

# Back to Life and Love;

OR, WAITING THROUGH WEARY YEARS.

## CHAPTER I.

"Happy? Yes; always quite happy; does she not look so? And always of course quite harmless," said the doctor in answer to my question, regarding a patient, whose rooms we had just left.

I was on a visit of inspection to the Good Samaritan Lunatic Asylum, and young Dr. Bennett Abbott was my guide through the institution. He was the third assistant surgeon there, a good looking and good hearted fellow, with face and voice full of kindly sympathy, and he was loved and trusted by nearly all his patients.

We had made the round of the wards, and done homage to all the self-fancied kings and queens, popes and heroes, and had humored the "peculiar whim" of each monomaniac, when at length, at the end of a long gallery, that looked out upon the shrubberies and upon the sea beyond, we came to the door of a cell which the doctor opened, by turning the handle, for it was not locked.

And now came a strange sweet experience. A sphere of infinite peace seemed to envelope me, the moment I crossed the threshold of that little room.

Its one window looked out upon the evergreen shrubberies and beyond upon the open sea, over which was shining the clear morning sun.

A large white china vase of rare exotics sat upon the window sill and filled the room with rich aroma.

The room itself was bare enough, but beautifully clean, with white-washed wall, waxed pine floor, and white draped bed.

On a chair by the window sat a young woman who immediately drew my attention, as the most fragile and spirituelle being I had ever seen or imagined. Her form, clothed in a flowing white wrapper, was so attenuated that the wonder was how it still had power to hold the soul within it.

Her face—how shall I portray it? For it seemed the face of a spirit! Bright golden brown hair curled around her broad forehead and shapely head, and fell down behind upon her graceful shoulders. Her eyes were very large, light blue, soft and clear and shaded by long lashes. Her other features were small and regular. Her complexion was singularly pure white, and transparent like very thin alabaster. But from those light blue eyes and from that wan, spiritual face, beamed a calm and radiant peace, ineffable and indescribable.

"Here is a friend come to see you, Marie," said the young doctor.

She looked at me and held out her little transparent white hand. She did not speak a word, but her whole delicate face lightened and softened as she smiled on me with a smile that reached my heart and seemed to communicate to me her own heavenly peace.

I sat down beside her. And the young doctor took the third and only remaining chair in the room.

"You have beautiful flowers here," I said, referring to the rich exotics.

Again her fair, wan face brightened and softened with that wonderful smile; she did not speak. Indeed speech did not seem to be her mode of communicating ideas.

"Is she a mute?" I inquired in a low tone, of the young doctor.

"Oh, no! no indeed!" he answered. Then turning to his patient he said—"Marie, my dear, tell the lady about your flowers. Tell her who sends them to you, Marie."

"My child," she answered in tone of ineffable tenderness. I never heard a human voice so soft, so liquid, so aerial. These two words, "my child," sounded like two notes of an Aeolian harp.

"She is a good child to send you such rich flowers," I said.

"Yes," she answered dreamily. "She is my angel."

"Where does she live, Marie?" I next enquired.

She opened her light blue eyes so wide that they seemed to blaze with a soft fire as she answered—

and doors of silver, with gardens of celestial fruit and flowers all round, and—"her voice, as she spoke, had gradually sunk to whispers, and soon became inarticulate, flowing in melodious, undistinguishable notes.

We sat in silence listening to her as we would have listened to the murmuring of a brook, or to the sighing of a breeze, until at last her voice ceased, and she sat with folded hands and wide open eyes, gazing far out over the sunlit waters, yet seeming to see nothing.

"We had better go now, if you please," said the doctor.

We both arose to leave the room.

"Good-bye, Marie," he said cheerfully, laying his hand upon her head.

His voice and touch aroused her from her reverie.

"Good-bye, doctor," she answered, but her voice sounded as if it came from afar, or like the distant echo of her voice.

I held out my hand in silence; for somehow I fell into Marie's favorite mute way of communicating.

She smiled upon me with her heavenly smile, and so filled my soul with peace as we left her presence.

In the hall outside I said to the doctor—

"Here is at least one happy inmate. Is she always so?"

And he answered in the words with which this story opened.

"She interests me more than any one I have ever seen," I added.

"I do not wonder. Hers is the strangest case I ever met with," he answered.

"What brought her here?"

"Mania, of course. Her mania being that she is constantly attended and helped by the spirit of her child, who prompts, in others, all the kindness that is shown her, causing them to send her flowers for instance, and who opens to her the gates of Paradise, giving her glimpses of the glory within."

"Was it the loss of her child that turned her brain?"

The doctor paused for a moment, his fine face clouded over, and then in a deep whisper, he answered gravely:

"She was accused of having murdered her child."

I started with a half suppressed scream, and shrank back with horror.

There was silence between us for a moment, and then I recovered myself and exclaimed with irrepressible indignation—

"It is impossible! She, never, no, not even in a paroxysm of insanity, could have committed such a crime."

"It is generally believed that she did, however—but, of course, in a fit of desperation."

"I do not believe it!" I repeated with all the earnestness of my soul.

"Do you remember," enquired the doctor, as we walked down the long passage together—"Do you remember the case of that Marie Serafinne, who was tried at Pine Cliffs, in this State, for infanticide some years ago?"

"I remember hearing and reading of it, yes."

"Well, the woman we have just left is that very Marie Serafinne."

I gazed at the speaker in mute astonishment for the space of a minute, and then broke silence by exclaiming incredulously:

"What! why that trial took place at least fourteen years ago, and the girl at the time was said to be sixteen years of age. That would make her now, if she were living, thirty years old. And this girl cannot be more than twenty."

"That is one of the strange features in her strange case. For the last two years she has been changing back again to youth and almost to childhood in appearance. But she is in truth that Marie Serafinne who was tried for infanticide fourteen years ago, and who owed her acquittal to the legal ability, logic and eloquence of that good and great Ishmael Worth."

"You amaze me! I cannot yet credit this story," I answered musingly.

"Come, I will convince you. I will go into the drawing-room this evening, and tell you the whole story, as I have learned it partly from herself and partly from others. You will acknowledge that

it is the strangest story you ever heard in your life; but you must of course set down the amazing phenomena of the last two years of her life to the fancies of her own namia."

And so saying, the doctor guided me out of the long hall through the shrubberies, to the part of the building occupied by the surgeon-in-charge.

I may as well state here, to make all clear, that I was a cousin of the surgeon's wife, and then on my first visit at their house, to spend the Christmas holidays.

## CHAPTER II.

That night I went into the drawing-room, as by appointment, to hear the story of Marie Serafinne from the lips of the young doctor.

Dr. Hamilton, the surgeon in charge, was making his last evening tour of inspection through the asylum, a duty that would occupy him for two or three hours. My cousin Eleanor, his wife, was in her nursery, seeing her children put to bed, and soothing her teething baby—duties that would employ her for an indefinite portion of the evening.

So that I was alone in the drawing-room, with the prospect of remaining so, until Doctor Abbott should come in and join me.

It was an old-fashioned, long, low-ceiled room in an old-fashioned country house, adjoining which the new asylum had been built, when the old manor was purchased by the State for the purpose.

The doctor preferred the old house to any part of the new building, and so, with his family, he now occupied it.

I walked up and down the long, low-ceiled room, now looking from the back window out upon the darkening wintry sky, and sea, over which heavy black clouds were rising; and now pausing before the enormous wood-fire that was roaring in the broad old fire-place, and that the keenness of the sea air made it absolutely necessary even in this early winter weather.

A storm was rising, heavy clouds blackened over the sea, and the wind moaned around the house.

I closed the shutters and turned from the window for the last time, and went and sat down in a low chair before the fire, with my feet upon the iron fender.

I had sat there but a few minutes when the young doctor turned the knob of the door, opened it, and quietly entered.

"I am true to my appointment, Mrs. Middleton," he said as he drew a chair to one side of the fire and sat down.

I thanked him, and remarked that a heavy storm was coming up.

"That," he said, "would be a fit and proper accompaniment to the wild story I have to tell."

And then there, as we sat by the great wood-fire in the old manor-house amid storm and darkness, howling wind and beating rain, he told me the weird story of Marie Serafinne, first again reminding me that all which was supernatural and incredible in the narrative, I might, if I pleased, ascribe to the hallucination of the heroine. I tell the story as I heard it.

(To be continued.)

## SENTENCE SERMONS.

Malice always misconstrues. Long prayers often hide wrong practice.

Formation is always better than reformation.

No man can save men without suffering with men.

It is hard work growing saints in the soil of the pit.

You can measure any man's aspiration by his perspiration.

No man has a large mission who neglects the little ministries.

Religious forms easily become caskets in which faith is buried.

This is a godless world whenever the divine is all in the past tense.

When a man is ethically wobbly he is usually theologically rigid.

Real prayers and real mountains always put a pick in your hand.

You will not help the man who is looking to you by looking at yourself.

Greatness of character rises in willingness to make small beginnings.

There's nothing a lazy man enjoys better than designing "Busy" signs.

The worst fools are those who worship a God in the hope of fooling him.

Some men use the beam in their eye to pick out the mote in their brother's.

Too many measure their moral soundness by the amount of sound they make.

The more a man talks about the next life the worse he is apt to walk in this one.

# The Farm

## WINTER CARE OF POULTRY

Keeping fowls over winter costs money. Nothing should be kept that does not pay its debts with interest. At the fall roundup make a thorough sorting. Every fowl should stand squarely upon strong, well-developed legs, whose scales are clear and distinct, overlapping each other neatly. Next in importance is the head, which should be rather small with a compact comb of clear, healthy rose color, a firm beak and bright eyes.

Though much more rare, there are defects in the body to be looked after, such as crooked backs, clogged oil-glands, etc. The too numerous males, and the late pullets that will eat all winter and then help flood the markets with nine-cent eggs in the spring, should be sorted out. If there is a swelled head or a consumptive have it killed immediately. It is the more merciful way.

With a flock of sturdy, healthy fowls, not too numerous for their quarters, poultry keeping is usually successful; but to bring best results loving care is needed. Loving is used advisedly.

Be careful of the roosting places. A cold draught all night is as dangerous as roosting in the open air; corn fodder set up around the windiest sort of a hen house will make it habitable.

As for the roof, if no water drips directly on the roosts, and holes are not large enough for the hens to fly through, it will do.

Most important of all—feed and water, water and feed continually. Feed with a liberal but judicious hand as great a variety as possible, but regularly.

A good ration is to feed whole wheat one morning and on the next a warm mash of table scraps, meat, cooked vegetables or anything obtainable mixed up with hot water and meal into a thick mash, which should be carefully seasoned with pepper and salt. This is a handy way to feed a few red peppers occasionally or poultry food, for a tonic.

Every night, half an hour before sunset, give a good ration of corn heated until some of the kernels are brown.

The fowls should have fresh water or milk slightly warmed twice a day and plenty of cracked and ground earth and bone, beside having water-slacked lime by them all the time.

If some snowy morning, the zephyrs are rather rough as you go forth broom in hand to sweep chicken paths, it may be some comfort to remember that business is business, and that profit and pains taking go hand in hand.

## TELLING AGE OF CATTLE.

At twelve months, an animal should have its milk (calf) incisors in place.

Fifteen months. At this age the central pair of incisors (milk teeth) may be replaced by a pair of permanent incisors (pinners), these being through the gums, but not in wear.

Eighteen months. The middle pair of central incisors at this age should be fully up, and in wear, but the next pair (first intermediary) not yet through the gums.

Twenty-four months. The mouth at this age will show two middle (permanent broad) incisors, fully up and in wear.

Thirty months generally shows six broad permanent incisors, the middle and first intermediary fully up and in wear. The next pair (second intermediary) well up but not in use.

Thirty-six months shows three pairs of broad teeth, which should be fully up and in wear, and the corner milk teeth may be shedding with the corner permanents just appearing through the gum.

Thirty-nine months. Three pairs of broad teeth will be fully up and in wear; the corner teeth (incisors) through the gums are not in wear.

## FARM NOTES.

Keep the churning-room as near 60 degrees as possible. Never fill the churn more than half full of cream. Churn at medium speed. Always use a thermometer, and in summer churn at 60 degrees.

Of the absolute necessity of potash for plant food there can be no doubt. It is essential to the life of plants, and there seems to be no end to its combinations with other component parts of the soil, which are thus dissolved and made assimilable.

It would be folly for any farmer to attempt to manufacture acid phosphate or dissolve bone fertilizer at home. The making of high-grade commercial fertilizer is a business requiring technical training, and for one who knows nothing about it, failure will almost certainly result. Before the bones are treated, they should be ground very fine, and the finer the grinding the more perfect will the acid act.

The wages may not be so high on the farm as in the city, but men are able to save more of them, and at the end of the month of year, the farm hand often has more money than had been working in the city. Probably a reason why there is such an apparent antipathy to working on the farm is the false opinion men entertain that farm labor is degrading. At the present day, when farm work is performed by machinery largely, and business methods obtain to a great extent, there is no ground for such a thought. A more logical reason is perhaps the usually long hours for labor on the farm.

## RECENT CLERICAL BULLS.

Mr. Spurgeon Was a Keen Collector of Mixed Metaphors.

The proceedings at a recent Church Congress were enlivened by the intrusion of several very fine bulls, of which the following are samples. At one meeting Canon A. W. Robinson, in his opening remarks, warned his auditors that his speech would be "pointed to the verge of bluntness," while later in the evening Sir A. Coote, explaining his presence at such a gathering, said that he was like "one of these satellites of Jupiter which, when they were visible, were always obscured."

The late Mr. Spurgeon was a keen collector of mixed metaphors, finding a rich field in the correspondence that daily overwhelmed him. A lady, enclosing a small contribution for his schools, wrote: "I hope this widow's mite may take root and spread its branches until it becomes a Hercules in your hands." The pulpit prayers of ambitious probationers added something to the great preacher's store.

One prayed that "God's rod and staff may be ours while tossed on the sea of life, so that we may fight the good fight of faith and in the end soar to rest." "We thank Thee for this spark of grace; water it, Lord," was the sententious, almost imperious entreaty of another promising young man. Still another prayed, "Gird up the loins of our mind that we may receive the latter rain." "As if we were barrels whose hoops were loose," was Mr. Spurgeon's laughing comment.

It was an Irish clergyman who remarked, sadly, "This is a sad and bitter world; we never strew flowers on a man's grave until after he is dead"; while another Hibernian cleric, preaching a funeral sermon while the corpse lay before him, exclaimed, "Here, brethren, we have before us a living witness and a standing monument of the frailty of human hopes!"

Equally unconscious of his humor was the parson who, at the close of his sermon, said; "And now let us pray for the people on the uninhabited portions of the earth"; as also the minister who, pleading for funds for a parish cemetery, asked his parishioners to consider the "deplorable condition of thirty thousand Christian Englishmen living without Christian burial."

Even more unfortunate was the clergyman who was addressing a woman's missionary meeting. "My sisters," he said, solemnly, "it is terrible to think that thousands of gallons of rum go into Africa for every brother who is sent there." "Rather a large allowance for one missionary," was the whispered comment of one of the sisters to her neighbor.

## WHERE EDUCATION FAILS.

An old "darker" in Alabama called across the fence to his neighbor's son, who is a student at the Atlanta University.

"Look hyar, boy," he said; "you goes to school, don't yer?"

"Yes, sir," replied the boy.

"Larning 'rithmetic an' figgering on a slate, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, it don't tak' two whole days ter make an hour, do it?"

"Why, no," answered the boy.

"Wal," said the old man, "you was going ter bring that hatched back in an hour, wasn't yer? An' hit's two whole days sence you bordered hit. What's the use of yo' education ef you go ter school a whole year, an' den can't tell how long hit takes ter fetch back de hatched?"