

SOUTHERN HOME

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THE ANGEL GUIDE.

BY MARGARET J. PRESTON.

The path of life lay stretching before a happy child,
Who with his own sweet murmurs, the lonely way beguiled.
It was a narrow pathway, and flowers of temptation
Overhung its edges, and hid beneath a yawning
depth from view.
So, all unwarmed of danger, with gay and careless air,
He wandered on without a thought of a be-
trailing snare.
But when his roving vision, the fruits and
flowers described,
Their beauty won him from his course and
turned his steps aside.
His garb was rent by briars, his flesh was
rudely torn,
He strove to grasp the fruit, and closed his
hand upon a thorn.
His tender feet were wounded, his brow
grew vexed with care;
And o'er his eye a shadow fell that had no
business there.
But with the lure before him, he pressed yet
farther through,
Until the pathway's bearding edge broke on
his startled view.
In doubt and sore disquiet, bewildered by
his fears,
With all a child's abandonment, he sobbed,
and hid his tears.
"O, where is he will lead me?—I needs
must turn aside;
I am not strong enough of heart to walk
without a guide.
"I shall be fooled and tempted, misled, and
overthrown—
I cannot keep so straight a path—I dare not
walk alone!"
"Nor shalt thou, tender pilgrim! Behold in
me thy guide!"
The weeping child looked up, and saw an
angel at his side.
"Turn from the bright seductions, that walk
thee only ill,
Nor rest thee in thy childish strength, for it
will fail thee still.
"Shut out from thy glazed vision, these false,
enticing charms,
And thou shalt walk unscared amidst tempta-
tions worst alarms."
The little trembler listened, with look of
sudden calm;
Then closed his eyes, and hid his hand
within the angel's palm.
"You, lead me, blessed angel!—guide thou
my steps aright,
And teach me it is best to walk by faith, and
not by sight."

THE ATONEMENT.

A SEQUEL

TO

"THE WAIF,
OR

THE WEB OF LIFE."

BY EMMA CHRISTINE ERICHSEN.

CHAPTER I.

[CONTINUED.]

The letter dispatched, the girl com-
menced to make preparation for her final
departure, packing her trunks, visit-
ing old, familiar places, bidding them
farewell; and she was joyous and hap-
py. The world outside, though a sealed
book to her, as yet, promised bright, de-
lightful realizations. She imagined she
was an heiress, with a tall, dark, hand-
some guardian with a kind, indulgent
heart. Many a romantic and dreamy
fancy she had woven, connected with
this unknown personage, and of all her
longings and aspirations, there was none
more ardent than to meet and know
him. Two visionary, dream-like mem-
ories of her childish years were some-
how associated with this nominal guar-
dian, but she could recall nothing vivid-
ly. Back, back, through the misty vistas

of years gone, she seemed to see water,
and a large ship, and a tall, dark look-
ing man, and she would think and think,
until her very mind seemed to whirl in
pain and confusion, but she could make
nothing out of it; then the other, was
that night of travel on the railroad; it
both instances were somehow connect-
ed with her supposed guardian, but both
so dreamy and obscure, that the lonely
academic prisoner could not define
whether they had been dreams, or actual
circumstances connected with her very
early years.

In due time, an answer came to her
letter in the form of a dispatch, saying
she could come to C— just when it
suited her; but that she must notify
him when she would arrive, so some one
could meet her.

Oh! what a thrill of joy and freedom
bounced through the girl's being as she
read these few lines, and thought that
the time of revelation had come, when
all her doubts and wonderings would be
put to rest; that she would now, at last,
see her mysterious guardian, and know
from him something about her unknown
parents, and who she was.

And this was the revelation. After a
few hours travel, she had arrived, well
and bright at her destination, and wait-
ed with feverish restlessness in the re-
ception room for her guardian, or some
one to come forward to claim her; but
an hour, then another, ticked wear-
ily by, and she was still waiting ner-
vously, walking to and fro and watch-
ing the busy, selfish crowd about the de-
pot. When almost despairing, and
wondering what such treatment meant,
she heard her name called, and starting
forward eagerly, was told a hack was
waiting outside for her. Delivering her
light traveling luggage to the man (the
driver of a public conveyance) she fol-
lowed him out, and was conducted to
where an old hack stood in readiness,
wherein sat a wrinkled visaged old lady,
with a dark brown wig, and attired in
the most grotesque and ancient style
imaginable. She was handed in, her
things stored away, and Zenobia De
Haey was driven off, her warm, sangu-
ine feelings chilled, her heart sinking
perceptibly below zero. She waited for
an explanation; but none was vouch-
safed. Her companion's face was like a
stone, not a muscle moving, her lips
compressed tightly, her eyes gazing out
into vacancy. The hack rattled on
along one street, then into another;
branching off suddenly, then turning in-
to another; jolting and jostling the dis-
gusted and indignant young lady almost
continually from her seat. "What a re-
ception!" she murmured under her
breath, her heart swelling with disap-
pointment, the tears of chagrin welling
up into the beautiful eyes. But the face
opposite was too forbidding, and she
was too proud to seek an explanation.
I will await results, she mentally decid-
ed; and crushing back the rising tears,
they jogged on in silence.

After a long, and to Zenobia never
ending drive, or rather jolt, the hack
came to a halt before an old, tumble-
down gate, and jumping down the driver
pushed it open, and leading his horse
in, urged him up through the overgrown
garden. "Well, here ye be missis," he
explained, coming to the side and offer-
ing to assist the old lady to alight, which
feat she accomplished with much diffi-
culty; then turning, he was about to
offer the same politeness to Zenobia, but
with crimson cheek and flashing eye,
she drew back, and exclaimed: "What
does this mean? You do not pretend to

say that this is my destination? I will
not alight and enter such a barracks as
that. Where is my guardian?" With a
shrug of her shoulders, the old lady
replied in precise, automatic tones:
"Your guardian has left the city, and
gave instructions that I must meet and
bring you here for the present; but I
do not force you to enter if you have
any where else to go. There is a letter
upstairs which will explain, but do as
you please." And without another word
she turned away and entered the house.

"This is abominable, disgraceful," ex-
claimed the outraged girl; but not
knowing what course to pursue, she
sprang from the vehicle and swept an-
grily up the stairs, which creaked and
trembled under her weight.

With an expression of positive alarm
and disgust depicted upon her beautiful
face, Zenobia De Haey paused upon the
threshold of the door, and peered, with
feeling better imagined than described,
into the faded, dusty little parlor; then
entered the chamber which looked the
most inviting. Her eyes looking around
soon fell upon the mentioned letter,
which lay upon the table in the centre
of the room; snatching it up, she tore
the seal open, and sitting down was very
soon acquainted with its contents. And
still she sits there as the reader
found her, shocked, disappointed, per-
fectly miserable; hardly able to compre-
hend the meaning of it all, certainly not
as yet realizing the new phase of life
open before her.

"Alone, alone," she murmurs audibly.
"Alone in this wide, wide, world; poor,
and an orphan, dependent all these years
on the bounty of a stranger. What a
rude, abrupt awakening from my hap-
py, bright, rose-tinted dreams. Oh, it
is terrible." With a quivering, sobbing
groan, she buried her face in her hands;
but rousing herself almost instantly,
she again audibly soliloquizes, raising
her black eyes, now humid with tears,
to the portrait before her. And who is
this beautiful girl, placed here as my
companion I suppose, somehow there is
something very familiar about this love-
ly face too," she went on, rising and go-
ing up to the mantle, her tall, queenly
height bringing her face almost on a
level with the picture. Long, thought-
fully, and curiously she gazed upon the
lovely face pictured there, and into the
dreamy, sad eyes of heavenly blue,
seemingly looking at you with a half
sad, half pleading expression. The longer
she gazes, the more thoughtful, the
more intensely questioning becomes her
gaze; but with a puzzled, dissatisfied
air she finally turns away, with an im-
patient gesture—"Another mystery to
torment me, I have seen that face be-
fore; but where and when? Is it a
dream or reality?" Back, back to the
shadowy past, her thoughts travel, but
no answer comes to the mental query,
and with a sweeping tide of keen pain
and regret, it surges back to the present.
With a troubled, almost agonized ex-
pression upon her beautiful face, she
looks upon her. The high, old-fash-
ioned bedstead, with its downy bed-
robed in white, certainly looked invit-
ing, for she was physically weary and
heart-sore, and otherwise the apartment
exhibited signs of comfort and cleanli-
ness; but nothing nice and pretty
enough to suit her refined, fastidious
taste, her face became more dissatisfied,
her eyes more gloomy and troubled as
she continued her inspection. She would
not venture into the parlor, but stood
on the threshold, looking around with
dismay and disgust at the faded, dusty

furnishings. Then she went out on the
piazza, and the expression upon her
countenance changed to one of positive
horror, as she gazed about her. The
large, old trees, gaunt and moss-robot,
excluded the view from all quarters, no
signs of life could be seen anywhere,
and only the distant, indistinct hum of
the city could be heard; the neighbor-
hood seemed as silent as a grave yard.
The overgrown, weedy yard, the gloomy
old trees, the delapidation of the house,
the silence which reigned everywhere—
filled the girl with a dismal, weird feel-
ing of loneliness and horror. "A verita-
ble prison," she muttered, turning into
the house again. "Stay here? No, not
one night if I can prevent it," she wailed
forth in utter misery and perplexity,
clasping her hands in her agonized dis-
tress. Growing calmer after a little
while, she mentally decides—Yes, I
must try and leave this place at once;
free my guardian of any further burden
on my account. But what a price to
pay for independence and a home; to
become a drudge of a teacher. Books,
books, again, books from infancy, and
no escape yet. Only a few days ago I
threw them all away, vowing never to
touch one again, and now here they are
thrust upon me as the alternative be-
tween them, and this den of depend-
ence, horror, and loneliness.

Gathering up her skirts she descended
the rickety stairs, and knocking upon
the door in which Mrs. Rigby had en-
tered, she was bade to come in. The
room was clean and comfortable, al-
though very poorly furnished, and was
used apparently, as kitchen, parlor and
dining room. A small table was in the
centre of the floor, with a white cloth,
and set for one person, with quite a
pretty and dainty gilt china tea service;
and the delicious aroma of hyson tea
brewing, filled the atmosphere with a
refreshing odor. The old lady, divested
of her ancient costume, was attired in a
neat, dark gown and white cap, and
seemingly busy with the pots and kettle.
As Zenobia entered she turned her face,
(the same stolid, stony expression upon
it) and looked at the girl, who full of
her desire to get away before night,
said bluntly: "Mrs. Rigby, my guardian
writes that I can either stay here, or go
to Mr. Hastings for a home. I decid-
edly prefer the latter, and would thank
you to direct me how to find him, for I
do not care to stay here one night if I
can help it."

"You can please yourself Miss De
Haey," was answered in automatic, frigid
tones. But sit down and get a cup of
tea, you must feel the need of some re-
freshments after traveling. Your
trunks will be here presently, then you
can ask the man to bring you a hack,
and I will direct him how to find Mr.
Hastings."

"A carriage if you please," corrected
the young lady somewhat haughtily.
"I have had enough of hack riding for
a while, and can pay for a more com-
fortable and respectable mode of trans-
portation."

The old lady shrugged her shoulders,
but not a visible sign of life flitted over
her face which seemed a very stone in
its fixedness. Zenobia took a seat at the
table, for she felt faint, nervous, and ut-
terly despondent, and without a word,
Mrs. Rigby placed a dish of hot toast
and a cup of steaming, fragrant tea be-
fore her. While eating, the girl in hopes
of finding out something concerning her
guardian, according ventured—

"Do you know where my guardian
has gone Mrs. Rigby?"