

**Democratic Watchman.**

Bellefonte, Pa., December 23, 1910.

**THE MANSION.**

Continued from page 2, column 6.  
green and gold and lilac, until it came to the high horizon, and stood outlined for a moment, a tiny cloud of whiteness against the tender blue, before it vanished over the hill.  
For a long time he sat there watching and wondering. It was a very different world from that in which his mansion on the Avenue was built; and it looked strange to him, but most real—as real as anything he had ever seen. Presently he felt a strong desire to know what country it was and where the people were going. He had a faint premonition of what it must be, but he wished to be sure. So he rose from the stone where he was sitting, and came down through the short grass and the lavender flowers toward a passing group of people. One of them turned to meet him, and held out his hand. It was an old man, under whose white beard and brows John Weightman thought he saw a suggestion of the face of the village doctor who had cared for him years ago, when he was a boy in the country.  
"Welcome," said the old man. "Will you come with us?"  
"Where are you going?"  
"To the heavenly city, to see our mansions there."  
"And who are these with you?"  
"Strangers to me, until a little while ago; I know them better now. But you I have known for a long time, John Weightman. Don't you remember your old doctor?"  
"Yes," he cried—"yes your voice has not changed at all. I'm glad indeed to see you, Doctor McLean, especially now. All this seems very strange to me, almost oppressive. I wonder if—but may I go with you, do you suppose?"  
"Surely," answered the doctor, with his familiar smile, "it will do you good. And you also must have a mansion in the city waiting for you—a fine one, too—are you not looking forward to it?"  
"Yes," replied the other, hesitating a moment; "yes—I believe it must be so, although I had not expected to see it so soon. But I will go with you, and we can talk by the way."  
The two men quickly caught up with the other people, and all went forward together along the road. The doctor had little to tell of his experience, for it had been a plain, hard life, uneventfully spent for others, and the story of the village was very simple. John Weightman's adventures and triumphs would have made a far richer, more imposing history, full of contacts with the great events and personages of the time; but somehow or other he did not care to speak much about it, walking on that wide, level, unshaded road, under that tranquil, heavenly arch of blue, in that free air of perfect peace, where the light was diffused without a shadow, as if the spirit of life in all things were luminous.  
There was only one person besides the doctor in that little company whom John Weightman had known before—an old bookkeeper who had spent his life over a desk, carefully keeping accounts—a rusty, dull little man, patient and narrow, whose wife had been in the insane asylum for twenty years and whose only child was a crippled daughter, for whose comfort and happiness he had toiled and sacrificed self without stint. It was a surprise to find him here, as care-free and joyful as the rest.  
The lives of others in the company were revealed in brief glimpses as they talked together—a mother, early widowed, who had kept her little flock of children together and labored through hard and heavy years to bring them up in purity and knowledge—a Sister of Charity who had devoted herself to the nursing of poor folk who were being eaten to death by cancer—a schoolmaster whose heart and life had been poured into his quiet work of training boys for a clear and thoughtful manhood—a medical missionary who had given up a brilliant career in science to take the change of a hospital in the darkest Africa—a beautiful woman with silver hair who had resigned her dreams of love and marriage to care for an invalid father, and after his death had made her life a long, steady search for ways of doing kindness to others—a poet who had walked among the crowded tenements of the great city, bringing cheer and comfort not only by his songs, but by his wise and patient works of practical aid—a paralyzed woman who had lain for thirty years upon her bed, helpless but not hopeless, succumbing by a miracle of courage in her single aim, never to complain, but always to impart a bit of her joy and peace of every one who came near her. All these, and other persons like them, people of little consideration in the world, but now seemingly all full of great contentment and an inward gladness that made their steps light, were in the company that passed along the road, talking together of things past and things to come, and singing now and then with clear voices from the veil of age and sorrow was lifted.  
John Weightman joined in some of the songs—which were familiar to him from their use in the church—at first with a touch of hesitation, and then more confidently. For as they went on his sense of strangeness and fear at his new experience diminished, and his thoughts began to take on their habitual assurance and complacency. "Were not these people going to the Celestial City? And was not he in his right place among them? He had always looked forward to this journey. If they were sure, each one, of finding a mansion there, could not he be far more sure? His life had been more fruitful than theirs. He had been a leader, a founder of new enterprises, a pillar of church and state, a prince of the house of Israel. Ten talents had been given him, and he had made them twenty. His reward would be proportionate. He was glad that his companions were going to find fit dwellings prepared for them; but he thought also with a certain pleasure of the surprise that some of them would feel when they saw his appointed mansion.  
So they came to the summit of the morland and looked over into the world beyond. It was a vast green plain, softly rounded like a shallow vase, and circled with hills of amethyst. A broad shining river flowed through it, and many silver threads of water were woven across the green; and there were borders of tall trees on the banks of the river, and orchards full of roses abloom along the little streams, and in the midst of all stood the city, white and wonderful and radiant.  
When the travellers saw it they were

filled with awe and joy. They passed over the little streams and among the orchards quick and silently, as if they feared to speak lest the city should vanish.  
The wall of the city was very low, a child could see over it, for it was made only of precious stones, which are never large. The gate of the city was not like a gate at all, for it was not barred with iron or wood, but only a single pearl, softly gleaming, marked the place where the wall ended and the entrance lay open.  
A person stood there whose face was bright and grave, and whose robe was like the flower of the lily, not a woven fabric, but a living texture. "Come in," he said to the company of travellers; "you are at your journey's end, and your mansions are ready for you."  
John Weightman hesitated, for he was troubled by a doubt. Suppose that he was not really, like his companions, at his journey's end, but only transported for a little while out of the regular course of his life into this mysterious experience. Suppose that, as he dimly felt, he had not really passed through the door of death, like these others, but only through the door of dreams, and was walking in a vision, a living man among the blessed dead. Would it be right for him to go with them into the heavenly city? Would it not be a deception, a desecration, a deep and unforgivable offence? The strange, confusing question had no reason in it, as he very well knew; for if he was dreaming, then it was all a dream; but if his companions were real, then he also was with them in reality. Yet he did not rid his mind of the sense that there was a difference between them and him, and it made him afraid to go on. But as he paused and turned, the keeper of the gate looked straight and deep into his eyes, and beckoned to him. Then he knew that it was not only right but necessary that he should enter.  
They passed from street to street among fair and spacious dwellings, set in amaranthine gardens, and adorned with an infinitely varied beauty of divine simplicity. The mansions differed in size, in shape, in charm, each one seemed to have its personal look of loveliness; yet all were alike in fitness to their place, in harmony with one another, in the addition which each made to the singular and tranquil splendor of the city.  
As the little company came, one by one, to the mansions which were prepared for them, their guide beckoned to the happy inhabitant to enter and take possession, there was a soft murmur of joy, half wonder and half recognition; as if the new and immortal dwelling were crowned with the beauty of surprise, lovelier and nobler than all the dreams of loveliness; and yet also as if they were touched with the beauty of the familiar, the remembered, the long-loved. One after another the travellers were led to their own mansions, and went in gladly; and from within, through the open door, ways, came sweet voices of welcome, and low laughter, and song.  
At last there was no one left with the guide but the two old friends, Doctor McLean and John Weightman. They were standing in front of one of the largest and fairest of the houses, whose garden glowed softly with radiant flowers. The guide laid his hand upon the doctor's shoulder.  
"This is for you," he said. "Go in; there is no more pain here, no more death, nor sorrow, nor tears: for your old enemies are all conquered. But all the help that you have given, all the comfort that you have brought, all the strength and love that you have bestowed, are here; for we have built them all into this mansion for you."  
The good man's face was lightened with a still joy. He clasped his old friend's hand closely, and whispered: "How wonderful it is! Go on, you will come to your mansion next, it is not far away, and we shall see each other again soon, very soon."  
So he went through the garden, and into the music within. The keeper of the gate turned to John Weightman with level quiet, searching eyes. Then he asked gravely:  
"Where do you wish me to lead you now?"  
"To see my mansion," answered the man, with half-concealed excitement. "Is there not one here for me? You may not let me enter it yet, perhaps, for I must confess to you that I am only—"  
"I know," said the keeper of the gate, "I know it all. You are John Weightman."  
"Yes," said the man, more firmly than he had spoken at first, for it gratified him that his name was known. "Yes, I am John Weightman, Senior Warden of St. Petronius Church. I wish very much to see my mansion here, if only for a moment. I believe that you have one for me. Will you take me to it?"  
The keeper of the gate drew a little book from the breast of his robe and turned over the pages.  
"Certainly," he said, with a curious look at the man. "Your name is here; and you shall see your mansion, if you will follow me."  
It seemed as if they must have walked miles and miles, through the vast city, passing street after street of houses larger and smaller, of gardens richer and poorer, but all full of beauty and delight. They came into a kind of suburb, where there were many small cottages, with plots of flowers, very lowly but bright and fragrant. Finally they reached an open field, bare and lonely-looking. There were two or three little bushes in it, with thin, in the centre of the field was a tiny hut, hardly big enough for a shepherd's shelter. It looked as if it had been built of discarded things, scraps and fragments of other buildings, put together with care and pains, by some one who had tried to make the most of cast-off material. There was something pitiful and shamefaced about the hut. It shrank and drooped and faded in its barren field, and seemed to cling only by sufferance to the edge of the splendid city.  
"This said the keeper of the gate, standing still, and speaking in a low, distinct voice—"this is your mansion, John Weightman."  
An almost intolerable shock of griefed wonder and indignation choked the man for a moment so that he could not say a word. Then he turned his face away from the poor little hut and began to re-monstrate eagerly with his companion.  
"Surely, sir, he stammered, "you must be in error about this. There is something wrong—some other John Weightman—a confusion of names—the book must be mistaken."  
"There is no mistake," said the keeper of the gate, very calmly; "here is your name, the record of your title and your possessions in this place."  
"But how could such a house be prepared for me," cried the man, with a resentful tremor in his voice, "for me, after my long and faithful service? Is this a

gone visiting in dreams? He sat for some time, motionless, not lost, but finding himself in thought. Then he took a narrow book from the table drawer, wrote a check, and tore it out.  
He went slowly up the stairs, knocked very softly at his son's door, and hearing no answer, entered without noise. Harold was asleep, his bare arm thrown above his head, and his eager face relaxed in peace. His father looked at him a moment with strangely shining eyes; and then tiptoed quietly to the writing-desk, found a pencil and a sheet of paper, and wrote rapidly:  
"My dear boy, here is what you asked me for; do what you like with it, and ask me for more if you need it. If you are still thinking of that work with Grenfell, we'll talk it over today after church. I want to know your heart better; and if I have made mistakes—"  
A slight noise made him turn his head. Harold was sitting up in bed with wide-open eyes.  
"Father!" he cried, "is that you?"  
"Yes, my son," answered John Weightman; "I've come back—I mean I've come up—no, I mean come in—well here I am, and God give us a good Christmas together."—By Henry VanDyke, in Harper's Monthly Magazine.

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