted with him. Sitting down in the saddle, I gave my horse his head; he wanted very little encouragement. He could hear his mate ahead of him, and stretching out his neck he increased his gallop to racing speed.

Suddenly I felt myself rising in the air. The horse had made a prodigious leap, and as we cleared the ground there seemed to flash under us a bunch of writhing snakes. They were black, and were probably two male snakes fighting together, as I have heard that they will do occasionally. My horse was now galloping at a terrific rate, I tried to steady him, but it was useless; he was thoroughly aroused and frightened by the snakes, and with the single rein bridle and snaffle bit I realised that it was useless to try to check him. The most I could do was to keep him on the track. Suddenly we came up to a fallen tree, which he leaped without hesitation, and then turned a corner, where just ahead I saw De Vere; he was

riding fast, but seemed to have the mare more under control, and I heard him laugh and shout at her as she shied furiously at something on the roadside. That and the sound of my horse behind made her quicken her pace, and I heard him laugh again as she dashed forward at her previous mad rate of speed. He would have laughed less had he known that he was riding to his doom.

The pace was again tremendous, but I rode on without any great alarm, for I felt sure that they could not keep it up much longer, and the track was fairly plain and seemed widening. A few minutes afterwards we came to a wooden bridge spanning a creek. It was in very bad repair but De Vere passed it safely, although his horse seemed to get a further fright, for a young white heifer, scared at the noise, rushed up the bank from the bed of the creek just as he passed. The approaches were very bad, and my horse cleared all obstacles and avoided rotten planks as by a miracle, and still raced after the chestnut.

We must have covered four or five miles by this time, and had not passed a single house except one deserted shanty.

Just here we got on to rising ground. The soil was a bright chocolate, then it suddenly changed to sand, the scrub thickening around the track, and a moment afterwards we were on the Pacific beach, with hard white sand under us that a few hours before had been submerged by the tide.

There was no sail or boat to be seen on the great expanse of water which now spreads itself before us. De Vere was galloping away about a quarter of a mile in front of me, keeping well down towards the water's edge, where the sand was hardest. Had he pulled his horse on to the soft dry sand he might soon have stopped. But he was riding to his fate, and at such times men don't see such things. I kept behind him, not wanting to distance him, and felt pretty certain that my horse was under control again, when suddenly I saw De Vere's horse stagger, then make a great leap, and at the same time scream as though in mortal terror. It was a half mad terrific sound, such as I heard a dumb animal make, when in fearful pain or peril, once or twice before; then I saw the horse sink to the saddle flaps in the sand, where she violently struggled. I pulled up my horse, which in turn seemed terrified with the spectacle, and answered almost immediately to the rein, and, shaking in the saddle with excitement, I watched him breathlessly. He was going to jump toward shore. In a moment he had made a great leap, and disappeared nearly down to his waist six feet from his horse. They had ridden into a quicksand.

No one but myself to hand to help him, and, if I had the will, it was doubtful whether I had the power to save him from a frightful death. The tide was rising, and if he was not swallowed beforehand by the quicksand, in two hours the whole place would be under water.

He called out in an alarmed voice as I rode up, 'For God's sake, Vernon, be quick and give me a hand to get out of this, I can feel the cursed thing sucking me down.'

I dismounted, and walking inshore fastened my horse to a tree, and then cautiously walked to within five and twenty yards of the terrified man, and looked at him without speaking.

# Chapter VIII

## The Song in the Quicksand.

De Vere was slowly sinking in the quicksand, in the position in which he had leaped from the saddle of his horse, with his face turned from the ocean. Behind him the chestnut was being engulphed more rapidly; probably she was nearer the centre of the treacherous sand drift, and her convulsive efforts to extricate herself only hastened her end; but she groaned piteously as she struggled for life.

De Vere evidently thought that I was forming some plan for his assistance, for he said nothing for a minute or more, but watched me anxiously as I took in the whole scene.

In leaping from the horse he had somehow lost his hat, and I noticed that it had fallen several yards away from him.

There was nothing to shade his features from me; I should see it all, and I gloated over the thought of the death agony of which I would be the only witness. It was as though I had suddenly become possessed by some spirit of hell.

"Why don't you come nearer," he called out, "you will feel how far you can come with safety, and then we can talk without shouting; but for God's sake be quick, it's the most frightful sensation. I shall remember it as long as I live."

I moved nearer to him cautiously, until I had decreased the distance by about one half. I was on the verge of the sloppy quicksand now, and within easy talking distance, but I still remained silent. He had a fine head and forehead, I thought, and eyes to captivate a queen, and silky luxuriant hair. Yes, he's a handsome man, and so Violet loved him. And then it seemed as though out of the sea behind him, there arose pictures and voices of the past; Church Consett and the old Hall, my father, Violet and her sisters, and amid them was the dainty figure of a sweet wee child, Beatrice, my Beatrice, and my eyes fell again upon this human serpent, writhing and struggling in the sand.

"You might as well keep still Harold De Vere," I said, "the more you struggle the faster you will sink, and that will be a pity, for I want to have some conversation with you before you die."

The whole manner of the man changed, and he looked at me for fully a minute in silence.

"I was able to move my foot up a little," he said in a quiet voice.

"Yes, but in doing so you have forced your body several inches lower in the sand," I answered.

"Why don't you look sharp and do something to assist me; he said hurriedly; if you broke down some ti tree branches and strewed them on the sand, and then fastened your saddle-girth, stirrup-leathers, and bridle together, you might be able to get near enough to throw them so that I could catch hold, and in that way I might get out of this cursed predicament; but unless you do something at once it will be too late."

"Supposing that I don't intend to help you Harold De Vere," I replied.

"Look here, Vernon!" he answered, "for heavens sake don't joke about it, it means death, man, unless I have immediate assistance."

"I know that, and I am not joking; but why don't you call me by my right name?"

He looked at me, and a sudden pallor overspread his face as he ejaculated, "It's Gunnery!"

"Yes," I answered. "That's my name; so you did not recognise your own infernal handiwork before? But listen to me for a little, there are a few things that I want to know, and some other things that I am going to tell you, now that I have such an unexpected but timely opportunity."

He saw that there was neither pity nor mercy to be expected from me, so he turned his head and looked eagerly in both directions along the beach. Inland a thick growth of bush trees stretched in an unbroken line just above high water mark.

I followed his long anxious look, with almost equal eagerness. It had not occurred to me before that our companions might return in quest of us, or that there might be others travelling on the same road.

There was no one visible, however, it was a bye track, right off the main road, leading no where in particular, and, as I learned afterwards, the way was blocked by a large creek about half a mile beyond. Unless some visitors from the distant township should ride so far for a morning's outing, we were not likely to be disturbed in that lonely spot.

I turned round towards De Vere again, and was about to speak, when I saw his chest heave, as he filled his lungs, and high above the sullen roar of the tumbling waves upon the beach, there rose the wailing piercing native cry, familiar to most Australians. Coo-ee! Coo-ee!

"Stop that," I said, drawing a small revolver from an inside coat pocket, "or I'll take the risk, and shoot you dead, just where you are."

"You daren't, you coward!" was his answer.

It is impossible to say what I might have done in the passion of the moment, but my attention was suddenly arrested by the distant sound of trampling hoofs, making their way through the bush.

De Vere heard it too, for his face became animated, and he listened in silence, and looking in the direction from whence the sound came. My horse, too, pricked up his ears, whinnied, and wheeled round facing in the same direction. I ground my teeth and fidgetted with the trigger of the revolver. De Vere watched me closely, but said nothing; he must have known what was passing in my mind, and that his life, at that moment, hung as it were, only upon a hair.

The tide by this time had crept considerably nearer, and only the top of the saddle, and neck and bend of the struggling horse were above the surface. De Vere seemed to be sinking, but more slowly, and had both hands and arms stretched out upon the wet, oozing sand for support. I put up the revolver as the trampling sound of the horses came nearer, and, mad with disappointment, turned to see who it was.

A moment afterwards a riderless horse stepped cautiously into the open, followed by two or three others, who stopped as soon as they saw me.

It was a small mob of stray horses! I called out to them, and they turned and trotted off into the bush.

The face of the man in the quicksand at that moment assumed the aspect of blank despair. Never shall I forget it! Scores of times it has appeared to me in this very room, and I suppose it will occasionally haunt me to the grave. It was the expression of perfect misery, disappointment, and horror. I think that he now for the first time really realized that in less than an hour the cold, wet grasp of the quicksand would drag him down into his grave.

"Why don't you shoot me," he said, "and put me out of my misery?"

"No," I replied, "I shall not shoot you. I mean to stand here and watch you; great Nature will do all the rest. Ask the rising tide to pity you, or the oozing quicksand—but don't ask pity from me. Where's my wife and child, you villain?"

"Don't lose your temper, Gunnery, or call names; here, face to face with death, I tell you I'm sorry for you, A man can't help his fate. I have ridden into this accursed quicksand and I have to pay the penalty. You came into contact with a stronger force than your own, and you've been worsted. Its the way of things in this queer world. Just look at me for a moment," he continued, reaching out his right hand towards me and glaring at me with his eyes, "I had a premonition this morning that our ride would end in disaster, for you as well as for me. I have known for weeks past that you were not what you represented yourself to be, I knew, too, that you had some design on me; but had I known all I should have killed you, that is if there had been no other recourse. You were cautioned the night before you were married to Violet Freeman, and for years you have known that she was not yours, but mine. Do you think that you, and friendship, would satisfy a woman that had known me, and love. You think, like other fools, that I am a sorcerer, in league with the powers of darkness. I know something more of nature's secrets than you do—unfortunately not enough to save me now—but I think I know enough to make you a comrade and companion."

"Don't move, Mark Gunnery! Keep looking in my eyes; That's it! Now come, and as you will not help to rescue me, come and take my hand, and let us here sink together into the quiet and mystery of death."

It is impossible to explain the sensation. My brain whirled and my will power seemed gone from me.

I was spell-bound. I could not unfix my eyes from his. A secret impulse impelled me towards him. He reached out his hand. I was about to move madly forward and share his frightful doom, when a sudden flash of lightning seemed to drop out of the clear sky, followed almost immediately by thunder.

I turned hurriedly away like one saved from a sudden death; hastened to where my horse was still tethered, and mounted him, quivering in every nerve.

Pulling the horse round I once more faced him. "That checkmates you, you sorcerer," I said. "You may be able by your cursed art to hypnotise me, but you can't the horse. You had better say a prayer if you've any God to pray to, for another quarter of an hour and you'll either be swallowed alive, or drowned."

He made no answer, he was probably making a last endeavor to think out some plan of escape, or some final scheme of vengeance upon myself. My horse moved about restively, conscious of the impending storm which had crept silently up against the wind, and of which the lightning flash, that had proved my salvation, had been to me the first intimation.

Making my horse walk up and down upon the soft dry sand, I looked around me. Far out at sea a steamer hove in sight, the black smoke of her funnels leaving a trail upon the blue expanse. She was in the sunshine, for the dark shadow of the thunder cloud, which already blotted out the sun from the land, and was sweeping out across the sea in a clearly defined line, had not yet reached her. Men, women and children were doubtless on deck watching the approaching storm; but little did they think of the tragedy which, under the shadow of that cloud, was being enacted here upon the land.

I turned my horse again, and he slowly and reluctantly paced back towards the quicksand and De Vere. He wanted to be off home; wanted to escape the storm; and he tossed his head and champed his bit, and now and then pawed the sand in his impatience. "Steady, lad," I said soothingly, "it won't be long now, less than a quarter of an hour will do it, and then you shall race home at your topmost speed. He's down now nearly to his chin, and the wash of the rollers already reach your old mate the chestnut, who no longer struggles or groans, for she's dead."

I looked around again as I said this, talking as much to myself as to the horse, when I, for the first time, seemed to realise the utter horror of the weird and awful scene that stretched itself around us. It was the long hush that sometimes comes before a storm. All nature seemed spell bound, the wind had dropped to perfect stillness, the rollers of the great Pacific Ocean, so soon to be lashed into seething fury, fell, as though awed into quietness, upon the hard sandy shore, except in the close vicinity of the quicksand, where there appeared to be some under current of disturbance. I saw the dull line of bush trees reaching inland; the stretch to right and left, of grey white sand; here and there a stunted bush; one waiting horseman; and the head and neck of a living man still visible above the watery, oozing sand.

I was suddenly seized with feelings of horror, and was involuntarily turning my horse's head towards the township—it was enough, without my seeing the final tragedy.

But as I turned I saw De Vere's hands appear upon the surface of the sand, as though he were pushing it back off his chest, and to my astonishment, there, with the breakers close behind him, and death before, he commenced to sing.

I have spoken of the awful stillness. That song broke it like a voice from another world. Every natural sound seemed to cease—twitter of birds, rustle of trees, even the ever sounding sea struck the sands in seeming accompaniment to the sweet, strong, swelling notes of that plaintive melody. It was an Italian song, the air reminded me of the familiar English one, "Alice, Where Art Thou?" Why he sang I cannot tell, unless it was in the last despairing hope that the sound of a human voice might bring him help. How he could sing under such conditions I do not attempt to explain. It was his death song, and as I watched and listened it echoed across the waste of sand, and along the tree-lined shore, in wailing, plaintive, and yet defiant melody. The voice soon grew faint, however, then ceased, stopped by the wash of the sea and the engulfing sand. The spray of a larger wave had broken over the brown hair, that fair fingers had often dallied with, and the proud eyes, glazing with the film of death, for the last time met mine.

Then the tempest broke, as though in righteous anger. A great wind swayed the trees, and dashed itself against the sea, which recoiled with the shock, and then rolled back upon the shore in angry, foaming waves.

And amid the storm, like a half mad hunting thing, a white-haired old looking man on a brown gelding, reckless alike of lightning, or wind, or rain, or falling timber, galloped back to Bournemouth.

# Chapter IX

## My Other Self.

My story was soon told, and as briefly as possible; this they attributed to my condition through having received such a shock to my nerves through the death of my acquaintance. It was a lamentable accident, people said, but there was no help for it. The quicksands on that beach were well known to local residents, and the newspapers said notices should be erected warning strangers of the danger.

My mission north was accomplished, I had hunted De Vere to his death; so I returned at once to Sydney to continue my quest for Violet and my child.

I carrying out my purpose, I determined to live and work alone. I had read somewhere of a recluse who resided for many years in solitary chambers in Lincolns Inn, London. I determined to do the same, and at last found a place to my taste, here in the heart of Sydney; it was but a stone's throw from this, and within hearing of the clock tower bells.

I spoke to as few people as possible, while engaged in procuring simple furniture, and gave the keeper of the chambers a small pittance to keep them clean and tidy. Installed and settled I recommenced my search, frequenting the public parks and gardens, and principal thoroughfares, always and everywhere looking for my wife and child.

My evenings were spent mostly in the gloomy old chambers. The basement must have been built in convict days, for there were iron bars upon the windows of the lower apartments; placed there no doubt to prevent the escape of assigned servants when they were once locked in for the night. I took a pleasure in roaming about the passages after every one else had gone. It amused me. My premature age had embittered my whole being. De Vere was dead; but his evil work remained, and I hated myself that I was compelled to carry my youthful manhood under a mask, and I hated the world of men and women around me because I appeared to them different to what I was. The reaction, too, had left me weak. I regretted De Vere's death; he might have known some means by which my lost manhood could be restored again. I took my meals at a restaurant, and for days together addressed no word to a living soul.

And yet I longed for human companionship. I would sit sometimes for hours on a seat in the public gardens. I saw men and women talking with their friends. I sat by the side of them, thus conversing,—I, who had not heard the sound of my own voice for days.

It was then that I first became conscious of my crime; I was the murderer of De Vere. I, who could have saved him, saw him die and let him perish. But I would

not give way to the thing. I argued with myself, set up a tribunal, and arraigned the dead to attend and answer for himself—and at last one night he came.

It was all in miniature, and I was convinced that the whole thing was an hallucination; but he came, and he argued his case in this fashion:

"Events proved too strong for me; I am dead; but rather a thousand times would I be dead than such as you are. Unbeautiful and unloved. What makes love, Mark Gunnery? Can you weigh it, measure it, command it to come to you, or when it has come bid it depart? Love is a part of God, and as mysterious. Whither it cometh, or whence it goeth, or what it is, none can tell. But to have spent one hour with youth and love was worth the living. You married her, but she was always mine, mine by right of love, a right which neither priest nor marriage vows can make, nor break, Mark Gunnery."

I got familiar with him in his diminutive form, and let him rant about his love, and sometimes questioned him; but the hallucination (for it was of course nothing more) would then vanish. But on one occasion, when questioned, he said with a miraculous grin, "you will come back again some day for punishment;" and then the hallucination left me.

One night a short time afterwards I found to my astonishment, sitting beside me, my former self; the chair was not three yards distant. I covered one eye and looked at it, but the figure remained. The shock this gave me was extreme, for I knew by that that this was not an optical illusion. It was my other self. "Old man," said he to me, "we shall live well together, I will assist you to find her, and be company for you in your quest. It is my wife and child you are looking for."

"My very blood curdled in my veins. It was my own voice, my own face, and form and gesture. This man which sat thus beside me, and talked so familiarly to me was the Mark Gunnery that married Violet Freeman, the father of Beatrice. I must be going mad.

"Rising suddenly I threw myself upon the apparition, and encountered warm flesh and blood.

"Sit down, old man," said the thing; "did you not hear me say that I had come to stay. We will look for them together."

I drew back in consternation. So this was what De Vere meant when he said, "you shall come back again." It was a coming back again with a vengeance!

"You can leave me here for tonight," said the thing, and then it stepped across to my writing desk and commenced to write a letter to my steward in England. It was my own hand-writing.

"I will close the doors," I said, shaking with fear. But instead of doing so I hurried out into the street. I did not know it then; I would not have believed it, but I had commenced to live a dual life.

# Chapter X

## „To See Ourselves As Others See Us."

An editorial note seems necessary at this stage of Mark Gunnery's story, for the very manuscript bore evidence of the horror of mind with which the writer had recalled this incident in his history. The writing was here deciphered only with difficulty. It had evidently been penned under great mental agitation.

It should be said that however strange and improbable this portion of Mark Gunnery's story may appear, it is plain that he himself believed it true. Moreover, there are incidents connected with it, which suggest the existence of internal evidence as to its accuracy.

The manuscript continued as follows:

The whole of that first night of horror and amazement I spent in the open air. I dared not go back. I would have done so if it had been De Vere, or any other human being; but I dared not go back to encounter this mysterious facsimile of myself, myself as I ought to have been.

I wandered about the streets and the domain, and thought of myself in those chambers. For a long time I feared even to sit down on one of the park seats lest the awful thing should appear by my side!

I saw men sleeping upon the grass and on the benches. With all their poverty, they were happier than I. It was not merely that I had a double; but it was myself, my own personality that had been usurped. I thought to myself that some demon had become incarnated in my natural body, and that that in which I dwelt was an aged frame, resurrected from the grave of one of my ancestors. I myself, my soul, the personality, the ego which loved and hated, and thought, and remembered, had been flung out of its natural home by the hand of De Vere, and had taken refuge during that period of my unconsciousness in the aged body of another—I was a living lie.

At last wearied out I sat down on a bench by the side of a sleeper; upon a little bit of unoccupied room at the end. The man moved restlessly, lifted his head a moment, and eyed me suspiciously. I apologised for disturbing him; upon which he blurted out something and betook himself again to slumber.

The night seemed interminable, but at last the grey dawn came, and I walked about, for I was cold, and presently returned to the street in which my chambers were located.

A light still burnt there, so I opened the street door with my latch-key, and with trembling steps mounted the stairs. I pushed the door gently open—and—saw the thing at the table still writing.

I thought "If I had a weapon I would shoot you," but the question arose in my mind was it flesh and blood at all, or was it anything natural? It would be little use to make a bullet hole in a ghost,—the sight of the thing perfectly sickened me.

"Come in Vernon," he said turning around.

My God! it was indeed myself, Mark Gunnery—voice, feature, gesture!

"Close the door please," he continued, "and sit down, I want to talk to you. You know you are singularly like an ancestor of mine Mr. Vernon. It makes it the more strange that you should be so interested in this search after my unfortunate wife and child."

My tongue was dry, and stuck to the roof of my mouth, and it was a minute or so before I could moisten it so as to regain utterance.

"Do you know who you are, and where you are, and how you came here. Whether you are human or inhuman, flesh or devil? In the name of God answer me!" I exclaimed.

His lips curled with scorn, just as my own would have done had any one so addressed me.

"Old man you have been drinking I fear," was all that he said; and that was uttered carelessly and disdainfully.

"Who are you?" I repeated.

"If you do not know, sir, I am Mark Gunnery of Church Consett Hall, England. If you wish to know further, I am in Temple Court Chambers, talking to one John Vernon."

He said this with a fine tone of superiority and irony in his voice, as though he still clung to the belief that I was intoxicated. I was simply confounded!

And now commenced one or the strangest experiences which ever fell to the lot of man. Daily and almost hourly I grew to have familiar intercourse with this thing. The something which was inside the body I hated; but the exterior was my own flesh, my own home, and I soon began to think and plan as to how I might regain its possession. I encouraged it to be with me, feared lest any accident might overtake it. It was something belonging to myself in the temporary possession of another, and I at this stage acted accordingly.

I called it Gunnery and the thing called me Vernon. I was amazed, however, to find that this thing, the vileness and devilry of whose character I soon learnt to know so well, was able to impress other people favorably.

It had installed itself completely in my position, for not only had it usurped my name and body, but it appropriated the property and funds, both in England and Australia, which were vested in the name of Mark Gunnery. The belief that it was a demon grew upon me, and in malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness and falsity, it equalled, if not surpassed other human demons, which, alas! walk our streets, and move in society, and taint the very air with their blasphemies and obscenity. I got to know my demon well, and I loathed him beyond measure; but yet kept company with him, because of my interest in the body he possessed.

Soon after his first appearance I found that he had taken rooms at one of the best hotels in the city, and was obtaining introductions by the use of my name and money, and was actually getting into society. I was sometimes led to almost question my own identity, for when we are long familiar with the state of things, it becomes difficult to continue to realise their falsity. Just as a man may so often repeat a fiction as to believe it true. I was so familiar with the Mark Gunnery who I daily met and conversed with, as almost to believe it to be what it seemed. The illusion was never continued long, however, for I knew the real Mark Gunnery too well not to discern the counterfeit.

The moment he commenced to talk of anything beyond the merest common-place, I saw the imposture. It was my own body, face, voice, and gesture. Every little trick natural to me as a man he had; to some extent, too, he possessed a knowledge of my past, but it was partial, and fragmentary. It was the outer circle of facts that he was familiar with, he knew about my property at Church Consett, my investments, the cash in the hands of my bankers, my wife and child, and other things which belonged to matters physical and external; but when the inner

circle of knowledge and experience which everyman possesses was touched upon he went off at a tangent. He knew that there I knew too much for him, so he evaded such things, and in doing so at once revealed himself.

Nor did we in our private intercourse altogether hide this from each other. He knew that I knew and hated him, and only kept company with him, as we do with a thief or enemy, who possesses something dear to us. That he had an object in coming to me, was self evident, either he was acting for himself or for another; but certainly it was for the purpose of tormenting me before my time.

I had singular bodily sensations in connection with his coming and his going. I knew at once when he was in my neighbourhood and I felt repelled and on my guard as soon as I found myself in his presence. It was like the positive and negative poles of magnet. There was much in common; but no spiritual affinity or attraction.

I believe that some people felt much the same way as I did, in his company. That mysterious principle which is known to chemists as 'the action of presence' was remarkably evident in him. I noticed the children and animals shrank from him. And yet he could be suave, and courteous, and sweet spoken when he liked; but it was only surface sweetness, from the teeth outward. And the purer portion of society seemed unconsciously to shrink from him.

But he had money, and spoke correctly, and carried himself among his fellows as one who by birth and education and rank had claim upon their consideration, and to large extent society took him at his own price.

A handsomely appointed cab, with liveried coachmen waited for him in the morning, to drive him here and there, and not unfrequently to the barracks, where he became specially familiar with an officer who was a man of wealth, but was lightly regarded in the service, and had been blackballed in the clubs.

I used to wonder sometimes why he clung to me so closely, and passed so much time in my company, for I knew that the hatred between us was mutual. I believe that there was some physiological cause, which even now I only very partially understand. It may have been that he wanted to find out something about my past history or intentions, or of the body he inhabited, which remained undiscovered to him. I make no pretence myself to special goodness or virtue, the current of circumstances, and my own evil passions, had carried me a long way down the stream; but there was still a great gulf fixed between myself and this unclean demon. The very thought that he had possession of my body, that he made it swear his obscene oaths and fulfil his unhallowed desires was maddening to me.

I have already intimated that my father had left me a large fortune at his death, and I expostulated with Gunnery at the way in which he was spending it.

"You seem to know a lot about my affairs," he said with an oath, "it's like your dashed impertinence to talk about a matter which is no concern of yours at all;" a volley of scurrility followed, at which I turned upon my heel contemptuously, and left the foul thing to itself. When next we met it was as though this had never occurred, and it was as suave and polite and generally fair spoken as before.

I never referred to the matter however again, let him spend it. I thought it would be curious to note how he would act if he was poor. The gross excesses of the thing, however, well nigh drove me to distraction—in my person too. 'The vile body

of my humiliation.' I thought to myself, unconsciously recalling scripture which I had heard in better and happier days.

I soon found out that he was associating himself with the fastest and loosest society of Sydney, so I followed him about with his boon companions, and witnessed, with a sickening heart how he was heaping dishonor upon my person, and trailing the fair name of my ancestors in the dust. Had I felt that he was human I would have risked everything to have rescued him; but he was inhuman, and I could only stand and watch the tragedy afar off.

And yet it puzzled me that the men with whom he consorted did not read his character aright and shrink from him. They certainly quarrelled with him occasionally at their wine parties; but foul as he then sometimes became, they were too nearly his equals in sin to take much notice of it, and in the morning, except for the deeper lines left by the previous night's orgie, he and his companions were smooth spoken and fair faced as before.

I asked myself whether it was possible that I, Mark Gunnery, could ever have fallen so low as this; and yet I saw men from whose early life, and religious training, and education, very different things might have been expected, follow the lead of this incarnated demon, as though there was no fine instinct of the heart to tell them what he was, or from whence he came.

Sometimes the thought of these things was more than I could bear, and I would then go alone, and sometimes lie down upon the cliffs at the South Head of the harbour. I did this one afternoon when I was more than usually depressed. The weather had been tempestuous, and I expected to find the Great Pacific billows dashing themselves in foam capped thundrous masses against the rocks. It would have been in keeping with the tumult of my mind. Instead, however, the great waters stretched away eastward in sublime tranquility; and I lay down on a little patch of grass upon the summit of one of the cliffs. It was a scene of perfect rest that lay before me, and its quietness stole into my heart and rebuked its disquietude, and I gave myself up to nature, for to all appearance we were there alone.

To my left was a long stretch of rugged beetling cliffs of rough brown rock. Against their shaggy sides, many and many a storm had beaten wrathfully, and many a well found vessel had been wrecked—wrecked at the very entrance headlands of the harbour. Some fisherboats were seemingly at anchor, half a mile or more from shore, moving up and down, and too and fro, with the swelling and falling of the water, which however never broke into a wave.

At a further distance a large clipper ship was being cast off by a tug boat. She had come down the harbour in the wake of a puffing little steamer with only her fore and aft sails set; but now she was shaking out her topsails, and although no sound was audible, they were evidently busy getting under way. The Guardian tug however kept beside her, and the two drifted slowly by, until she could be quite ready to take her own pathway on the sea.

The sun hung above the scene, as though enamoured of the glorious prospect of the sea and land-locked harbor he was loath to leave it, lest in his journey he might not look upon such a sight again. Nor could I wonder, for to lie there, and look out upon the great beyond, and drink in the fresh sea air, and scan occasionally the ever beautiful panorama of sea and shore, had become to me a

solace. Something which took me out of myself and my dark surroundings, and rekindled hope, and restored the even balance of my mind and placed a just and good God once again upon the throne. Thus I lay thinking when I heard a voice which seemed to come from below me. It was a voice which made my blood tingle in my veins to my very finger tips; for it spoke in familiar accents, a familiar name.

"Beatrice!"

# Chapter XI

## A Leaf Out of the Past.

How many men live with women,—wife, sister, mother,—and never understand them. To some extent it might be the same with all of us, but men, I think, are less difficult to read and know.

Woman's whole nature is cast in a finer mould than man's. There's a reason for it in the construction of her whole being and in the position natural to her in life. The shyness of a young girl's disposition—the drooping eyelash, the gentle sigh, the patient waiting to be sought, are the language not of affectation but nature, and in every beautiful and womanly woman there is a good deal of this remaining, even after marriage, or when culture, and travel, and society, have made them what we call, women of the world.

The voice I had heard was Violet's, and she evidently had Beatrice with her. I could see no one; but looking around I noticed to the right a narrow pathway, which, evidently led to one of the sheltered grassy nooks which are common on the cliffs. I listened intently and a moment afterwards heard Violet speak again.

"Beatrice child, don't go to sleep, sit nearer to me and listen. Yon ship is like a woman, little one; see, how gracefully it is built, and how it moves upon it's ocean pathway, as though compelling notice and admiration. There is a very long voyage before her; but with one true captain to rule and shape her course, she will haply reach the desired haven in peace. You won't understand me now, but you will some day, two lovers are as bad for a woman as are two captains for a ship. It ends in mutiny, of some sort, in both cases.

"Where is my own father now?" asked Beatrice, in a half sleepy indolent tone of voice, as though the asking of the question had aroused her from the languor of the afternoon.

"He is in Sydney, love, and I have seen him, but either he has not seen or has forgotten me. Your mother's life has not been a happy one, my child, and less happy still, since we came to Australia. I think everyone has some ordained place in life, but I always seem to get into the place for which nature never intended me. For years I have been dominated by a stronger will than my own, and that will, my child, was between me and your father. I did wrong ever to have married him,—three lives have been wrecked by it."

I listened, like one spell bound, she was opening her heart to the child as she had never done to me.

"That little steamer is returning now," said Beatrice.

The child had evidently quite woke up, and the sweet bell-like tones of her voice thrilled me again. My breast was torn by conflicting emotions. I had not forgiven the woman, but my feelings towards her changed, for through the death of her lover I felt as though in some way I owed her compensation, but I had no love or even pity for her,—but the child; my Beatrice! I could scarcely restrain myself from calling her by name.

But, Beatrice was now prattling away musically to her mother, who I imagined to be gazing with strained attention, on the movements of the ship—symbolical to her of her own life. She commenced presently to talk again. It was as I had imagined, her thoughts were still with that ship.

"It is a wonderful emblem of life," she said, "one is towed out of the harbour of one's early home. I did not want to marry; I was led into it by my parents and family, they said it was the right thing to do. I could not marry the man I loved and wanted; but I was expected to marry, another, and alas! how little fitted I was for it; like a ship towed out of a peaceful harbour, ill equipped and ill found, with two captains; no wonder that my poor heart mutinied, and that the ship has been wrecked."

"Beatrice child, you remember the sea is not always like this, it is peaceful, all smiles, and seemingly all gentleness; but it is a treacherous thing, it can roar and thunder, and overwhelm fair vessels in its wrath, and wreck them, and sport afterwards with the winds that shriek—Ah! Ah! above the sinking ship, and drowning crew. The sea is a cruel thing; and so is life. There's no pity in it. Ships go to sea with massive cables, and great anchors, and strong yards, and masts and ropes, and sails, to cope with circumstances, and fight the ocean in its stormy moods; and so women, before they are cast adrift, as it were, upon the ocean of married life, ought to be thoroughly prepared for it."

"Mother, while you have been talking the ship has passed nearly out of sight," said Beatrice.

I turned my eyes towards the horizon where the vessel was fast sinking in the distance. I almost pitied Violet as I watched the vanishing speck sinking below the horizon. So fair, so unprepared for change or storm, and with mutiny on board! So that was the way Violet, with me for a husband, had put out to sea!

"There is nothing changes a woman so much as love or marriage," she commenced again, unheeding the child's remark. "When I was your age, my pet, I had the happiest of homes. There were a lot of us, but we were a united family; I only knew what trouble was when, as a girl, I first commenced to love."

"Your father was a good man, except that he married me without love. He was the stronger of the two, and ought have known better than a girl, the almost inevitable consequences. Then when he found out my secret, man like, he flew to the opposite extreme and neglected me. He should have fought for me; he had money, and might have taken me away from all my dangerous surroundings, and if I had been out of reach of the other influences, I think that I would have been grateful, and he was a good man and in time I might have loved him, but now they are both gone, and we must love each other, child, and be as cheerful as we can."

I was cut to the heart by this simple recital of Violet's own story. It was true, no doubt, for there was no motive for deception; she could have no knowledge of

being overheard, nor did she know that De Vere was dead; at least there was no reason to suppose that she knew of it.

I felt strongly impelled to make myself known to them, and tell Violet of De Vere's death, and urge her to return with me to England. I had for the moment forgotten my withered face and white hair, and the existence of that thing. I groaned aloud in my anguish as I thought how completely I would be a stranger to my own child, and cursed De Vere's malignity.

"What is that, mother?" I heard Beatrice exclaim, in a startled tone of voice.

I did not wait to hear the answer, but rushed from the spot. "I must get back my own proper body first, if there is any power on earth by which it may be accomplished." I said this to myself over and over again; but it was little more than a frenzied wish. What reasonable chance had I of its fulfilment? Alas! practically none.

# Chapter XII

## The Doctor's Theory.

Much of my time during the next few weeks I passed alone. Men usually stand perplexed and alarmed before the mystery of death, and its surroundings. I sought death as a friend! To me it had no terror, for I hoped somehow to learn the inscrutable secret of resurrection. I poured over books dealing with these, and kindred subjects—Spiritualism, demonical possession, witchcraft.

I studied the scriptures, and read of the raising of Samuel by the witch of Endor, and mused upon what Paul, the holy apostle, said of being clothed upon with a house from heaven. But all things pertaining to death and resurrection, inscrutable as they are, even to philosophic minds, seemed simple and familiar to me, compared with the dark awful secret of my own life.

I remember specially meeting with the thing one day, just about this time.

I was standing near the Sydney General Post-office; when, in company with a fashionable man, I saw my own body walking into George street. I had seen myself in mirrors; but never before had I looked at myself upon the street. It was Mark Gunnery, and the step was firm, the head erect, and a devil-may-care swagger marked the stride.

"Good Heaven!" I thought, that such a thing could be possible.

Outwardly they were both well dressed gentlemanly men. They raised their glossy silk hats as two stylish women passed them, who smiled and bowed. The two were smoking cigars, and as they crossed over, Gunnery flourished his cane. They passed me near one of the pillars of the building, and I heard them jest coarsely to each other, about the women.

I felt stung to madness, as when one sees a thief flaunting about in some valuable stolen garment.

"The infernal shame of it!" I groaned in agony that a demon should be thus able to possess himself of the body of another—and that other still a living man!

In desperation I broke through my reserve and consulted a physician, who was just then much talked about. It seemed to me from the first a very singular interview. I will endeavour to describe the whole matter just as it occurred.

The street he resided in was retired and of a severely respectable character. Burnished bell-pulls and brass plates were numerous in this street. At the door of a large and somewhat pretentious house I found myself early one morning.

On gaining admission I was ushered by a servant into a large well furnished apartment, to wait.

I say to wait, for it is part of a doctors method in Australia to keep patients seated in a waiting room for some time before being admitted to professional interview. It cools them if they are heated, reduces temperature and pulse to normal condition, and generally quietens them for the interview.

I must have waited in that wretched room fully half-an-hour—probably while the doctor had his bath, and smoked his cigar, or ate his breakfast. At last I was admitted.

The doctor, to my astonishment, turned out to be a man I had met with on the continent; one who knew and had been friendly with De Vere.

How small a place the world is, at any rate in these days. There seems to be no odd, out of the way, towns and cities now, such as there used to be. You bury yourself in the heart of a continent, and find that your nearest neighbour is a man from the next country, or possibly some distant relation.

I shrank back for a moment; but then remembered that he could not recognise me, and yet what did it matter, his knowledge of De Vere and possibly of Violet and myself might be an assistance.

He was a tall spare man with grey eyes and thin brown hair. He regarded me for a moment as though in doubt. I had no introduction; but I had something better, so I drew out a five pound note, and placed it upon the table.

"I wish, sir, to have your professional advice," I said.

"I have not the pleasure of your name, sir," he replied, carelessly brushing the note on one side—the side farthest from me—as though he had not noticed it.

"My name is Mark Gunnery," I replied.

"Take a chair," he said, at which he sat down in his own chair, which I noticed was so arranged that the light shone full in my face, while he remained in the shade. By this means he could perceive every change of feature in a visitor's face, and himself remain unobserved.

"I know Mr. Gunnery of Church Consett Hall, England, who is staying at the Golden Gate hotel. Are you related to him?" He said this very quietly, and my face doubtless revealed my surprise. What was the use of telling this man my story, he would think me insane or untruthful.

"My name is Mark Gunnery," I said emphatically, "and the thing you refer to is a devil from hell, that has usurped my body."

He rose at once, and picked up my five pound note and reached it over to me—I thought somewhat reluctantly—and said: "You had better take this to Dr. Blank, sir, you will find him better able to advise you than I can."

He had named a doctor for the insane!

"Don't be hasty, Doctor," I said, pushing the note back again. "I am not a madman. You remember that duel at Alcona?"

He started as I mentioned this, and turned pale, for he had killed this man. "Your Mark Gunnery never told you of that, or that Horace De Vere was dead," I continued.

"Sit down again," he said wiping the perspiration from his face, "whoever you are, I will listen to your story, if you will be brief."

I told him everything from the the time of my marriage with Violet to then; it was a long story, and I heard ring after ring at the door bell, and I guessed there must be a crowd of patients waiting; but I held him with a fascinated attention, which surprised even myself.

"Mr. Gunnery," he said when I had done, "are you sure that you are not mad?"

"Certain!" I replied.

"Can you describe the nature of the shock which you say De Vere gave you in Melbourne?"

"It was like a galvanic shock," I answered.

"Were you perfectly unconscious the whole time?" he asked.

"Not altogether so, at first," I said, "but I was powerless to move. I had a feeling as though my body were melting away from me, with a sound like flowing water."

I saw him start as I said this.

"That is all you remember until you came back to consciousness?"

"Call and see me again, about the same time to-morrow morning," he said, "I have a number of patients waiting for me, and I will think over your remarkable story."

I left, feeling satisfied that he had some idea in his mind, but wanted an opportunity to more closely observe my double. At any rate I had partially persuaded him as to the genuineness of my story.

The following morning I kept my appointment punctually, and this time was not asked to wait. The doctor met me with evident interest, and in a state of some excitement.

"Come in," he said rising as I entered.

He waited until the servant had gone out, and then abruptly asked, "did you feel any peculiar sensation at any time after seeing me yesterday?"

"I did," I replied.

"At what time?"

"At ten minutes to five o'clock," I answered.

"Describe to me the sensation," he said.

"It was as though a hot iron was passed from my temple down the right side of my face and jaw," I answered.

"Any other sensation?" interrogated the doctor.

"A feeling of exhaustion, faintness, and as though I must fall asleep."

The doctor at this made some memoranda in a note book, and I heard him say to himself, "It is certainly very remarkable."

"Mr. Gunnery," he said suddenly facing around upon me, "I want you to keep away from your relative,"—he said this with some hesitation as though he scarcely knew how to rightly designate my double.

"Keep away from him as much us possible for the next few days. I cannot now tell you what I think of your very singular case, or of certain remarkable phenomena, which I ascribe to natural causes, which have come to my knowledge.

I have a theory as to your case; but I want a further data to go upon, which I hope to obtain during the next few days. You may rely upon my professional assistance to the utmost of my power. Your idea of the supernatural as it relates to Mr. Gunnery of the Golden Gate Hotel, I believe to be altogether mistaken. But I think it possible that we are upon the threshold of a great discovery."

This was all that I could induce him to say, and I went away, restless, dissatisfied, and thoroughly mystified. He would say nothing about my chances of regaining possession of my proper body. In fact while he theorised, and set forth suppositions, and aroused my curiosity and hope, he gave me no information, nor explanation of the remarkable sensation I had experienced, of which he seemed to have some knowledge.

That evening, for want of something better to do I wandered into the Free Public Library, and happened upon a book on Physicology, dealing with the terms Soul, Spirit, Life, etc., viewed in their bearing on the doctrine of Resurrection. The distinction of Spirit, Soul, and Body, the author stated, was clearly recognised in the ancient philosophies, and was familiar among the fathers of the Christian church. A quotation, from Irenoeus specially clung to my memory: There are three of which the perfect man consists, flesh, soul, spirit; the one, the Spirit giving figure; the other, flesh, being formed. That, indeed, which is between the two, is the soul, which sometimes following the spirit is raised by it, sometimes consenting to the flesh, falls.

"Was it possible," I thought, for the spirit of a man to be divorced from his soul and body, and for it (the spirit) to be incarnated in another body? Was this, or something similar to this, the Doctor's theory?

I had accidently stumbled upon a great physiological fact, viz. That the spirit is to the soul, what the soul is to the body.

# Chapter XIII

## Violet Again.

I have for evident reasons refrained from mentioning the doctor's name. He is still successfully practising his profession in Sydney, and what follows as well as what has already been said about the duel at Ancona, might prejudice him in the eyes of the public. I say this because it has occurred to me that this manuscript may be found after my death, and its contents made public, and I should be loath to injure in any way one whom I have cause to respect and be grateful to, and whom I esteem in my heart as a truly worthy and courageous man. With the scientific views that he held, and my permission, he is I believe wholly absolved from blame in regard to what follows. And I say this the more freely in view of the results of his experiments as the unfortunately affected myself.

But I must proceed with my story.

The thought which had now taken possession of my mind at first staggered me. I recalled the doctor's words, "Your idea of the supernatural, as it relates to Mr.

Gunnery of the Golden Gate Hotel, I believe to be altogether mistaken; but I think it possible that we are upon the threshold of a great discovery."

What did he mean? Was it that the Gunnery who had become such a horror in my life was myself? My soul and body, but without my psyche, the Spirit, which alone makes man to differ from the brute creation? The words of Irenus passed and repassed through my mind. "Between these two (the spirit and the body) is the soul, which sometimes following the spirit is raised by it; and sometimes consenting to the flesh, falls." In that case, I thought, What am I? I began to analyse my thoughts and inner consciousness. Could it be possible that I was merely a spirit in a body, without a human soul. I thought about it until my fleshly frame was shaken with the vehemence of my feelings and conjectures. There was only one source of relief for me.

I must again see the doctor.

He greeted me gravely, and listened with interest to what I had to say. I could see by his face that I had a clue to the bent of his thoughts. In fact without actually admitting it, he allowed me to see that I had correctly surmised his theory.

It was in a word this: that by some mysterious power De Vere had unknowingly brought about a severance of the spirit of Mark Gunnery from his human soul and body; that my other self, dwelling at the Golden Gate Hotel, was the animal body and human soul of Mark Gunnery; but the masterpower, the spirit, the pneuma, was in some mysterious, manner united to another aged body. But here, too, I was perplexed, for the strong muscular frame which I possessed was scarcely in keeping with my white hair and wrinkled face.

"Sit down," said the doctor, pointing to large padded operating chair. "Make yourself quite comfortable. I may want to make an experiment. But first answer me one or two questions."

"Do you remark any change in your mental and emotional sensations since your illness in Melbourne?"

"Yes," I replied after a few minutes thought.

"As you best can, explain or describe them to me," said the doctor.

This was a matter of some difficulty, for one may be conscious of mental and emotional changes, which it is very difficult to explain in words. At last I said, "there seems now to be a missing link, as it were, between the thought of my mind, and the action of my body. When my mind is highly excited, I feel my body to be full of nervous force and muscular power; but, unless so excited, it seems as though the connection between thought and action were weak. I feel myself to be deficient, in the softer and gentler emotions of the mind, I am easily angered but never sorrowful, I brood over my state; but the feeling is more one of indignation than regret. I have little desire for the company of my fellows, such as I once had; but pride, hatred, and a burning desire to secure my purpose, and get back my own body at any cost, possesses me. I cannot explain it Doctor," I said with some vehemence, "nor can you understand it, but I long to be back in my own form, with a desire which neither love, nor woman, nor any other passion, ever created in me before. I would die to secure it."

The doctor at this paced up and down the room, in deep thought. "Mark Gunnery," he said at last, "will you place yourself wholly in my hands, and absolve

me from all blame, if I endeavour to make an experiment in the interests of science—one which will for a time, at any rate, give you your desire?"

"Most willingly doctor," I answered.

"It will be a great risk," he said.

"Doctor," I cried, "If by any power you can reunite me, if only for an hour, to my other self, I will absolve you from all blame, even should death be the penalty. My best friend," I pleaded, "don't trifle with me. If you have the knowledge, and the power, use it, exert it, I beseech you, in my behalf."

He looked very grave and seemed still to hesitate; but I continued to urge him. "If I can do it," he said looking at his watch, "it must not be for more than an hour."

At this he rose and rang the bell. "See that I am not disturbed, for one full hour from the present time; it is now ten minutes to eleven," he said to the servant.

As the servant closed the door, he turned upon me like a man transformed. His eyes fairly glistened, and his hair seemed to move slightly up and down of its own accord, as though surcharged with electricity.

"Mark Gunnery," he said, lifting his hand above my head. "Sleep!" Again he moved his hand, "Sleep!" he said.

I felt my whole body growing rigid, then a tingling sensation crept over every limb, and a sense of death like, but peaceful slumber followed.

"Mark Gunnery you are now wholly at my command?"

"Speak!" he cried, impatiently.

"I am wholly at your command," I repeated, mechanically, for I was no longer master of my own words.

"Search the room for the Golden Gate Hotel, and find whether your other self is there," he said.

The sensation which followed these words, it is impossible for me to describe. It was as my whole being was suddenly changed into a thousand eyes. I could see every where and everything. "He is in his own room dressing to go out," I said.

"For one hour," said the doctor solemnly, "and only for one hour I permit and command you to take possession of that which is your own. Go! but at the appointed time, I will, that you return."

As the last words fell from the Doctor's lips the surgery vanished, and I was again consciously my former self.

I sat down for a moment on a chair in front of my dressing table, and looked thoughtfully at myself. I had no special sense of surprise at the change. There was only one thing which seemed to bind me to the old fearful past. I felt as though a thread of some kind held me near the heart. I tried to brush it off with my hands, but it was useless. I arose and bathed my face in water; but although I could see and feel nothing with my hands it was there, reminding me that I was only where I was, by permission. The other end of that thread, I knew, was fastened to a seemingly inanimate corpse which leaned back in an operating chair in the Doctor's, surgery in W——Street. By means of that thread of sympathy the Doctor could at any moment communicate with me, and I was conscious that he was commanding me to make the best of the short opportunity he had given me.

At that moment I remembered that in another quarter of an hour I had an appointment to meet my wife and child. I need scarcely explain that it had been

made the previous day by my other self. I felt ashamed and disgusted with myself, for about the same moment I found out that I had been drunk the night before, or rather that my soul and body had been.

For five minutes, I had one of the strangest feelings which probably ever fell to the lot of man, I took my own soul and body in hand a bit, and let them know that the master had come back.

"Mark Gunnery, you drunken fool," I cried indignantly, "how dare you make such an ass of yourself," and at this once again I felt sorry and well nigh shed tears over my own unworthy degradation. "Never do this again Mark Gunnery," I said. "I shall sign the pledge for you this very day, and don't you care to break it, or get into any other abominable wickedness."

I completed a careful toilet hurriedly, and during the time recalled a thousand things which had been unknown to me before.

I passed down into the vestibule, and surveyed myself with intense satisfaction in a mirror I found there. I was again Mark Gunnery, as of old. My other self's companions came up just then and slapped me on the back.

"You're a regular buck this morning Gunnery—what's in the wind—come and have a soda and brandy, and a game of billiards."

"No, thank you, old man," I answered somewhat coolly.

"You won't," he said with an oath, eyeing me with evident astonishment, as he no doubt remarked a change in me. "What has come over you—going to join the Salvation Army?" This he said with another foul expression.

I looked at the great blustering cowardly rou, and all the passion of outraged manhood that was left in me, seemed to spring up suddenly with over-mastering power; this was one of the men who had enticed my wretched soul and body perdition-ward. I lifted my clenched fist—and a whole tempest of passionate indignation gave strength and aim to the blow—and smote him fair between the eyes, and felled him to the ground.

I heard shouts behind me as I stepped outside, and jumped into my cab, which stood waiting.

"Drive quickly," I said to the man. "Snowden Villa, Darlingford."

Ten minutes afterwards I was in a pleasant drawing room with one arm round Beatrice, and my free hand clasped in the hand of Violet. Good Heaven! I could have forgiven anything, I could have loved anyone! I was so filled with delight at being once again my own self.

"Mark," said Violet, great tears in her eyes, "I feel happier to-day than I have been for many years. I have been far from a good wife to you; but you can never know the powerful spell that has been around and over me. You know that I loved Horace De Vere," she continued, "before I knew or married you."

I had no wish, and no time to chide her, half of my precious hour had already gone.

"Violet," I said quietly, "Horace De Vere is dead."

"I am not surprised to hear it," she said calmly. "I have felt for nearly a month past that something had happened to him. But why don't you upbraid me, and say what you must feel in your heart, at my having deserted you."

She was now sitting on a chair near me, her face covered with her hands. But my arm was still around Beatrice, who stood between my knees, and seemed to cling strangely to me.

"Violet," I said hurriedly, "I forgive you from my soul; I heard all that you said to Beatrice the other day on the cliffs. I ought to have fought for you, but instead of that I let you drift out to sea, poor soul, with mutiny on board. Dry your tears and let me talk to you. My time is most precious; but you cannot understand the awful thing De Vere did to me. I cannot, I dare not tell you!"

I saw her wince under my words, and know that she altogether misunderstood me, so I hastened to say "you are only indirectly concerned in it, however. It was something which he did to me personally that I refer to."

I saw Violet look at me as I caressed and fondled Beatrice; the child had evidently not forgotten me, and her pleasure at again being with her father filled me with unmixed delight. I bent down and kissed the child's hair, and felt more like a lover than a father.

"Mark," said Violet quietly, "you are wonderfully changed since yesterday, you are not like the same person."

"Violet! Beatrice!" I exclaimed excitedly, "let me explain an awful secret to you," and I looked at my watch and saw that in another few minutes my hour would have expired; indeed I already seemed to hear the Doctor calling me from his surgery.

"De Vere by some accursed art has divorced my spirit from my soul and body; the Gunnery you met with before was only a part of me—and—" at that I felt the tugging at my heart again; and the Doctor's peremptory voice commanded my return.

My last look out of my staring eyes, revealed to me the shrinking forms of my terrified wife and child. Then for a moment I heard a knocking at the outer door—then hurried steps, and a voice, asking where is he? He's killed a man—and then unconsciousness.

# Chapter XIV

## I Meditate Suicide.

THE period of unconsciousness must have been brief. Probably it only lasted during the moment or two in which the doctor's influence recalled me from Snowdon Villa back to the surgery.

Then as in a confused mist, I looked at the inanimate white-headed form which lay back in the operating chair, and I was immediately conscious of a revulsion of feeling. I seemed to struggle against the doctor's efforts to reanimate that body. For my young ardent spirit to be again incarcerated in such a form was most repulsive to me.

But I saw just then great drops of sweat standing thickly upon the doctor's face, as in a perfect agony of excitement and fear, he labored to reanimate the

seemingly lifeless clay. Surely it was base ingratitude! and at the thought I resisted no longer, and immediately the white-faced man in the chair sighed.

At the doctor's command I then struggled to open the closed eyelids, and in the effort lost all my sense of a separate existence.

I was oppressed with pain now; a tremor shook me, and I sighed a second time, and then felt the doctor making fresh upward passes on me, and afterward applying a restorative to my lips. He then fanned my face, at which I again opened my eyes, and breathed heavily.

"Thank God!" I heard him ejaculate devoutly.

He sat down on a chair and looked at me and I think that of the two he must have been the whitest.

Then he took my hand to feel my pulse.

"Are you all right, Gunnery, now?" he asked.

"Yes, doctor, thank you?" I replied.

"You have had a narrow squeak," he said. "I thought at one time I would hardly bring you too again."

"It never occurred to me that the absence of a human soul would be so perilous to the body during the clairvoyant state. I have had to keep up respiration and heart action by artificial means during the whole time. I never ought to have made such an experiment."

I was naturally very much exhausted, and could at first say very little in reply. He saw this and gave me some brandy, and then half carried me to a couch, and assisted me to lie down, covering me over with a rug.

"You had better sleep for half-an-hour," he said.

I found on waking that I had slept for several hours, and was quite restored. The doctor had been out, but had returned again.

He invited me into his dining room, where I found dinner laid for four. He then introduced me to his wife and daughter as Mr. Vernon, and we talked upon general subjects. After dinner he asked me into his study for a cigar and a chat.

"You feel quite yourself again now, do you not?" he commenced.

"No, I don't feel that I am myself;" I replied. "I feel that I am John Vernon again, worse luck!"

"Ah! Of course, that's what I mean," said the doctor.

"Now, it won't excite you over much, will it, to talk of what has transpired to-day," he continued.

"I don't think so," I replied.

"Have you any recollection," he asked, "of what happened while you were clairvoyant?"

"My memory is not so clear as I could wish it to be, but I have a recollection, and I feel it to be growing more distinct, as I endeavour to recall the incidents of the day," I answered.

"You know that in ordinary cases of mesmeric sleep there is no recollection whatever on the part of the patient?" he said, looking at me anxiously.

"Yes," I answered.

"What is particularly impressed, upon you as having happened?" he asked.

"I remember seeing my wife and child," I answered; "and I have a faint recollection of someone having said that I had killed a man."

I saw the doctor start as I said this; but he smoked for fully half a minute before he answered me.

"Yours is the most extraordinary case I ever met with or heard of," he said at last. "What you dimly recollect is perfectly true. A man was killed in a fracas in the vestibule of the Golden Gate hotel, and your other self has been arrested by the police and is now in prison charged with murder or manslaughter."

I was not so much shocked by this announcement as might have been expected, for mentally I was still somewhat confused, and while the doctor had been speaking, my mind was struggling to recall the events of the day. It was only afterward that they impressed themselves vividly upon my mind, and I became fully aware of the seriousness of the position. I was shocked and grieved, however, as memory, assisted by the doctor's story, brought back the facts to me. The hand of my other self had struck the blow; but it was by my will and direction.

"Don't you feel sorry for what has occurred?" said the doctor, looking me full in the face with a somewhat stern expression.

"No, I cannot say that I exactly feel sorry, but I realise that it was a mistake, and were it possible, I would recall the blow and its consequences. I may feel it more keenly to-morrow; now I feel almost stunned by what has happened. If, however, you think I am responsible, Doctor, mesmerise me, and let me again take possession of my own self, and remain there, and let this body die."

"And what should I do with the corpse of John Vernon?" asked the Doctor.

"No, sir," he said without giving me time to reply, "I will do nothing of the sort. I have more compunction about killing people than you seem to have. Don't you think we had better go up to the gaol, and see if it is not possible to bail your relative out."

I could not bring myself to this, however, the idea of meeting the thing again that day, was repulsive to me. My brain was in a whirl, the events of the morning were rapidly imprinting themselves upon my memory with most vivid distinctness. I afterwards recalled the very pattern of the carpet in Violet's drawing room. I could see the face of Vaughan Stockton immediately after the blow. Not one thing which had transpired during my possession of my other self escaped me—Violet's words, her tears, the tremor of her voice, and Beatrice—everything was vividly remembered.

The doctor's offer to find bail was not accepted; and I returned to my Chamber in Temple Court, with my hopes dashed to the ground, and with a sense of fresh guilt and increased responsibility upon me. It was not that poor wretched thing in gaol which struck the blow. It was only the instrument of my passionate temper. If murder it was, I was the murderer.

I lay awake half the night and seriously contemplated suicide, as the only means of unravelling the tangled skein of my most unfortunate and mysterious existence.

I could see that it would be a hopeless task to try and persuade the doctor to again exert his power in my behalf. I was confronted too with an unforseen difficulty. I found myself unable to act upon impulse: and I felt a singular repugnance to taking my own life, I would have thanked another for doing it, but shrank from the act myself.

I did not at this time trouble about Gunnery, except as something in which I had a kind of personal possession. I knew now, however depraved the thing had been, it was merely the uncontrolled and debased instincts of my lower nature run wild; and that there could be no more responsibility or accountability than in the case of a derelict floating upon the ocean without a captain, in charge, possibly or an imbecile crew.

I sought the doctor early next morning with anxious and haggard face, and we debated the strange position of things long and earnestly.

He upraided me for not having controlled myself better on the previous day, and strongly refused to make any further experiment.

"It is too dangerous," he said. "Besides it is plain that you are not to be trusted. Good heavens! you would implicate me, and I should be ruined—perhaps hanged."

"What is to be done then?" I asked.

"First of all I think that we had better both of us visit him; something may suggest itself. Besides you must remember that an animal with a soul has instincts, and reason and feeling, and the thing as you call it, is a part of yourself—and you have no knowledge whatever of the extent of the suffering you may experience should your relative be hanged. Do you remember the pain you had the afternoon you first consulted me about your case?"

"I do," I replied, and I shuddered at the recollection.

"That was merely through my having drawn a tooth from your other self's jaw. I fear you will have to prepare yourself for some great suffering—possibly death—should your relative be hanged."

This was a new idea to me, and I felt greatly disconcerted. Not that I feared death, but I shrank from the thought of the ignomy, the disgrace, and the pain, which it must inflict upon both myself, and Violet, and Beatrice. I was greatly moved, and determined to accept the doctor's suggestion and go with him to the prisoner. It proved to be a melancholy and unsatisfactory mission.

# Chapter XV

## A Great Discovery.

FOR the sake of clearness it will be better for me to continue to refer to my other self as Gunnery.

I wanted the Doctor to go with me at once to visit the prisoner, for having come to this decision, I was impatient to carry it out, without further loss of time. A desire had come over me to look intelligently at my physical body and human soul from without.

Previously I had regarded my body as in the occupation of a demon. Now I was persuaded that it was simply a human derelict, cast adrift upon the ocean of life without spiritual guidance. Handed over as it were to animalism to become earthly, sensual, and devilish, for the lack of the divine essence which comes from, and returns to, Him who gave it.

The Doctor, however, could not visit Gunnery with me that day for many patients were awaiting him. He urged me to go alone and see him, but this I was disinclined to do; so he arranged to go with me on the following day.

I knew that he wished to be rid of me; but I was afraid of myself, and dreaded now to be left alone; so to please me he suggested that I should accompany him in his gig, and return with him to dinner, after he had visited certain patients.

I began now to realise that my case had so taken hold of the Doctor, that its investigation was absorbing his almost every thought. He commenced talking as soon as we started, and we resumed the conversation after each visit he paid, as though nothing else was worthy or a thought.

"I never did believe in the efficacy of what people call spiritualism," commenced the Doctor, "your case appears to me simply an illustration of the marvellous possibilities of man's complex nature."

"I believe there are thousands of people in the world," he continued impressively, "no better, and no worse, and no more accountable for their actions, than is Gunnery in the gaol yonder. Do you remember how St. Paul prayed that the spirit, the soul, the body, of some of his converts might be kept blameless. It's the spirit, the 'pneuma,' that makes men to differ from one another; but heaven only knows how many of the men and women we meet with have one."

I listened to him in amazement. Could it be that of the men and women around us, many had no spiritual aspirations, no heavenward longing?

The Doctor evidently read my thoughts.

"You see Mark Gunnery, I can talk to you about this, because I know my words are not being thrown away upon a mere soul. I can recognise the psyche in some people by their eyes; but yours is the first case in which I have been able to actually demonstrate its existence apart from the soul as a fact. I would give ten years of my life," he exclaimed vehemently, "if I could prove it before an audience of scientific men. Why if it could only be made an absolute certainty, it would change the whole of our system of jurisprudence, and give the key to solve some of the worst social problems which now perplex and sadden the nobler men and women of the race."

The last remarks seem to hold out a hope to me, and I eagerly took hold of it.

"Doctor, why do you not make use of Gunnery and myself to demonstrate the truth of it?" I said. But my question was unnoticed.

"Yes," he continued stroking the horse with the whip, and speaking more to himself than to me, "they talk about setting a trap to catch a sunbeam; but De Vere has somehow managed to catch a man's spirit, and confine it in a body, which that spirit has actually quickened into life."

"Do you know," he said turning around and looking fixedly at me, "you are the scientific marvel of the age! And yet I dare not make use of my knowledge."

"What do you mean?" I asked, startled by his appearance.

"I mean," he said, "that through your case I have learnt the secret of bringing a dead body to life again—but nothing is accomplished in this world without sacrifice, and in every such case the miracle of resurrection would mean the loss of the pneuma by some living man."

My very hair bristled with horror and astonishment. I grasped what he meant. He would multiply similar cases to my own, and in doing so launch other spiritless men and women, like Gunnery, upon the world. He again read my thoughts.

"What would a few more or less matter," he said, "there are thousands of them around us as it is. Besides, see what a solace it would be to thousands, what mourners might be comforted, what tears dried, what blighted hopes restored again; and think too," he said, lowering his voice almost to a whisper, "think too, what I should be—a physician? Nay! I should be a King, the lord of death and life; the thought of it is marvellous!"

I began now to fear this man, and yet I clung to him, for he was my only hope; and after all, the suggestion he had thrown out was purely scientific, and only fearful because so new and strange. If instead of being imprisoned in an aged form, I had been united by De Vere's mishap to a more youthful body, I might have been less dissatisfied with my lot.

I looked at the Doctor again, his eyes were glistening, and I noticed the same strange throbbing movement in his hair, he was evidently powerfully affected.

He now drew up the horse at the entrance gateway of a handsome residence, and handing me the reins stepped from the gig without a word.

I sat there patiently for fully half an hour, pondering over the doctor's words, when my mind became absorbed with a project of which I shall have more to say presently.

The afternoon sun shone hotly overhead; some well dressed children in an adjoining garden laughed loudly as they sportively chased each other on a grassy lawn. How light-hearted they were? How little they thought of the storm and stress of the life which lay before them. Alas! that we could not always remain children; or at any rate retain the child heart, which loves and trusts, and laughs and sings, and even when it weeps sheds tears, which flashing, tell of summer sunshine in the life, as well as summer rain.

Suddenly, however, my thoughts were broken in upon by the appearance of a man servant who touched his cap to me, and betraying evident concern, said:—

"Sir, the doctor wishes to consult with you, and has asked me to remain with the horse and gig. One of the maids awaits you in the hall, and will show you to the room where the doctor is with the young mistress. Alas, her sister is dead."

I stepped out of the vehicle and passed along a well-kept gravel pathway to the entrance hall, wondering the while why I should be called in for consultation; but the thought suddenly flashed into my mind, that I was wanted because the doctor was about to use his newly acquired knowledge, and make his first original experiment.

That, in a word, he was about to attempt to bring the dead to life again, and in doing so, turn adrift upon society another derelict, similar to the Gunnery of the Golden Gate Hotel! I passed into the mansion like one stunned. It was too terrible!

The servant took my hat and stick from me in the hall, and I followed her into the chamber of death, like a man walking in a dream.

# Chapter XVI

## Quickening the Dead.

Entering unnoticed, for the thick carpet deadened every sound, I saw that the Doctor was in a state of intense but suppressed excitement. The room was a large one, and richly furnished. Silken hangings draped the lofty windows, and mirrors flashed from the walls. It was evidently a home of luxury; but alas! wealth had failed to keep out the presence of death. The Doctor stood beside a bed, of costly workmanship, which occupied the centre of the apartment, his arms folded as he gazed intently upon the dead.

While I had been watching the children outside in the sunshine, he had been grappling with the Skeleton King for a Life, and Death had been victorious.

It was a face of rare beauty which lay so white and still upon the pillow. A girl of eighteen, and with no sign of a long illness in the cheeks or upon the brow; her beautiful golden hued hair had been confined; but a stray lock had broken away, and curled lovingly around her shell-like ear and soft round cheek, from which the bloom of youth had not yet departed.

A nurse was just bending over the corpse, with two golden coins in her hands, to lay upon the lifeless eye balls, and close them down for ever.

"No nurse, not yet!" The voice of the Doctor was that of a man in pain, and the woman evidently marked the strange inflexion, for she drew back hurriedly.

At the same moment I noticed kneeling by the bedside another youthful figure, the fair young head bowed down in grief, just such hair, and such a head as that which lay so still upon the pillow. They were sisters—only sisters—and nearly of the same age. At this moment the Doctor saw me. He gave me a glance of recognition.

"Nurse," he said, "here is Mr. Vernon, who will now render me any assistance which with Miss Mabel's help, I may need. I am of opinion that life is not entirely extinct. I wish you to go and attend to Mrs. Chesterfield, for whom I am much concerned. Tell her that I have called in an assistant, and that we are going to try artificial respiration for half an hour, and that she must not yet regard the case as altogether hopeless. Ask one of the maids to wait outside the door, within immediate call, and I will send for you at once if I need you."

I could see that he wanted us to be alone.

When she had left the room, he at once locked the door, and without speaking to me, turned to the bereaved sister.

"Miss Mabel," he said, "there is still some hope; but as you love your sister, I beg of you to endeavour to be calm. Very much will depend now upon you. I am about to make a final attempt. It will mean hopeless death for your sister if I fail; but If I succeed it will be her restoration."

Seldom have I remarked such a change as these few words worked in Mabel Chesterfield. She raised herself from the ground with eager earnest eyes.

"Doctor!" she exclaimed. "I will be perfectly calm and composed, and will do anything to assist you, if there is the slightest hope. Tell me Doctor!" she said imploringly, "is it possible that my sister is not dead, that there is still hope?"

The Doctor again reassured her; but I knew—as he did—that the recovery which he referred to was altogether different to that which this eager girl expected. Alas! it was to be resuscitation at the expense of this sweet girl's spirit. And yet the experiment was magnificent if awful, and offered compensation in this case, which possibly could scarcely under any other circumstances be equalled.

"Will you kindly rest in this easy chair while Mr. Vernon attends me," said the Doctor, "we will call you when you can be of any assistance. Let me feel your pulse."

"Ah! just a little excitement; let me make a pass or two over you to quieten your nerves. There now, you feel better. You might go to sleep for a few minutes if you can."

I saw that the girl was perfectly passive in his hands, and in a few minutes he had cast her into a deep mesmeric sleep. When he saw this, he turned around to me almost savagely:—

"Mark Gunnery, it is you who have taught me this; but what shall I do if it fails?"

I shall never forget the plaintive upraining of these words. It was a crisis in the doctor's life, one of those hours which turn men's hair white, and put marks, not only upon the body, but upon the mind and soul, the last eternally. I knew just how the Doctor felt, for had I not myself troden a very similar pathway? On either side of him in that still room there towered the mountains, awe inspiring and unscalable; in front of him burned the luring beacon-light of hope; but to attain his purpose, he must pass alone through the valley of the shadow—with death on every side of him—a path which few tread without mental agony and lacerated feet. How little do the great crowds of the passionate heart-throbs, and sacrifices and soul-risks, through which daring scientific explorers have won from nature, secrets that have enriched the world.

By saying this I am not committing myself to any full approval of the Doctor's actions in the case referred to. I believe him to be devoted to his profession—a scientific enthusiast—and I am persuaded that he honestly believed that in this case the end justified the means. My desire is to narrate facts, rather than analyse motives.

He now turned his attention again to the body of the dead girl. He bared her bosom, and laid his ear above her heart. There was neither breath nor life. He gently chafed the flesh, and filled the lungs of the corpse with his own breath.

"Put another pillow beneath the head," he said to me.

"Now you stand and watch, and touch the lips occasionally with this cordial. Tell me immediately of any change you may remark—even the slightest."

He went back once more to the other sister, and there, with my back to the Doctor and the living sister, I watched the dead, and listened.

"You are still asleep, Mabel," I heard him say.

"Yes, Doctor," she answered.

"Are you strong enough to go and help Gertrude to recover?" he said.

"I feel as though I could do anything doctor which you wished, and which you helped me to do."

"Are you stronger now?" he presently asked; and the tremor of his voice told me of the strain under which he was operating.

"Yes," was the faint response.

"Go then to your sister's body, possess it and remain there, to sustain it in life during my pleasure! Do you hear me, Mabel?"

A sigh escaped from the lips of the entranced girl. Then I heard her say, "I want to do it doctor, but the heart is not beating, the body of Gertrude is cold and lifeless. I am trying doctor—be patient with me—it is so very hard."

"Put the cordial to the lips,"' said the doctor to me, "chafe the arms again, and rub the palms of the hands."

I was too much engrossed with my task to turn around to look at him, but the tone of his voice told me of his agony.

No doubt the singular constitution of my own being prevented the horror of the thing being fully realised by myself; but I was startled for a moment afterward, for I heard the doctor again commanding the spirit of Mabel to take possession of her sister's body, and at that moment the corpse whose hands chafed—sighed!

"Doctor, don't urge me any more or I shall die," was the next thing I heard said behind me.

I chafed the arms and hands and feet with fresh energy, for now the eyes had lost their stony vacant stare, and turning my head, I saw the doctor beside me. His face was suffused with perspiration. "Get me that smelling bottle," he said.

I realised at that moment his frightful position, as a physician. He was staking everything upon this experiment. It was a question not of one life, but of two.

He made a few passes above the reviving body of Gertrude. "Sleep!" he said "Sleep!—Sleep!"

"Lift the girl gently up," he said, "and place her upon that couch. Put that eiderdown coverlet around her. Tell the servant maid outside to have my horse put into the stable for a few hours. And also to bring something to the door for us to eat. They must both sleep until the changed conditions of their bodies become normal. Be careful to lock the door; no one must, at present, come in."

Half an hour afterwards the two young girls were calmly sleeping, their breathing being in each case natural, and distinctly heard in the room, and the news soon spread through the house that Miss Mabel was ill, through the shock at her sister's supposed death, but that Miss Gertrude was recovering. The secret of that resuscitation was known to no one, except myself and the doctor. The strain upon him must have been almost at the breaking point.

"I have done it," he said to me excitedly, "I have demonstrated it is an actual possible fact, that the spirit of one person may possess, and give life to the dead body of another; but it is a step in the dark; a scientific exploration of nature's secrets which as yet we are altogether unprepared for. It is my first, and it will be my last experiment in reincarnation."

My whole feeling was one of horrified amazement; they were asleep now; but what of their awakening!

# Chapter XVII

## „As Through a Glass, Darkly."

Let a hidden thing be but once discovered, and how it stares at us. We marvel then that when we did not see it before. There is absolutely no escaping it, and we upbraid ourselves for lack of shrewdness and sagacity, that it was not at once distinguished. This was my feeling now in regard to my other self. The absurd idea which I had held, that my physical body was possessed by a demon, had completely vanished, and the more I thought of the poor thing, away there in prison, the more I pitied it—and myself too. My anger burned less even against De Vere. There was after all no devilry in the matter. As he had put it when sinking to his death in the Queensland Quicksand; it was not sorcery, but simply his larger knowledge of Nature's secrets which gave to him seemingly supernatural power.

De Vere however only knew in part—like others. The effect of his assault on me, he could only have very partially understood, or he would at once have recognised me when we met again in Queensland.

Such thoughts as these passed through my mind, as I watched alone in that hushed chamber with the two sleeping girls. "But were they now two girls?" I thought; and I was startled by the thought.

I should say that the Doctor had left me alone with them for a while, to visit the mother upstairs, and speak with the nurse. He had been with them for an hour, but both patients were now sound asleep. I watched them closely one after the other, it seemed to me that it was not exactly the sleep of health.

The colour had partially returned to Gertrude's cheeks, but it seemed more like a swoon than the restful sleep of youth.

While thus watching them closely, during the Doctor's absence, it would be difficult to put in words the thoughts which filled my mind. I stood before Gertrude, the girl without a soul, but whose body had been quickened into life by the indwelling spirit of her sister. She was not Gertrude now, no more than I was my grandfather Gunnery. "We two partners," I thought, "in a common bereavement; spirits flung out of their natural homes into the bodies of others.'

"But how," I thought, "will she feel? What will she do and say, on awakening? She must discover the truth then, just as I have done. And how about the other sister?"

At that, the doctor knocked at the door, which I opened for him, and then locked again.

"Will you awaken them now?" I asked anxiously.

He shook his head, "No, it will be better for them to sleep just where and as they are, until the morning; they must both however be fed at intervals. They will take it without being awakened."

He had some strong beef tea with wine in it, and went first to Gertrude, "Gertrude," he said, "take a little of this, it will do you good."

He waited a moment but the lips were not opened, and there was no answer. "Gertrude," he said more firmly, taking her hand, "open your lips my dear, I wish you to take some nourishment."

"I thought that I heard you speak to Gertrude, Doctor; don't you know that I am Mabel?"

I saw his hand tremble as he placed the medicine spoon to her lips.

"It's all right," he said, "take this, and then go to sleep again, and mind, you must not awake until the morning."

He also gave some to the other girl; but without calling her name. He might have done so for she would have answered all right—They were both Mabel!

He left me abruptly after this for an hour, and then came back again with another nurse, in whom he seemed to have special confidence. She was to be left in charge for the night with the first nurse to assist her, and I heard him giving the strictest directions as to the treatment of the two sisters until his return the next day.

"I think that they will both sleep, but on no account disturb them," he said.

As we drove back to the Doctor's home, I asked, "What will you do with them when they awaken?"

"Don't ask me! don't ask me!" he exclaimed.

We argued the whole matter at length in the Doctor's study; he kept me with him until midnight. It was evidently a relief to his strained feelings to talk.

I could see that he was trying to take no thought for the morrow, and in his case indeed, sufficient unto the day was the evil thereof.

"Do you now understand the nature of the remarkable discovery which I have made?" he asked abruptly.

"I believe so, Doctor."

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "it's a great discovery! It's a marvellous discovery! but there is one thing which troubles me."

"I know what it is," I said.

"It won't forget, it cannot forget, it will retain its identity, even though absent from its own body. I have done a marvellous thing; but I have not given them back Gertrude; the hands, and the face, and the voice, and the whole exterior form are there; but the spirit in Gertrude's body is Mabel. Good Heaven! they will be accounted mad when they awake, for each of them will be consciously Mabel. It is not Gertrude after all that is brought to life, only another Mabel!"

"Can nothing be done to remedy that," I asked, equally excited with the Doctor.

"Nothing," he replied, "the spirit never loses its identity. You, for instance, are in a body which resembles your grandfather; but did you ever imagine yourself to be Old Squire Gunnery?"

"Never!" I answered emphatically.

"That's the trouble in the case of these two girls," he said, "the experiment breaks down at this very point. You may command the spirit, and control it, and change its location permanently, while under the influence of mesmeric trance; but you cannot cause it to lose its identity, you cannot create a new spirit."

"Surely, Doctor, it's marvellous enough to be able, by any means, to put life into a dead body."

"I don't know that that is so very marvellous," said the Doctor thoughtfully. "What is a dead body?"

"Take a case of drowning," he continued, without waiting for a reply, "There you have all the appearance and evidence of death. The heart has ceased to beat, the lungs to breathe, the blood to circulate. Left to itself the body is as dead as a piece of wood; but notice there is no disease and no wound; you call it death by asphyxia. But by artificial respiration and artificial circulation, you set the heart beating again, and lo! the departed spirit comes back again, and you bring that dead body to life again by compelling the return of its own spirit, just as I brought back the life of Gertrude Chesterfield, by transferring to her dead, but perfect and healthy body, the spirit of her sister, by means of mesmeric trance.

"It's science. Sir! only that, and nothing more, and as far as I know, yourself and Gertrude Chesterfield are the only two illustrations of the transmittance of spirits into other bodies, to be found in the whole universe."

"What caused Gertrude Chesterfield's death," I asked.

"Asphyxia," said the Doctor, "commonly speaking was the cause. It was the result of a sudden shock, and not actual disease, but there is no need to enter into particulars, her case was a similar one to that of drowning. She ceased to breathe."

"Was it that which suggested to you to make the experiment?"

"Yes," said the Doctor, "I knew them both, and it occurred to me that if Gertrude had only had as brave a spirit as Mabel's, it would have clung to the body, and would not have allowed it to die."

"No end of people die simply because—if I may so put it—their spirits lose heart. That's why we give intoxicants in some cases; the alcohol puts a little Dutch courage into the spirit, and carries them over the crisis. Some people's timorous spirits clear out of the body and make off to another world, if you only give them half a chance to do so; while others cling with such tenacity to the body, that they won't let it die, and in such cases through the very pluck of the man's spirit he pulls through and recovers again. There's another thing too, some medical men have the power of infusing hope and courage into the spirit of a sick man, to such an extent that the spirit fights with the disease until it gets the upper hand of it. People have attributed all this to what is called the imagination, but when there is no spirit there is no imagination. For instance, you are all mind, sensual things are nothing to you, your imaginative power is your strong point, because you are spirit; but you will find that your poor relative up there in the prison is a most unimaginative creature. In fact, has no imagination, but is purely a creature of instincts, feelings and animal passions, because it is nothing more than a physical body kept alive by the indwelling of a human soul. If he were taken seriously ill there would be little or no chance of recovery. If he is unfortunately hanged for the death of Vaughan Stockton he will suffer far less than an ordinary man would, for the very reason that he has no imagination. It is the presence of the spirit in the soul which makes all the difference. Our exquisite pleasures and our exquisite pains all arise from this source. We speak of men being high spirited, proud spirited, low spirited, etc., and we speak correctly. Imagination contains within itself positive evidence of its spiritual nature. Imagination for instance has always preceded the discovery of truth; the poet sings of things which he has learned by

spiritual intuition. And years afterwards laggard science catches up, and proclaims that the poet's visionary song was actual truth."

"I am not sure that I even now thoroughly understand you, Doctor," I said.

"You ought to, then, for it's plain enough," he replied. "Let me put the whole thing in a nut shell. The ordinary man is composed of three parts—Spirit, Soul, Body. The soul is a spiritual form, similar in shape to the body, which is moulded upon it, and fits it as a glove does the hand. If not, how is it that some of the lower forms of life have the power to reproduce amputated members; you take off the foot or tail of a lizard and a new one grows in its place. You don't suppose that nature works a miracle? it merely moulds a new limb upon a spiritual form already in existence. The soul is the life, and if you look up the first chapter of Genesis, you will see by the marginal reference that in the Hebrew the word translated life is really soul. It is not 'every moving creature that hath life,' but every moving creature that hath soul. The quotation of course refers to animals, and the form of all animal souls is undoubtedly the same as that of the animal body. If you had your arm amputated, and your body survived the loss of blood, you would suffer pain; but you would have no remaining consciousness of that limb still being there, because you have no human soul. But people generally who have limbs amputated, retain a strange consciousness of the old shape of the limb being there as long as they live. The fact is you cannot amputate the spiritual form which in every limb underlies the flesh. Gunnery of the Golden Gate Hotel, has your soul form, under the flesh, and I might amputate his arm, but he would never lose the sense of having one. Of course I cannot demonstrate all this mathematically, because you can only positively prove the lower forms of truth. But I should think that you have seen and experienced enough to-day to believe what I say. You will be able tomorrow to put it to a further test when you meet face to face with your own soul and body now incarcerated in prison."

I left the doctor in the early morning hours and returned to my chambers, but I could not sever myself from the marvellous experiences and new discoveries of the day. My mind was in a state of feverish activity. How should I feel when I again stood face to face with my other self? Would I be able to persuade the doctor to carry out my project and restore me finally to complete manhood, spiritually and physically? Better a thousand times that John Vernon should die, than that the spirit and soul and body of Mark Gunnery should be longer separated! Better too, a thousand times, that there should be one wholesome, complete, and perfect Mabel Chesterfield, than that there should continue to be a counterfeit Gertrude and a spiritless Mabel; sisters alas! and yet not sisters.

I decided to use every argument on the morrow to persuade him to restore each of us to the other's counterpart, and somehow provide for the death and burial of the superfluous bodies. How gladly would I, in my proper person, have attended the funeral of John Vernon, or for the matter of that, of Gertrude Chesterfield. The spirits of both bodies had passed into another life, and I thought it was only decent and reasonable that the bodies should be at once buried and return again to dust.

# Chapter XVIII

## Face to Face.

It was the following evening.

I had returned to my chambers after visiting the prison, and sat musing upon the strange events of the day. Little had come of it, excepting a change to myself; of which more hereafter.

Gunnery had met us almost with indifference. He was of course somewhat depressed, but there was nothing like the despondency and anxiety in his mien, which I had expected.

"Hallo, Vernon!" he exclaimed, "I have got into a devilish scrape, haven't I? But I'm dashed if I know why I struck him—drunk, I suppose. And yet the queer thing is," he said, turning around to the doctor, "I have an impression that I drank nothing that morning except a whisky and soda before breakfast."

"They say he asked you to drink with him just before you hit him," I said quietly.

"Who told you that?" he exclaimed.

"There was a number of people about," I said, somewhat taken back by the suddenness of the question.

"Ah, yes!" he replied, "I remember; but you know I was not myself exactly that morning. I have had a lawyer in just now, and have given him an account of the whole affair from my standpoint. He says that I must have struck him in a fit of temporary insanity, and by George, I think he is about right. You see, I had no motive for the crime. We were out and out friends, and I am very sorry that he is dead; in fact when I was told the whole of the trouble, I felt quite bad about it. But they can't do much to me; besides I am told that in this dashed country, money goes a long way, and I'll sell the Church Consett estate rather than run short of money to grease their dirty palms with. Stickfast, that's the lawyer, says I need not trouble my head about it. That they will pull me through somehow; for if the worst comes to the worst, they'll manage that no true bill shall be found against me. Stickfast is a smart man. He went very carefully into the matter, and I told him all about my money affairs. In fact, he made more notes over that than all the rest put together. I expect they will bleed me pretty well before I am through—hang them!"

"Who are the firm?" asked the doctor. "I don't seem to know the name."

"Bouncer and Stickfast of George-street. It was one of the gaolers recommended them—a tout, no doubt gets a commission, I suppose. But you see I don't know anyone likely to help me now, so I was glad to be able to consult with someone. I thought Vernon, that you would have been in to see me before this." He made the last remark reproachfully; almost as a child or younger brother might have spoken.

"Why did you think that?" said the doctor, sharply.

"Oh," he said, "Vernon is an old acquaintance of mine, that I knew in Melbourne."

I gave such a start at this that both the doctor and Gunnery noticed it. The latter looked at me long and curiously.

"Vernon," he said at last, "I think that I would like to have a talk with you alone."

"All right," said the doctor, "I'll leave you."

"Don't go for a minute, doctor," I said, laying my hand upon his arm.

"Gunnery, old man," I continued, addressing my other self, "I have not been as good a friend to you as I might have been; but I am determined to befriend you now, if you will let me. The doctor is an intimate friend of mine; in fact, I believe you have met him before in Italy."

"Never mind about that," said the doctor, breaking in abruptly. "If I can be of the least service to you, I shall be very happy. You may rely upon me, Mr. Gunnery, for I have every reason to wish to serve Mr. Vernon here, and I know him to have a friendly feeling towards your self."

Gunnery looked from one to the other of us with a queer expression as though thoroughly bewildered.

"He has taken a dashed queer way of showing his friendship to me," he said with an oath.

"Don't go, doctor," I exclaimed, for he again made as though he would leave us.

"There has been a mystery between Gunnery and myself, which I should like to have as far as possible cleared up in the presence of a friendly witness."

"I freely confess," I said, turning again to my other self, "that I have not shown the friendliness which I might have done. The fact is, I have misunderstood you altogether. And you have not known me properly."

"Look here, Vernon," he said suddenly, "I'm perfectly dazed. I know that I have not seen you for a week, and yet I seem to have been with you somewhere, and know a lot of things which you have told me, and yet unless I am mad, I have not set eyes upon you for a week until to-day."

I think the doctor noticed my embarrassment, and guessed its cause. I couldn't tell Gunnery the truth, for first of all, he would not believe it; he could not believe it; he would only set the doctor and myself down as a pair of sorcerers, and our chance of doing anything with him would be gone.

"Gunnery," I said, "I have not told you before, but I am a relation of yours."

"I guessed as much," he replied, "for you have some of the family likeness. I suppose you are a brother of my dead father, but I never heard of you."

"How came you to call upon me that first night in my chambers at Temple Court?" I asked, my heart beating wild with excitement.

"Now that's the very thing I am puzzled about myself," he said, "and have often wanted to ask you. You see, I had an illness or something of the sort down in Melbourne directly after I met you, and when I try to recall what happened, after meeting one night with a man I knew, I got mixed. I sometimes believe that I will go out of mind, thinking and thinking; but it does no good, and I generally wind up by getting drunk. The night I first met you in Sydney, Vernon, I had just come up from the South, and of course I made straight for your chambers; but you were awful drunk that night, old man; you swore at me like a trooper and wanted to fight, and goodness knows what all. Of course you remember it! Upon my soul, I have often wondered how it is that I have stuck to you so. But there, what's the

good of talking. If you can arrange for me to get some whisky and cigars in here, and have me out as soon as possible, I shall be obliged to you."

It was indeed no use talking further, so I took his hand and promised to get him all the indulgence possible and the best legal advice, and he agreed to be guided by my judgement.

It was of no use asking him any questions about the trouble at the hotel. I knew as much about that as he did.

The doctor said to me afterwards, "He's a bit mixed, as I expected he would be. No doubt he has an indistinct recollection of many things known to you, and which passed before his brain while you held possession of it; but have you thought out any plan yet?"

"I have a plan," I answered, "but it is a desperate one, and I think we will wait until after the trial."

I should say that the verdict at the inquest that day had been murder, and Gunnery was afterward similarly charged at the police court, and was committed for trial to the Quarter Sessions. I shall never forget that night. The Doctor came down by arrangement to my chambers to tell me of a visit that he had paid to Violet and Beatrice in the afternoon. They had both been to see him that day in the gaol, and were thoroughly repulsed by his behaviour.

"He does not seem to me to be the same man," Violet had said with tears in her eyes to the doctor.

I must here set on record a fact in regard to myself. The feeling which I experienced during the short time in which I visited my wife and child at Snowdon Villa, was totally different to that which I experienced afterward. I seemed when severed from my other self to be without human love. I was a thing of spiritual sensations, passions, and desires. I loved, and hated, and hoped, and feared, and remembered; but it was in a different way to that of any ordinary human being. Of animal instincts and passions, I had scarcely any. But on the other hand, I was deeply pained and humiliated, to see what my lower nature had come to when left to itself. I seemed to read new truth in the Holy Scriptures. Paul said—"I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; and also, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death." I read in the Old Testament—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," and I could understand it better. The Gunnery in prison was my lower nature, uncontrolled by anything spiritual. I seemed to understand things differently. I remembered that it was not his soul that the martyr Stephen asked God to receive; but his spirit.

"What a pity it is, and how it misleads men to talk of the soul, in the way that ordinary theologians do," said I that night to the Doctor.

"Yes," he replied, "imagine that line in the hymn—*A never dying soul to save and fit it for the sky*. It should be spirit of course; but that would not rhyme."

"Ah!" I said, "but the writer of that hymn believed that there was a future state for all souls, whether animal or human, and in that he was supported by many of the old theologians."

"My dear fellow," said the Doctor impressively, "you cannot get away from facts. The soul of a perfect man is one that is animated with spiritual life. It is the spirit-soul that lives in the future life, and it is the presence of the spirit which makes man to differ from the brute creation around us, all of which by the teaching of

reason, science, and scripture, possess souls. A spirit is no doubt immortal, but there is no proof that the soul is so of necessity. The Scripture teaching on that point seems very plain. 'Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' For those who accept the scriptures as a divine revelation nothing could be plainer than that; but there is not a word in the book from cover to cover about destroying a spirit."

"Of course," he continued, "Gunnery is, to some extent, an exception, because in his case the soul is human, and was for many years associated with, and under the dominion of, the spirit."

"But let me ask you, did you ever see him weep?"

"No," I replied, somewhat startled by the question, "I don't know that he has ever had any occasion to weep."

"I don't believe he could weep violently," said the doctor emphatically, "animals cannot weep at all; you cannot tickle them; they cannot laugh, and they cannot sing. It is the spirit nature in man which makes him an intellectual and emotional being, differing from the lower animal creation. But we musn't talk metaphysics. Have you done anything yet to get another firm of solicitors to take up Gunnery's case."

"I have called upon two or three; but as Bouncer and Stickfast have been consulted, no one will take it out of their hands."

"Ah! professional etiquette!" exclaimed the Doctor.

# Chapter XIX

## Everything at Stake.

THERE was nothing for it but to make the best of Bouncer and Stickfast, who, knowing that there was a considerable amount of money available, gave Gunnery's case their very full and careful attention.

It is perfectly astonishing how a law case, with money in it, grows; how papers and costs accumulate. I felt afraid at last to meet Bouncer in the street, for I am perfectly certain that every time I said "Good day," to him he charged six and eight pence in the bill. As for Stickfast, he is a man with no more conscience than I have soul. He is well named, for once he gets a pull upon anyone there is no shaking him off. I frequently saw Gunnery, and although he was well taken care of in the gaol, for all his meals were taken in from outside, and no necessary comfort was denied him, still he was despondent.

It was not that he suffered much anxiety, for he seemed to sleep half his time, but he was out of the ordinary grove of his life, and the prison was intolerably irksome to him. I found out that he never read anything except scrappy light literature. He ate, and slept, and fattened.

I learned through the Doctor, that the counsel's opinion, who had been retained for the defence, was that the blow was accidental, and that at the worst the verdict

could not be more than one of manslaughter. Temporary insanity might, he said, be pleaded, but he did not see how evidence could be obtained to uphold it. The prisoner had breakfasted as usual in the public hall, and had chatted with various people on general subjects, and afterward had smoked a cigar while looking over the morning paper in the smoking room. Several people had spoken to him, and he had made an exceptionally careful toilet, in view of visiting a friend. There was no evidence of insanity!

I called on the lawyers after hearing this, and found that although they had not told Gunnery so, they held the same opinion themselves, and yet they were fooling their client, and leading him to believe that he was sure to get off.

"The Crown is working up the case tremendously," said Stickfast to me. "They have a witness to prove that Gunnery and Stockton were in love with the same woman, a Mrs. Ferndale who lives at Snowdon Villa. He drove there you see immediately after the unfortunate death of Stockton. Then too, he has been heard on several occasions to threaten Stockton, and it is said that he had lost large sums of money to him at cards. But I can make very little of him, he refuses to talk about the lady, and curses me for a fool for asking him any questions."

"Don't I pay you, sir, to get me off, work up the dashed case yourself, sir."

"Now what can be done with such a man?"

I grow increasingly anxious in regard to the matter, for I thought if he is imprisoned for 10 or 15 years, whatever will become of me. Just at this time, however, something occurred which increased my anxiety tenfold.

I was, as may well be believed, intensely interested in the strange case of Mabel and Gertrude Chesterfield; but I could get very little out of the Doctor about them. I was confident that he was still absorbed in the results of his experiment, and that it was not turning out satisfactory. There was evidently, too, some reason why he refused to allow me to again meet with the sisters, or give me any particulars of how they were getting on. His usual reply was that they were recovering as well as might be expected.

"Do they know each other as Mabel and Gertrude?" I asked.

"Yes, in a certain way," he replied, "but really I would prefer not to talk about it, and whatever you do," he said with much emphasis, "don't mention it to anyone."

"I thought, Doctor, that you knew that I had neither friend nor intimate in this city, except yourself," I said. I would not stoop to tell him what he ought to have known, that any secret of his was safe with me.

"Tut! Tut! man, it's for your own good that I have kept it from you, you need not feel hurt, I have confidence in you being able to keep a secret, but I think it is as well for you not to know."

At this I urged him to tell me, for somehow I felt that there was something being kept back, which it might benefit me to know.

"Well," said the Doctor at last, with evident reluctance, "Gertrude is dead."

"How did she die?" I asked.

"Got into a passion with her sister and broke a blood vessel. She went off then like the snuff of a candle."

"And how about Mabel?" I asked.

"Oh! don't bother me about her," said the Doctor brusquely. "She's alright enough, you see Gertrude's death put an end to my experiment."

"And the spirit of Mabel!" I almost screamed this in excitement. "Good heaven. Doctor! tell me what happened?"

"There, I thought you would want to know that," said the Doctor; "but really I don't feel free to tell you."

"But I know! I know!" I cried out vehemently. "Mabel's spirit returned again, to her living soul and body!"

It was as though the revelation was too much for me, for I felt sick and faint.

"Doctor," I moaned. "Why did you not tell me sooner. I see it now. For me to regain possession of my other self, I have only to let this old body, which now imprisons my spirit, die!"

I had indeed something now to think about! I must save the life of Gunnery, and secure the death of my own body, but how? This was the question.

I seemed now to understand why I had such a repugnance to taking my own life. Great nature prohibited my securing my own release by suicide; but I must die! "Yes," I repeated to myself, over and over again, "I must die! I must die!"

For a time this thought took up the whole of my attention. I had read of men who had sought death; but could not find it. Who, amid the din of battle, and, the convulsions of nature, seemed to lead charmed lives. Such for a few days was my experience. I courted death. I went everywhere, and did everything which seemed to me to be at all dangerous to life. I read of accidents daily, by tram and steamer, but no accidents would come anywhere near to me. I even rode a vicious horse, hoping that I might be thrown; but, it was all in vain.

The fit lasted only a few days however. I then saw that at present it would be better for me to secure the acquittal of my other self, for, if I were reunited, and made a perfect human being again, it would not prove of any permanent value to me, unless I had life and liberty. Everything now depended upon securing the acquittal of Gunnery.

I visited the Doctor again, and through his influence, secured frequent admission to the prison as Gunnery's next of kin and friend. He was growing fatter and lazier daily, and I endeavoured to disturb his serenity, and persuade him that his life was really at stake; but it was useless.

"Why should I worry about it, Vernon," he would say, "let the lawyers see to it, I pay them well, and they have pledged themselves to get me off."

There was nothing for it, but for me to render the lawyers all the assistance in my power, and at the same time carefully work up the case myself. I had two projects, the least desperate was to get the Doctor to restore me to my other self during a portion of the time of the trial, by placing my body in a mesmeric trance, so that I might render Gunnery any possible assistance when he had to go into the witness box to give evience. The other was, that failing all else he would lend himself to a project by which I yet hoped to get my other self out of that prison, and also out of Sydney, alive.

So far as I could see, the tide of public opinion was running strongly against the prisoner. Hints as to a probable scandal in connection with the case, were thrown out by a section of the press. His evil life, bad as it had been, was exaggerated, and I found that the judge, before whom he was to be tried, had a reputation of harshness and severity. The outlook was by no means reassuring, and my only

source of consolation at this time, I found in connection with my visits to the Doctor.

With the increased gravity of the position he had become more sympathetic and communicative. In public he stoutly opposed the popular opinion as to Gunnery, and showed more desire to assist me. But I could not get him to promise to help me in the carrying out of my plan.

"It's too great a risk," he would say. I told him of my attempts to secure the death of my body.

"I knew that's what you would be up to," he said, "and so hesitated to tell you about Mabel Chesterfield. I am very glad that you have now learnt to look at the matter differently. You can be of more use to Gunnery with things as they are."

"Can you explain," I asked, "how it was the spirit of Mabel immediately returned to her own soul and body, when Gertrude's body died?"

"Where else should it go?" asked the Doctor. "It had no right to go into the spirit-world, for its proper soul and body were still alive. There was no other place for it to go to, so it returned to its own home."

"I see!" I exclaimed, "I see!"

It need not be said that my spirit was more buoyant as to the result of the great hope by which I was now actuated. Death must come sooner or later to this old body called John Vernon. And then!

But in the meantime the day of trial rapidly approached, and I was engrossed in the preparation of an elaborate defence. I could not disclose it to the lawyers, it would have been worse than useless, they would have set me down as mad. But I would speak myself, when the right time came, through the lips of the Gunnery in prison.

I need scarcely say that I had secured a tacit promise from the Doctor to assist me when that time came. He was now almost as anxious and excited in prospect of the trial as I was myself.

# Chapter XX

## I Defend Myself.

I suppose it is as natural for a man as for animals to hunt—to try by skill and cunning, and misrepresentation and trickery, to catch something. So the angler drops his fly for the unwary fish, and the trapper fixes his bait for the unsuspecting animal. The devil is said to hunt for men, and men hunt for their fellows, often very necessarily. But not infrequently, quite careless of the man's guilt or innocence, the police will prejudge a case, and urged on by the instinct to hunt, and professional habit, will move heaven and earth to scrape together evidence which will secure a conviction.

My anxiety increased as the day of trial drew nearer, for I heard from the Doctor that it was whispered in legal circles that the police were determined, if possible, to have my other self hanged. It was a matter of professional pride. The facts

seemed indisputable. There were several witnesses of the actual assault, and they regarded the evidence as sufficiently complete; besides, another alleged criminal had shortly before given them the slip, and there hadn't been a hanging in Sydney for six months.

It had been discovered by the police, too, that there was some mystery about Violet; it was known that she was the prisoner's wife, and that he had come to Australia in search of her. Vaughan Stockton, too, had been friendly with some prominent members of the force; and generally both public opinion and official circles showed a strong bias against the prisoner.

"The other side has a strong case," said Stickfast to me, "and the unfortunate thing is we have no case at all. The most that I can do is to attempt to prove that there could be no malice; but the remarkable thing is, Mr. Gunnery will give me no assistance. 'Hang the confounded trial, get it over as quickly as you can,' is about all that I can get out of him?"

"How long is the trial likely to last?" I inquired.

"Not less than a week," said Stickfast.

"A week!" I ejaculated, in dismay. I had overlooked the fact that there was money in it for the lawyers for every extra day it took.

I have no intention of prolonging this narrative by entering into the particulars of the trial at any length.

I sat in court as a spectator the first and second days, and saw Gunnery in the dock, and heard him plead not guilty.

I cannot explain the sensation which passed through my mind as I looked at him—my other self—thus shamed before the public gaze.

When he confronted the judge, and saw the spikes around the dock, and noted the watchful constables guarding it, and the jury empannelled, he seemed to feel his position keenly. I felt as though I could have gone over and sat with him on the hard bench within the spikes, and have called out to the judge and jury: "In justice, you must try me as well."

I listened in amazement as the Crown Prosecutor opened the case. It was as though everything possible had been raked up against him. Things which I knew to be utterly without significance as far as the case was concerned, were colored and made to dovetail into other facts, until I could scarcely believe my ears. It had the effect, however, of sharpening every faculty of my mind, and I felt determined that I would somehow frustrate their evident design to secure a verdict of wilful murder. I felt maddened with what seemed to me the utter want of tact and forensic skill on the part of the barrister in charge of Gunnery's case. I felt that I could have conducted the affair better myself.

The case was progressing more rapidly than they had expected; there was so little to be said in Gunnery's defence. So the afternoon of the third day the time had come for me to play my part in the prologue, of what proved to be a tragedy.

I lay all that morning on my bed in my chambers, and before midday the Doctor was present.

It should be explained that I had stated to the keeper on the previous evening, and also to one or two of those who knew me in the building, that I was far from well, which was not altogether untrue.

When my servant came in to wait upon me that morning, I sent him for the Doctor, to say that I wished to see him; all this was done by his direction, for he had refused to put me again into a trance, except in my own chambers, so that in case of any accident bringing about the complete severance of my spirit and body he would be able to certify as to my death, and protect himself.

"I can't have you dying in my surgery," he said, "and leave that old body of yours to account for, it would look bad."

But I had no wish to die, or continue in possession of my other self, except for the purpose of the trial, as it would not have suited my plans to have remained reunited, at this crisis in my affairs.

It had been arranged the previous day that the prisoner should make a statement in defence, and we had further learned that it was to be immediately after lunch. So about an hour before the appointed time the Doctor placed me in a mesmeric trance.

I lay there on the bed conscious of my surroundings in the chamber, and conscious of the Doctor's presence, but also watching under his direction, in my clairvoyant state, what was transpiring in the courthouse a mile and a half away.

The court had adjourned for lunch.

Gunnery was eating a comfortable meal in the prison; he had got over the first shock and was taking the trial more easily; I heard him talking to one of the warders; but he did not seem so sure of getting off. Alas! the evidence against him seemed most conclusive. It seemed impossible for him to escape.

By the Doctor's direction, I then looked into the room where the judge and his associate were also eating a very hearty lunch, and listened to their talk; it was about the trial, and they expressed themselves as convinced of the prisoner's guilt, especially on the grounds that Vaughan Stockton had been known to have visited the prisoners wife at Snowdon Villa. "He was jealous," said the judge, "and Vaughan was a man to be jealous of, but the prisoner could not have cared much for her, for he had been leading a fast life ever since he came to Sydney."

I wondered how the judge came to know so much about him.

The Doctor kept me thus clairvoyant, in order that I might tell him when the court sat again. Then after impressing upon me that he should recall me at a certain time he sent me again to take possession of the body of my other self.

I think it will be as well to quote here from the columns of the *Evening Luminary*, which gave a very fair resume of what transpired in the court. Said the journal—"The prisoner, who during the morning had seemingly betrayed a stolid indifference to the course of the trial, seemed to arouse himself on the reassembling of the court, after lunch. He was then to make a statement and submit himself to cross examination; and it was noticeable that his attitude and mein as he passed from the dock to the witness box was altogether different to that which he had previously shown. In fact, the remarkable change was commented upon by all in court."

I may here observe myself in passing, that the reporter's idea and my own feelings, were very different. My re-possession of the soul and body of my own self may have made such an impression upon the court and spectators as is described by the said newspaper; but my own first feeling on finding myself actually in the felon's dock, was one of stupid horror and consternation. Fortunately I found

myself in perfect health; but the shock to the spirit was terrible, it was a very good thing that I was not immediately called upon to make a statement, for my knees smote together with alarm, and every portion of my carefully prepared address had completely vanished from my mind.

I should say that I had not given the Doctor any clue as to the substance of what I intended to say. Probably had I done so, he would not have dared to be a party to the matter. I had obtained his consent to my having one and a half hours but it was only after I awoke to perfeet consciousness in my own body in the dock, that I thoroughly settled upon my plans.

I noticed Violet in court, and also two or three other witnesses who had been examined, so, through Stickfast's influence, I secured their removal from the court, while I made my statement.

I will, however, again quote from the newspaper report, a copy of which lies before me as I write—

> "The prisoner on entering the witness box took the oath, after which the learned counsel for defence explained that his client wished to make a statement, which might necessitate the recalling of several of the witnesses.
>
> "Very good Mr. Stoneham," said his Honor, "let all witnesses in the case leave the court; but await in readiness should they need to be recalled."
>
> The prisoner commenced in a voice at first scarcely audible. He said:
>
> "Your Honor and gentlemen of the jury, I have an extraordinary statement to make; but I do so with full realization of the gravity of my position and the solemn obligation of the oath which I have just taken. What I am about to say will be the truth, so help me God, and my plea is, that the death of Vaughan Stockton was justifiable homicide, of which you shall, after hearing my statement, be my judges.
>
> "I arrived in Australia, as you have already heard, a man of position and substance, in search of my wife and child. But you have not heard that they had been lured from me by a man of singular ability and fine person, who was deeply versed in occult arts, by which he had obtained a fatal influence over my wife.
>
> "I do not in this hour of my deepest humiliation and sorrow, wish to say one hard word of the woman I made my wife and the mother of my child. She was dominated, by a more powerful will than her own."

The newspaper here explains that at this early period of the prisoner's statement, he seemed very much affected; while its remarkable character and the visible emotion of the speaker, arrested the attention of the whole of the crowded court. After taking some water from a tumbler, pushed across to him by the Judge's Associate, he continued as follows:

> "I arrived in Australia last year, a land which has been to me a place only of misfortune and suffering, and shortly met the man who had robbed me of my wife and child. I say I met him; but, alas! with disastrous results to myself. He was a past master in the new science of hypnotism, and by some means,

although unknown to myself, he severed from me my physical body and human soul, and I, a man in manhood's prime, awoke to consciousness in the Melbourne hospital robbed of my rightful body, and in possession of an aged physical form.

"Gentlemen of the jury, it may sound madness to you; but I remember that I am on my oath, and on trial for my life, and I beg you to hear me patiently. Witnesses who can corroborate what I state, will be called presently, to, at any rate, partially substantiate my solemn declaration.

"After many months had passed amid varied circumstance's, during which time my enemy died by accident in Queensland, I in the aged form of which my spirit was the enforced temporary occupant, met my living soul and fleshy body for the first time in this city, and ultimately learned the whole awful truth as to the diabolical outrage which had been perpetrated upon me. I was a dual man. My spirit was knowingly possessed of another body, while my spiritless soul and body moved to and fro among my fellows, a human derelict, the sport of every animal passion, and the prey to every tempter which crossed his path.

"You have heard from the learned counsel for the prosecution, of the grossness and debauchery of my life in this city. I do not deny it, for alas! I have been an eye-witness of the degradation to which the soul and body of a man may be brought when the master has, by a cruel art, been severed from its other self.

"I saw Vaughan Stockton and such as he, luring my wretched soul and body to ignominy in this life and perdition in the next—and gloating over the catastrophe.

"At that time I believed this body, in which I now stand before you, to have been possessed of a demon from hell. But in mercy, a pitying Providence brought me in contact with a man of great learning—a medical scientist—through whom I learnt my error, and found that, under grave risks, it was even possible for my spirit to be reinstated in possession of its own proper soul and body.

"Upon my oath, gentlemen of the jury, as I speak to you by the aid of this tongue, and through these lips of Mark Gunnery, I do so to-day only by permission. There lies at this moment in a distant part of this city, a body in a trance, and I who now speak to you may only do so while the medical scientist under whose control I am, permits me to continue to animate and vivify this my natural frame."

The awful sensation which thrilled the whole court at these words of the prisoner's, we do not attempt to describe; it was a scene never to be forgotten by any person who heard the speech and witnessed its effect. His Honor readjusted his glasses, as though he could barely believe either his ears or eyes; it looked as though he were about to interfere, but after a moment's pause, the prisoner proceeded, the whole court listening with strained and painful attention.

"My Lord, and gentlemen of the jury, and you who hold the responsible position of legal advisers and counsel, to you I appeal: Can he who is now

addressing you be the same man that has ate, and slept, and fattened in gaol, and awaited this trial with the utmost indifference? You must all be convinced that it is another spirit which now animates this body, and gives vigor to the mind, and words and argument to the lips!

"But let me continue: After learning from my friend this awful solution of the mystery of my life, I prayed him to place me in the mesmeric trance, and reinstate me in my rightful soul and body, if only for an hour. This he at first refused to do but at last my importunity, and his natural wish to put to the test what appeared to him to be a great scientific discovery, caused him to yield, and on that fateful morning when Vaughan Stockton died in the vestibule of the Golden Gate Hotel, I was for the first time released from the environment of strange flesh in which I was imprisoned, and for one hour only was reinstated by my friend in my own proper form.

"It was an hour into which was crowded the thoughts and upbraidings and passions of a lifetime. I then learnt, by actual personal intuition, how fearful had been my soul and body's fall.

"Gentlemen of the jury, the Gunnery's come of a proud stock in the Old Land, and have for generations borne an honoured name. Can you imagine my feelings then, when I learned the whole sad and humiliating truth.

"I discovered, however, that my other self had made an appointment that morning, at that very hour, to meet my wife and child. I went to keep it, and in the vestibule of the hotel was met by one of the men, who had won my money by trickery at cards; who had tempted my soul to sin, and who with a knowledge that there was something to make my poor other self so easy a prey for their wiles, had drawn him into drunkenness and debauchery, until at last the lowest haunts of vice in Sydney had made merry over my fathers honoured name.

"I was going out to meet her that morning, clothed and in my right mind, bent on putting wrong things right, and for one short hour playing the part of an honest man again, in my own proper person. Then it was that Vaughan Stockton put his hand upon my shoulder, and jeered at me amid the laughter of his companions, and urged me to turn aside from my purpose, and go with him and drink.

"Gentlemen of the jury, there is murder of soul and body, just as real as that which is by the hand of violence, and he who that morning tempted me, was verily bent upon the death of all which in Mark Gunnery was worthy of being called a man. In a whirl of suddenness I smote him to the ground.

"You know the rest. When Mark Gunnery was arrested he averred that he had no motive for the blow. He had no cause, he said, to strike his companion, he regretted that he should have done such a thing! That was the word of the Mark Gunnery who stood before the Police Magistrate; of the Mark Gunnery who had lain for years in the adjoining prison, and who has been unable to offer his solicitor or counsel any assistance in the preparation of his case!

"But the Mark Gunnery who stands before you this afternoon, and bears this testimony on oath, is he who smote Vaughan Stockton in the vestibule of the Golden Gate Hotel. Smote him to save his soul from an ignominious

death—equal, if not worse than, the punishment which the law metes out to the murderer. The blow was unpremeditated; it was without malice; it was struck in defence of honor dearer than life, and to save from a moral death, worse than that which is merely physical.

"I passed out of that hotel, gentlemen, in haste, for I had but one hour (part of which had already expired) and in my proper person I sought reconciliation and forgiveness from my wife and child. As my hour expired—even as it is expiring now—I was arrested, charged with murder, and the result has been this trial.

"But before my time expires to-day, I entreat you, gentlemen of the jury, extraordinary as is this statement, incredible even as it may appear, to accept it on its own merits. Test it honestly by cross-examination of the witnesses, and, as I who now hold possession of this brain as matter, and actuate and sway this physical frame, will be absent—beyond the reach of your law or punishment—do not, I beseech you, inflict upon this irresponsible human soul and physical body, undeserved condemnation. If it was murder, or manslaughter, it can with justice only be attributed to the spirit which was at the time master of both body and soul, and which supplied the motion and the will power by which the muscles of the body struck the blow.

"Gentlemen of the jury, I feel myself again called! called!! called!!! I would that I could remain longer, but alas! alas! I must leave my poor body and human soul once more to its helplessness—and to your mercy.

"But hear me? It was no murder to strike such a blow, in defence of purity and manhood, and my last hope of this world's honor, and heaven's reward."

The prisoner at this sank back against the edge of the witness box, and swooning, fell heavily to the floor.

The sensation in Court was indescribable. It was felt to be impossible to continue the case for that day, and amidst unparalled excitement, His Honor adjourned the case.

The prisoner was carried to a ward of the gaol hospital and placed in charge of the doctors. The whole case is most remarkable. In view of the certainty of a crowded court tomorrow, we are requested to state that admission will then be by ticket only, "a limited number of which may be obtained from the Sheriff's officer."

This is the newspaper report of one of the most fateful and memorable days of my life.

# Chapter XXI

## Various Expedients.

I learnt by the newspapers that the court on the following day was crowded as had been expected; but I was not there. I had made my supreme effort, and the inevitable reaction followed. I had no heart now for anything, and lay there in my chambers attended by the Doctor, and a nurse he had brought in, and there awaited the verdict.

The Doctor was not at all communicative. The newspaper report of the scene in court during my statement, had fairly carried him off his feet. I gathered from some remarks of the nurse that he had had an anxious time with me, and that I lay unconscious for a long time during the previous night.

I had no desire to return again to the court, or, at first, to look at a newspaper, the passion mood had passed, and I lay there upon the bed as weak and helpless as a child. Two or three days had thus passed, and then with the desire to arouse me the Doctor placed the newspaper in my hands containing a report of the proceedings.

I found that my statement in the witness box had made the case the talk of the whole city, and that the interest had been still further deepened when on the following day, my other self supplied a further sensation, by contradicting the evidence he had given when under my influence, so that not only the city, but the colony, became divided into two parties; those who believed in the spirit, soul, and body theory, as set forth in my address; and those who believed the statement in the witness box to have been a wicked and fraudulent imposture. But the climax of the sensation was reached when my wretched other self, later on, signed a carefully prepared confession, duly attested by the Governor of the gaol, as having been voluntarily made, without threat or promise, which set forth in circumstantial language that the sworn statement from the witness box was wholly a fabrication, and that not one thing he had then said, about having experienced a remarkable change in his physical or mental constitution, was true.

At this the learned counsel who had charge of Gunnery's case threw it up in disgust, and the trial became a nine days wonder.

Those who held to the previous statement however, argued that being deprived of the spirit, a repudiation such as that made by Gunnery was what might have been expected. However, the newspaper accounts of the actions of my other self, filled me with astonishment. As I read it I could scarcely believe my own eyes. Mr. Shoreham the barrister had clutched at my theory, as a drowning man may clutch at a straw, on the day following the statement. And handled it with some dexterity, and cross examined Violet and other witnesses in such a way as to show that they had noticed a remarkable change on certain occasions in the prisoner's demeanour; but the confession was so circumstantial that even Mr. Shoreham was staggered by it; and as he himself stated, it was useless to defend the prisoner further, unless to put in a plea of insanity.

Some endeavour seems to have been made by an enterprising newspaper to discover a Doctor or other individual who might answer to him, or other person or persons, referred to in the prisoner's address; but it came to nothing.

The judge in his summing up, commented, I thought, upon the prisoner's conduct with extreme severity. He had committed perjury, by his own confession. The plea of insanity, he passed over with indifference—there could be no doubt in the minds of the jury as to the light in which he regarded it. As might have been

expected, the verdict brought in by the jury was one of wilful murder, and Mark Gunnery was, alas! sentenced to be hanged.

I was about again as usual after a few days, and obtained permission to visit Gunnery in the condemned cell. He was stolidly uncomfortable; but seemed to take the result of the trial only as an unavoidable misfortune. He did not care to talk about it; but ate and drank, and smoked and slept, and waited (very much as the doctor said he would), for the day of execution.

The prison chaplain I learnt could make nothing of him, and expressed his opinion privately to some of his friends, that he was inclined to believe the extraordinary theory set forth by the prisoner in his singular defence at the trial, "Or else," he said, "he is utterly reprobate."

The opinion of the officials, however, was that Gunnery was a clever man playing a part, and that he would break down and show his hand before the morning of the execution.

For myself I suffered agonies of torture during those days of suspense between the trial and the execution.

Imagination vividly pictured to me the effect of the tidings in Church Consett, that young Squire Gunnery was to be hanged in Australia for murder. What would be said by honest Bob Sutton—our old steward—and then one after another the familiar faces of those whose esteem I prized, came up before me.

"Good God! was there no escape?"

Then it occurred to me that there was perhaps one way by which Gunnery might escape. I would give myself up to the police as the actual murderer of Vaughan Stockton, and as John Vernon, submit to the last penalty of the law, and from the scaffold, in spirit once again repossess my former self.

I put this to the doctor; but he ridiculed the suggestion.

"You would gain nothing by that," he said. "Both of you would be hanged for the murder, for your own confession would prove that you were equally involved in the blow which resulted in Stockton's death. I see no way out of it."

"There is one way," I said.

"What is that?"

"Let us together visit the prison, taking a suitable disguise with us, you place me in a trance and reinstate my spirit in possession of my soul and body, and let us return again and leave this old carcase to perish in the prison cell."'

"My good friend," said the doctor sympathetically—he evidently pitied the hardness of my lot—"it is impossible; the condemned cell is closely watched, and the prison carefully guarded; you would involve me in a conspiracy to frustrate the ends, of so called, justice. Unless you have some totally different plan to that I cannot help you."

"Doctor!" I exclaimed in desperation, "could I not put myself into a trance?"

He thought for a minute and then said, "Yes, I believe you could by hypnotism."

"What is that?" I asked, "I thought hypnotism and mesmerism were the same?"

"Not exactly. Mesmerism is the production of sleep or trance by the influence of one individual over another; hypnotism is produced by a patient fixing his attention upon an object, for instance, something held in the hand, until the trance state supervenes. I know that the terms are often used the one for the

other; but that in the distinction. You are now so susceptible to the trance state that I believe you could easily induce it yourself."

"May I make the experiment now?"

"No," he replied hurriedly, "I have made my last experiment of that sort with you."

Nor could I by any argument or entreaty, induce him to give me any further information or assistance.

The day of execution had been fixed for nine o'clock on the following Monday morning, and this was Thursday. I was in a state of feverish excitement. Sleep had for several nights forsaken me. I knew that the doctor regarded me with anxiety. He had adopted the plan of calling me Vernon again in private; "I might make a slip in public if I get into the way of calling you Gunnery," he said.

"Vernon!" he exclaimed, "come with me somewhere away from Sydney until it is all over."

But I refused.

"Well then, stop here with us," he said.

This I also refused to do, for I was determined upon making one more attempt.

"Doctor, will you give me permission to repossess my soul and body, if I can do so without your intervention?" I said.

"No, certainly not," he replied sympathetically, "I cannot be a party to any more experiments. I shall only be implicating myself in some way. The prison authorities know that we have visited the place on several occasions together; and know too, that you are related to Gunnery."

I was now just as determined however as the Doctor, and that evening, I purchased a false beard and provided powder and other materials to make up a disguise, and the next morning sought and obtained an interview with Gunnery. I had a small ball of amber with me, for I had heard that amber was specially calculated to induce hypnotic sleep.

I found Gunnery sadly callous as to the impending execution. He seemed to have an idea that even now he would somehow get off. He had refused to make any will, or even talk about the possibility of his being hanged. But when I sat down and commenced to gaze absorbingly at my amber sphere he at once grew restive. I noticed too, that the warder was occasionally looking in upon us, and I saw that there was no possible hope of carrying out my project, so with a sad and heavy heart, I shook hands with my other self for the last time. Gunnery seemed a bit bored, and shewed very little emotion. "Alas poor thing!" I thought, as the prison gates closed behind me. "It is a hard and bitter ending for us both."

Again, the feeling came upon me to go back and announce my relationship; but it would have availed nothing, and I returned to my chambers with a troubled mind to await the end. How it might affect myself, I scarcely knew. "What matter," I thought, "there can be no further hope, or joy, in life for me, after my other self has suffered death upon the scaffold. It will be better to die and learn the whole secret."

# Chapter XXII

## The First Peal of the Bells.

It has been said that the execution was fixed for nine o'clock on Monday morning. The doctor had strongly advised me not to get up; and had promised that he would come and sit with me until all was over.

But my nervous excitement would not allow of this. I was up at seven o'clock and breakfasted early, and when the Doctor came in a little before half past eight, I was awaiting him in a fever of excitement.

He usually made himself very much at home with me in my chambers, and on his arrival sent my man servant on a message to a distant part of the town. He then locked the door of the outer room, and led me into that which I used as a sleeping apartment. He said, "You know, Vernon, that I am a bit apprehensive; but I don't think there is any actual cause for alarm. I am here, as much to see whether the death of your other self will result in the exhibition of any startling physiological phenomena as anything else. I may as well tell you at once what I expect to see when the death of Gunnery's body actually occurs."

"What do you mean?" I said.

He hesitated.

"Now, don't agitate yourself," he replied, "sit down in this arm chair; lean your head back, and make yourself comfortable."

"But tell me what you were going to say," I exclaimed impatiently.

"Simply this: that when the body of your other self is in the act of dissolution, I expect to see your soul form come into this room, to claim re-union with its spirit. There is, of course, no possible cause for you to feel alarmed at that, for I expect it will unite itself to you in your present body. I may be mistaken, so don't let your hopes be unduly raised. If this should take place, you will become a perfect man again, except that your body will be old and to some extent infirm. You may suffer somewhat during the execution; but this thought should buoy you up, that the death of your proper body is likely to reunite the soul form to your spirit. I don't see where else it has to go. You see you still have something to hope for."

"Doctor," I gasped, "why did you not tell me this before?"

"Ah!" he said, "you are too volatile now to tell you much; there is too much of the spirit about you. If you get your human soul back again, it will steady you a bit. I may then tell you something more. But it is only a few minutes now to nine, try and settle yourself down to sleep a bit. I would make a pass or two over you, and send you off myself; but it might spoil the experiment. Only do, for goodness sake keep yourself quiet. Suppose we talk now about something else."

Talk about something else, indeed! My whole being was thrilled by the thought of the home coming of my soul. No lover longered more for the embrace or his betrothed; no father desired more earnestly the return of a long lost child. The Doctor saw the excitement in my face.

"There you go again," he grumbled, "you will spoil the whole thing. I shall be compelled to put you off to sleep, unless you keep quiet."

"Doctor," I said, "if my soul comes, will it be exactly in the form of my other self; and if it unites with my spirit how will the union be consummated?"

"That is exactly what I am here to find out," he said. "But listen? It is just about to chime the half-hour."

The top part of one of the windows was open and, as the Doctor spoke, I seemed to hear the whirr of wheels as the hammer lifted to strike the chimes. Just then I caught the Doctor's eyes; they were full of his strange will power, and the hair above his broad white forehead for a moment rose and fell. Then the chimes commenced to strike, eight in number, which mark the half-hour.

For an instance my brain reeled with horror, it wanted only thirty minutes to the time when my body would be led forth to a ghastly and ignominious death; when the bolts would fly back, and the drop would fall, and my miserable other self would be strangled until dead.

But, as the chime reverberated down the narrow street, and through the quiet room, I felt the warm pressure of the Doctor's hand upon my own, and immediately my head fell back peacefully upon the soft cushions of the chair.

Instantly the familiar chamber, and all my accustomed surroundings seemed somehow to change. It was not that I was in a trance, for I was thoroughly conscious of the Doctor's presence, but it was as though the whole of my body suddenly became one great receptacle for sound. I was all ear. That is the only way in which I can describe the sensation.

What the overarching expanse of the midnight sky is to the vision, that the universe of sound now became to my sense of hearing. The range was wonderfully comprehensive, but perfectly harmonious. It was like a magnificent oratorio, but performed with a vastness indescribable, and yet a trained, ear might distinguish every part.

Or to attempt to describe it further, it was though the very first stroke of the chimer had signalized to me a new and wonderful development of the power of hearing.

From out of infinite space there came first of all, whispering sounds; the low humming of the bees among the flowers in the old garden at Church Consett; the sighing undertone which on still nights came up from the clump of trees in the Brookside meadow; the distant lowing of the cattle, as they made their way home with full udders through the dewy pastures. Then there blended together in the distance, all dreamy soothing sounds, which, undefined will float upon the air in the odorous evening of an English summer's day. It need hardly be explained that the duration of time seemed to be infinitely extended, for as yet I had caught only the first stroke of the half hour chimes.

The second followed without any actual pause, and instantly a new doorway of hearing was thrown open to my spirit. Harmonious music swelled through the room, and I remember wondering to myself whether the Doctor could hear it; but I was too enraptured to move or speak. It was solemn but glad, like the chanting of holy psalms by a cathedral choir. I seemed to hear my father's voice in the family pew of the old church—the grave calm tuneful notes telling of a hallowed peace. Then suddenly there burst forth the pealing of the church bells as though their tasteful mellow notes came from a distance, now rising, just as I had heard them on my wedding day long years before. Then mingling with the music of the bells,

out of the distance, the voices of children, and the laughter of young girls, and the shouting of schoolboys at their play. It should be said that there was no haste in all this, each distinct sound was natural and fully prolonged, and in order and proper sequence.

With each fast falling chime, it was as though new sounds were set in motion. I heard the booming of ocean billows on the rocks and sand; the wailing of the curlew, and the moaning of the wind across the sea. Then came the muttering of distant thunder, nearer and still nearer, and the sound of rushing waters, and the flapping of sails and cordage, and crash of falling masts, and cries of distress which arose shrilly above the clamour of the elements.

All weird and fantastic and awe inspiring sounds followed, until they seemed to combine together, in one blood curdling scream of suffering, which died away in an agonising sobbing cry that might have been the wail of a lost soul.

The last chime of the half hour died away, it had only lasted, altogether, for a minute, but it might, by the long succession of wonderful sounds, have been an age. Silence once more reigned.

I felt the Doctor wiping the perspiration off my face and brow, and, as I opened my eyes, I met his anxious gaze. Doubtless he was forecasting what would happen later, for it was still half an hour to the time of execution, the strange experience which I have described, was only that of what I afterwards, remembered, as having accompanied the first peal of the bells.

# Chapter XXIII

## The Second Peal of the Bells.

"This will never do," I heard the Doctor say. "He will either sink through exhaustion a go raving mad, unless in some way his spirit can be thoroughly subjugated and quietened."

"Mark Gunnery," he called out, "you are an ungrateful fool. Here I am taking infinite pains and no end of personal risk, to pull you through, and instead of quietly submitting yourself to my guidance as your medical man, you excite yourself so that all your plans are frustrated, and my effort made of no avail."

"Doctor," I said, "don't bully me. Did you hear that last scream?"

"What do you mean?" he asked.

Then I explained to him as well as I could what I had heard.

"You are a bit lightheaded," he said. "Tell me; what had you for your breakfast?"

I had but very little, and I told him so. He went into the other room at that, and I heard him heating up an egg, and presently he came in with a tumbler of egg and brandy.

"Drink this," he said, "and compose yourself, and rest a little, it's just going to chime the three-quarters—I think we had better talk a bit."

But my head fell back upon the cushions again; the hammer was rising to chime the three-quarters, and I was again seized by the same remarkable feeling of conscious unconsciousness.

The hammer struck the first chime, and immediately all other senses seemed swallowed up in that of sight. The Doctor avers that my eyes were closed, so what followed must have been a series of images that were reflected upon the brain. I saw—saw as never before, and as I never in this life expect to see again. It was spirit sight. Why I should see such things, even in that hour of extremity and apprehension, I cannot surmise. What suggested the recurrence of these vivid images I cannot tell. I have thought about it since, until brain-weary with the thinking. So that I make no effort to explain, or to suggest, an explanation.

In most vivid hues and distinct detail, there now swept before my vision a succession of scenes associated with my early life; but many of which I had no recollection of, and no key to, although I felt assured that they were somehow associated with my history.

Other scenes, however, I readily recognised; each seeming to mark an epoch in my life. A summer's day in harvest time appeared; the day upon which I first remember meeting Violet in the Meadow Lands by the Colton River. The detail of the scene, as it rose before me in that quiet room, was amazing. The different shades of green in a clump of alders, the white pebbles, where the shallow river at Colton-ford sparkled and danced and eddied beneath the noonday sunshine. Everything was reproduced in perfect verisimilitude. Violet's girlish beauty the central feature of the picture. But the scenes passed in quick succession.

They grew more sombre as the bitterness of life crept into them. I shuddered when I recognised that long grey Pacific shore, with a rising tide, near Bournemouth; but I had to see it. There was no closing of the eyes against such visions as I was now called to look upon. I watched every incident of the death of Horace De Vere—saw it to the very last convulsive struggle, and was only saved the hearing, once again, of his dying cry.

The scenes which rapidly followed each other after this were all sombre, and some were fearful. I would have turned away my gaze had it been possible; but although the looking at them seemed to scorch my brain, I had no alternative but to gaze at every frightful thing which presented itself. It lasted for what seemed an eternity; yet it had all transpired in a few moments, for as I opened my eyes, and saw the Doctor again, the chime of the second peal was but just dying into silence.

The Doctor had noticed nothing except that I had for a few minutes closed my eyes; and yet, to me, in that brief time, there had been crowded the scenes and incidents of an average life.

The Doctor sat down and commenced to talk to me about Violet and Beatrice, for he seemed to be greatly taken with the winsomeness of the child.

I listened, but I could at first make him no answer; a moment before I had looked upon a world of ghastly things, and I dared not close my eyes lest the dreaded scenes should return again. I made some incoherent reply to him, which he attributed to my dread of the approaching ordeal; but it was not that, but this fearful resurrection of my life, which now troubled me.

I had seen things in those few moments which if I had the power I would have plucked up by the roots, and have cast out of my life for ever. But I now realised

as I had never done before, that every one of those dreaded things belonged to me. That I might forget but could never remove them, that nothing could conceal them, that at any moment they might be revived again, that they would cling to me in life, and follow me into eternity, as imperishable as my own spirit of which they formed a part.

"Doctor," I said at last abruptly, "is there no such thing as death, for the soul?"

"I think there may be," he said gravely, "but not for the spirit—that never dies."

And I groaned, repeating some former words of the Doctor's, "It never forgets; it cannot forget; it will remember!"

The Doctor listened with anxious interest to my fervid words, and asked me what I meant by them.

But I could not tell him of those scenes which had revealed to me the imperishable character of the spirits memory. I could only pray the bitter prayer of the guilty Eugene Aram: "O God! could I so close my mind and clasp it with a clasp."

"Now brace yourself; be calm and resolute; it will soon be over," said the Doctor kindly.

I tried to smile, and feebly promised to pull myself together; but what I had passed through was trifling compared with that which I had yet to experience. I had heard, and I had seen, but I had yet to feel. "Alas! that it should be so," I thought, shuddering—"before the execution, there is yet another peal of the bells!"

# Chapter XXIV

## The Third Peal of the Bells.

Hitherto I had not heard Gunnery speak; I had not seen him; but immediately the chiming bells commenced to usher in the hour of execution, I felt him. It is the only way by which the sensation may be described.

Just as sound is transmitted, and thought, and light, and heat; so there was by some mysterious means transmitted to me—feeling. I could not see, nor hear, but, by feeling, I knew exactly what was transpiring in the condemned cell. He had knelt down mechanically as the chaplain prayed. I felt him. He had shuddered with momentary fear as the warders prepared him for execucution. I knew when he emerged from the cell, and passed into the fresh morning air—mounted the scaffold—and looked dispairingly around on the few fearful witnesses.

I felt the touch of the rope by which he was bound, the pulling down of the cap over his face, the preparatory tightening of the noose around the neck, the shooting back of the bolts, and the drop into space, and the horrors of strangulation.

The Doctor stood fanning me, for he guessed what was transpiring, he knew that by some mysterious means I was suffering every agony, and drinking to the very dregs, Gunnery's cup of death by violence. But fearful as the sense of

physical suffering was, there was a torment still greater. It was the consciousness of guilt.

It is not given to ordinary men in this life to see the vision of sin. I had seen; but now, I felt it. There was laid upon me in that hour of horror, the whole burden of guilt of my spirit, soul, and body. But with the consciousness that it was not vicarous suffering. One might in that way, be willing in some heroic hour to suffer for another; but it was my own burden that pressed me down, the penalty of my own transgressions, the realization of my own sin. Every physical pang which the parting soul and body of the hanged man suffered, passed spiritually to me; but that I could have borne. It was the other thing. The choking sense of wrong, of a hopeless future, a wrecked life. A mountainous unshapely thing of evil, which encompassed me, which bore me down, and smothered me in its vileness; until, as the Doctor told me afterwards, I literally gasped for breath, and actually showed signs of strangulation. But it was nothing physical, which I might explain. If, as I said, every colour has a corresponding mental emotion, it was the darkest of them all, something which personified all mental and physical suffering. The wonder is that the body sustained the spirit; doubtless it would have been better for me to have died.

But the Doctor was on the tiptoe of expectation as to what should be next. He knew by the pallor of my face, that Gunnery away there in the court-yard of the prison was dying, or dead. His one absorbing thought was, would there be a reunion? Would the soul come seeking for itself? Would it be visible? What matter my sufferings if he could but demonstrate a remarkable psychological fact!

I saw it all myself, but I think it will be best to describe what followed in his own words, as he related it to me afterward.

There was no preparatory sound of warning, said the Doctor, but he was suddenly conscious of the presence of a third person in the room. He looked into a mirror, and distinctly recognised behind me the soul form of Mark Gunnery. It had come, as he expected. He confessed to a severe mental shock when the apparition like figure first appeared, standing behind me. He moved away nearer to the side of the room on which the mirror was; carefully observing every movement of the soul in the glass.

There was only one living Gunnery now, and the soul had come in search of its sister spirit, and yet it seemed to him to stand hesitating. My eyes were closed, and my aged form lay back in the large chair as though insensible. He realized in a moment that it was the aged form which was repugnant to the soul, and it hesitated so long that he feared a catastrophe, and every moment expected to see my spirit, in some materialized form, emerge from the body and join with the soul-form and disappear.

He trembled in every nerve lest this should occur, and the death penalty should be paid by two instead of one, but he dared not turn around, for it seemed to him from what he could see by the reflection of the ghost in the glass, that it was watching him as much as the patient. His whole body he said, broke out into a cold perspiration, so great was his anxiety. Presently he observed the soul form draw nearer, and bend over the unconscious form in the chair; then it again seemed to hesitate. He was simply terrified now; and almost prayed aloud that the end might come one way or the other quickly. He felt the tension upon his nerves

so great. Just then the soul-form changed in its appearance; and slowly melted away.

It must have been some time afterward when the Doctor, who had sunk exhausted into a chair, came to my assistance.

He found me sobbing as though in the greatest grief; but he at once ceased to fear for me. I was once again perfectly human, for the soul of the dead Gunnery in the prison, had secured reunion with its spirit in the body known as John Vernon.

# Chapter XXV

## The Luxury of Tears.

"Mark Gunnery," said the Doctor, "don't give away too much to your feelings man, you may be better now than you have been if you control yourself a bit."

I still wept, however, although not so much in grief, or from the sense of loss or pain: it seemed to me as though I had at last found a place for repentance; that the hard stony nature which had hated like a devil, and hunted De Vere remorselessly to his death, and left a weak woman unforgiven, had at last gone. Stray man as I was, as the Doctor stood over me I still wept, wept foolishly, rioting in a very luxury of tears. I got up after this, and, assisted by the Doctor, lay down upon a couch, and presently fell asleep. It was a troubled but dreamless sleep, and I awoke refreshed. The paroxysm of tears had done me good. I was the better for it; as after long drought the parched earth is refreshed and sweetened by the blessing of the rain.

I passed through a period of singular mental repose during the first few days following the restoration to me of the triple nature. The Doctor had carried me away among the mountains, and I was satisfied merely to live. It was the re-marriage of the soul and spirit, and like other brides and bridegrooms they were spending their honeymoon in an unfamiliar home. The soul that is the bride—no doubt, specially felt it so; but both were happily comforted by the thought that the physical structure they then inhabited would not be the body of the resurrection.

There was still strife and storm to follow, but those first days among the mountain were days of infinite calm and peace; spirit and soul were satisfied with each other, and that and the restfulness of nature were sufficient.

Some such seasons, no doubt, come to all men; but not with such intensity. They are the slumber hours of life, when nature readjusts itself and re-builds the worn tissue cells. As winter rests the earth, and lulls the activities of vegetation until they lie dormant; and as sleep rejuvenates the body so was the hushed inactive life of those days to me. It was a sort of tranquil May-day of the soul and spirit. I wanted no company; to speak was at times almost painful to me, all I desired was to be left to myself. I was quiet that was needed for the mental and spiritual processes, which I felt would soon be perfected within me, when sleep would be followed by an awakening, and winter by the spring.

I was lodging with a worthy old couple, dwelling near the verge of one of those splendid prospects which have made the Blue Mountain scenery of New South Wales famous all through Australia. When I reflected upon the matter it surprised me that I was left so much alone; but I found out afterwards that it was by the Doctor's explicit direction, who, by the way, had now returned to Sydney. I can only marvel at the way in which that master of medical science forecast my necessities. He knew that what I wanted now was rest, and the tranquility of nature—the subtle influences of mother earth when far removed from the noisy haunts of men; the moving branches, the tremulous leaf, the chirp of birds and hum of insect life, the far-reaching landscape, and the solemn mountains. I think that if I had no other memory than of that fortnight of quietness, and communion of self with self, and both with God, it would have recompensed me for the previous agony, and whatever may yet follow. Like two lovers—made one in marriage—who fully learn for the first time each others worth, and passively enjoy the bliss of undisturbed society, satisfied and happy with only the pressure of a hand, or the nameless subtle, influence of presence—when it is that of one who is supremely loved.

"Good Heaven!" I broke out impetuously as I lay alone upon the grassy cliff, with a hundred miles of fair landscape at my feet, stretching away to where it became lost in the blue distance. "To think how little men and women enjoy of the delight of life for lack of knowledge of life. What hours of bridal love might be the joy of men and women if they only knew their capacity for enjoyment. But alas! one half the world is grossly blind to the glorious possibilities of happiness which God has laid up within them, and others of us discover it too late. We live, and eat, and drink, and die; but never taste the wine of living."

These days of rest were followed by a period of singular mental activity, when every faculty of the mind seemed to be quickened, and every sensation of pleasure emphasised. I was rejuvenescence. I recall my emotions with wonder. It was a new world which I saw, for I looked at it through new eyes, and understood it as I never had before. My feelings too were wonderfully changed toward Violet, and I thought more about her, and her future, and her child.

# Chapter XXVI

## A Letter of Amend.

I was reminded by the reappearance of the Doctor, that rest and peace in this world are of short duration. "I want to talk to you about Violet and Beatrice," he said.

"I have been thinking of them both," I replied.

"That's good as far as it goes," said the Doctor, "but you will need to do something more than think. They should at once return to England."

"I will take them back myself," I said eagerly. "De Vere is dead. I am hopeless of recovering more than I now have. Australia has been the scene of misfortune and sorrow, and I am cheered by the thought of leaving it. I will take them back."

The Doctor looked at me as though he had something on his mind and scarcely knew how to unburden himself.

"Listen to me," he said at last. "I can talk to you now, for you will be able to judge more wisely, and have right feelings in regard to Mrs. Gunnery and the child. Has it never occurred to you that you have no claim upon either of them? Mrs. Gunnery's husband is dead. By marriage two are made, not one spirit, but one flesh. You are not the husband of Violet Gunnery."

This was a blow that I was utterly unprepared for. Singular as it may appear, I had never thought of it. I had no bodily right to call Violet wife, or Beatrice child. That death upon the scaffold had made the first a widow, and the second fatherless.

I looked at the Doctor with a hard despairing gaze as I realized all this. I was a mis-shapen wretch, without kith or kin. Relationship is of blood. What law would recognise a mere spiritual relationship between man and wife? Probably Violet was rejoicing in her new found personal liberty. Marriage to her had brought no happiness: why should she not feel glad at its being annulled?

"I have seen your wife," said the Doctor, "although, as you know, no one but myself would in any way acknowledge such a relationship. But you cannot cease to be interested in their welfare, and the time has come for you to do something for them."

"Mrs. Gunnery has been twice to see me since the execution; the remarkable incidents of the trial, and of your visit to her after the murder, have made as deep impression upon her mind. I do not myself know what to say. But it is due to her that there should be some explanation from you. This you had better send in a letter, give her any necessary information about your affairs, and let her return to England to her friends."

"And the child?"

"Beatrice must also go."

"Why?"

"First for the mother's comfort, and second for her own happiness. You might arrange to see her; but not as her father."

"You are keeping something back Doctor," I exclaimed angrily, "why do you treat me like a child?"

"Gunnery," he said turning around warmly upon me, "do you not think that I have been considerate for you all through this strange and painful experience? I pity you from my heart."

"Why don't you help me then to a reunion with my wife and child?" I said sullenly.

He shook his head, and sat down upon a chair, and looked at me with a curious but pitiful glance. "Gunnery, you don't yet know yourself."

I said nothing, for there flashed into my mind that there was some fearful thing about myself yet to be revealed.

"I took you to the country," he continued, "that you might be the better fortified to bear life's ills. You have been telling me of the joy of those days of intercourse

with nature, and your own soul and spirit, let that suffice you; you cannot get back your own body now. Write a farewell to Violet and the child, and then take life quitely as long as it may last."

"I understand you, Doctor," I said bitterly. "You think that the end is not far distant, that for some cause best known to yourself the close of all this will be that I shall go mad. I am not surprised."

"I do not say that," replied my friend, but the sadness of his voice belied the hopefulness of his words.

"It will not be wise for you to attempt any personal explanation," he continued. "You can write briefly, and then think no more of them, and let us hope for the best."

"Tell me all that is in your mind," I said, "I can bear it now, and it will be better for me to know before I attempt to write the letter which you suggest. Why are you so fearful as to the length of my life or its character? It will be kindest for you to tell me everything."

"I can tell you nothing absolutely," he replied, "unless you can tell me the age of your present body."

"That you know I cannot tell you," I said.

"Just so, and herein is the difficulty, and yet the certainty. Your spirit and soul are younger than your body. You are like a steamer too powerfully engined, and except you can keep yourself quiet you will shake your body into a speedy dissolution. You see it is impossible to apply to your case any of the ordinary suppositions as to the probability of life. You are not in your own body, and there must be friction, and friction always causes pain. You suffer discomfort now, because the brain, muscles, and various physical powers do not correspond to the soul and spirit. Man is a marvellous piece of complex mechanism; is it any wonder that such a union as that of your spirit and soul with an older body should be likely to end disastrously? I don't want you to think of it, but I want you to be prepared, and my advice to you is not to try and explain to your wife or anyone else what they will never be brought to believe; but set your affairs in order, and, as far as possible, write her a letter of amend."

The more I reflected the more fully persuaded I was that this advice was good and disinterested. So at last I returned to Sydney.

I had taken an intense dislike to my old chambers, and on arriving, at once moved here. Somehow it seemed to me, as though in the other place, I might again see the form of my other self. I was nervous and unsettled.

I need not say much about another matter; but I found, on looking over my affairs, that my funds were fast melting away. That does not trouble me, however; there is nothing to live for now, unless it were to further attempt to solve the mystery of this frail body. But that is hopeless, and were it not, might only lead to further disappointment. So I put the thought away from me, and have spent what I feel to be the closing days of my earthly existence in writing this strange narrative of my suffering and sin. I am well aware that most people would not credit my story. I can scarcely credit it myself, although I have seen, and heard, and realized its truth.

The fact is, the world is credulous and incredulous; put it upon a beaten path of discovery, and it will credit everything which it may find there. But that which lies

a short distance off the beaten track, although seen by one, will remain undiscovered by the crowd for years and years.

It will, no doubt, be the same of much which I have written. Not that it matters. I have written more to have something to occupy my attention, and relieve my mind, than for anything else. Let it be set down as the raving of a madman, yet let the sceptic explain as to where the madman obtained his information and his facts. It would not be the first time that words of truth and soberness have been branded madness by those who failed to understand them.

I have just learned that the Doctor is called away to take part in a consultation at a distance. I have not seen him, nor do I expect to see him again. It would be in keeping with my life's strange tragedy to die alone, and be buried in a strange grave an unknown man.

And yet I would, that I might once more see and kiss the child.

# Chapter XXVII

## Postscript.

A brief editorial note is all that need be added.

Pinned to the manuscript was a copy of a letter addressed from the Chambers, and dated two days before Mark Gunnery's death. In some places it was tear-stained, as though written under strong emotion, and it had evidently been straightened out after being crumpled in places, as though the latter had been done in some paroxysm of regret or pain.

The reader already knows how Mark Gunnery died; and how, in response to that letter; the child had been brought to say good-bye to one supposed to be her grandfather. The letter was full of penitence and forgiveness; but it distinctly forbade Violet to visit him. He would see the child alone.

One paragraph of the letter to Violet showed how the man's mind was centred upon his mysterious trouble. It ran as follows:

> "We both know something of nature, but only a little; as a child playing on the ocean beach knows something of the sea. Let us not judge each other too harshly; both have erred, and both have suffered pain. It is the way of nature never to pity, never to spare. It is too strong for us; it was too strong for De Vere, too strong for you, too strong for me. God only, who made it, understands it. Men and women it tosses to and fro, and sports with; and when they contend with it, it crushes them. It drowns, burns, pains; but fires cleanse, pain purifies, and death awakens memories which live eternally. Be good to Beatrice!"

With this extract we close this strange story. We do not attempt to offer any solution of the mystery of the two bodies in which the spirit and soul of Mark Gunnery are said by him to have found temporary homes. Whether a large portion

of his story was the raving of a madman; or whether, on the other hand, it was a glimpse into a hitherto unexplored avenue of the mysterious tripartite nature of man, time alone will reveal.