

## A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIMENT.

"AS to every leaf and every flower there is an ideal to which the growth of the plant is constantly urging, so is there an ideal to every human being—a perfect form in which it might appear, were every defect removed and every characteristic excellence stimulated to the highest point. Once in an age God sends to some of us a friend who loves in us not a false imagining, an unreal character; but, looking through all the rubbish of our imperfections, loves in us the divine ideal of our nature—loves, not the man that we are, but the angel that we may be.

"But these wonderful soul-friends, to whom God grants such perception, are the exceptions in life; yet sometimes are we blessed with one who sees through us, as Michael Angelo saw through a block of marble, when he attacked it in a divine fervor, declaring that an angel was imprisoned within it.

"There be soul-artists, who go through this world looking among their fellows with reverence, as one looks amidst the dust and rubbish of old shops for hidden works of Titian and Leonardo, and, finding them, however cracked or torn or painted over with tawdry daubs of pretenders, immediately recognize the divine original, and set themselves to cleanse and restore."

Alice dropped the book and gazed dreamily through the green branches of the arbor into the golden sunset. A world of thought had been opened to her. She was imaginative and poetic, pre-eminently one of those very soul-artists of whom she had been reading. How beautiful, how true every word was to her! "As to every leaf and every flower there is an ideal to which the growth of the plant is constantly urging, so is there an ideal to every human being." Would the time ever come when we should all read this ideal perfection—when, from the narrow, the selfish, the passionate, the ignorant, and prejudiced, the dust and rubbish would be removed, and they should stand out pure and beautiful, their own higher, truer selves? How many beautiful characters might be hidden beneath the coarse and uncultivated exteriors of those around her! What a glorious work that of the soul-artist! She was living in an ideal world when she was suddenly recalled to the actual by her sprightly little companion.

"Come, Allie, are you thinking how you're going to carve out Ned Armstrong, and polish him up into a magnificent work of art? I'll tell you what it is, you've got a work before you! It's easier to see a statue in a block of marble than it is to get it out, particularly in these human statues Mrs. Stowe tells about."

"Pshaw, Kate, how you do run on! I wasn't thinking about any one in particular. But isn't it a beautiful idea that every human being contains the germ of perfection, and that we have only to remove the dust and rubbish to reveal an angel?"

"Beautiful, but not true."

"Not true? Oh, Kate, you wicked little skeptic! If I didn't see a beautiful character in you, behind all your naughty ways, I'd never say another word to you!"

"I'm very glad you have such good eyes, or such a vivid imagination, I don't know which. But I'm more practical. I'm a Baconian. First get your facts, then form your theory. Now you sit and read beautiful books, and look off into the sunset clouds, and weave a most delightful web of fanciful theories. But just come down to everyday life; mingle with commonplace people. I don't mean your friends that you love and idealize, but people you don't take any particular interest in—those bread-and-butter kind of people that don't seem to have any ideas beyond heaping up a pile of dry goods and furniture around them; the very sort that Mrs. Stowe herself describes on another page: those who have learned 'to be fat and tranquil, to have warm fires and good dinners,' to hang their 'hat on the same peg at the same hour every day, to sleep soundly all night, and never to trouble their head with a thought or imagining beyond.' Do you see any angels in them? To come to the point: There is Aunt Julia, whose highest ambition is satisfied with a \$500 camel's-hair shawl, and Mr. Simmons, who will have attained the object of his existence when he is the owner of a marble front on Broadway; there is poor Mary O'Neil's miserable husband, who beats her every week in a fit of intoxication; and there is my beloved brother-in-law, a minister, yet the most thoroughly selfish, disagreeable man in his family I ever knew. Can you see an angel in any of those people?"

"If I can not, I have faith to believe it is there. God is the artist, and His works are perfect—behind all the rubbish with which time has obscured them," Alice rejoined, earnestly. "Sometimes it requires peculiar circumstances to develop the finer traits of character. A seed is wrapped up in a paper for centuries, and it remains nothing but a seed. Yet the possibilities of myriads of beautiful flowers are there. Plant it, give it rain and sunshine, and the rich juices of earth, and all the possibilities of the seed blossom into the reality of a beautiful flower. So it is with character. Think how much nobleness and heroism and self-sacrifice have been developed since the opening of the war, among many in whom we least expected to find those qualities. Yes, I believe there is an angel in every one, if we could only find it and bring it out."

"I don't know, Alice. Some people don't seem to have any higher nature. If you should describe what you call their higher nature to them they wouldn't appreciate it at all, wouldn't recognize it as belonging to them, and wouldn't consider that you complimented them in insisting that it did. James Sherwood hasn't any higher nature, I know! You ought to see him every day, for weeks and months, as I have. I've studied him for a curiosity, as a naturalist

would study a peculiar fossil, and I can't find any thing in him but what is coarse, and selfish, and narrow. He goes around house like a thunder-cloud; never speaks except to tell what he wants done, or find fault with something that isn't done to his mind, and never seems to think of any body's happiness but his own. I verily believe he enjoys making other people unhappy as much as some people enjoy creating happiness. I never saw such a narrow, contracted specimen of humanity in my life, and that's just the amount of it!"

Alice looked grave, and was silent a few moments. "And yet your sister saw something to love in him;" she said at last.

"Poor Nell! I suppose she was just such a dreamy, imaginative girl as you are, and she made up a glorious ideal all out of her own brain, and threw it, with undoubting confidence, over the man who said 'I love you,' never dreaming that love did not mean to him all that it did to her; that to him it only meant, 'You're a good-looking and very convenient article of household furniture; I would like to own you.' Now I'm romantic. You don't believe it, but I *am*, only I have just enough of real practical common-sense to save me from making a martyr of myself. I have a glorious ideal. I could love almost to idolatry the man who only aspired to it; but that man I have never seen. I have tried to surround some I have known, and who have professed interest in me, with the radiance and glory of this ideal. I never succeeded. The outlines of the real were always too plainly visible through the ideal, and so it follows that at twenty-two I have never been in love. Nellie, I suppose, was more imaginative and less practical than I. She loved an ideal being, a creature of her brain; she awoke to find herself married to a stranger."

"You draw too dark a picture, Kate. You are very intense in your likes and dislikes. I never saw a being who was wholly bad. I believe Mr. Sherwood has a better nature, if any one has the skill to draw it out."

"I don't know how you'd go to work to get at it. If he was a drunkard I could undertake him with some hope of success. He might have a large, generous nature, something that you could appeal to, to lead him up to a higher life. But a professed teacher of righteousness, an expounder of the will of God, one who doubtless considers himself at the pinnacle of virtue, when he hasn't in reality the faintest conception of the meaning of the word, how are you to get at him? I have a missionary spirit toward him, but I don't know how to go to work."

"If you could tell him the truth in kindness. Perhaps all he needs is light."

"Kindness! Poor sister has tried that on him for the last ten years, and had the satisfaction of seeing him grow more selfish and morose every day. He isn't high enough up to appreciate it. But the truth! I'll tell you what it is. I've a new idea!" exclaimed Kate, suddenly starting up. "I'm going to try a

psychological experiment on him. I'll test him with acids, and if there's a soul in him I'll bring it out. I'll write him a letter this very night, and I'll tell him just exactly what I think of him; ask him if he's got any better nature; and tell him, if he has, I'd like to see a little of it. He preaches the truth to others; he shall enjoy the privilege of having it preached to him for once. "Truth and Love are the two great levers to move the world with. Nell's love has failed with him; I'll try truth. If I succeed I'll accept your theory, and be your most reverent and devoted disciple henceforth and forever."

Alice Graves was wealthy and an only child. Her friend, poor, an orphan, and a teacher, was spending her vacation with her. The two girls had spent the long summer afternoon in reading, and, as twilight approached, had fallen into the conversation we have just recorded.

## II.

It had been a busy day in the little country parsonage of A—; for its mistress was cook, chamber-maid, nurse, seamstress, and lady of the house, all in one. The week's ironing, which had occupied the sultry hours of morning, was fluttering in snowy purity on the bars; the callers, who had stolen the precious hours of afternoon, had taken their departure; the teething baby was at last asleep; and Mrs. Sherwood had seated herself before her formidable basket of unfinished sewing. What a weary vista of unstitched seams lay before her! Would she ever reach the end? No; for soon the autumn work would come—the sewing, cleaning, and a multitude of other duties—for a country minister's wife must be economical, and try her own lard, and make her own candles; and then came winter, and then spring; the seasons following each other in such rapid succession that she scarcely found time to prepare for one before the other was upon her. Life seemed an endless succession of unsewed garments, unwashed dishes, and teething babies; and, to embitter all, perpetual fault-finding from one whose love would have cast a golden halo around her humblest duties.

Mr. Sherwood had spent the day in his study, reading a little, lounging a little, and writing at intervals on a sermon on "Unconditional Submission." A very attractive room was Mr. Sherwood's study—much more so than the kitchen in which his better half was destined to spend the greater part of her time. There was a large square writing-desk, an inviting arm-chair, a lounge, and, best of all, a very respectable library of standard authors. One hour of the twenty-four in this room would have been gold to Nellie Sherwood, yet she seldom entered it but to sweep and dust. If her husband would but have brought the warmth and light of those great minds with whom he daily communed down to her, she would have asked no more. He never did; perhaps because he was himself incapable of receiving them.

When he came down this afternoon he had but three words for her: "Where's your supper?"

"It will be ready very soon. It is hardly time yet, and I wanted to get Susie's little apron done," was the rejoinder, without looking up from her work.

"Time half an hour ago. Seems to me you must have been short of starch this morning," he continued, going into the kitchen and inspecting the newly ironed linen. "My collars are as flimsy as rags, and one of them is smutty."

His wife ventured no reply. George and Susie rushing in at that moment fresh from play and waking the baby from his restless slumber, gave her opportunity to conceal the burning tears she could not wholly suppress.

Mr. Sherwood stretched himself on the sofa and took up a paper, but soon threw it aside impatiently. "I believe I will go up to the Post-office, as there seems to be no prospect of supper in this establishment for some time to come."

There were three letters in Mr. Sherwood's box; one from his brother, one from a neighboring clergyman, asking an exchange; the third—did his eyes deceive him?—was directed, in the dashing, off-hand chirography of Kate Vivian, to "Mr. James Sherwood."

"What now?" he thought, as he wonderingly tore open the envelope, and unfolded two closely-written sheets. He read as follows:

"HEMLOCK GROVE, August 29, 1864.

"I have been thinking about you this evening, and have taken it into my head to write you a letter. While I was at your house, two years ago, I interested myself in studying your mental and moral developments, to learn your object in life, your idea of happiness, your views of duty. I must confess frankly that the result of my investigations was not at all flattering to you. As far as I could learn your nature, from its outward manifestations, it is an intensely selfish one.

"As I understand it, the mainsprings of human action are three: duty, benevolence, selfishness. Neither duty nor benevolence ever prompted you to scold and grumble at your wife—making yourself disagreeable and her unhappy—because, perchance, she had made an ill-fitting garment, burned the coffee, or forgotten to make the gravy. Only selfishness, and a low form of selfishness, prompted you. Neither duty nor benevolence influenced you in treating your wife with the unkindness and neglect which you uniformly did while I was there. Selfishness—only selfishness—of the coarsest, rudest form. You are not happy. You can not be. The two objects of life are: first, holiness; second, happiness. To the attainment of the former, forgetfulness of self, love for God and our fellow-beings—a love which manifests itself in kind words, generous deeds, self-sacrifices, little acts of nobleness and love in everyday life—is essential. Evidently your object in life is *not* the attainment of holiness. It must then be happiness, and a failure at that! In a blind, ignorant, groping way you are seeking happiness, and, continually baffled, continually disappointed, you are vexed, angry, irritated, and out of humor with every one for that for which you alone are to blame.

"You profess to be a teacher of righteousness, yet how ignorant you are of the first principles of Christianity! 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' 'God is LOVE.' Love is the essence of Christianity. By 'love' I mean *all* true love, divine and human. All true love *is* divine, and he who scoffs at love blasphemes. Love was given to lead us out of and above self; to a purer, higher life; to God. It

is sacred, and he who has proved disobedient to its requirements has committed a fearful sin. Ten years ago you won the love of a sincere, pure-minded, trusting girl. You married her, promising to love, tenderly cherish, and care for her, as long as you both should live. How have you fulfilled that promise? Have you, forgetting yourself, sought to smooth her pathway for her, day by day; cheering her with kind deeds and pleasant words, noticing every little effort to please, generously overlooking all failures, nobly assisting to bear her burdens? Do you bring sunshine into the house with you? Or do you think only of yourself, and of her simply as a convenient machine to get your bread-and-butter for you, sew on your shirt-buttons, and darn your stockings?

"I have boarded for a long time in the family of a man whose life is a continual sermon. His happiness seems to consist in the pleasure he gives others. If his business troubles him he does not bring any clouds home, but has always a genial smile and pleasant word for his family. I have never heard him find fault with his wife. When things are to his taste he notices it, if there is a failure anywhere he does not see it. If one collar isn't ironed to suit him he takes another, and never says a word about it. Generally speaking he thinks every thing his wife does is about right, as every man with a soul in him does, when she tries her best to please him. He is always pleasant around house, and his family are glad instead of sorry when he comes home earlier than usual. He is always helpful, kind, considerate. If there are any burdens to bear, he is always ready and more than ready to bear them; and so easily, so cheerfully, with such manly strength and hearty good-will! In short, he *lives* the religion of the God whose name is Love. He is too manly to bicker about trifles, and too sensible to allow things which are of slight consequence to destroy domestic happiness. Although he values neatly fitting and well-ironed collars as highly as you do, he values the happiness of his wife, and the calm, peaceful flow of a pure and sacred home-love far more. Though he appreciates elaborate dinners, he likes better the cheerful converse around the board, the unclouded brow and merry laugh of his wife, the free, hearty effort to please which only love can inspire. In a word, he values the spiritual more than the material; love more than the gratification of selfish desires; God more than the world. His life tends upward, toward God; yours downward, as that of every selfish person must.

"Oh, why can you not change? Why can you not become noble, manly, generous, strong—living above self, forgetting self, trying to make others happy? Have you no higher nature, capable of nobler things? Surely you must have. My dearest friend, Allie Graves, says everybody has an angel in him. If there is one in you, I think it's about time for him to show himself. I want to see him. Won't you liberate him for my benefit? If you will, I'll like you and call you 'brother.'

"Trusting that you are sufficiently noble to accept all that I have said, in the same spirit of candor and goodwill in which I have written it,

"I remain your honest and sincere friend,

"KATE VIVIAN."

Mrs. Sherwood's supper was uncriticised that night. If the tea was too strong, or the biscuit not quite right, Mr. Sherwood did not know it. He ate in silence, and immediately retired to his study. For weeks he was the victim of violent and conflicting emotions. At first surprise and indignation, then bitterness and a feeling of injured innocence, finally a settled conviction of the truth of all Kate had said—a conviction that he would not have acknowledged even to himself—took possession of him. The angel in him was awakened, was beginning to assert her authority, and the demon, so long master, stood on his defense. A fearful soul-conflict followed. Mrs. Sherwood only knew that her husband was reserved and fitful—sometimes moody, sometimes petulant, and sometimes

strangely kind and thoughtful for her. They were "strangers yet," for he lacked that largeness of nature that would come to her, acknowledging his past unkindness, telling her all his heart, and promising that henceforth love should reign in their household. Unkind? He had not been unkind—oh no! Things had not always run smoothly, he had had his annoyances, perhaps he had not always been patient under them—one can not always control one's self—and perhaps Nellie had had more labors and trials than he had realized. At any rate he should always be kind to her, and make her happy, of course. Hadn't he always done so?

The angel was very feeble from her long imprisonment. Air, exercise, and time strengthened her.

## III.

The next summer Kate wrote to Alice Graves as follows:

"The millennium is coming! What do you think has happened? James Sherwood has made Nellie a present of a sewing-machine. My poor sis is in the seventh heaven over it. You see she has always been dying for one, she did want so much to find a little time for reading and writing; but, then, she said she didn't suppose she could ever see through one—she never had any ingenuity—and she should only break needles and waste thread. Well, you know that piece in *Harper's* about that wonderful sewing-machine so like the letter 'G.' She was telling Em Heath about it, and saying if she could only get time to write another Sunday-school book she thought she could earn one. James happened to overhear her, and when he went to New York made a hunt among the sewing-machines till he found the right one, and sent it to her for a surprise. She wrote me the gayest letter I have had from her in years; said she had all her summer sewing done, and was looking forward to hours and hours of reading that would make her forget she wasn't a girl again. She says her machine will braid, hem, fell, and do all sorts of things. I don't know but it washes the dishes, and takes care of the baby by the way she runs on about it. Any way I am glad she has it. She said James was 'very kind' now, and that the future looked brighter to her than it had done for many years. I grant you the victory, *ma chère*, in the argument we held last August in the arbor. That sewing-machine has revealed the angel in James Sherwood to my heretofore unbelieving eyes. Yes; I can see every feather in its wings, and every fold in its snowy drapery. Are you satisfied?"

## IV.

But the sewing-machine was destined to reveal another angel to Kate; even the Angel of Love.

"See what an odd document somebody let fall in our office to-day!" said Guy Worthington, the superintendent of the salesroom of the sewing-machine establishment, to his friend and confidant, Fred Elmore. "The envelope was gone, so I couldn't send it to the individual for whose benefit it appears to have been written. Would you return it to the fair author, or preserve it as a curiosity?"

"What is it? A love-letter?"

"Doesn't strike me that it is. It appears to be addressed to a parson, and charges him with all sorts of iniquities; being a bear in his family, and what not; then there is a high-flown disquisition on love; and the document finally winds up with an exhortation to him to repent and change his course. Oh, it's rich! The

lady is a regular little pepper-box whoever she is."

"Let's have it;" and Fred Elmore tipped back in his easy-chair, elevated his feet at some distance above his head, and was soon buried in the perusal of the manuscript in question.

"Kate Vivian. A pretty name," said Fred, as he threw the letter upon the table. "Pretty penmanship, too; has character in it."

"Character! I should think so. Won't the man who marries her catch a Tartar? Whew! Such high and mighty ideas on the duties of husbands! It fairly takes my breath away to think of it! She's smart though, by George! I'd give half a year's salary to become acquainted with her."

"You might send her the letter with a polite note, telling how it fell into your hands, and so worded as to require an answer."

"That's so! I'll do it!" And, suiting the action to the word, Guy Worthington drew up a package of note-paper and fell to writing. After several unsuccessful attempts, resulting in the sacrifice of considerable stationery, he at length produced a specimen of composition and chirography which Fred pronounced faultless.

"Hemlock Grove! Have you the least idea in what portion of our terrestrial sphere this very spicy grove is situated?" asked Guy, as he folded the note.

"There is such a place in the western part of the State, somewhere in the vicinity of the renowned village of Algiers, where I have an uncle. I remember hearing the name mentioned when I was there years ago."

"No doubt that's the very spot. At any rate here goes for 'Hemlock Grove, New York.' Heigh-ho! Shall I get an answer in a week?"

"If ever. What will you wager, now, she isn't an old maid between fifty and sixty, with gray hair and spectacles?"

"Any thing. I tell you she isn't over twenty-two, is tall and handsome, with large dark eyes and raven locks—and is brilliant, spicy, and original. I do like to see a woman who isn't run in the common mould."

"I hope you won't be disappointed; but I haven't the least idea she's under thirty."

"You're a bear. I shall ask her for her *carte de visite* in my next."

Guy watched the post-office anxiously for one, two, three weeks. At last a missive in a lady's hand, post-marked "Berlin Centre," appeared. He tore it open eagerly. It was a brief, dignified note of acknowledgment, giving no opportunity for a reply without positive rudeness.

"Any way, I've found out one thing. She lives in 'Berlin Centre,' wherever that may be."

A reference to the Post-office Directory showed Guy that it was in the same county with "Algiers."

"Hurrah! I say, Fred, don't you want to go up and visit your uncle this summer, with an agreeable companion? I've been thinking where I'd spend my vacation, and this is just the thing!"

"Of course I will. I've a pretty cousin there, too, who must be a young lady by this time. So if your divinity turns out to be a vinegar-faced spinster—which is more than likely—your cloud of despair will turn a silver lining!"

Accordingly the month of August found the young gentlemen ensconced in the ample farmhouse of Mr. Ira Harrison, with Miss Susie to do the honors for them.

Susie Harrison was a rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed farmer's daughter, full of health and cheerfulness, who churned butter, made cheese, swept, washed dishes, and sometimes helped milk the cows and feed the pigs. Guy, who had imagined her a delicate, golden-haired, ethereal style of maiden, like those in pictures, who spend their time sitting around in dells and grottoes dressed up in their Sunday's best, was disappointed. But Susie was pleasant, sensible, and well-educated withal; so that after the first few days they were the best of friends, and at the end of a week our hero might have been seen at the kitchen sink wiping dishes, with a mammoth checked linen apron pinned up in front of him, and a trim little figure with a merry face working at his side.

"Is there a place called Berlin Centre near here?" he had asked her, on the second day after his arrival.

"Oh yes; it's the nearest village, about four and a half miles distant."

"Do you know any family there by the name of Vivian?"

"No family of that name. There's a young lady teaching the select school there named Kate Vivian."

Guy glanced triumphantly at Fred as Susie said "young lady."

"What sort of a person is she?" asked Fred.

"Oh, she's splendid! You ought to know her. And that reminds me that her school is going to have a picnic next week, and we'll all go. She told me to invite my friends."

"All right, so far," thought Guy.

The picnic came in due time, and with it the long looked-for introduction to Miss Vivian. She proved to be not sparkling and sharp, as Guy had imagined, but reserved and dignified, with just sufficient spice and originality to make her interesting in conversation. Guy was satisfied.

The picnic was closely followed by drives, rambles, and so on. The four weeks' vacation passed all too rapidly. Fred carried away with him at its close a promise from the country school-mistress to correspond, and during the following autumn and winter lengthy documents passed weekly between Berlin Centre and New York. Guy Worthington, probably unaware of this, took a trip to Berlin Centre in May, staid three days, and returned to his business "a sadder and a wiser man."

The next August a double wedding took place at Hemlock Grove. Alice Graves became Mrs. Ned Armstrong. We hope she found her angel without having to carve him

out of the block. Kate joined hands with Fred Elmore. Her bridal present from her husband was a sewing-machine—of whose make we know but will not tell; only be sure it was the best. "It has done a greater work than it ever promised," said Fred. "It has sewed two hearts together."

#### A DIXIAN GEOGRAPHY.

MRS. M. B. MOORE, "having found most of the juvenile books too complex for young minds, has for some time intended making an effort to simplify the science of Geography. If she shall succeed," she says, "in bringing this beautiful and useful study within the grasp of the little folks, and making it both interesting and pleasant, her purpose will be fully accomplished." The result of her well-meant labors lies before us in the shape of a dingy pamphlet of 48 pages, each containing not quite half as much matter as a page of this Magazine. It is issued at Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1864, and is declared to be "A new and popular book, entirely Southern, and finely adapted to the use of Common Schools." The price is three dollars, as announced by the publishers. Our copy, however, bears the bookseller's price-mark of five dollars. We suppose that the value of Confederate money had gone down.

The work opens with the usual "First Lessons," in which the young aspirants for geographical knowledge are told that

"The earth is round, like a ball, and turns over once in a day and night. The reason we do not fall off is that the earth draws us to it. We call this drawing toward the earth *attraction*. Were it not for this we should all fall off, like the water falls from a grindstone or a wheel when turned rapidly. God made the earth and put it in motion, and it will move until he commands it to stop. Should we not love him for making us such a beautiful home?"

By way of explaining the "Points of the Compass" it is said that

"There is a certain star, called the North Polar Star, which you can always see of a clear night. There is a kind of stone, called the load stone, which, if a long piece of it be fixed on a pivot, will always point to the North Polar Star. There is one spot on the earth which is always turned to the Polar Star. This is called the North Pole. The just opposite is called the South Pole. These points are called Poles because of their relation to the Polar Star."

The "Races of Men" have a chapter. "Those in Europe and America are mostly white, and are called the Caucasian race. They have schools and churches, and live in fine style." The Asiatics, or Mongolian people, "are a quiet and plodding race, but when educated are sensible and shrewd. When they ever become converted they hold fast their profession, and are not fickle like some races." The Malays "are black and have wool on their heads, but not like the African. They are very fierce, and will die rather than be made slaves. They eat the flesh of their enemies, and are called cannibals." The African race, as most likely to be of interest, comes in for a longer account than is ac-