

His brain was reeling, how suddenly the whole current of his life was changed; what agonies, what soul tortures he endured! Instead of the happy heart-throbs of the lover, he had the dull thuds of a breaking heart. All that night, he lay awake thinking of the girlish form that was then resting beneath a mound of earth. He loved the body, and that was but the dwelling place of the soul. But in death the soul had vanished, and it was hardly possible that a man could concentrate his heart's affection on an object so inanimate. But in some lives there comes a crisis hard and bitter as death, and to Edward Everett's life that crisis had come. Perhaps if he had braced himself against the emotions of the hour, he might have gone on his way but little affected by the scenes he had passed through. But he drifted on until he was beyond the control of his reason.

Wildly he thought of the perfect misery of his hopeless condition, until his imagination pictured for the buried form a soul and spirit such as she possessed in life. When the next day dawned, his mind was quite at ease, for his thoughts were lifted from the lifeless form beneath the ground to her beautiful spirit just ushered through the celestial gates into the realms of bliss.

This world is but a halting place between the two eternities,—the past and the endless future. Man dwells a little while on earth but for a purpose, and, that purpose accomplished, he is taken away and begins another existence. Mayhap that fair girl's mission was to save Edward Everett from himself, from the ruthless ambition which would gnaw his life away. Who can tell? Mystery as a veil hangs over all, and through it neither the sharpest sight nor the keenest judgment can penetrate. All is hidden save the result.

One short day spent by chance in a quiet little village had served to turn the current of one life from the calm channel in which it had flowed.

The following day Edward Everett continued his homeward journey; and e'er two more sunsets had been viewed, he was once more in the home of his childhood, and surrounded by loving friends. Still his life seemed empty and useless, and, when he set sail for Europe, he had not that enthusiasm for Scotch scenery that he once had. Not even new scenes had the effect of effacing from his mind the image that he worshipped; his thoughts dwelt upon

her, until at last, he conceived the idea of searching for her spirit. He believed that there is a spirit-world and into its mysteries he tried to pierce. Vainly he sought for the soul he loved, and he was near to despair when he accidentally met with a spirit medium, and to her he gave the story of his life. She listened patiently while he told of the spirit he longed to greet. When he had finished she fell back apparently dead, but it proved to be only a trance, for, after a time, she awakened and told of a restless spirit hovering near to earth and anxious to hold communion with him.

With delight mingled with fear lest all should be a farce, Edward Everett gave himself up to a deeper knowledge of Spiritualism. As a result of his labor and faith, one day, about a year after his first interview with the medium, it was permitted him to hold communion with his beloved in the world of spirits.

His joy was boundless! The pure young face cold and stiff with death had not stamped its image on his brain in vain. All that was mortal was forgotten while their very souls were bound together by cords which none could break; and they spoke a language not understood by bodily ears.

These interviews continued at intervals for several years then suddenly stopped, and the man whose very life was nourished by them was on the verge of despair. He thought of death and wondered if that would end his miseries. He longed to be released, but he dared not take his life for fear his darling would be lost to him forever.

II.

Fourteen years have passed away, and Edward Everett at forty is a broken down old man. Before that fatal day which marred his life had come, his one ambition had been to make himself famous in the study of Natural Science. He proudly thought of a future day when his name should stand as an honored professor of a European University. But that ambition had passed like a dream away when he gazed upon the lifeless form which took his heart from him.

Money he had in abundance, so he had no need to work. The years were spent in travel, and in the study of the relationship of the living to the dead. He wrote a book setting forth his own opinions on the subject, but as its teachings were considered pernicious, its circulation was suppressed.

Not once in all those years had Everett visited his home in America; but, at length, worn out with a