

Hell.

I stepped out of the train ground by the early train. The day was a perfect June day, but for a time, enjoying the fresh country air, and the pleasant surprise of the first Bar-Association pic-nic I had attended for several years. Over three hundred lawyers from the largest city in that quarter were expected, and the fashionable caterer had been engaged for the occasion.

I left the grounds and wandered listlessly up the little stream that ran to the south of the grounds. The banks were precipitous and the undergrowth thick. Half a mile up the little stream I crossed the bridge, and seated myself on a rocky bank to enjoy the surrounding scenery. Almost perfect stillness reigned, and the sun was completely shut out from the landscape. I sat. The shallow water of the stream, the dense foliage on the banks and countless insects made the spot a most resonant and secluded spot as in an atmosphere of perfect peace.

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Presently an opening in the red rocky side of the bank, and rose to inspect the opening. As I advanced, the opening seemed to widen and deepen, till I reached a sort of grotto from which the light was almost wholly excluded. The mouth where I had entered, and also from the roof of the grotto a few struggling beams of sunlight seemed to proceed. A cold and chill suddenly came over me, and I shuddered as if I had witnessed some mysterious and unwonted apparition of which, however, my natural five senses gave me the least perception.

I turned hastily to trace my steps, but before I could make out the exact pathway to the opening, a light burst upon my sight--a strange radiance--such as I had never before witnessed; and by some unaccountable spell I stood arrested to the spot, and gazing intently toward the point a few yards in front of me whence the wonderful illumination seemed to come. I was still calm, I assure you I was quite calm, and yet, I felt a strange quiver, or flutter running through my veins which appeared to centre at the lower right-hand extremity of my heart: a feeling which I had experienced only twice before in my whole

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I could not tell whether the mysterious presence had dropped from above, or risen like a specter out of the rock-paved floor of the cavern. For a minute or two it appeared to me--~~XXXXXXXXXX~~--the apparition stood still with a--oh what a--a deep all-penetrating gaze upon me. I could not make out just what creature it was. It looked more like a bank of the lightest clouds floating, and swaying to and fro on a storm-cloud fragment that scarcely seemed to touch the floor; and it started and advanced, deliberately, but with a decided gait toward the place where I was standing I dazed, and too much alarmed even to fly from this dread, but entrancing vision that held me as by an invisible chain of steel. I fell, or rather sank backward, and supported myself on a projecting fragment of rock. On came the strange Being to within reach of me, before I could say a word. In vain I tried to speak; and if I had succeeded in doing so, I felt sure my voice would be husky, and perhaps, tremulous, and thus betray agitation or fear.

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I know not how to describe the strange being who was standing just by my side. The head and countenance were very remarkable, while the body, so airy and unsubstantial as an apparition, was properly designated by "a body," appeared to be thrown into the air, and the lower and central portion of my new acquaintance in flakes, not a regular and sweeping flounce formerly so fashionable in such dresses. The legs were seemed to be nothing so coarse or vulgar as legs or arms. A long and graceful pair of members floated from the wraith-like body about amidships, as nearly as I could judge; and it was these organs, apparently which it moved in locomotion. After a brief pause, the stranger, raising one of its hands with indescribable grace but also with force and decision, began to speak, or rather, it seemed to me, to play or sing; for there were at least three distinct tones which fell ravishingly upon my ear. Startled, alarmed, almost mad with fear or I know not what emotion, I tried again to flee; but it was too late--- the aperture in the side of the cavern was closed. The light, was now as brilliant as day, but whence it proceeded, I could not determine.

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I turned toward the stranger again, and listened intently to the
concourse of words that fell upon my ear, and by the gestures of the stranger that
he---or perhaps she---for all the while I felt that the vision must be
of the feminine, trying to make some communication to me, and was
quite earnest that I should understand it. She seemed to be talking in
the key of F, a minor; but unluckily, I have a very dull ear, and
was never able to distinguish groups, or even single tones with any degree of cer-
tainty. Still I listened with rapt attention,--spell-bound, in fact, and
with a singular feeling that stole over my whole being--a sense of distance, or vagueness
that veiled everything in a dreamy haze. Then suddenly it occurred to me that I was in
danger of losing control of myself altogether. I had always had a horror of being hyp-
notised, and I made a strong effort to free myself from this mysterious being's grasp;
but it was too late; she held me with the grip of a vice,,, held me merely by her presence,
on, was it by the m road-sounding voice that ~~she took~~ I was enchained? . . .

It matters little now,--I only remember that I listened, at length without
~~disturbance, and with an indescribable awe~~

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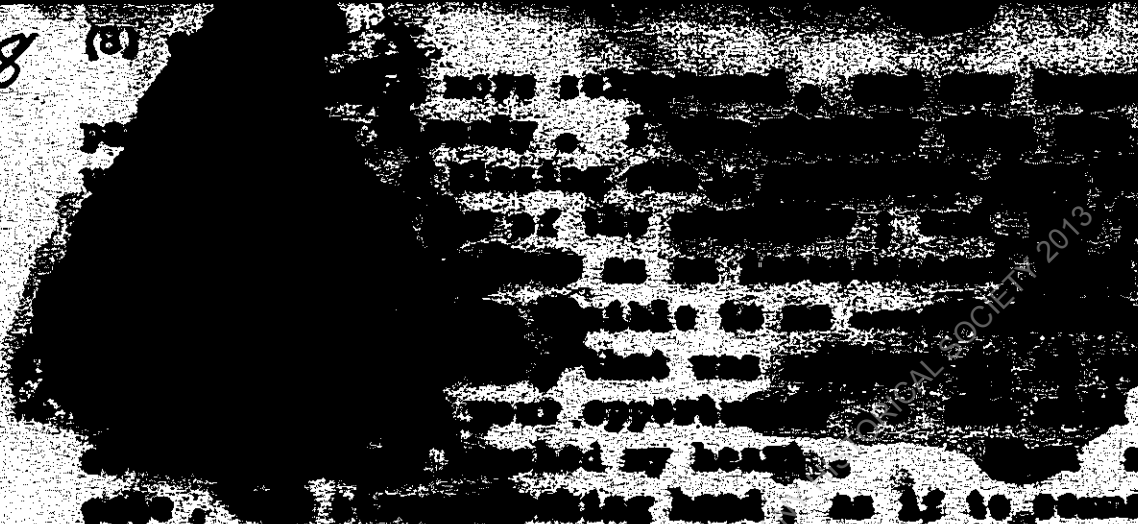
resistance, with an indescribable awe which was yet delicious and entranced.

Listening for a long time--it seemed to me years--I perceived a stranger was speaking in a language which, little by little, became intelligible to me. I started, at first, but restrained myself, being sure that by coolness I should be the better prepared for what might happen next. The thought of a new language dawning all at once in the struggling mind--instead of long months and even years of drudgery and effort, struck me as a beautiful sunrise might do in case of one who had never witnessed that marvelous phenomenon. It seemed as if all the words I had ever known deepened and widened into spherical proportions; as if they had suddenly become transparent, letting in the light of thought from every quarter.

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... of my own ... as a man who
... right foot ... to a gorgeous palace .
I ... listening ... and habitual con-
... as ... in his sublimest strains,
... she at last ... bowed assent, for I dared not
... she added ... Again I bowed-I could
... I could only feebly try .
... solicitor of patents, she proceeded, in a still more so-
... earnest tone, voice ; and her myriad-toned voice gave
a strength and emphasis to her utterance which pierced my very bones .
Ah, yes, you could not have been mistaken . I have been watching
you for a long time . Foolish mortal .

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more... exchange some-
 pe... which had burst
 ... appeared to be the neck,
 ... of electric glow, as
 ... to that everything in the
 ... save the ap... through
 ...
 ... more quietly, and in a tone
 ... she went on, raising her deli-
 cate, ... head, as if to demand my closest attention:
 :Yes, you might have made a man of yourself; you might even have been a
 great benefactor of your race, if you had not yielded to the demands of a
 selfish, and ambitious nature. I too, was a lawyer; I also became
 was a solicitor of patents; and I too became a Judge. Unhappy day.

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(a)

It is a maxim that ye be not judged by this maxim is of universal application, but the world have misinterpreted and perverted it by pretending that it is to individual conduct, thus taking away all the significance of the maxim.

I too had a maxim, like yourself, to help mankind, and, indeed to put a final end to the disputes and miseries of mankind. But I also, was selfish, and I fancied myself wise, and even shrewd, in those days. Alas, I have paid the penalty of my wickedness and folly--for, believe it--all wickedness is folly--and you also will suffer the reward of your deeds, and suffer tenfold, for I am come from the other world solely to instruct and warn you. She paused, as if expecting a reply, but in my excited and bewildered condition, I could frame no answer, not even the simplest query, and I remained dumb till she began again.....

(b)

One day, while I was still a solicitor of patents, and prior to my political hopes and aspirations, a man, a stranger in the place came into my office, and desired to speak with me privately on important business. I knew the man by sight. He was a public character, a lecturer, whom every one regarded as half cracked, if not wholly insane, on certain questions of reform. He was known in the newspapers as the immortal J. N. -----but I have forgotten the last name. After we had gone into my private office, the immortal J. N. -----began;-- 'I am a reformer. All the troubles of mankind arise from one cause, namely the want of time--time to acquire an education. Life is simply a battle for bread, when reduced to its last analysis. It occurred to me many years ago that if the necessities of physical life could be made easily accessible, and dispensed with, the whole problem would be solved. At length, after long reflection, the matter was settled in a twinkling, and by the merest accident.

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No matter what I discovered, but I made a discovery--a great discovery, only a part of which I am now to divulge. In brief, the scientific world has made some gross blunders in its use of electricity, and I am on the way to the true explanation of all the phenomena of life. The planet on which we live is an immense loadstone, or magnet, and light, heat, electricity and all the so-called forces of nature--now supposed to be ethereal matter--matter in short, spread out VERY THIN--are not material at all. Nor are they all the results of the Earth's relations to the Sun and the other heavenly bodies. There is another entity, or substance, if you like, which I have discovered--a universal pabulum, similar in some respects to light, which bears the same relation to man's sense of taste that light holds to the sense of sight.....

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This pabulum, he continued, is no doubt somewhat less ethereal than light, but for reasons which I need not now explain it has for so many ages escaped the eye of scientific men. I have at last succeeded in devising a means of utilizing this ether as food for the human race; and if I can only introduce my invention, I may hope to have far greater success in my schemes of reforming society.

Half confounded by the man's audacity, and evident sincerity I answered mechanically, 'And how can I serve you, sir, in this matter. I am no reformer.'

Certainly, he said, but in order to introduce my invention, I must first secure a patent, and I will gladly give my machine to all who will accept it, but men are so stupid they will not accept a new thing unless you make them pay for it and pay roundly. I will help me to obtain a patent, and for pay you shall have the vast sums of money which the sale of my new machine will bring.

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Just consider the vast gains of such an enterprise. It is too immense for the mind to grasp at first. Five or six millions of people in the U. States alone will yield, even at the low figure of a few cents apiece for my device, over a hundred millions of dollars. It is all yours--it is all yours. I need no money. My living costs but little. I travel free on all railroads without charge at all hotels. No one expects me to pay. It would do them no harm. I am a philanthropist, a reformer, devoted body to the amelioration of mankind. I shall be richly rewarded by the good people--when their physical wants are once provided for, will be glad enough to listen to my proposals for the salvation of the race. Here the immortal J. N. ----- paused to take breath, and I looked at him in astonishment. I had often been told of his eccentricities, and wild notions of reform. But I had no conception of the absurd insanity of his schemes till then. I was in doubt whether I ought not to take steps to have the poor wretch confined in a lunatic asylum; but inasmuch as his family and friends, who I knew were well acquainted with his plans, had allowed him to go at large, I at once decided that it was best to do nothing, feeling sure that his strange illusions were in no way dangerous either to himself or others. In order to get rid of so wild and crazy a customer I told him--knowing well that he had and could raise no money--that I would examine his new device and apply for a patent if he would pay the usual fee of a

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a hundred dollars. 'Only consider,' he urged, 'what benefactors to mankind we, you and I shall be, what complete leisure for study, and doing good for all men, women and children. The poor will be as rich as the rich; for of what use will money be then? No disputes, no more family dissensions; earth will be a real paradise, and crime and vice and ignorance will suddenly disappear--for I am fully convinced that with such a change most of the vices that lead people to crime and wrong of all sorts will disappear in the face.' At length I took my hat and pleaded an important engagement as an excuse to rid myself of the poor wretches whom I could not help pitying in spirit.

He evidently departed with a heavy heart. I shall never forget the deep sigh with which he rose and left the office, saying only these words; 'I have given my whole life with joy--even a little with enthusiasm to this work, and you--who ought to be a good man--you will not even risk a few hours work--though I assure you the wealth of kings as a reward.'

He disappeared from the place, and the whole affair passed from my mind--though for a few weeks we had many hearty laughs over the wild and absurd project the poor lunatic had revealed to me as the one great work of his life. Later I began to entertain ideas of office, and political preferment, and was finally elected district judge, an office which I held till my death. It did sometimes occur to me that after all of this if the project of the immortal J. N. could only be realized, the business of my new office would be much simplified, if not rendered wholly unnecessary.

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Later I began to have political aspirations and was finally elected district judge, and in that office I continued to hold till my death. It did not now and then occur to me that if the wild and absurd idea of the immortal J. N. could only be realized, half my work would be greatly simplified and rendered wholly unnecessary. She paused and gazed at me intently for ten minutes or two, and seemed to read the very feelings of my inmost soul... When she shrank from her gaze and was struggling to speak, she quickly resumed :--- I have not finished. Be calm. Listen. I have much still to communicate. I died, and passed to the mysterious Beyond; and there, there, in what was called 'lawyers' Hell, I found in reality just such a world as my poor insane client had depicted. Only in that world no device, no machine was needed to avail oneself of the universal pabulum, which the new body takes in as naturally and easily as inspire the air that supports life, and serves as fuel to all the vital processes. In your sphere you must eat by an act of volition, and work for food; that is only because you are gross, animal, and rudimentary Beings. In the more perfect and celestial life of the lawyers Hell things are very different. There the inhabitants live on light, as it were---an ethereal substance of which your coarse senses take no note. The Sun,

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Sun, which your foolish scientists fancy is matter, is pure spirit---it is, in truth the eye of the Perfect One, the All-in-All; and it glares or glows or falls softly and deliciously on the earth according as Beings are rude or refined. To those more advanced, such as the dwellers in the Lawyers Hell, and especially to those in still higher and purer realms, it affords constant joy and beauty to the soul. For they need no material food, but drink of truth and beauty on which they subsist. But you are of the earth earthy, and the pure and beautiful light of heaven is mingled with darkness and precipitated into what you term matter; and you take it into your systems and assimilate it. When you are fitted for the change, you will be removed to a world where the process of digestion and assimilation will become more organic, and so sunk below the sphere of volition, and consequent effort. There are worlds where Beings of a coarser nature than those on the earth work as hard for the air they breathe as you work for the food you eat. And the same is true of all the senses. As Beings are elevated in the scale, these various phases of spirit become more and more refined. The Sun--or eye of the All-in-All adapts itself to the needs of every grade of life; pure, unadulterated divine light would destroy life on the earth. Hence it is tempered to your needs, just as a wise physician weakens or strengthens his doses, or his battery according to the constitution and state of health of his patient. If you are ever so happy as to reach the blessed conditions of the Lawyers' Hell you will see all things as I see them now.

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"Your astronomers falsely teach you that the vast, immeasurable space that lies before you is for the most part void, vacant, cold and dark beyond the power of the thermometer or the most delicate photometer--or measurer of light to measure. In reality, on the contrary, all these immense gulfs of space are redolent of life, which swarms, and throbs and breathes in every chink and cranny of the universe. Worlds lie close upon each other-- so close that as Macbeth says ghosts may come from the spirit-world and push us from our stools. I say MAY--but, in fact they seldom do so. I have plead and prayed for aeons, and aeons, that I might be permitted to return to Earth and communicate to some happy mortal the secret of my own sad and terrible blunder, in the hope that he might be more wise and, according to an old prophecy, redeem the sons of men from the dreadful curse, 'By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn bread,---redeem them here upon earth simply by introducing our mode of subsistence, and thus abolishing the drudgery for food that hems man in as by a sevenfold wall of steel and adamant. Go then--make haste, and if he still be alive, search out this immortal J. N. -----, secure his patent for him, and help him to introduce his new device for utilizing the universal pabulum which is the food of angels and spirits in more elevated and advanced worlds. Curb your ambition; repress all individual selfish ends and aims; and your reward will be great indeed.

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Suddenly I heard a hissing sound and before I had time to glance around me I was grasped firmly by an unseen power and quickly hurried to a considerable distance from the spot where I stood, leaning against the rocky side of the cavern. My companion raised her hand, and I saw a huge serpent with its horrible tongue darting violently in and out ; but in a second it ceased, dropped its head and slunk away into a large opening in the rock near by. I then began to realize the danger from which I had been rescued, but before I had time to utter my gratitude my companion said, in a hurried manner --

* But we must be quick, my time has almost expired, and your friends will soon be on the grounds. I hear the train coming in the distance, and I must detain them, if only for a few minutes. Now I have it ; and that also will impart to you some information as to the nature of the inhabitants of the world from which I come. We dwell far above the realm of sex---a condition of life shared only by those in the lower and grosser regions of existence. Each individual comprehends in itself both sexes, and with there is no long period of infancy and helplessness. Our offspring, like Minerva, spring full-grown and perfectly developed beings from the bosom of our love. * So saying, she rapidly passed her hand across her face and breast, with the single word, --- : Behold, * And, marvelous as it may seem, I saw the most wonderful phenomenon ever witnessed by mortal man.

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The fleshy flouncelike fold of her outer garment, which I afterwards learned was not a garment at all, but actually a part of her physical organism, were thrown aside and her naked breast a line of demarcation began rapidly to appear. In less than a minute's space it lengthened, till it extended from head to foot, and soon the body seemed to separate and presently it fell apart into two halves, each side quickly closing up so as to resemble the original being with whom I had been holding converse. For my life I was unable to detect the original from the new-born being before me, till I heard, in the voice which had been addressing me, these words ; " And now, my child, be quick ; be sure that no one is harmed, only the train MUST be detained if but for a minute, till I have finished my instructions. " One figure instantly disappeared. The other turned again toward me. One figure instantly disappeared ; the other turned again toward me .

I must be quick, though I have not told you the half of what I had intended, with us is so precious that each second is distended, as it were to the length of days. For to us thought is actual, and hence each thought is an event. In the course of the aeons I passed in the Lawyers' Hell, I grew and developed so that at last I passed on to another sphere far nearer to the blessed Eye of the All-in-All, where sex no more hits our Being, both both masculinity and femininity are combined in the same being. In the Lawyers' Hell sex still continues. But now, passing to that phase of progression become feminine, and are equipped with tongues on the principle of a rotary shuttle--hung at all times. Their husbands, however, and all the males in that world are deaf and dumb. In exactly five years--five years according to your mode of computing time, I shall be permitted to return to Earth, and I will meet you here at that time. Now I implore you as you love mankind, as you respect your own soul, and as you value your future happiness, I implore you to be promptly on hand. ~~Waiting for you at the moment of my return, who, I~~

have every reason to believe is still living. ~~Take with you the secret, and help~~ to carry out his project for the amelioration of the human condition on the Earth. Instead of the slow and hopeless processes of education, ~~and what-not to improve~~ enlighten mankind, you will thus strike at one fell blow the tyrant of physical want that for so many ages has bound your race in chains. The idea in itself is grand; its accomplishment will prove grand beyond your present ability to conceive. Go--Go--Go--Go--rest not--delay not--and fail not to return here at the appointed time--five years from this very hour. They--They come--they come--cried out a strange voice that echoed wildly through the cavern. I was too late--they are upon us. Suddenly I was seized, and in a blaze of light and confusion I was hurried, by a decided--the a violent impulse from behind toward the side of the cavern, which still appeared to have no place of exit. But as I came near the rocky wall it suddenly opened, and I was ejected through the p aperture with so much force that, when my feet struck the ground, and tried to stand, I staggered forward and fell sprawling on my face toward the waters of the little stream. As I picked myself up I heard a loud and merry ring of laughter near by, and the words,--Hello there's the Judge ahead of us as sure as --but the rest of the --

My sentence was he lost in a burst of hurrahs and shout of laughter from a dozen friends on the opposite bank of the stream.

Why Judge, what on Earth's the matter, exclaimed young Brown. You look as if you'd been put through a brick-making machine. Here, let me brush you off. So saying he rubbed the clay and mud from my clothes which I had not had time yet to observe. I replied as carelessly as I could,--O, nothing, nothing at all. I arrived early on the grounds, and sat down on the ledge there to enjoy the scene, and must have dropped asleep and tumbled from

my seat.--Ha, ha, ha--a--a. Here the newcomers all joined in a hearty roar of merriment at my expense, and I did what I could to pass the thing off as a joke. I was so blinded for a time that I could not see to recognize my friends, and had to guess at them by their voices. The boys were in a hilarious mood, and there was the usual fat-mens' race, a dozen other sports, the banquet, a moot trial and so on. But for the entire day I was dazed, and unable to share their enjoyment, and as soon as it was possible I excused myself on the ground that I was not feeling well and took an early train for the city.

After a day or so I determined my course. The impression of the scene I had witnessed, and the words I had heard could not be banished from my mind. At length I yielded to the impulse--which grew into a deep and irresistible conviction, and resigned my office, settled my affairs and set out on a journey on the plea of declining health, and overwork.

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It is now five years since my adventure in the strange cavern on that picnic day. I searched the country over again and again for the immortal J. N. but he was nowhere to be found. I went abroad, into many lands. I heard of him and there, I saw his name in the newspapers, and at once hastened or wrote to have him detained till I could arrive. Reward after reward was offered in vain. I could not ascertain that he had died. Indeed, every one who seemed to know him, or to have seen the man felt sure that he was still living; and most people thought that they had seen or at least heard of him quite recently, and that he could not be far away.

My former friends one by one deserted me. It was rumored abroad that I was suffering from a strange amnesia; and at one time my friends had me, so confined in a private asylum for the insane. People said I was as crazy as the immortal J. N. for whom I was in search. For a long time I tried to hide the real object of my absence from home from my family and friends. I even assumed an alias at times, but this was always so distasteful to me that I gave it up. Indeed, it was this which at length betrayed my secret, through an infernal newspaper reporter who had my picture taken without

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(ee) my knowledge, and that, by a mere chance, fell into the hands of an old political antagonist, who had the affair written up as a sensational article for the chief Sunday paper in the city where I had formerly resided. My friends denied it, but there was no use--the evidence was to ob over--whelming, and I paid the penalty by months of ennui and wretchedness. Once released, I again began the search. I spent all the means I had accumulated. I lectured, at times to replenish my purse, but then the damnable newspapers would step in and give me away, as they called it--and all simply because I showed them up in their early crusades against all new ideas--and especially in the case of the Morse telegraph, which they opposed on the ground that if practicable and once introduced, it would utterly destroy the newspaper business, rendering papers unnecessary. My wardrobe became exhausted, and I did not make enough cash to replenish it; not even enough always to buy necessary food. I often went for days without more than a sandwich or a glass of milk. Sometimes working all day and all night for want of money to pay for a bed. Every state, nearly every small town and many hamlets and villages were visited in this way. Sometimes I met kindhearted people who, either because they believed in me or pitied me, did all they could to help me on my way. In truth I at last became so fully insatisfied in my search, that I must admit the fact of my apparent

insanity

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Month after month passed away. Year after year flew. My search still continued. It is now five years since I met the strange Being in that weird cavern ---it will be five e years years tomorrow. She bade me, in case I failed, to return alone. She promised that if the immortal J. N. had died, she said she could then impart to me the secret of the universal panulum ; but she declared that if he were still alive, it would be contrary to the usages of the spirit-world to impart to the inhabitants of any sphere, knowledge which had been or might be attained by the natural use of the human reason .

Yes, I will go and meet her. It is a days journey, and I have only half a day---only a night in which to walk there . And the storm does not abate. I ought not to have waited. I was foolish to hope for an audience to my lecture here---and in this rain. Hew foolish, --but I hoped I might make a little cash--on ly a little wound serve my need. Hunger--ah, I no longer mind or fear that. And many a night have I slept out in the open fields, or in the depths of the forest. But this road was unfamiliar to me...I had been absent for years, and was never p minutely acquainted with that particular region lying to the northwest of the city where the pic-nic grounds and the cavern were located.

But I must go . The time is short. I am weak and exhausted. I have had little to eat for days.

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I must go...I must go at once. I hear her ~~strange~~ strange myriad-toned voice is still sounding in my ear. I have heard it all these years--so gentle--so commanding--so irresistible.....And will they both be there--the parent and the child. What matchless charm, what marvelous power draws me to the spot--and yet--and yet---a n d y e t ---??

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CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY