

# A Soul Seen as an Insect

By A. Le Braz

Yvon Peuker was a good man, living in the fear of God. His best friend was named Pezr Nicol. Pezr fell ill, and immediately sent for Yvon Peuker.

“I feel that I am about to die,” he said. “You are the man I have most loved and esteemed in the world; I should like to have you with me at the last.”

Peuker answered, “I will not leave you!” And he took his place by the bedside of his friend.

“Towards the middle of the night Pezr said to him, in an altered voice, “give me your hand,” and as soon as Peuker had put his hand in his, he died.

Peuker, who, with tears in his eyes, watched him die, then saw come out of his mouth a fly—a shadowy fly,—with gauzy wings, something like the ephemeral insects that hover over streams at eventide. The tiny thing went and dipped its feet in a basin of milk which was on the table, then it flew round the room, and suddenly disappeared.

“What can have become of it?” said Yvon Peuker to himself.

But ere long it re-appeared.

This time the insect settled on the corpse and there remained, allowing itself to be shut into the coffin with the dead man.

Peuker did not see it again till they reached the churchyard. It was only then that he understood that this insect must be the soul of Pezr Nicol, and he resolved to follow it wherever it might go.

The insect soon flew to a marsh not far from the farm on which Pezr Nicol dwelt during his life. There it perched upon a thorn-bush.

“Poor little fly! what do you here?” asked the good Peuker.

“You can see me, then?”

“I see you, certainly, since I am speaking to you. Tell me, are you not the soul of the departed Pezr Nicol, who was my best friend on earth?”

“Yes, Yvon; I am your dead friend; I am Pezr Nicol.”

“Come with me to my house. I will find you a quiet corner, where we can sometimes hold converse as in the old days!”

“I cannot do so, my dear Yvon. This is the place where God wills me to be for my expiation, and I have to remain here five hundred years. God must regard you with great favour, having permitted you to recognise my soul under this form!”

“Oh! I have not lost sight of you for a single instant since you were separated from your body. No, I am wrong, for a few minutes you disappeared from my sight, and I knew not what had become of you! But, tell me, I entreat you, why did you first of all dip your feet into the jar of milk?”

“Was it not fitting that I should strive to make myself white and clean to appear before the Great Judge?”

“And afterwards, when you vanished, after flitting about the house, what had become of you?”

“When you saw me flitting here and there all round the house, I was bidding farewell to all that it contains. Then, when you lost sight of me, I went into the farmyard and into the

stables to say good-bye to the implements and the animals which had helped me in my labours. After that, I had to present myself before the Judgment Seat of God.”

“You did all very speedily!”

“The flight of souls is swift.”

“But why did you let yourself be shut up in the coffin with your body?”

“I was obliged to remain with it until God had pronounced my sentence.”

“I could have wished that it had been permitted you to undergo a portion of your time of expiation near me so long as I remain alive. God knows, surely, that we loved each other with unusual affection, Pezr Nicol!”

“Yes, God knows that, Yvon Peuker, and you may be assured that He will speedily reunite us. Before long, your soul will join mine in this place!”

Three months later, Yvon Peuker, the wise and good man, was buried.

*(Related by Catherine Careenec, Port-Blanc.)*