

Chapter 12

Diary of John Cavendish Dudley

**PROFESSOR VON MARX'S HISTORY—THE PRINCESS—
THE YOUNG CHEVALIER—"PROSPERO AND ARIEL"**

Editor's Note:

[In the Introduction to this work, the editor has already explained the necessity of incorporating some portion of Mr. John C. Dudley's Diary into "Ghost Land" papers. Without the continuous thread of narrative afforded by Mr. Dudley's interesting journal, there would be a hiatus in the record of several months, which the reader will readily perceive could not be filled up by the Chevalier de B_____, and yet this would leave a most important part of the history in a bald and unfinished state.

Neither the Chevalier nor Mr. Dudley have been very exact in the order of chronological data. The editor, however, being quite familiar with the narrative, is enabled from personal knowledge to state that the extract from Mr. Dudley's diary with which the following chapter commences, refers to the period when Professor von Marx and his pupil first visited England together, and antedates by several months the catastrophe narrated in the last chapter but one.—Ed. Ghost Land.]

March 10, 18—. Good news for the occultists of Great Britain! Just what we wanted, in fact, and that is, the infusion of a new element into our effete, lifeless ranks. Although not one of us has half digested the good things we have been receiving for years, we have long been on the tiptoe of expectation, waiting for something new. Well, unless my expectations are strangely disappointed, we shall have just the dish of excitement our blase palates have been hungering for; for lo! I shall have the welcome task of announcing at the Orphic Circle, of which I am the recording secretary, the advent of the great Professor Felix von Marx, the Cornelius Agrippa and Nostradamus of the nineteenth century, accompanied, too, by a peerless somnambulist, one whom the Illuminee of Germany exalt as the rarest and most gifted seer in the world.

I don't very well like the tone of von Marx's letter though, for he declines to accept of my hospitality, old and dear as are the ties of friendship that bind us; nor yet he adds, will he consent to parade the gifts of his Seer before the craving wonder-seekers of England. The boy, he says, is tired, and needs entire cessation from magnetic influences, besides they are coming to London, as he assures me, chiefly to find out what we can show them; to determine what progress we have made in the black or white art, as the case may be, and learn whether the Teutons are not surpassed in magical lore by the countrymen of Roger Bacon, Dee, and Kelly. Well, no matter what they come for, I for one, feel my heart leap with joy at

the prospect of clasping hands once more with my dear and well-tryed friend, Felix von Marx. Let me recall the circumstances of our early intimacy. At the university of W_____, Marx and I were sworn chums. We had but one heart, one purse, and one lesson between us. The heart was our joint-stock property; the purse was mine, the lesson his, for he did all my learning for me. What a bright and glorious scholar he was! Took all the prizes, and never had any rivals: I suppose because nobody dared to compete with him.

What he ever found to take a fancy to in such a dunce as me, unless indeed it was my unbounded admiration for him, I never could understand; but I suppose we loved each other on the principle of positive and negative agreement; certain it is we were never apart, not even in the tremendous mysteries in which von Marx had been initiated before I knew him, and which he, like a true friend as he was, determined I should share with him when we became such constant associates. Heavens! what awful things we did at that K_____ association. If but half our doings had been known to the jealous German government--our fly-by-night excursions, our Asmodeus inspections of any house or castle we chose to enter spiritually, our Polter Gheist performances, sending our spirits out to knock about the pots and kettles of old fraus and pelt their pretty frauleins with rosebuds and spiritually written billets-doux! methinks we students of the occult, in secret session in our upper room at W_____, would have been deemed fitter subjects for fine and imprisonment than many a political plotter or distinguished conspirator, hosts of whom were constantly under arrest, whilst we continued to cut up our capers unmolested and unsuspected.

It was a hard matter for me to quit the university at W_____ and my dear friend Felix, when my father at length recalled me for the purpose of placing me at that dull old anti-German, anti-spiritual, anti-everything that is progressive, Oxford College, but when after two years of useless waste of fees to professors who could teach me nothing, and "fags" who could cram nothing into me, my father thought the time had come for me to make "the grand tour," how gladly did I remember my promise to von Marx, and at once propose him to my respected sire as the tutor most fit to accompany me. In vain I argued that though von Marx was in reality a shade younger than me, he was a perfect octogenarian in learning and experience. My father had inquired about him, found he had just been appointed to a professorship in Oriental languages, but that, taken on the whole, he was a strange, mystical sort of a fellow, and anything but a fitting mentor for me. The subject was still in petto, when a brilliant diplomatic opening occurred for me in our minister's suite to Russia.

No sooner was I installed in my new dignity than I discovered the immediate necessity of my having an under-secretary. Now Professor Marx was a splendid linguist, and beside the Oriental tongues, was a complete master of the Russian language. He could give intelligible expression to more consonants in one word of seven syllables in fact than any one of his generation. The result was, I proved to my father's entire satisfaction, that if I did not succeed in securing the services of Professor Marx as my under-secretary and instructor in the Russian language, my whole diplomatic prospects would be blighted, in fact, likely to come to a premature end.

My father appreciated the force of my logic. The case was stated to the professor, who, as an act of friendship, felt bound to sacrifice himself. His salary, fixed at double the worth of his professorship, his ragged college gown and cap exchanged for a neat suit of Khamschatka dog, behold us smoking cheroots and plotting occult seances at our elegant quarters in the Grand Square of St. Petersburg.

I had always loved the mysterious, doted on ghost stories, and though I shrank away with inexpressible terror at the idea of their realization, I ever returned to their study again, and cared for nothing so much as the wild, the weird, and the wonderful.

Now, if there ever was a born Adept, with all the natural qualifications for a magnetizer, biologist, healer, astrologer, in a word, for a master of spirits and spiritual things, that Adept was Felix von Marx. As to me, my occult powers were my natural inheritance. My sainted mother, then in heaven, had been a seeress, my honored sire, still on earth, was a devoted student of astrology. Coward as I was—I am bound to own it—in the ghost-seeing line, I never could get out of that involuntary and much dreaded accomplishment. When quite a little lad, I was regularly worried with ghosts. My father spent the autumn months generally at a fine old castle he owned in the north of England, and there these phantoms took such an extraordinary fancy to me that they walked with me, talked with me, met me in every gallery and corridor, made me come and go, fetch and carry just as if I had been a young sexton, and naturally belonged to the dead. I saw, moreover, sprites and fairies by the score; heard the mermaids sing and the tritons whistle; in a word, there never was a boy more admirably adapted to be a good magnetic subject, never an operator more completely *au fait* at putting me through the spiritual kingdom than Felix.

Of course we gravitated together as naturally as the magnet and its armature, and though, now I was in office and had attained to the dignity of a diplomatist, I declined to be put asleep like a fractious child or sent out of my body as a Polter Gheist to scare honest peasants out of their wits with throwing stones and making noises invisibly, my love for the practices of mesmerism and magic only increased with my years and the fine opportunities which association with my accomplished secretary afforded me. I found Professor von Marx had made immense strides in occult knowledge whilst I had been wasting my time in learning the arts of impolite dissipation at Oxford. He had visited the East, where he was born, and had there picked up so many awful scraps of magic lore that I began to be almost afraid of him.

Whilst we were deep in our plans for the prosecution of occult study, however, I suddenly realized the truth of that excellent proverb, "Man proposes and God disposes," in the very awkward fact of my falling desperately in love. The object of this unexpected awakening, was a charming young widow, the relict of a certain old German Margrave, the Prince de K_____, who had left his fair lady with a fair fortune, by virtue of which double accomplishments madame, the princess, became the cynosure of all eyes, and the target at which every bachelor in the land aimed his arrows. Of course I should have had little expectation of carrying off such a prize, with so many odds against me, had not the lady conceived a very agreeable plan of perfecting herself in the Russian language. She was visiting for the season at the house of some very distinguished relatives of her late husband's in St. Petersburg, and having frequently met us in the diplomatic circles, and noticed, as she courteously observed, the immense facility with which I acquired the throat-splitting language of the country under the admirable tutelage of my secretary, she inquired in the most insinuating manner whether my studies could not be conducted in her salon, by which arrangement she could have the advantage of participating in them. I was enchanted. To me the whole thing was plain. The princess had in this delicate way, hinted at her wish to enjoy my society untrammelled by the frivolous crowd who usually surrounded us, and thus I should be able to get the start of all my rivals, and lay siege to the fair widow's heart at my leisure.

The only difficulty was, to enlist that cold-hearted Mephistopheles of a secretary of mine in the scheme. I did not dare confess the real motives that prompted me, for I could by no means venture to meet the tremendous sneer with which I knew he would meet my avowal of being in love. At length I conquered his stubborn prejudices against "the attempt to teach a woman anything but folly," by assuring him I was so situated that if I did not continue my studies in the Princess K_____'s private apartments I might be recalled to Europe at any moment. Von Marx could not, as he affirmed, see the force of this position; but at length,

finding his friend's heart strongly set on the matter, he complied with the best grace he could. Thus it was arranged that I and the princess should read Russian three times a week in her elegant salon, where, by aid of coffee, chocolate, German poetry, and Italian music, I managed to get through a deal of covert flirtation with the fair widow, whilst the professor, ensconced in a distant easy chair, pored over the pages of Cornelius Agrippa or Jacob Behmen.

At length the time arrived which I deemed ripe for my intended declaration. Taking advantage of my secretary's being laid up with a sore throat, and presenting myself one day in his stead, Russian books in hand—volumes, by the way, of which hitherto we had not found a convenient opportunity of cutting the pages—I began to open my battery, and with a rush of enthusiastic courage, stimulated by the absence of my secretary, I laid my name, fame, fortune, life, etc., etc., at the feet of the adorable princess. The result of this outbreak was a polite request on her Highness's part that I would discontinue my visits in the future. I was in despair. I would instantly go mad, hang, drown, shoot, or freeze myself to death; I would cut somebody's throat, exterminate the human race, and by way of preliminary, I smoked ten cigars and wrote the princess a series of letters once an hour for three days. Each missive ended, like the cigars, in smoke.

At length and just as I had made up my mind to confide in von Marx and urge him to plead for me, that gentleman called me into his apartment, lighted a cigar, begged me to do the same, and then, putting a letter into my hands, asked me to read it and tell him what I thought of that. What I thought of that, indeed! Great heavens! what should that be but a deliberate offer of herself, her name, fame, fortune etc., etc., from the Princess K_____ to Professor Felix von Marx! Rage and astonishment choked my utterance at first, whilst prudence and self-respect urged me to keep my own counsel at last. Recovering my composure, I began to congratulate my friend on his good luck. Of course I was glad, I was delighted, I should dance at his wedding furiously; in a word, I was "only too happy," I said, "to see him so very happy." But as I spoke, with a sardonic grin worthy of a demon, I could not help remarking that my friend appeared most particularly unhappy. With a comical mixture of discontent and perplexity, he declared he could not imagine what the deuce the woman could want him for, but the worst of it was he didn't know how he was to get out of it.

"Get out of it?" I exclaimed, in high indignation. "What! when the handsomest woman in St. Petersburg lays her fortune at your feet?"

"But I don't want the woman, nor her beauty nor her fortune either," replied the cynic.

"But, my dear fellow," I rejoined, warming with the idea that my idol was to be slighted and insulted by being called "a woman," "you can't treat a lady of her exalted rank and character in that way. You must have her, you ought to have her, you shall have her, or—I'll know the reason why."

"Whew!" cried my friend, with a long whistle. "Am I to be married against my will, and to a woman I don't care two straws for?"

I saw I must change my tack. Professor von Marx was just then the handsomest young fellow I had ever looked upon. Tall and finely formed, any Grecian sculptor would have laid violent hands upon him for a model. With what I had so often heard the ladies describe as "those lovely black, curling, waving locks," tossed carelessly over a noble brow; a pair of large, splendid dark eyes, that went right through everything, especially that frailest of all things, a woman's heart; with a classic mouth, fine teeth, and what every female authority declared to be "such a duck of a moustache, and such a love of a pair of whiskers," but above

all, with a sort of indescribable, Oriental, magical kind of spell-like way about him that nobody seemed able to resist; who could compete with him? On the other hand, how could I, a slim, genteel youth, with narrow shoulders and a stoop, blue eyes and a cough, a small crop of straw-colored hair on my face and an equally slender allowance on my head, the latter of a stubborn character, too, which no friseur had ever been able to twist into curl—how could such an one enter the lists with a von Marx and hope for success?

Oh, if my father had only been an Arabian shiek, or my mother an Eastern sultana, there might have been a chance for me! But as it was, and with the fatal experience of the princess's choice between a poor Adonis and a rich gawky—as I in my humility deemed myself—I saw there was no chance for me in future, unless I got von Marx married right out of hand. Besides, I loved the dear fellow in one way as much as I adored the faithless fair one in another way, and the only balm my wounded spirit could receive was to see them united. This done, I would seek an early grave, and—"die in peace." How I managed it I cannot tell—whether by coaxing, scolding, or fairly badgering my friend into the match, I know not. Certain it is, I did succeed; and after laying out before Felix all the opportunities he would enjoy of following up his favorite pursuits as the husband of the rich and fashionable Princess K_____, I finally saw the knot tied by the chaplain of the embassy, and Professor von Marx and his illustrious bride departing for one of her charming castles on the Rhine, at which spot I promised to join them as soon as I could get released from my now irksome official duties.

It was three years before I was able to redeem this promise, and when I did, it was in company with the dear and lovely lady who had discernment enough to discover in the slim, genteel youth, whose many disadvantages I had so humbly pitted against the splendid von Marx, the dear companion by whose life-long love every other female image has been displaced, always excepting the admiration I share for her, with three fair duplicates of herself, who now call me their loving father.

When I and my beloved bride reached H_____, and I had placed her to rest in the pleasant apartments provided for us, I hurried off to the castle where my servants had learned the Princess von Marx was then residing. Great was my chagrin to find neither my friend nor his lady at home. Her Highness was out at the hunt, the domestics told me, and the professor—they didn't know, but they thought I should find him at the neighboring college. "At the college!" I repeated. "That is odd. What could he be doing there?" They didn't know, but they believed he was there; if not, they didn't know where he would be.

Hurrying away, with strange misgivings in my mind, I applied to the chief janitor of the college, and learned that von Marx was professor of the Hebrew and Arabic languages in that institution, and might be found in his own rooms in such and such a direction.

Professor von Marx a teacher, and occupying shabby rooms in a third-rate college, whilst his illustrious consort was residing in a neighboring castle and amusing herself with a hunting party! There was "something rotten in the state of Denmark" with a vengeance. I thought. I soon reached my friend's quarters, entered without ceremony, found him in, and received such a greeting as assured me whatever else was changed, his early friendship remained. In all other respects I found him a sadly altered man. He seemed to have grown taller and thinner, though he still retained his unparalleled grace and symmetry of proportion; his air was as commanding as ever, but it was tintured with a deep and stern sadness which added many years of age to his manner; his face, though as noble and handsomer than ever, was pale and care-worn; his brow was contracted with an habitual frown, and there was a fixidity in his expression which almost made me shrink from him. His dress, though still gentlemanlike and

clean, was worn and threadbare, and the furniture of his room was beggarly compared to that which in old times we used to share together. In the corner of the room was a rude, evidently home-made cot, shaded with a pure white coverlet, on which were strewed wild flowers, and beneath which slept a beautiful child, the father of whom unmistakably stood before me.

Subdued in an instant to the tone of my friend's altered circumstances and appearance, I could only take his hand and stammer out: "How is all this, Felix? Let us sit down and talk it all over like dear old times, you know."

And talk it over we did, and for a few hours the dear old times seemed to come back to my friend's wounded spirit.

It was an old story von Marx told me—the story of a marriage which was not made in heaven, and wherein the hapless couple were yoked, not mated. The princess was a gay, frivolous butterfly, utterly incapable of appreciating any tiling in her talented husband except his remarkably handsome person. He was a stern, devoted student of the occult, who found neither sympathy nor companionship in his fashionable wife: thus before six months had worn away, both had bitterly repented—the one her infatuation, the other, the astonishing facility with which he had suffered himself to be "entrapped."

Their lives of unceasing discord were, it is true, interrupted for a time by the birth of a lovely boy, upon whom the unhappy father lavished all that wealth of affection of which he was so capable, could any one have found and governed the secret of its source.

After two years of mutual bitterness and recrimination the ill-matched couple agreed to separate. and in so doing Professor von Marx retired as he had for some time lived, entirely upon the proceeds of his writings, translations, and lectures. He refused to accept the smallest portion of his wife's wealth, and finding he could not obtain possession of his idolized child by amicable arrangement with his lady, he actually carried him off by force, and held him under an unceasing watch and ward by the same means.

He had gladly accepted the offer of a small professorship in the poor college of H_____, and was now lingering in that vicinity awaiting the tardy decision of the law in respect to his boy, whom the princess sought to reclaim.

Such was the sum of a history which occupied in the relation many hours of the night. I heard it with great pain, not only on my friend's account. but on that of my wife also. The princess and herself had been schoolmates. Educated at the same convent in France, they had conceived a girlish affection for each other, and I knew my dear companion, with the zeal of her warm, loving nature, would he sure to take her friend's part in the impending dispute.

For several weeks we lingered in the neighborhood of H_____, vainly endeavoring to effect a reconciliation between a couple who had nothing in common with each other to be reconciled about.

With the old sophistry of appealing to their sense of religious duty, we endeavored to convince them they had taken each other "for better or for worse," and ought to endure the worse if worse it were. The princess declared the professor had no more sense of religion than a stock or a stone; the professor swore that the princess's religion was all carried in the feathers of her churchgoing hat; in short, our efforts were as fruitless as nature intended them to be. At length the time arrived for the decision which was to award the little fellow,

who was the only tie of mutuality between them, to one or other of the parents, and the law, by what hocus-pocus I know not, decided to bestow him on the mother. The professor had left his pearl of price in the college building in charge of a trusty friend, but before he returned from the court to defend his rights, as he certainly would have done unto the death, by force of arms, a party of German Jagers surrounded the place of the child's concealment, carried him off, and placed him in his mother's castle, under the protection of half a regiment of well-armed domestics.

Deep if not loud were the curses which the bereaved father uttered, when he returned to find the little cot, which he had made and adorned with his own hands, empty, and his idol gone. Were those curses vented on empty air alone, or did they take effect in the realm where evil wishes are registered by evil though unseen powers? Within twelve hours after the young boy was removed to his mother's castle, reaching out of a window to call piteously on what he insisted upon declaring was the form of his father in the court-yard below, he escaped from the grasp of his attendant, and screaming: "Coming, papa! Erny's coming!" he sprang through the open window, fell nearly sixty feet into the court below, and was instantly killed. Professor von Marx soon after inherited, by the death of a near kinsman, a small independent fortune, and a title of nobility to which he was the next heir.

The title he repudiated, the fortune he claimed, generously offering to divide it with his late partner, who with equal liberality declined the proffer.

This was the last communication the ill-assorted pair ever held, the professor having, as he has since assured me, never heard of or sought to inquire for his lady again. The princess is still, as I hear, a gay habitue of many an European court; the professor, one of the most celebrated writers and lecturers on metaphysics of which the age can boast. Openly, he devotes himself to the duties of a professorship at the university of B _____, but privately, he has addicted himself to the incessant study and practice of occult arts, in which, throughout the secret societies of the East, Germany, France, and Continental Europe generally, he is acknowledged to be one of the most skillful and powerful adepts that ever lived.

In correspondence with me which has never been interrupted, he has of late years made frequent allusions to his deep interest in a young Austrian boy of noble birth, who was placed by his parents for education at the college of which von Marx is still a professor.

This child, he once wrote me word, was born, the very day on which his idolized Ernest, then only two years and a half old, died. "Born one hour after the tragic event, this child," he added, "strange to say, resembles me so closely in appearance, that every master and student in the university remarks upon the likeness. Day by day this weird resemblance increases, and if the dreams of the reincarnationists had any foundation in truth, it might have been supposed that the spirit of my precious Ernest had passed into the form of the infant born in a far distant land at the self-same fateful hour that my Ernest died. I know these are worse than idle dreams; still I have pleased myself at times by indulging in them, just as a weary man of the world might take up at some odd hour a fairy tale and linger over the page of fiction which once constituted his childhood's delight" *

* Since the editor of these papers has become intimately acquainted with the Chevalier de B _____ she has frequently heard discussed, the extraordinary resemblance between him and his adopted father, named in these writings "Professor von Marx." A fine portrait of Professor von Marx is to be seen in a certain German collection of oil paintings, in which it is almost impossible to trace any dissimilarity between that and a portrait of the Chevalier de B _____ at the same age, save in point of costume. This remarkable resemblance has been

frequently cited to the editor and the author also, in confirmation of the re-incarnationists' theory that the soul of the dead child Ernest had passed into the new-born form of the Chevalier, the period between the decease and the birth being only one hour, and the parties, though originally strangers to each other, having been so singularly brought together in later years. The author has requested the editor to record here his utter disbelief in this theory, or indeed in the doctrine of re-incarnation at all. He himself is a firm believer in the existence of special types of physique prevailing throughout all the kingdoms of nature. He conceives that he and his adopted father belonged to the same peculiar type of being, and that the resemblance first instituted in the architecture of Nature, was deepened to a perfect fac-simile by the formative process of magnetization during a period of many years, also by the strength of the attachment subsisting between the parties, which tended to mould even the expression of their features into similarity.

Perhaps these circumstances may account for the extraordinary fancy which the stern and otherwise ascetic professor has conceived for the young Chevalier de B_____. I am advised that his personal adventures, marriage, and paternity have never been revealed to his protege, to whom, as he claims, he can veil or disclose his mind just as he pleases. Despite this boy's high birth, his family have, it appears, consented to his adoption by the great and learned Professor von Marx; and this then is the prodigy, whom the professor declares to be the finest seer and the most perfect ecstatic upon earth, and whom I hope soon to welcome as my honored guest.

My dear wife and our three charming girls are not, I regret to say, in sympathy with my Spiritualistic pursuits; in fact, they profess to be quite scandalized at the idea of their beloved husband and father being a "magician," a practicer of the "black art," a regular Zamiel or Ashmodi. As to my two boys, they are such a rough-and-tumble pair of young profanities that I don't dare to trust them with any higher ideas on Spiritualistic subjects than a mild ghost story or two about Christmas or New Year. Take it on the whole, however, my happy household are all agreed to disagree. My magical pursuits moreover, are all conducted in other scenes than my own home, and whatever friends I do introduce there, are ever warmly welcomed by my wife and children. Professor von Marx is of course, well known to my wife, though not altogether her special favorite. With true womanly feeling she espoused the female side of the matrimonial dispute; nevertheless she was in the habit of saying to me privately, that any woman who was bold enough to offer herself in marriage, deserved just whatever treatment she might receive; so, take it for all in all, she didn't know that the fault was wholly on the professor's side.

March 29. The long-looked-for guests have arrived, and I have just returned from my first visit of welcome to them.

The changes which years have wrought in my friend Felix von Marx, seem to have intensified rather than altered his marked characteristics. In form and face he is still superb, but his manners are even colder, more resolute and self-centered than in the days of yore, when I and all around him bent before his indomitable will. His friendship for me still remains undiminished, but the yielding points of his nature seem to be all called forth by his protege, to whom his manner always becomes softened when he either speaks to or even looks towards him. My long and curious study of mesmeric subjects, natural somnambulists, sensitives, etc., has been fruitful of a rich and strange experience, and inspired me with much curiosity concerning the young man for whom Professor von Marx and the German mystics generally, make such high claims.

How, then, can I permit my pen to record my first impressions of this paragon, and own

that I was disappointed in him? Yet such is the actual fact. Perhaps I placed my expectations of personal gratification too high; but to me, he is unapproachable; I am troubled in his presence, troubled even when I think of him, and yet I am lowered in my own estimation for being so. In external appearance he so wonderfully resembles his adopted father, that it would be difficult for strangers to believe there were no ties of relationship between them; the only perceptible differences in these gentlemen are in respect to age and the fact that all the sterner features of Professor von Marx's expression are softened in his ward by an excessive sensitiveness.

The professor's almost insupportable penetration of glance is subdued in this boy's magnificent dark eyes, by a dreamy, far-off look, which speaks unmistakably of the spiritual mystic. They are truly perfect types of a high magian and his subject, but that of which I complain—if indeed I have any right to use such a word—is the entire absence of pleasure, earthly interest or sympathy in this young man's manner. He received me as if he were in a dream; answered when I addressed him, as if by an effort to recall himself to my presence or remember where he was. His sweet and beautifully modulated voice, sounded a long way off, and his entire person was so statuesque and unearthly, that I could have almost imagined I was a boy again, and shivering under the old superstitious awe which used to possess me when I deemed I was in presence of a spirit, or, in more homely phrase, thought I saw a ghost.

I noticed, moreover, the wonderful, I may truly say the unspeakable, understanding that subsisted between these strangely-matched persons. Professor von Marx seldom addressed a word to his friend during the whole interview, yet the latter frequently rose, handed him a book, some papers, or other matters he required, without any other than a mental request. He evidently understood and obeyed the least thought in the professor's mind, and on more than one occasion turned towards him, and by silent looks replied to his unspoken thoughts. Through the same extraordinary process of soul intercourse, the professor would fix his questioning eyes upon his ward, and obtain an answer without one syllable being interchanged between them. I have often seen and wondered at the remarkable rapport which existed between my own mesmerized subjects and myself. I have seen still more positive evidences of pure, mental transfer between the Lucides of the celebrated Baron Dupotet, MM. Billot, Delleuze, and Cahagnet, also with a number of my English associates, whose honored names I withhold in view of my anonymous style of writing; but I never beheld any system of soul intercourse so perfect as that which existed between these unrelated Teutons, nor so complete an adept in mind-reading as this young Chevalier.

After a short experience of the singular influence diffused by this speechless intelligence, I began to comprehend that it was the source of the troubled feeling which possessed me, and involuntarily I began to speculate upon the possibility of the young mystic's reading my mind with the same facility that he did his father's. This thought not only disturbed me, but awoke these spontaneous reflections within me: "I wonder if he knows I don't like him," and, "I wish to heaven he would leave me alone with my friend." No sooner did these mal-a-propos ideas fill my mind than the Chevalier arose, and with a flushed face, and for the first time during our interview, a furtive smile playing around his lips, he bent to me courteously, apologized for his indiscretion in obtruding his presence "so long on dear friends who must be so very glad to renew their old, confidential intercourse with each other," and before I could stammer out any protest against his obvious interpretation of my secret wishes he was gone.

The professor, who seemed more at home and like his old self when his sprite was gone, laughed outright at my confusion, and cried cheerily: "Never mind, John! Louis knew just as

well as you did that you wished him at the deuce, so of course he retired; but don't let that worry you, old fellow. The fact is, this boy feels rather than sees or hears what is going on around him; but now tell me candidly, what do you think of him?"

Once again I began to stammer in that ridiculous way of mine, when my thoughts are a long way off and want collecting, but the professor saved me all further trouble by giving me such a complete word-picture of what I had actually thought in the Chevalier's presence that I started up fairly aghast, and cried: "Come, come, Felix, this will never do! It is bad enough to be obliged to say many things we don't always-think, but when we only think things and don't say them, and yet have them all said for us in this remorseless way, 'pon my life! I don't know what is to become of us. Felix, I am getting to be fairly afraid of both you and that weird friend of yours."

"Well," replied von Marx, coolly, "if you will venture upon the enchanted isle, and place yourself at the mercy of a Prospero and Ariel, why you must take the consequences but come now, John, let us talk as of old, and somewhat more to the purpose. You have had great experience as a magnetizer since we met, conversed with many of the best and most philosophic of Mesmer's followers, both here and on the Continent, besides enjoying the opportunity of analyzing the idiosyncracies of some hundreds of 'sensitives.' Tell me, then, what do you think of them as a class?"

"Felix," I replied, "I will answer you in the words of Geibnitz, that fine old writer on mental philosophy, whose works you and I used to pore over so constantly at W_____, and whose description of this very class I was so enamored with that I committed several pages to memory. Geibnitz says:

"Now, as copper and zinc would not form a galvanic battery if the acid which consumes the metals acted on both alike, neither would the thunder roll or the lightnings flash if the two clouds that met in mid-air were equal in force and polarity, one with the other, so would there be no exhibition of soul galvanism, or mental lightnings, if the body in which they shone was all equilibrium, and the person was well composed and evenly balanced. Methinks all history shows us that the ecstatic or seer must be an inharmonious being. Something ails him which disturbs his balance or sets the measure of equilibrium at odds, before he can admit another mind to govern him.

"Thus it was with the great fabulist, Aesop, who was an idiot in all things but the strong point of allegorical composition which, to my mind, was pure inspiration. So also with Robert Nixon, the Cheshire prophet, who was also foolish, yet subject to that high inspiration which prophesied through his lips. Again, with Chetwynd, the fool of the great Saxon monarch, and many others, who, although so silly as to be marked with the fool's cap and bells, yet when the spirit spoke through them, did give utterance to prophecy and wiser things than most other men.

And if the intellect be well composed, then must we look to find a lack of balance amongst the moral qualities; for example, Cagliostro and Kelly, both being great seers and governors of spiritual things, were yet knaves. Bohemians, Gypsies, and Zingari are all thieves and cheats, yet they know the future better than many wise men, and can see farther with their souls' eyes than most men with their telescopes.' In short, Felix," I continued, seeing that my quotations were beginning to be more dangerous than apt, "you and I at a very early period of our investigations, came to the conclusion that fine sensitives or high magnetic subjects must be unevenly balanced or lack equilibrium somewhere. They must be either fools like Nixon, and therefore good subjects for the control of others, knaves like the Bohemians, and

in constant rapport with the elementaries, or sick sensitives like St. Bridgetta, St. Catherine, and other saints of great renown, who floated in air, bore the stigmata, prophesied, read every mind, and—and—were, in a word, so highly endowed with Spiritualistic gifts."

"How about Jesus of Nazareth, Appolonius of Tyana, and Joan of Arc?" said the professor, dryly. "Were they fools, knaves, or sick sensitives?"

"Well," I replied, taken something aback, "Jesus was undoubtedly very sensitive, as his susceptibility to human suffering and pain demonstrated; Appolonius was said to be an epileptic, though I can't vouch for the fact; and as to Joan of Arc, we know she was a very melancholy young person, remarkably fond of the sound of bells in her youth, besides being very pious, which I regard as a sign of a morbid temperament, to say the least of it."

"Well, well!" interrupted von Marx, impatiently. "Set your brains no more to wool-gathering to find out similitudes. My Louis is at once the purest being in the world, and endowed with the finest and most comprehensive intellect, but he is just as fragile in physique as your argument would need to prove him. But for the constant and steady infusion of my magnetism, his soul would long since have escaped from so frail a tenement as he bears about with him. Will that satisfy you?"

"Felix," I said, looking steadily into my friend's troubled eyes, "tell me; is it a normal or healthful life for one human being to live upon the magnetism of another? I know it can be done, but is it in the sweet and natural order of creation?"

"No, John," replied my friend, sadly, "it is not, and I have often felt it was not. But when do we enter upon any new and untried path and see the end from the beginning? When do we determine how far we may drift before necessity or some strong impulse forces us to stop? I commenced magnetizing this adopted child of mine first, for the sake of continuing my experiments, then because I and the Berlin Brotherhood found in him a rare and unusual combination of splendid powers. We all know that the most passive mentality, or that which in ordinary life would be mere imbecility, often supplies the best, because the most unsoiled tablet for the inscription of a foreign mental power.

We have also proved that the same aroamal life principle which clusters in excess about the cerebellum, and makes its subject sensual, acquisitive, or destructive, furnishes in many instances the potency by which the elementaries and earthy spirits can control mortals; hence we so frequently see fools and knaves endowed with those spiritual gifts which plead for the intervention of the daemons, but here we have an exception to all such experiences. Here is a being of the noblest and least guileful character that ever lived, and yet so intellectually bright, that he acquires knowledge with magical intuition. Ere he had been our subject long, I am well convinced if our society had been one of the fanatical kind that were likely to be entangled in religious absurdities, we should have exalted this boy into a new Messiah, hailed him as a tenth incarnation of Vishnu or a modern Buddha.

"Delighted with my prize, and somehow always associating him with that little one whose cot I made with these hands—John, you remember—I gradually drew him away from all other influences than my own. I have watched the dawning of his noble manhood as an astronomer would watch for a new planet. I put my life upon him, trained the tendrils of his lonely being to cling around me with all the wealth of a passionately loving nature centered on one object.

"Many a time when the life had nearly ebbed away, and the thread which bound him to

mortality became so attenuated that my earth-dimmed eyes could scarcely discover it, by a mighty wrench of will, by the throbbing of my whole heart's love poured out upon him, and the vials of my own life drained to supply his, I have succeeded in dragging him back to me, keeping him alive, and seeing him grow into a spiritual, physical, and intellectual beauty that knows no peer on earth. John, do you remember the story of the German student, Frankenstein? He made a monster, I an angel. His was the story of a myth, mine that of a scientific truth. Is there no gain to the cause of science in the success of my singular experiment?" The strange man paused, wrought up to the most intense pitch of emotion, and gazing at me with an almost imploring expression, asked: "Have I not cause to love him, John?"

"Aye," I replied, with equal emotion, "you cannot fail to do so; still you have not answered my question, Is such a life as his normal, healthful, right?"

"No," he answered, firmly, "and never will be whilst—" "Whilst what?" I asked, eagerly.

"Whilst I live," he half whispered; "but enough of this now. I know he is not a creature of earth, but he is mine, all my own, the angel side of myself, and I will yet think out a bright destiny for him, or wreck myself body and soul in the attempt."

I was subdued, awed, by the depth of this strong man's fierce love for the creature he had made, and whilst I was not less struck by the obvious return the young man gave in his deep and absorbing affection for his adopted father, I could not for the life of me realize the angelic excellence of which the professor boasted. To me there was something wanting in this singular being's nature. He was too unsympathetic, too anti-human for an angel; too dreamy, exalted, and visionary for a man. I almost felt as if he either lacked a soul or was so much of soul that he had no business with a body. He was a problem I could not solve; in fact, the whole visit left such an uncomfortable feeling upon my mind, that I began to half surmise my dear wife was right, and that in meddling with matters too high for us, we poor mortals are apt to get out of our depths.

One thing was certain; a train of speculation in which I had been indulging prior to the advent of my friends, fell to the ground with a crash. The truth is, I had heard that the young heir of the great Professor von Marx was of noble birth, wonderfully handsome, and altogether a most eligible parti; hence, with what my eldest daughter, Sophia, called, my inveterate spirit of matchmaking, I had already got up a little imaginary romance between this preux chevalier and a certain fair Lady Rosa, a dazzling creature whom I strongly affected, and who had always promised to marry only just that particular person whom dear Uncle John should select. Now, this was not the only lovely creature I had destined for my interesting young foreign guest, but now, whew! before I quitted the presence of this young mystic or could shake off the remembrance of his soul-haunting, far-away-looking dark eyes, I came to the conclusion I might as well expect the north star or one of the Pleiades to come down and woo the Rosies and Sophies of fashionable life as this unearthly Chevalier de B_____.

With my old habit of putting my reflections into shape, I mentally exclaimed as I passed down stairs: "I'll wager that this young fellow has got a spirit bride somewhere off in one of the planets. Perhaps he might deign to chant a sonnet to a Slyph or serenade an Undine but as to his falling in love with any of the pretty butterflies that call me dear papa or darling old uncle, pshaw! I'll go and put all the girls on their guard against him, or else they will be throwing away their hearts upon a streak of moonlight".

"Have no fear of that, senor; your butterflies are all safe from me," said the sweet voice and soft Italian accent of the Chevalier, close to my ear.

Turning around in the entrance-hall hastily to face this audacious mind-reader, I encountered—nothing! Save for the Irish porter who held the hall door open for me, not a creature was within sight or hearing. Quitting house with a little more than my ordinary precipitation, I hurried into the street hoping that in a strong current of east wind, I might at least be free to think or resolve never to enter that weird house again, unless indeed, I could leave my thoughts at home, or in some distant scene which the wizard's spell could not reach.

That afternoon, having retired to my library, and according to custom being about to compose myself to take half an hour's siesta before dressing for dinner, I was startled by the noiseless opening of the door, which, by the by, I generally locked on such occasions. Looking up in surprise, it being against the rule of that charmed scene even for my own daughters to enter without knocking at the door, I beheld, in a maze of astonishment which kept me speechless, the young Chevalier de B_____. Speaking in an earnest, pleading tone, which somehow filled my eyes with an irrepressible moisture, he said: "Dear sir, there are some beings on earth who are not yet born into actual humanity. It requires for them a great change, most commonly a great sorrow, to effect that new birth in which the true union between body and soul takes place.

One man may know many births and deaths in the course of a single life pilgrimage, and I am one of those who must be born again, conceived in sorrow and born through great anguish, before I can be really the man my too fond father deems me. To be a man I must be endowed with the passions of one—with vices as well as virtues, and criminal as well as noble tendencies. As yet, the humanity which makes a full-grown soul is lacking in me, and I am not good, because I am not bad; not virtuous, pure, or noble, because I have no opposite propensities to rise above. My poor father has not created an angel, only endowed this frail form with a spiritual essence which yet lacks parts and passions. But, O dear sir! the hour approaches when I shall be born again through a maternity of great sorrow. In that hour I shall stand in direst need of a human friend and helper; will you not be that friend? The world of spirit pleads with you for me, their child and servant."

At the conclusion of this extraordinary speech, every syllable of which seems to me to have been indelibly engraven on the tablets of my memory, he extended his hand towards me. As I was about to grasp it, my eye was arrested by the sight of the word *Isabella* inscribed in finely-formed, crimson letters across the palm of his small, white hand. This was the name of my deeply-cherished and long-lamented dear mother. I had often prayed that if the soul was immortal, could live, love, and know those they had left on earth, especially if they could minister to them, this most tender mother might be permitted to give me some sign which would convince me of the stupendous fact of her immortal being.

No response had ever before been vouchsafed to my soul's deep aspiration, but even as I gazed on that familiar name, and saw the letters melt or fade slowly away in the outstretched hand before me, the thought was irresistibly borne in upon my mind that here was the proof I sought. I have since, during the modern dispensation of Spiritualism, seen many a name of the beloved ones gone before, inscribed in fleshly characters upon a medium's body. I had heard of such stigmata appearing amongst my friends, the French magnetists, but never had I witnessed aught so wonderful, aught that took so deep a hold upon my inmost convictions of spiritual identity before. As the letters faded, I rubbed my eyes, started, rubbed them again, and with my characteristic slowness was about to seize the young man's hand, and make a speech, assuring him of my eternal friendship and devotion to him, under whatever circumstances he might command it, when lo! he was gone. I rushed to the only door in the room, and found it locked on the inside just as I had left it.

Returning to my library table I found a volume of Shakespeare unclasped; open at the play of "The Tempest," a leaf turned down—a liberty I never allowed with my books—and a deep pencil-mark drawn underneath these lines of the fair Miranda's:

"Believe me, sir, it carries a brave form—but 'tis a spirit."

And thus began our campaign with the Prospero and Ariel of the nineteenth century, Felix von Marx and his adopted son, the Chevalier de B_____.