

Rays from the Rose Cross



A Magazine of Mystic Light

EDITED BY MAX HEINDEL

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IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING DEAD
THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS
DEATH BY DECOMPRESSION
PROBLEMS OF REBIRTH
SLEEP WALKING; ITS CAUSE AND CURE
POST MORTEM CONDITION OF DRUG VICTIM
PLANETARY POLARITIES

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General Contents

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The Mystic Light

OCTOBER 1918

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The Lesson

We had played one day for a thousand years
In the meadow of Asphodel,
When my love grew weary of too much light
And laughter, where angels dwell.

So we went and asked the Lords of Life,
Who sent us to school again—
For he who would learn to be more than man
Must suffer and work with men.

They put us in the poor man's class;
My love had a shovel and pick,
And a washtub was mine for a spelling book,
Until I was tired and sick.

"Oh, let us go back!" I cried to my love,
"I faint in this school of pain";
But he smiled, "To learn to be more than men
We must use man's heart and brain."

But when it was done we went back to God,
Who said we had studied well;
And He sent us to play for a thousand years
In the meadow of Asphodel.

In the Land of the Living Dead

Prentiss Tucker

IT ALL came about from a German high-explosive shell.

Nothing happens without a cause. We might say that this story began in Germany when Gretchen Hammerstein put the finishing touches on a certain high-explosive shell and, with the contact of her fingers, filled the shell with the vibrations of her hatred for the Americans. We might note the various occurrences which, each the result of an endless train of circumstances, contributed to the fact that this particular shell was brought to the German front at just such a time and just such a place. But to follow up these lines of happenings, almost infinite in number, would require an eternity of patience.

And so we will take up the history when the high-explosive shell burst in the American trenches, scattering, besides its material and visible

charge and fragments, the hatred of Americans which Gretchen Hammerstein had packed into it.

Jimmie Westman was leaning against the trench wall nearest to the German line and was peering through the well *camouflaged* peephole which was used to watch the dreary and awful wastes of No Man's Land in guarding against any surprise attack. The shell burst within a few feet of him and to the rear but Jimmie did not know it. It was, in fact, a long time before he found out just what had happened, and it is of the things which came in between the bursting of the shell and the time when Jimmie was able to reconstruct the whole affair, that I wish to tell.

They were quite remarkable events and produced a great impression upon Jimmie and completely changed his ideas of life.

It was, as I have said, a long time before Jimmie

regained consciousness after the explosion. To be exact it was practically three days and while he is lying in that condition of *coma* let us take a little look into his life and history.

Jimmie was not born of poor but honest parents. His parents were honest but not poor and though not rich, they had given him a good up-bringing and a good education. He had gone through high school and was engaged in the study of medicine when the war broke out. I say he was engaged in it. I like Jimmie and am unwilling to say that he was putting entirely too much of his time in the sports of the gridiron and the diamond than he should have done, but nevertheless that was the case. He was a specimen of the clean, honorable, somewhat careless American boy, eager to succeed, eager to stand high in work and sport alike, but glamored to a certain extent by the almost adulation paid in the college which he attended to the prominent athletes.

However, he was engaged in the study of medicine, partially engaged, perhaps I should add, and to a certain extent he was deeply interested in his chosen profession, although he had not really progressed so far as to be very profound in his knowledge of *materia medica*. He had imbibed some of the scientific spirit of the lecturers to whom he had listened, and his mind had taken on a rather skeptical tinge which had given his mother some little worry, though not very much for well she knew that her early teaching,s were deeply rooted and the character of her boy was too strong for the scientific skepticism of his surroundings to do much more than ruffle the surface of his clean young life.

But Jimmie had an enquiring soul and while the platitudes, most of them grossly illogical and unscientific, which he heard from the pulpit when he did go to church, produced little effect upon him, yet the objections put forward by the doctors and students with whom he was associated seemed to him to be also lacking in force and weak in reason. He was swayed between the two, but controlled by neither, though at heart he was inclined to be deeply religious, as most people are if they have the chance.

So in the first year of his college life the great war began. It was practically at the end of the first.

year just, before the final *exams*. and when he went home for the summer vacation the whole country was seething. Farsighted ones knew that the war would involve the United States. Fanatics and fanatical pacifists fought every measure of safety and sided with the traitors and the enemies of liberty and justice. Jimmie began to think and turned over and over in his mind the state of the world, and when he went back to his study in the fall it was with the settled conviction that the United States would soon have to mix in and that he would necessarily be involved. At that time no one had foreseen the shortage of doctors, and Jimmie, feeling sure that the fight was a righteous one and that it was his duty to help, even though his country still held back, during his second year enlisted with the Canadians. He paid a short visit home first and succeeded in making his mother and father see the matter in his way, though it was the hardest task he had ever attempted, and it was when he was home on this errand that he got the news of the death of an old friend of his. She had grown up with him and the loss of her dispelled a dream which had half formed in his mind and toward the realization of which he had unconsciously been working.

So he enlisted and was whirled into the great seething cauldron of war.

By he time the United States came in he was a war worn veteran of wide experience, in spite of his few years, and he sought and obtained a transfer from the Canadian troops to those of his own country by whom he was welcomed with enthusiasm. At the time the shell burst which made so great a change in his life he was second lieutenant with a good chance of promotion.

He had not heard the shell, and as I have said, did not know that it had exploded, and was somewhat surprised to find himself in a part of the country which he did not know. It was a wide, meadow-like stretch of land sloping gently upward and he was walking leisurely along as though he had all the time there was at his disposal.

The first return of consciousness found him walking up this gentle slope wondering a little in his mind because, as he remembered, he should have been at his post in the trench. Things were a

little different somehow but just how he could not for the life of him understand.

He seemed to be moving with considerable ease, much more so than he was accustomed to, for the everlasting mud of this country did stick to one's boots terribly and it was often hard work to lift one foot after the other. Now, however, he was stepping along easily and without effort, but he did not know where he was going or where he came from.

The trench was not in sight, but he was walking so entirely without effort that it made little difference to him for he could find it, doubtless, even though his knowledge of French was quite limited.

Thank goodness! he was not behind the enemy lines.

But stop!

If he was behind his own lines and did not know how he got there, why might he not be behind the enemy lines equally without his knowledge?

His mind was coming back to him more and more and he began to wonder a little. It was as if he had waked up out of a deep sleep and was just coming to himself.

But if he had been asleep, why did not some of the boys come and wake him up before the whole line had been pushed forward like this?

For goodness sake! where was the trench?

Where was the camp, the communication trenches, the roads, everything? Where was this place; this nice, easy meadow sloping gently upwards?

The line must have gone forward and he had been left behind in his sleep. That was evidently so, because if the line had gone backwards the *bosches* would have waked him up with their pleasant little civilized custom of killing the wounded and the sleeping, if there were any sleeping. No, the line had gone forward and somehow he had not waked up but had evidently walked in his sleep to this place, wherever this place might be.

He could not remember leaving the firing post where he had been watching through the peephole, but that was a mere detail, the main thing now was to find out where the command was and rejoin it. He could easily find it because he knew how to keep his direction by the sun.

Involuntarily he looked up. The sun was not visible, although it was broad daylight and there was no haze apparent.

Never before in France had he seen so long a stretch of country with no sight of humanity. Either there were towns and hamlets and farms, or there was the awful desolation where the *bosche* had passed, but this meadow showed neither the one nor the other. It was certainly a 'whale' of a meadow, especially for France. Put a bunch of tractors on this place and the dread of famine would pass away for there was land enough here to raise food for a kingdom.

But time was passing and he must hurry, also he must think up some kind of excuse for his absence, for the captain was pretty strict on such subjects and sleepwalking might not be taken as a valid reason for being away from his post of duty.

"Why don't you *glide*?"

"What do you mean, *glide*?"

He turned to see who spoke, for he had heard no footsteps and had thought he was quite alone. He saw a girl walking along beside him, or at least, moving along beside him, for apparently she was not walking in the orthodox way. He knew her well and, as he recognized her, he felt his face grow pale, for the girl beside him was one who had been a particular friend of his but he had been told, on his last visit home, that she had—had—well, that she had died while he was away at college, and just before his return to say goodbye to his parents before enlisting. He must have been misinformed, somehow. He looked at her, edged away just a trifle, pinched himself, and was quite at a loss just what to do or say. She must not have died but perhaps she was sent to an insane asylum and had gotten over here to France somehow by mistake and here she was talking nonsense to him about "*gliding*".

He glanced again. By Jove, she *was* gliding! For Heaven's sake! Had he gone crazy too?

A merry peal of laughter interrupted his amazement. It was the old, joyous, hearty laugh of the girl he had known well.

By jiminy! she was laughing at him. Bewildered? Well, who wouldn't be bewildered in such a case?

Thoughts flash through the mind at times with terrific rapidity and the thoughts which I am setting down apparently took a long time, but in reality they were almost instantaneous and practically took no time at all, yet they had a logical sequence and seemed to him, at the time, to be slow and careful reasoning.

She was laughing at him! Ghosts don't laugh. It is not-not-well, it simply is not done, that's all. Everybody knows that ghosts don't laugh. And she was talking to him about *gliding*. That showed she was crazy and upheld the insane asylum theory but, and here he glanced again at her feet—she really *was* gliding. At least she was not walking by lifting up one foot and putting it down again in front of the other. No, she was gliding and laughing at him.

Besides, ghosts are gloomy, distraught, lovers of darkness and graveyards and midnight and mystery and of frightening people. Yet here was one, if she really was a ghost, who was looking at him with a really beautiful face, happy, apparently joyous and frankly and unaffectedly amused at him—at him!

He remembered her well. He had known her well. He had been—er—well, to tell the truth, he had thought that perhaps, when he got started in his profession—oh! shucks, he must be dreaming. He was in France, come over to fight the kaiser and make the world safe for democracy, and that was a serious job.

Yet here she was laughing at him. How could such a mistake have occurred? They had told him all about it. They had gone over it again and again, for they knew how he had cared for her. Yet they must have made a mistake. He had to believe the evidence of his own eyes.

Dear heart! but she was pretty now. She had been pretty before, beautiful he had thought, but now she seemed radiant. Now she was walking, and with that little dancing step which cannot be described but is called “tripping.”

She moved slightly ahead of him and half turned toward him, laughing at him in such a natural way, just like her own old self, that he began to laugh too. Things had seemed pretty serious but with so much merriment around and such a pretty girl

mocking at him he could not realize that the Huns were so near and that so human suffering was going on.

She instantly grew serious, as though she had divined his thought.

“I couldn't help it, Jimmie, you looked so bewildered”

“I sure am bewildered. How did you get here? Over here in France? And why did they tell me that you had—er—gone—” He groped helplessly for a way to express the thought.

She answered him with a rippling little laugh at his dilemma.

“Don't be afraid to say it, Jimmie.”

He *was* “afraid to say it” however, and he countered with—

“How did you get here?”

“I was sent.”

“Look here, Marjorie, don't fool me. How did you get over here in France?”

“Truly, Jimmie, I am not ‘fooling’, ‘honest Injun’, as we used to say, I *was* sent, really and truly I was, but I asked to be sent,” she added. You see the others were so busy and there was not much that I could do, but I knew that I could help you and I knew that you would be glad to see me, so I asked for permission and the Elder Brother gave it to me, He is always so kind to me.”

The insane asylum theory received a new impetus with this statement. The ‘*Elder Brother*’ must be one of the doctors, but she didn't talk like an insane person. She was radiantly beautiful now, far more beautiful than she had been when he had seen her last, and she was talking rationally, but who in the dickens was this ‘Elder Brother’? She was an only child. It must be the doctor.

He had been through an insane asylum once with a party of sight-seers and had not noticed that any of the women inmates were beautiful. Even if one had been pretty, the expression of the eyes would have offset any mere physical prettiness. But this dancing, gliding, tripping girl beside him, with her blue eyes and fair hair, was so bewilderingly, dazzlingly beautiful, and her eyes had not a trace of that fixed stare or lack of focus which makes the insane person so terrible to look at.

And, besides, she *could* glide! Great Scott!