

RELIGIOUS

EARTHLY WATCHERS

AT

THE HEAVENLY GATES.

The False and the True Spiritualism.

BY THE
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PREFACE.

IT is a sad commentary on the depravity of the human heart that Spiritualism exists in this land of gospel light. It might reasonably be supposed that the frequent exposures of its deception, and failures of its prophecies, would convince all of its falsity ; yet if any one will take the pains to investigate the classes among whom it gains a hearing, and the number of Spiritualistic camp-meetings, seances and circles yearly held, he will see that it is not merely an absurdity to be laughed at, but a pernicious evil to be counteracted.

There is also a large class of persons who, smarting under bereavement, have had their imagination and sympathies wrought on by

the prospect of holding Spiritualistic intercourse with their dead. As a pastor the writer has often felt the need of a book to place in the hands of those inclined to adopt this error. He has therefore written this volume, the aim of which is to show that every proper desire to know about the state of the dead can be abundantly satisfied by the word of God, and that the communion of saints through Christ and the Holy Spirit yields more real soul-comfort than any *séance* could, even if such a mode of intercourse were possible. A story is interwoven with the discussion of this theme, with the hope that it will thus reach those who might be repelled by a formal doctrinal treatise.

JOHN CHESTER.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March, 1886.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
QUESTIONINGS BY ONE OF THE WATCHERS	7

CHAPTER II.

AN INTERPRETER APPEARS	15
----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III.

A SPIRITUALIST OFFERS HIS AID	27
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

TWO MORE WATCHERS, ONE PRACTICAL, THE OTHER ÆSTHETIC	45
---	----

CHAPTER V.

A LADY-SPIRITUALIST	58
-------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI.

A SPIRITUALISTIC SÉANCE	77
-----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VII.

EXPOSURES AND REPENTINGS	96
------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REASONS WHY SPIRITUALISM FAILS	111
--	-----

CHAPTER IX.

HEAVEN, AND ITS CONTRAST WITH EARTH	126
---	-----

CHAPTER X.	
	PAGE
MINISTERING ANGELS	142

CHAPTER XI.	
AN ASTONISHING INTERRUPTION	160

CHAPTER XII.	
GRACE HALLOWELL'S HISTORY	179

CHAPTER XIII.	
THE TRUE MEDIUM FOR SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE . . .	198

CHAPTER XIV.	
HEAVENLY RECOGNITIONS	218

CHAPTER XV.	
RECOGNITION: ITS RELATIONS TO SOULS NOT SAVED . .	235

CHAPTER XVI.	
ONE OF THE WATCHERS BECOMES SENTIMENTAL . . .	251

CHAPTER XVII.	
LOST, THOUGH ONCE IN SIGHT OF THE GATES	270

CHAPTER XVIII.	
THE LAST EFFORTS OF THE SPIRITUALISTS WITH MRS. HALLOWELL	286

CHAPTER XIX.	
CEMENTING OF SOME EARTHLY LOVES	301

CHAPTER XX.	
ONE OF THE WATCHERS ENTERS THE HEAVENLY GATES	314

EARTHLY WATCHERS

AT THE

HEAVENLY GATES.

CHAPTER I.

QUESTIONINGS BY ONE OF THE WATCHERS.

“**W**HAT I now want with heaven,” exclaimed Mr. Avalon, “is intercourse. Imagine as I may its promised glories, picture as I will its future bliss, what I want now is communication with”—here he hesitated—“with the Saviour first of all; but—”

“Father,” interposed his daughter Clara, interpreting his thoughts, “why perplex yourself with the impossible? You know what David said about his dead child: ‘I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.’”

“True,” answered her father; “but do

you not suppose that David in his very heart longed to see his child? Is there one bereaved heart but has often yearned for at least a moment's communion with its loved ones snatched away by death?"

"Dear father," answered Clara, "what we long for is not always what we can or should possess. I firmly believe that God has arranged all these matters for the best interests of both the living and their departed friends. Above all, I know that a loving Saviour sympathizes with our griefs as well as with our joys. The time has not come for him to wipe away all tears from our eyes or to resolve all the questionings of our hearts; let us wait until the Hand once pierced for us on the cross draws back the veil which separates our loved ones from us. 'Twas only yesterday I was reading these beautiful lines, and they came to my heart with fresh comfort:

'Between the mysteries of life and death

Thou standest, loving, guiding—not explaining:

We ask, and thou art silent, yet we gaze,

And our charmed hearts forget their drear complaining.

No crushing fate, no stony destiny,

Thou Lamb that hast been slain, we rest in thee:

Thy piercèd hand guides the mysterious wheel,
 Thy thorn-crowned brow now wears the crown of power;
 And when the dark enigma presseth sore,
 The patient voice saith, "Watch with me one hour."
 As sinks the moaning river in the sea
 In silent peace, so sinks my soul in thee.' "

"All true and beautiful," said Mr. Avalon, "but, Clara, I do not think you understand my feelings. I am not murmuring against God for taking away my loved ones—I know they are far happier in heaven than they could be on earth—but I do want to know more about their present state. It was only last night that I dreamt of Frank, and in my dream we walked and chatted together as we were wont to do when he was living, but just as we reached a stream I awoke. I would have given anything to have had the dream over again, there were so many questions I would have asked him."

Clara was here called away to see a visitor. Mr. Avalon, left alone in his study, drew his chair to the open fire and sat a long time gazing thoughtfully therein. He was thinking of his dead, and they were many. That home which once resounded with shouts of merry laughter and the pattering of little

feet was now desolate. Two years before, three of his children had been swept away by an epidemic of scarlet fever. There were still left his wife, whom he loved with tenderest devotion, Clara and his only son, Frank; but before the year closed, Frank also was taken. He was a manly fellow, the pride and hope of the family, and possessed a well-formed Christian character. After graduating from college at the head of his class, he entered the office of a celebrated lawyer in New York City; on leaving that office the following endorsement was given him by his preceptor; "I consider Frank Avalon the most promising of the scores of young men who have studied with me. His mind is naturally a legal one, his forensic powers are uncommon, his character is unblemished, his industry constant. I expect to see him take his place among the ablest lawyers of the land."

Frank left New York City to return home and advise with his father about the best place for settlement. The family were eagerly anticipating the pleasure of having him with them again. A deputation of

young friends accompanied Frank's parents to the railroad station to escort him home. The family and friends waited for hours. News, in the mean while, came of a fearful collision on the railroad. The suspense became terrible. At last a train appeared, and from it was lifted a mangled corpse: it was that of Frank Avalon. We draw a veil over the scene which ensued; imagination alone can picture it. But a few months passed, and Mrs. Avalon was taken from her husband's side. She never recovered from the blow of Frank's death.

One daughter was left to Mr. Avalon, the only remaining member of his once large family. Clara Avalon was both the comfort and the pride of her father—the one on whom he leaned more as a companion than as a daughter. She was in her nineteenth summer, but in mind and judgment was matured beyond her years. The very trials attending her youth had ripened her character, and the demands on her sympathy had cultured her naturally affectionate disposition. Beautiful in face and graceful in carriage, she moved around the desolate

mansion like some ministering angel. With a woman's tact, she saw there were shadows enough, and that what was needed was the sunlight of a cheerful face, even sometimes the music of a happy laugh.

Still, there were times when even Clara's thoughtful sympathy failed to cheer her father's heart. That evening being the anniversary of Frank's death, Mr. Avalon had felt peculiarly burdened. The occasion not only recalled his bereavement, but started afresh many questionings which lately had much occupied his attention. He was a firm believer in the Christian religion—his mind did not question its evidences or its doctrines—but his difficulty lay in harmonizing his desires with the limitations of the word of God, at least as he then understood those limitations.

"I am ready," he said to himself, "to bow to the will of God: I do not complain that he has removed my loved ones from this earth of sin and sorrow to the mansions of the blessed; but I cannot see why he lets me know so little about them now. Why does he not draw aside the veil which conceals the

holy of holies and let me have one look into the mysteries beyond? I think then I would be perfectly satisfied. Why, too, could there not be some mode of intercourse established by which our departed ones should become as the angels are—ministering spirits to us? There surely is no such impassable gulf between heaven and earth as lies between heaven and hell. But then,” thought he, “they might see the grief of those left behind, and that would mar their happiness. Still, what a dreary world this must needs be to the Christian, when he has to stay here in a sort of Siberian exile, while his loved ones are feasting in the palace of the great King in contented oblivion of those on earth who love them so much! There is a mystery here, and, say what we will, the mind will try to penetrate into it. Oh that God had revealed to us more of what lies beyond! But there is his Bible. Yes, those are indeed wondrous words: ‘Who has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.’ Perhaps I might find something in the Bible on these very points. But oh how much I need an interpreter! I

feel just as Job did when his three friends proved miserable comforters and he found no light till Elihu appeared. Elihu could say to the afflicted one, 'Behold, I am, according to thy wish, in God's stead; I also am formed out of the clay.' Still, why should not some one come to me from the spirit-world? He would be even better than one 'formed of clay,' for he could tell me what he had seen and testify what he had heard."

Mr. Avalon was so lost in thought puzzling over these questions that he had not noticed the deepening twilight; but the last question so startled him that he rose from his chair, and found himself alone in the dark. *Was* he alone? The very darkness seemed to repeat the question. Though a man of strong nerves, a sort of tremor thrilled his heart. He stood listening—as for the rustling of angels' wings.

CHAPTER II.

AN INTERPRETER APPEARS.

A LOUD knock at the door of his study roused Mr. Avalon from his reverie. Quickly lighting the gas and hastily wiping the tears from his face, he opened the door, and discovered a welcome visitor, his friend Mr. Edward Calvert. This gentleman had been Mr. Avalon's intimate friend from his boyhood. Both had entered the same profession—that of the law—though in different places. Lately, owing to Mr. Calvert having the settlement of an estate which lay in Mr. Avalon's neighborhood, they were brought frequently together. Mr. Calvert was a devout student of the Bible. Mr. Avalon often said that a very fine preacher was spoiled when Edward Calvert became a lawyer.

If there were any parts of the Bible which Mr. Calvert had studied more than

others, they were those which relate to the state of the soul after death. Indeed, it was currently reported that Dr. Goodwin, the worthy pastor of the church, was in the habit of seeking inspiration for his funeral sermons from talks with Edward Calvert. Mr. Calvert's face, however, would never bring up the associations of funereal thoughts, for it was one of those bright, healthy faces which speak of life rather than of death, and his voice had that sympathetic tone which, like all true sympathy, avoids the minor key of whining condolence.

Mr. Calvert was too much of a lawyer to let anything in the conversation of his friend escape his critical eye, and soon he detected signs of agitation which were at variance with Henry Avalon's usual manner. Skillfully he led the talk from one topic to another, but all in vain; politics, law, the state of the markets, even the last sermon of Dr. Goodwin, were brought in review, but there was that want of response which reveals a lack of interest. At last, by a sudden turning of Mr. Avalon's face, his friend noticed that his eyes were red with weeping.

The thought flashed on him, "Henry has been thinking of his dead." There are times when silence comes to our aid, and Mr. Calvert wisely saw that to let his friend alone was the best plan; therefore, pretending to be absorbed in thought, he settled himself in his chair and gazed into the flickering fire.

Suddenly, Mr. Avalon turned and said,

"Edward, do you think that we can really know anything of the state of our friends after death?"

"To what do you refer," replied Mr. Calvert—"the state of their bodies or the state of their souls?"

"Well, either—or both."

"Why, certainly, if we believe in a God and in a heaven and in the Bible."

"But the Bible tells us so little about heaven, Edward."

"Now, Henry," replied Mr. Calvert, "that is just where the mass of people make their mistake, and the reason is that, while so many read their Bibles, so few study them. The peculiarity of the Bible is really that it tells us not so little, but so much, about

heaven. Why, there are many places on this very globe about which, with all the assistance of geographers and modern explorations, we know less than about heaven."

"That is a queer assertion," replied Mr. Avalon; "I think it would be difficult for you to supply proofs of it."

"Well, let us see," said Mr. Calvert. "There is the north pole, to which during the last fifty years so many expeditions have been sent, and about which so many books have been written. Let us, in this year of our Lord eighteen eighty-four, compare the knowledge we have of the north pole with that we have of heaven through the Bible. First, we do not know, except by deduction, whether there is any such spot as the north pole, but we do know by direct assertion in the Bible that there is such a place as heaven; second, we do not know whether there is a living creature at the north pole, but we do know that heaven is inhabited; third, we do not know as yet any way to reach the north pole, but we do know the way to reach heaven; fourth, there is an uncertainty—even if the north pole *is* inhabited

—whether a man would find there the Indians or the Esquimaux, but we do know that a man will find in heaven redeemed ones ‘out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;’ fifth, as yet no one has ever come back from the north pole, but we know that two very respectable men, Moses and Elijah, came back from heaven. Here are five reasons—and I might cite many more—to prove that heaven is not so unknowable a place as is generally supposed.”

“But,” said Mr. Avalon, “does it not savor of presumption to try to peer behind the veil which God has hung between the outer court of this world and the holy of holies in which he himself dwells?”

“My dear Henry,” replied Mr. Calvert, “your very illustration affords the best answer to your doubt; for while it is true that there was a veil hanging between these places beyond which it was absolute profanation for mortal sight to peer, yet I beg you to remember that at Christ’s death ‘the veil of the temple was rent in twain.’ Besides, such a good Bible authority as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews used

your illustration to teach exactly the opposite to your view of our want of knowledge of heaven; for he wrote, 'Having boldness, therefore, brethren, to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil; that is to say, his flesh.'"

"Ah! but this refers to the access of the soul to God in its communion with him on earth, and the access of the soul, after the death of the body, to his immediate presence."

"Where do you get your authority for that interpretation?" inquired Mr. Calvert.

"Is it not the usual one, Edward?"

"Well, suppose it is? Usual interpretations are not always correct ones. Take, for example, one which affords an illustration pertinent to the very point on which we are dwelling: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' To what does this refer?"

"Why, of course," answered Mr. Avalon, "to seeing God hereafter in heaven. It was only a few Sabbaths ago that Dr. Goodwin

—whom I know you respect so much—preached a beautiful sermon on that very text to show how little we can know of heaven.”

“Well, Henry, I shall hereafter think less of Dr. Goodwin—at least, of his exegesis. He has certainly a veil over his mind as surely as the Jew had over his heart, for the good doctor needed but to have read one verse farther to see that the contrast which Paul makes is not between our knowledge of heaven here and our knowledge of it hereafter, but between the ignorance of the unrenewed heart of heavenly things and the clear knowledge of them by the renewed heart. For the next verse reads, ‘But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.’ Now, notice the reason given: ‘For the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God.’ I suppose, Henry, I may assume that you number heaven among the deep things of God, and I also believe that you have the Spirit of God; now, why not search out this deep thing of God, what he hath revealed to us about heaven by his Spirit?

“Besides,” continued Mr. Calvert, waxing

warm through his interest in the subject, "if you will reflect upon it, your very reason ought to teach you that heaven is a subject which the mind with the utmost propriety can investigate. Such investigations are not only lawful, but highly beneficial. It is mentioned in the Bible as one of the traits of the Christian that he is 'heavenly-minded.' The Christian is exhorted by the joys of heaven to take comfort under the sorrows of earth; by the rewards of heaven, to go through earth's conflicts; by heaven's prospective fellowship, to be animated in his Christian race. Now, it stands to reason that the clearer is his knowledge of these, the more active will be his hope of attaining heaven. The racer cannot be animated in the race by the prospect of an indefinite prize; he knows before he starts what the prize will be, and the precise knowledge of its character stimulates him in the race. Besides, the Christian on earth has so many foretastes of heaven that the apostle absolutely refuses to use a future tense when he speaks of our intercourse with heaven, but makes the very force of his argument depend

on the present tense, for he says, 'Ye *are* come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, to an innumerable company of angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect.'

"Indeed," went on Mr. Calvert, rising from his chair and walking the floor in his earnestness, "I am, for one, convinced that many professed believers in the Bible have a solemn responsibility for their lack of appreciation of what God has written about heaven for their instruction and comfort. Why, really, it seems to me that in avoiding the Scylla of the Spiritualist some have run into the Charybdis of the infidel, and talk of 'the dark unknown;' like the Pharisees of old, some professed Christians will neither permit men to enter nor enter themselves through this 'open door' of knowledge of heaven which God 'hath set before us.'"

Mr. Avalon listened with astonishment to this burst of mingled wisdom and indignation on the part of his friend. It was very different from what he anticipated from one usually so cautious and calm as Edward Calvert. But it was just the line of thought

which answered to the questionings of his own heart. He saw hope of getting light on a subject he had long pondered, and, turning to his friend, said seriously and earnestly,

“Edward, are you willing to do me a great favor?”

“Why, certainly, if it is in my power, Henry.”

“Well, then, will you appoint some evening when we can talk over this subject together? I will arrange it that we shall not be disturbed. And oh,” he added, “if you only knew what a comfort it would be to me to get some light on these questionings of my heart, I know you would grant me this request.”

Mr. Calvert was much affected. The anxious, careworn face of his friend pleaded touchingly and unanswerably. He knew the sad history of the bereavements through which Mr. Avalon had passed. He answered,

“Henry, I willingly accede to your request, but on one condition—a condition that may seem a very easy one, but may prove more difficult to fulfill than we think—namely, that we confine our investigations

to the teachings of the Bible. For the point I have just endeavored to make is not that the human mind unassisted can peer into heaven, but that the Bible is purposely constructed for assisting the human mind sanctified by the Spirit to see what the carnal eye hath not seen nor the ear heard. The Bible must be our guide and the Spirit of God our Interpreter. Let us come together after mutual conference with God, and then have converse with things heavenly and divine."

As Mr. Calvert left the house Mr. Avalon followed him to the door, and while he stood looking after his friend's vanishing form he instinctively raised his eyes to heaven; there, shining in its dark canopy, were the bright stars.

"Earth doth not have to wait till the consummation of all things to get its light from heaven," exclaimed Mr. Avalon; "the stars shine upon it, and we, in turn, study them. Men with nothing but the book of Nature and the aids of science have been able to find out even their weight, atmosphere, velocity, the forms of their mountains, valleys, volcanoes, deserts; and shall not we,

with the word of God, into which we can look, 'as in a glass beholding the glory of God,' be able to find out something of the heavenly courts above?" And then, remembering the last words of his friend, about the need of the Spirit of God and of prayer to clear the mental sight, he unconsciously voiced his petition in the words of Milton:

"What in me is dark illume,
What is low raise and support,
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man."

CHAPTER III.

A SPIRITUALIST OFFERS HIS AID.

THE next morning Mr. Avalon received a note from Mr. Calvert informing him that he had been suddenly summoned home by the extreme illness of his wife. He, however, assured Mr. Avalon of his speedy return, when he would devote many evenings with him to the study of the subject in which both were so deeply interested.

That evening there called at the house of Mr. Avalon a neighbor, Samuel Giles by name. This Mr. Giles was a noted Spiritualist. He claimed that like Paul he, while in a trance, had been "caught up to the third heaven" and had "heard unspeakable words." Where he differed from Paul was in not considering them as "words which it is not lawful for a man to utter;" for nothing pleased Mr. Giles so much as to find some listener into whose ear he could pour the

history of what he heard in the spirit-land. Nor must it be inferred that Mr. Giles was "a profane babbler." No preacher ever approached the subject of heaven with more reverence than did he approach the subject of spiritual manifestations. The solemn look, the self-deprecatory attitude of the man, the eyes raised as if in contemplative devotion, the careful choice of words in expressing his thoughts,—all aided to impress his listeners with the idea that he was a man of unusual sanctity. He was also careful to avoid the whine of the devotee.

Mr. Giles came to see Mr. Avalon with the air of a man who had a mission to perform; so, after a few introductory words, he thus began :

"My dear Mr. Avalon, I have long felt the deepest sympathy with you in your severe afflictions. From experience I know what it is to part with loved ones." Here Mr. Giles paused, and, taking his handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his eyes; then, after waiting to see the effect on Mr. Avalon, he continued: "But I am thankful to say I have found out a source of consolation which

so illumines the darkness of the tomb that its shadows have fled away and everything seems bathed in a glorious light."

Mr. Avalon made no response to this exordium, and Mr. Giles, inferring that he had at least gained a hearing, proceeded:

"After the loss of my only daughter I was one day sitting in my study engrossed with the sad reflections which you have doubtless experienced, when the thought struck me, Why should there not be some means of communication between us and those in the spirit-world?"

Mr. Avalon gave an imperceptible start, and Mr. Giles, seeing that he had succeeded in touching some sensitive point, went confidently on:

"While pondering this question, suddenly I awoke to the fact that there was some one near me. I say 'some one,' but it was not a human form; it was rather the consciousness of a presence than the presence itself. What impressed me most was that I felt no fear; a calm, holy influence seemed to steal over my senses. My faculties, too, were sharpened. There was afforded to my

eye a sort of spiritual sight, and, looking upward, I saw floating over my head a light which seemed to be phosphorescent. My sight seemed to be gradually increased, and what formerly appeared as a light now assumed the dim outlines of a human form. My soul seemed to rise to a state of perfect ecstasy. I realized what Peter must have felt on the Mount of Transfiguration when he held company with Moses and Elias, and so much enjoyed it that he wanted to build tabernacles and dwell there for ever." Mr. Giles here rested and fixed his eyes on Mr. Avalon with an inquiring look, as if saying, "What do you think of that?"

Mr. Avalon's face showed interest, but he merely said,

"Was that all?"

"Yes, all for that night. Not, I frankly confess, all I could have wished, but all that was necessary to convince me that there was something which would well repay following up. And follow it up I did, to my utmost satisfaction, and to the opening of a world of wonders which has since proved a source of comfort to my previously anguished

heart." Suddenly turning to Mr. Avalon, Mr. Giles asked in a solemn tone, "Mr. Avalon, do you believe in Spiritualism?"

"No," said Mr. Avalon; "that is one subject I have never dared to tamper with."

"May I inquire why?"

"Because it seems to me meddling with things which God has purposely hidden from us; and, to speak plainly, I think I have marked the punishment those receive who attempt to tamper with it. The extravagances—yea, I might say, the abominable sins—some men and women have been led into by Spiritualism are a standing warning."

"Just so I once thought," responded Mr. Giles; "but without attempting in the least to argue these points with you I only ask that you will with the same kind patience you have already shown listen to the rest of my experience in this matter."

"Certainly," answered Mr. Avalon; "go on."

"Well, I confess that after the memorable evening in which I beheld with such rapture that heavenly vision I was in perplexity what to do. I took down my Bible and

studied it from Genesis to Malachi and from Matthew to Revelation, but could get no light. There were, it is true, cases of the reappearance of persons after death to the living, such as Moses and Elias, but I noticed this—that, though these talked with Christ, nothing is said of their talking with Peter, James and John. Then, again, there were those dead bodies which arose after Christ's resurrection and went into the Holy City and appeared to many, but there is no mention of any intercourse between them and the living. Now, what my heart panted after was this very thing—intercourse. I did not need my daughter to appear to me to assure me that she was in the spirit-world, for I am as firm a believer as yourself in the immortality of the soul; but I wanted her in some way to convince me that she was in a state of rest—yea, of positive happiness; yea, that she still felt an interest in me. Yea, I frankly confess it: my very soul yearned for the renewal of that loving intercourse we had enjoyed together on earth. My minister told me to wait and 'work out my own salvation with fear and trembling,'

and then by and by I should have this intercourse renewed. But oh the pain of waiting !”

Mr. Avalon’s interest was now thoroughly aroused. He leaned over the small table which separated him from Mr. Giles and looked intently into his face, like a child listening to an interesting story from its mother’s lips.

Mr. Giles saw his advantage, and determined to improve it. He continued :

“While in this state of mind I fortunately was thrown into contact with a lovely Christian lady. She was a person whose attainments of mind were surpassed only by her loveliness of form. She had that refined sensibility which so much adorns the female character, which made her appreciative of the feelings of others and deeply sympathetic with their sorrows. Indeed, she had reason to be sympathetically inclined, for her cup of happiness had been suddenly dashed to the ground by the loss of her young husband. He was a noble fellow with all the qualities of heart and mind which promised to them both a happy married life. But by

an accident he had been taken from her side, and her cup of happiness was suddenly dashed to the ground."

At the mention of "an accident" Mr. Avalon gave a start and drew his face still closer to the speaker.

"I shall never forget," continued Mr. Giles, "the time when I first met Grace Hallowell; for that is her name. Her sweet, beautiful face seemed to reflect the radiance of heaven; her soft blue eyes appeared as colored with the tints of the skies, and the gentle, sympathetic tone of her voice thrilled my very soul."

Mr. Avalon instinctively drew back. This earthly rhapsody had struck the first false note in Mr. Giles's hitherto heavenly oratorio. It savored too much of the houris of the Mohammedan paradise to suit the tastes of one who was trying to peer into the realities of a Christian heaven.

Mr. Giles perceived the mistake he had made, and proceeded hastily to take another tack :

"But what impressed me most was the evident sincerity of this lady. She was a

candid seeker after light; and though she discussed these subjects with me hour after hour, yet there was always that propriety of speech and absence of romantic flights which often makes the reasoning of the gentler sex mere rhapsodies. I also discovered that she possessed in a wonderful degree the faculty of mediumship."

"What do you mean by that term?" asked Mr. Avalon.

"The instance I am about to relate concerning Mrs. Hallowell will best answer your question. The evening I first met her we naturally drifted into a conversation about our respective bereavements. To my surprise, I found that, while she experienced an equal sense of loss with myself, she seemed to possess a superior strength—yea, I may add, comfort—under her bereavement. I was anxious to find out what it was that made us differ, and at last said,

" 'Mrs. Hallowell, I would like to ask a question of you which I fear may appear to savor of impertinence.'

" 'Well,' she answered, pleasantly, 'you had better ask the question; and if it savors

of impertinence, your presumption can easily be rebuked by my silence. If, on the other hand, as I anticipate from my high opinion of you as a gentleman, your question savors more of the restless inquiries of a burdened heart, I will try to answer it to the best of my ability.'

"I replied,

" 'Since you have so kindly devised this ingenious mode of holding an inquest over my intellectual waywardness, I will place the subject before you and await the verdict. The question is this: "Whence do you receive the greatest comfort and strength in bearing your heavy bereavement?" ' "

"Mrs. Hallowell's countenance assumed a very solemn aspect.

" 'I regret, Mr. Giles,' she answered, 'not your question, but that in the naturally pleasant flow of our conversation we should each have drifted toward a most serious subject with such apparent lightness of speech. I mention this not to censure, but to prepare you for an answer which I beg you will receive not as a matter of speculation, but of solemn fact. My answer is this: My strength

and comfort come from possessing the privilege of communicating with the dead. My dear friends, though absent in the body, are still present with me in spirit, and the reality of their spiritual presence so compensates for the absence of their bodies that I sometimes think I know them better now—have more fellowship of heart with heart, mind with mind, than I had even when they were living with me. Longfellow wrote more wisely than he knew when he said,

“There is no death : what seems so is transition ;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian
Whose portals we call Death.”

“‘Why, Mrs. Hallowell, your answer confounds me ! Do you mean to say you have actual converse with the dead ?’

“‘Yes,’ she replied ; ‘and, what is more, they not only tell me about themselves, but they have been the means of introducing me to others in the spirit-world, some of whom I knew only by name. I used to read the works of Nathaniel P. Tallmadge and Robert Dale Owen, and their accounts of interviews with the spirits of Clay, Webster, Bacon,

Shakespeare and Milton, and regarded them as the extreme vagaries of disordered brains. But now I myself converse not only with these, but with those more ancient celebrities Herodotus, Seneca and Demosthenes. Indeed, it was but the other day I sat at the feet of Hypatia and learned more of her history in an hour than I have been able to gather during my lifetime from books. Yea, this is not all : I have learned through these communications all about “the other world,” as we call it—have had its very scenery painted before my mental vision, have listened to its seraphic music and had unfolded its rapturous employments. You may doubt this, Mr. Giles, you may think me crazy ; but I have a proof of which you cannot, with your inherent high sense of justice, deny the force. These revelations have unfolded to me—and will, if you choose to try them, unfold to you—incidents in your life that could not by any possibility be known to any other human being. Let me give you one example from my own experience. At the time of my engagement to Mr. Hallowell he gave me a

plain gold wedding-ring not different from thousands which have been placed on the fingers of others who were betrothed, except that in the inside of the ring was a secret spring which when touched opened a cavity in which was a tiny piece of parchment on which a single word was written. My husband was a firm believer in Spiritualism, though during our married life he could never convert me to this belief. When he slipped the ring on my finger, he made me vow a solemn vow that I would not take it off again until he should tell me to do so, or if by any accident it should be separated from my finger that I would not touch the spring till he bade me. This promise I faithfully kept. The week after his death I was sitting in a room with his sister, who was also a medium, and she abruptly turned to me and said,

““ Grace, Charles”—that was my husband’s name—“is here with us.”

““ How do you know this?” I asked.

““ “I hear him rapping,” she answered.

““ I was so disgusted with this, as I then considered it, ridiculous nonsense, that I

started to leave the room. But my steps were arrested by several raps, made on a table near which I and my sister were sitting. While I paused to listen my sister exclaimed,

““Charles, is that you?”

““Two raps were immediately heard on the table.

““Do you wish to communicate with Grace?”

““Two raps more followed this question.

“““Oh, Grace,” said Annie, “do stay. You have now, I feel assured, the opportunity which your heart longed for to converse once more with your loved one.”

““I was still unconvinced, but, thinking it would do no harm to watch the result of this, as I then regarded it, attempt at accomplishing an impossible thing, I sat down. After a pause the knocks began again. My sister then said,

“““Grace, there appears to be an anxiety on the part of Charles’s spirit to say something to you.”

“““Well, let him say it, then,” I replied, rather impatiently.

““A series of rapid knocks followed. Annie listened and said,

“““Why, it is strange! They keep repeating over these three words, ‘Look at ring.’”

““I confess my heart began to beat rapidly, and a cold chill crept over me. I knew that my sister had never known of the peculiarity of my ring and of the secret compact between Charles and myself. I really did not know what to do. In my anguish I exclaimed,

“““Oh, Charles, if that is truly thyself, tell me, do you indeed wish me to touch the spring and read the contents of that parchment?”

““Two loud, emphatic knocks followed.

““Annie was now becoming more disturbed than myself; she saw that she had opened up some secret which was utterly unintelligible to herself.

“““Grace,” said she, “I now see that you are a medium as well as myself; I leave you, then, to converse with Charles;” and she glided from the room.

““I waited a moment, but the raps kept repeating “Look at ring.” Tremblingly I

slipped it off my finger and pressed the spring. It opened, and I took out the parchment, on which was something so finely written that I could not make it out. Fortunately, there was a magnifying-glass on the centre-table. I approached the table, and while doing so the raps spelt out the word "Love." I examined the parchment, and on it was written one word—"Love." Could I withstand such a proof? I knew that no one but my husband and myself knew the compact about the ring. I never knew before that day what was on that parchment. I had waited till he told me to open the ring, and thus, after his death, he had identified the presence of his spirit with me by stating through these raps the very word written on that parchment."'"

Mr. Avalon's face was a study during this recital. As a lawyer he was accustomed to sift evidence ; he had been picking flaws in what he regarded as the special pleading of the testimony offered. But it is a singular fact that many of those considered good lawyers have been Spiritualists. There is also a vein of superstition in every one's

mind; especially are we apt to be superstitious when the ideas of the mind are biased by the affections of the heart. Mr. Giles had failed to convince Mr. Avalon, yet he had succeeded in awakening that other faculty incident to a judicial mind, inquisitiveness. Mr. Avalon was at least convinced that the subject was worthy of further investigation. Turning to Mr. Giles, he said,

“Where does this Mrs. Grace Hallowell reside?”

“In Boston,” said Mr. Giles, “but she has friends whom she sometimes visits in our village. I remember now that Mr. Samuel Mills—who has, you know, lately bought that beautiful country-seat at the head of Sycamore avenue—expects Mrs. Hallowell to visit him next week.”

“I also am acquainted with Mr. Mills,” replied Mr. Avalon, “for he applied to me to examine the title of that very property, and, as there was some difficulty in straightening it out, we had several interviews, and thus became well acquainted.”

“Well,” answered Mr. Giles, “you ought before this to have called upon him. He

has a young daughter; suppose you call with Miss Clara next Thursday, when you will probably also meet Mrs. Hallowell."

"I have not been going out into society since the death of my wife," said Mr. Avalon, "but, as six years have passed and my daughter ought to have more society, I think I will take her with me and call next Thursday."

CHAPTER IV.

TWO MORE WATCHERS, ONE PRACTICAL, THE OTHER ÆSTHETIC.

A FEW days after, Mr. Avalon and his daughter called at the Mills's. This family consisted of Mr. Mills, his wife, their son George and daughter Edith. Mr. Mills was a prosperous banker in New York City. His wife was a lady who had evidently seen much of the fashionable world, but now, wearied of its round of pleasure, was glad to rest a while in the quiet of their beautiful country-seat. George Mills was a junior partner in his father's banking-house and represented the firm at the stock board. His face betokened a man of resolution, yet of eminent good-humor. There was a frankness about him which was very attractive. He would have been a favorite in society, but was too much absorbed in business to be anything of a society-man. His sister,

Edith, was about Clara Avalon's age. She was not beautiful, though decidedly stylish, well made up by all that modern art could do to compensate for lack of beauty. She was rather affected in manner; this, however, served to set off by contrast her brother's honest, outspoken disposition.

Mrs. Hallowell was a lady who would have attracted attention in any cultured circle. She possessed a rare union of beauty, intellect and sweetness of disposition. Though now a widow for five years, she was still in the prime of womanhood, having married when very young. Hers were not the attractions which empty-headed gallants would have raved over, but those peculiarly fascinating to men who admire smart women. Her smartness, however, was not that which shines upon a platform, but rather that refined culture which makes the home and the parlor attractive.

Mr. Mills and wife and Mrs. Hallowell gathered in a group by themselves, while George, Edith and Clara sat chatting pleasantly at a little distance.

"Miss Avalon," said George Mills, "what

do you find with which to while away your time in this quiet village? I wish you would post my sister on the recreations of Spring Dale. She is getting in a very morbid condition, for she declared only this morning that if she stayed any longer here she would die of the blues."

Clara, whose strict conscientiousness made her always feel that she must try to do good to every one she met, answered,

"I think Miss Mills will find that a quiet village affords good opportunities for self-culture. In the whirl of the city one has little time for reading, but here we can enjoy it to the utmost. In our own home we are spending our evenings in very pleasant talks about heaven."

"'Heaven!'" exclaimed Edith. "Why, Miss Avalon, what do you find in 'heaven' to interest you? I am sure it's the last subject I should choose to talk about. It always reminds me of death; and if I should stop to think of death in this quiet place, I should go perfectly wild."

"Oh, you misunderstand me," said Clara; "our talks are not of death, but of that

beautiful home which lies beyond it. We ourselves have lately passed through frequent bereavements, and we find great comfort in thinking of that happy place where so many of our loved ones now are."

Edith looked in blank amazement at Clara. George courteously came to the rescue by saying,

"Well, Miss Avalon, we are all of us a pretty sorry crowd as respects matters of religion, yet I do wish we had some investments in heaven. I have myself thought at intervals about the future state, and our guest over there," nodding toward Mrs. Hallowell, "is a beautiful interpreter of the Spiritualistic view of it; but" (lowering his voice) "she is what the Scotch people would term 'a little daft' on the subject. So far as consolation is concerned, I regard it, after all, as a very practical matter. The best way to console any one is to give him something to divert his thoughts. When I die, I do not intend to leave money to found a college or an asylum, as many of our rich men do: I am going to found a place of amusement where the afflicted and broken-hearted, as they call

them, shall have everything to divert their thoughts from themselves. I would, for example, furnish them with the finest music possible, good plays and operas, or, if they are educated people, with good libraries."

"Do you think it would be possible by these means to divert their thoughts from their dead?" asked Clara.

"Why, certainly," said George; "for, after all, this is a very practical matter. Give a man something to think of which interests him intensely, and he will not think of anything else. Now, here am I. No man loves his mother or his sister more than I love mine, and when at home I am thinking of them all the time; but when I get in the whirl of the stock exchange, I absolutely forget that I have a mother or a sister. I had an opportunity to try my theory only lately, and it proved correct. There was my friend Ned Billings; he lost his wife and a child in one day. Poor fellow! how I pitied him! He was all cut up. He moped around the house and looked as if he were destined to end in a lunatic asylum. I called and took him riding, so as to have a

plain talk with him, and advised him to take the next steamer to Europe and see the sights of Paris. He did as I urged him, and in a month he wrote me from Paris as cheerful a letter as ever was penned. The last I saw of him he was deep in a speculation in Erie stock, and to look at him you would never have thought he had lost a friend."

"Is Mr. Billings a Christian?" inquired Clara.

"No, I can't say he is. Oh yes; I do remember hearing that he was a trustee in one of our fashionable up-town churches. Oh, now I'm sure that he's a Christian, for he once told me that he doesn't eat meat on Fridays."

"Have you ever lost a near relative?" asked Clara.

"Can't say that I have; Death has been very kind in not knocking at the doors of the Mills mansion. But I did once lose a friend who was almost a brother to me. Poor fellow! he was smashed up in a railroad-accident. After learning of his death I hunted up his mother. She was a lovely lady, and he was her only son. I never

could see how God could take away the only son of a poor widow, when there are so many worthless fellows all about. Why, she actually had no one else to depend on for support. I hunted up the fellows around the exchange—they all knew Ned—and when I told them how poor his mother was, I assure you they made up a big purse. When I took it to her, she thanked me so feelingly that I never felt so good in my life. But what do you think she said to me? Queerest thing I ever heard! ‘Mr. Mills,’ said she, ‘I would not have my boy back, for I know he’s far better off.’ Now, that woman must have been crazy. I was so mad to think that I had been to all that expense of money and time for her that I determined to let her starve and try her consolation to see how it would work. But, somehow, I could not get her and her sweet, patient face out of my mind; I found myself, two days after, standing on her doorstep with a big basket of provisions. I never could account for doing so foolish an act. Well what do you think she said to me the second time? She said, ‘Mr. Mills, you

have been very kind to me, and, though I cannot repay it, I have prayed for you to God, who has promised to reward those who are kind to the widow. Will you accept from me a slight token of my esteem? What do you think she gave me? Why, a New Testament. I verily believe she thought I was a heathen."

"I hope you read it?" quietly remarked Clara.

"Now, Miss Avalon, how can you expect a business-man to read the Bible? Why I hardly have time to read the newspapers. Here is a programme of my daily life: Up at seven A. M.; a hurried breakfast; a rush to the cars; a smoke on my way over to the city; then a rush to the office; then a rush all day till five o'clock; a rush to cars again; reach home; eat a late dinner; talk with father over stocks; take a little stroll; go to bed. I leave my mother and Edith to do my religion for me. The only prospect I have of ever getting to heaven will be to marry some pious woman who will read the Bible and say prayers for me. I think there ought to be opened an intelligence-

office where business-men could find some one to do their religion for them, just as you ladies have intelligence-offices where you can find a servant to do your cooking."

Clara was shocked, and said to herself, "Well, here is missionary-ground! I guess that I will have to try to do some missionary-work in this family."

But Edith broke in with the impatient exclamation,

"Now, that is the way George always rattles on when we begin to talk about religion. I wish I could convert him to my views. I have always thought that religion belongs wholly to the æsthetic: you must cultivate a taste for it as you would for classical music. I would adorn religion with all the beauties of art, would voice it in music, would have churches built only in the purest Gothic with ivy-vines running over them and a dim religious light within; I would clothe the priests at its altars with elegant vestments and interpret its doctrines by an elaborate ritual. It would be such a spiritual education to the poor, you know. Then, about the subject of comforting mourn-

ers, I would have the bodies of the dead kept in vaults and buried only in the spring-time, when the grass is fresh, when Nature in the sprouting leaf and flower-bud speaks to the heart of resurrection, and the birds singing in the trees remind one of the music of celestial choirs. Then this common way of burying the dead in coffins! That ought to be done away with. I would return to the ancient mode, and have their bodies swathed in fine linen and saturated with fragrant spices. There is one great improvement in this direction that I am glad to see—the decoration of coffins with flowers. Why, I attended a funeral lately where actually it took two carriages to carry the flowers from the house to the tomb. It was the funeral of Mr. Simpkins. He was an awfully wicked man; I attended his funeral merely out of curiosity to see what the minister could say. Well, the flowers really saved him from saying anything, for what a beautiful sermon those floral tributes preached! There was a magnificent crown and a cross and an anchor of Hope, all made of the rarest

flowers, and, best of all, there was a pillow, of the choicest rose-buds, and on it, in the most delicate purple immortelles, was the word 'Rest.' Now, that widow had only to look at those flowers and have one of the grandest consoling sermons that could be preached."

"I wish I could get her to look into the books of our firm," said George, abruptly, "for that fellow died owing us some twenty thousand dollars. He was the man that broke up the firm of Samuel Brothers by getting them to 'go short' of Reading, while he was quietly 'bulling' it all the time. He finally got broke up himself, and every one was glad of it—though, poor fellow! it really caused his death."

"Well," interposed Mrs. Mills, "I am afraid that Miss Avalon will think us a rather lugubrious set if we talk of nothing but death. I confess I sometimes fear that we would not have much consolation if death should ever enter our family. I wish we had more time to think of these things; perhaps our coming to this quiet village will give us the opportunity. But,

dear me! I do not know how or where to begin."

Clara immediately began to be interested, and said,

"Mrs. Mills, will you not come to our church? We have such pleasant people, and our pastor, Dr. Goodwin, is an excellent preacher."

"Why, yes, I must really try to begin attending church, and get my family to go there also."

"Well, church is a good institution," said George, "but, really, it's an awfully dry place. Still, I think I will try your church, Miss Avalon, and see whether it goes any better in the country than in the city. Have you good singing?"

Clara hesitated before replying, as she was really the leading lady in the choir, but answered,

"Not as good, probably, as you have heard in the city."

"Then I can't go," exclaimed Edith, "for the only part of the worship I really enjoy is the music. When they sing the 'Ave Maria,' I am in an ecstatic condition; and

when that heavenly tenor in the church of the Blessed Angels sings Gounod's 'There is a green hill far away,' I feel as if I were already in heaven."

CHAPTER V.

A LADY-SPIRITUALIST.

IN the mean while, the other group were in an earnest conversation on Spiritualism. Mrs. Hallowell found an interested auditor in Mr. Avalon ; he listened as the disciples of Hypatia were wont to drink in the words of their teacher. Her views were to him new and fascinating. Though he did not accept her arguments as conclusive, yet they awoke interest in the subject of Spiritualism.

Clara was about to rise to leave, when she was attracted by hearing Mrs. Hallowell say to her father,

“ You have no idea, Mr. Avalon, what a world of information is opened up by Spiritualism. To an inquiring, intelligent mind like your own it answers the very question you long to solve. There, for instance, is the great doctrine of progression, by which you

can trace man's history from the most inert particle of matter up to the spirit of man—yea, even following the spirit beyond the confines of earth. Then there is so much opened up of the progressive history of souls after they leave this world—their occupations, habits, connections, dress, conversation, pleasures, amusements, business; in fine, all that could or should interest you as belonging to the spheres. You see distinctly what is absolutely going on in life as it is and the particular circumstances which occupy the spirits at the time you see them. You look at them as through a window at the real scenes of earthly life before you and the persons acting therein. Now, these things are given to your spirit, which is lifted upward and gifted with the faculty of really seeing what is described. The teachings will now assume the particular details of real life, and what is given is the reality of life as it is. You may suppose many things your own imagination, but it is really the absolute reality of living fact.”*

*The above is quoted *verbatim* from the Preface to the work of Judge Edmonds and Dr. Dexter on Spiritualism.

“But, Mrs. Hallowell, how do you know that ‘it is the absolute reality of living fact’? In my observation as a lawyer nothing has impressed me so much as the unreliability of certain so-called facts. I have heard good people swear to impossible events which they as honestly believed as I believe that you are sitting in that chair at this moment. I remember a case in point. Mr. Quarles, an elder in the church of Bayfield, swore that on a certain night he saw a man standing in a neighbor’s field of corn. He described the man’s hat, coat, beard and general appearance, and they exactly corresponded with those of Sam Patch, a worthless fellow who lived at Bayfield, Long Island, belonging to the class that are too lazy to work, but not too honest to steal. Other witnesses followed, who proved that on that very night a large quantity of corn had been stolen from that field. I was prosecuting the case, and, as link after link of evidence was wound around Sam Patch, I regarded his con-

We prefer to give this description in the language of a book which is readily accepted by all Spiritualists as a standard authority, so that we may not be accused of misrepresenting them.

viction as certain. Indeed, I thought I could already see in the faces of the jury the verdict of condemnation. But, to my surprise, the attorney for the defendant called two reputable witnesses who swore that on that very night they had seen the same Sam Patch on the night-boat from New York to Albany. His counsel argued that, since that boat made no landings between these two cities, Patch could not have slipped off it, and, even if he had, the distance between the Hudson River and a town on Long Island was too great for him to return to it during one night. I need hardly add that the jury gave a verdict for the defendant."

"Ah! that only shows," answered Mrs. Hallowell, "what light Spiritualism can throw on even abstruse legal questions. Why, your story is not at all surprising. While the soul is in contact with the spirit-world it often visits remote places. There are cases on record where Spiritualists have made as long journeys as Mohammed did on the memorable night when he journeyed from Mecca to Jerusalem."

“Why, you do not count Mohammed as a Spiritualist?”

“Yes, in the sense that there are mediums who are themselves unconscious of mediumistic power. Indeed, Mohammed is one of the best illustrations of Spiritualism. His celebrated night-journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and from thence to the seventh heaven, is simply a repetition of what many a Spiritualist has enjoyed. Take, for example, the experience of Judge Edmonds. In his work on Spiritualism he states that on the 16th of June, 1853, while in New York City, where he was sitting with Dr. Dexter, he was transported in spirit to the beautiful Lake Managua, in Central America. He then ascended to the top of a mountain which overlooks that lake. There he held converse with heavenly intelligences who talked with him as freely as Gabriel did with Mohammed.” *

“Well,” said Mr. Avalon, “that reminds me of what my friend Calvert once remarked—that Spiritualism was but Americanized Mohammedism.”

* See Edmonds's *Spiritualism*, p. 313.

Mrs. Hallowell colored, but, without stopping to notice the slur, adroitly answered :

“Mr. Avalon, I think you will agree with me that worse things have been imported into America than Mohammedism—Mormonism, for example. You should also not overlook the fact that at this distant period—when we receive the story of Mohammed only through the writers of the West, who delight in caricaturing him as ‘the False Prophet’—there may have been a brighter side both to his character and to his mission than we usually credit them with. Besides, one of the great facts which Spiritualism has brought to light is that progression applies to revelation. We Spiritualists hold that God raised up an advancing series of revelators. I might mention among these Moses and Isaiah, and in these latter days those whom he has chosen as mediums for Spiritualistic revelation. The past was the dawn, this is the noonday, of revelation.”

It was difficult to tell with which Mr. Avalon had been most impressed, the face or the argument of Mrs. Hallowell. She was a beautiful woman, but her face in

repose was cold; during her argument with Mr. Avalon, however, it had been lit up by the earnestness of her convictions. Mr. Avalon had unconsciously drawn his chair nearer to hers; and when, in the climax of her argument, she paused and looked up earnestly into his face, Mr. Avalon felt a thrill which warned him that it was time to depart, lest, if his head did not yield to the logic, his heart would succumb to the charms, of this fascinating woman.

A few hurried words of parting were said, and Mr. Avalon and Clara wended their way home.

"Why, father," said Clara, "what made you stay so long? I was fidgeting and wanting to go, but you seemed so absorbed in conversation with Mrs. Hallowell that I could not even catch your eye."

"Ah!" said Mr. Avalon; "Mrs. Hallowell is a very accomplished lady, and it is so rarely that one meets with a woman who can talk on something besides dress and gossip that I wanted to improve my opportunity."

Clara answered not a word. At other times

she would have come to the defence of her sex, but the insinuation against woman was at once forgotten in the anxiety about her father's interest in Mrs. Hallowell. She walked on in silence. "This," said she to herself, "is a most unfortunate call. I really meant to get my father out of his seclusion and to cheer him up, but all I have accomplished is to throw him into contact with a bewitching widow."

Mr. Giles appeared the next morning at Mr. Avalon's office and handed him the following note:

"HENRY AVALON, ESQ.—

"MY DEAR SIR: I trust you will not deem it presumptuous, after our brief acquaintance, that I should address you; my desire is simply to aid you in investigating the subject in which you evinced such interest last evening. I have just learned that there have arrived in this village some wonderful Spiritualistic mediums; they are distant relations of the Fox family, whose powers in this direction are so well known

and so strongly attested that the very relationship inclines me to believe these powers are hereditary in these ladies. Few are admitted to their *séances*, but I have received an invitation to be present, which I accepted on condition that I could have the privilege of bringing some friends with me. Now, here is an opportunity for you to test for yourself the reality of Spiritualistic manifestations. As I do not wish to impose myself upon your good-nature, and as Mr. Giles has an invitation for himself, he will attend me to the house, which stands at the corner of Decatur and Chestnut streets (it is known as the Jones mansion). You can simply meet us at the door and enter with me, but can feel free to leave at any moment.

“Again begging your pardon for addressing you, and trusting that you will believe me prompted only by a desire to have you test for yourself this important subject, I remain,

“Very respectfully,

“GRACE HALLOWELL.

“P. S. You need not trouble yourself to

send a written reply: a message by Mr. Giles will be sufficient."

Mr. Avalon read the letter, and then slowly read it over again. At length he said to Mr. Giles,

"I really do not know what to do. I do not want to get mixed up with this sort of people, yet I confess I would like to have a fair opportunity of witnessing a Spiritualistic *séance*. I have no fear of becoming a Spiritualist, but I fear that it might get out in the village that I was there." Here he paused: he was thinking what Clara would say. Then he thought of his friend Calvert, who he knew detested these things, and who denounced them as "snares of the devil."

Mr. Giles broke in on his cogitations by remarking,

"You need have no fear in these respects. The *séance* will not commence until eight P. M., when it will be dark. In our village, unlighted even by oil-lamps, your only difficulty will be to find the way to the house. No one but Mrs. Hallowell and myself knows of this arrangement; she has not mentioned

it even to the Mills family. She comes to my house to take tea with my wife, and after tea I shall wait on her home and we will stop at that house. If you will be at the door precisely at eight o'clock, we will enter together, and you can leave so as to be home at half-past nine. Now, Avalon," added Mr. Giles, "this is an opportunity which you may never again have. I beg you not to decline it, for, while I confess I do not believe it will convert you, yet it will," he pleasantly added, "leave you without excuse for not being converted; and Mrs. Hallowell and I will at least have our consciences clear of neglecting an opportunity to have you convinced of the reality of Spiritualism."

"Well," said Mr. Avalon, "I will meet you there promptly at eight o'clock, but it will be understood that I can leave at any moment."

"Certainly," said Mr. Giles.

"Clara," said her father, at the supper-table, "I have an engagement this evening, and will not be back until about half-past nine."

"Well, that suits me very well," answered Clara, "for I promised Susie Hall to call with her on Miss Edwards, a friend of hers, and a new-comer to our village."

"Shall I call, then, at Miss Hall's and see you home?"

"No, for Susie has arranged that her brother James shall do this. He will go with us to visit Miss Edwards, and then see me home."

Now, it so happened that Clara and Susie Hall, with her brother, started to the house of Miss Edwards just as Mr. Avalon left his office. And it further happened that just as Mr. Giles and Mrs. Hallowell and Mr. Avalon had reached the Jones mansion Clara and her friends drew nigh. As they were passing its door the ring of Mr. Giles was answered, and the light, streaming through the opened door, revealed to Clara the whole party. On the other hand, Clara and her friends, being in the dark, on the opposite side of the street, were not noticed. Clara started, and was about to exclaim, "Why, there are my father and Mrs. Hallowell!" when, observing that her

companions had been too earnestly engaged in conversation to notice the house or the party on its steps, she kept silence.

Suddenly, James Hall exclaimed,

“I meant, girls, to have called your attention to that house at the last corner we passed.”

“Why? What about it?” asked Susie.

“It is said to be a haunted house; there is a set of women from New York who come there and hold Spiritualistic *séances*.”

“Oh, that is just what I have always wanted to see,” exclaimed Susie.

“Susie,” answered James, speaking slowly and solemnly, “if I thought you would enter that house, I would— Well, I would disown you as my sister.”

The feelings of Clara can be imagined; she said nothing, but the enjoyment of the evening was spoiled, and she was glad when the call on Miss Edwards was finished. With a heavy heart she reached her home, and, going to the parlor, she sat down by the fire. Over the mantel was a beautiful portrait of her sainted mother; on the opposite side of the room was one of her father. She

turned her back on the latter and sat gazing on the former. Tears began to flow and sobs burst from her heavy heart; she realized then as never before what it was to be an orphan. Her father's tender care had made her motherlessness hitherto at least supportable, but now she felt that somehow a wedge had come in between her heart and that of her father. Her passionate devotion to him made the blow heavier; for the more fervent love is, the greater the jealousy when any one comes between it and its object. She thought to herself, "If my father had seen fit to marry again, I would not have said a word—indeed, I do not know but I should have been glad, because if he survives me he would then have some one to care for him in his declining years—but to have him bewitched by a widow much younger than himself, a Spiritualist! Then, above all, to see him going into a house of which James Hall declared that if he should see his sister enter such a place he would disown her, and by his side, that widow! Oh, it is too bad! It is too hard!" Then her eye fell on the table on which lay the family Bible.

She opened it, and was attracted by a pencil-marked verse. She recognized the marking as her mother's. It read thus: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." Instinctively she fell on her knees and cried, "O God of my mother, have pity on me and my dear father! Thou art, I believe, his God, and he is thy child, though thou only knowest how far Satan may have tempted him. Thou art everywhere; oh, follow him this night! Bring him back to his home untouched by sin. Confound his and thy enemies. Open his eyes to see his danger, and, O thou blessed Father, who hast already fulfilled to me thy promise to be the father of the orphan, and hast hitherto given me such a loving, pure and good father, preserve thou him as such. Show me, thy child, what to do in this hour of perplexity and bitter anguish. O Lord, deliver me! O Lord, make haste to help me! Undertake thou for me!"

Clara's prayer was hardly closed when a knock was heard at the door; she had just time to wipe her eyes and recover herself

when Mr. Calvert was announced. Clara somehow felt that her prayer was already answered. Next to her father, she had looked up to Mr. Calvert for counsel; he, in turn, had always regarded her with almost a father's affection. Mr. Calvert was so much a brother to Mr. Avalon that Clara had always called him "Uncle Edward." From her childhood he had been her constant friend. He was also the only one to whom she could speak about her present trouble. Mr. Calvert's relations to Mr. Avalon were so intimate that she felt it was no violation of propriety to make him her confidant and adviser; she therefore entered into a full detail of all the incidents which have been related in the last two chapters.

Mr. Calvert heard her, sometimes interjecting a question to bring out more clearly every point, and finally said,

"Clara, I sympathize with you most truly. Your feelings and fears are perfectly natural, and, I may say, in some respects proper; they only prove the intense affection you have for your father and your regard for his highest interests. But I am inclined to

think that we have not yet obtained all the facts about this matter. You said that you saw Mr. Giles on the doorstep with Mrs. Hallowell and your father; when was the last time, before this evening, that you saw them together?"

"Last evening, when we were at Mr. Mills's."

"Have you ever seen them together before last evening?"

"No. Ah, yes! I remember now that Mr. Giles called here the evening before we called on the Millses, and spent a long time with father in the study."

"Just as I suspected," exclaimed Mr. Calvert. "That man Giles is a noted Spiritualist. He is a great intriguer; he will compass land and sea to make a proselyte, and will use any means to accomplish his purpose. In this game he is playing off this bewitching widow as his card. She may herself be ignorant of that fact, though I doubt it. But, Clara, I have too much confidence in your father to believe that he will ever be inveigled into Spiritualism; yet, as to a bewitching woman, I have learned by ob-

servation this sad lesson—that the strongest man is but weakness in her hands. Still, Clara, we must remember that this is but a two days' acquaintance; it is not probable that your father has compromised himself in any way with Mrs. Hallowell. The fact that Mr. Giles was with them induces me to suspect that he was the one who brought your father and Mrs. Hallowell together at the Jones mansion. There may also be reasons for your father's presence there that will change the whole aspect of affairs. But let this all be as it may; of one thing I am sure—namely, of your father's deep, unalterable affection for you. Remember, my dear child, that so far you have not the slightest evidence that his affection has abated one whit. Now, here is your power for the deliverance of your father not only from the snares of a bewitching woman like Mrs. Hallowell, but from the snares of such a conspirator as Giles. Use your power, and I believe this, which now seems as a mountain of difficulty, will become a plain. Trust in me to do all I can to aid you. But, Clara, you have a much better, wiser Friend

to whom you can go for counsel, and never in vain. One word more : keep this whole subject to yourself ; and when your father returns to-night, do not let him gather from either your manner or your speech that you know where he has been."

CHAPTER VI.

A SPIRITUALISTIC SÉANCE.

WE left Mr. Avalon about entering the Jones mansion; he little suspected that any one had seen him enter, much less that his daughter knew anything about it. Mrs. Hollowell had fulfilled her promise and simply entered with him, but the lady who received them and attended to their seating placed Mrs. Hollowell on a sofa with Mr. Avalon on one side of her and Mr. Giles on the other. Mrs. Hollowell wore a very becoming bonnet, and Mr. Avalon gazed on her with increasing admiration. However, his thoughts were soon drawn off to his new surroundings.

The parlor was a large one, with sofas and chairs arranged in a circle, and in the centre a small table. The seats were filled by rather a motley company. There were some thin-faced women, who sat nodding

their heads as if in silent communication with some spirit, their noddings being the sign of their approval of these communications; Mrs. Hallowell whispered to Mr. Avalon that they were "being impressed." There was a lady dressed in deep mourning and with a thickly-veiled face. Mr. Avalon thought he recognized in her Mrs. Wilbur, a neighbor who had lately lost a child; he inwardly hoped that her dark veil prevented her from recognizing him. But the hope of escaping recognition altogether was speedily dissipated, for while running his eye around the circle whom should he see but Mr. Cranch, the tailor, and Mr. Grimes, the shoemaker, of the village! Both returned his look with one of evident recognition.

"Oh!" thought Mr. Avalon; "I am not only recognized, but in such a way that I will have this night's escapade noised over the whole village." For if there are any two places where gossipers stop to hear and retail the news, it is at the shop of a village tailor or shoemaker.

Fortunately, the six others who comprised the guests on this occasion were unknown to

Mr. Avalon—at least, he thought so at that time. One thing he remarked : not one had a cheerful look ; anxiety, sorrow and restlessness were stamped on each face.

But these meditations were interrupted by the entrance of a man accompanied by three women. The moment Mr. Avalon's eyes fell on the man he felt an impression that he had seen him somewhere before ; whether it was a mere suspicion or not, he thought the man started when their eyes met. This led him to study the man's features more closely. Mr. Avalon thought he detected a resemblance to that Sam Patch whose remarkable *alibi* he rehearsed to Mrs Hallowell at his visit to the Mills's. But Patch was formerly ill-dressed, with a long, unkempt beard ; this character was neatly dressed in black, and, with his white neck-tie, would pass anywhere for a clergyman. His face was cleanly shaven ; his long hair, reaching down to his neck, was carefully combed back of his ears. His voice assumed a nasal twang that was very different from the boisterous tones in which Patch used to voice his drunken ribaldry. Still, the fea-

tures were wonderfully like those of Patch. The women who accompanied this character were young, and by some might be considered handsome, though they possessed that kind of beauty which appeals rather to the wanton eye than to the pure heart.

The man, having seated his female companions in the middle of the room, advanced a few steps and thus began :

“Allow me to introduce myself to this highly-refined and intelligent company as the Rev. Phineas Sampson. These ladies,” pointing in turn to each, “are Miss Victoria Woodruff, Miss Irene Templeton and Miss Sarah Ketchum. These young ladies, having each graduated at the head of her class in celebrated seminaries of learning, naturally realized that their talents should be devoted to some aim bearing on the enlightenment of humanity. Being gifted with analytical minds, they directed their attention to the study of clairvoyance and psychometry. In their studies on these subjects they met with the celebrated treatise of Von Reichenbach on the *Dynamics of Magnetism*. This led them carefully to analyze its hidden wonders.

Starting with Von Reichenbach's discovery of the odic force—which he describes as an exceedingly subtle fluid existing with magnetism and electricity*—they discovered what Von Reichenbach seems totally to have overlooked, the fact that this odic force pervades all nature and is a means of communication between the natural world and the spiritual world. They also found themselves wonderfully possessed of this odic force, being, in fact, a sort of spiritual telephone through which the spirits might speak to man."

At this high-sounding rhapsody the tailor and the shoemaker rolled up their eyes in undisguised admiration. Mrs. Hallowell looked at Mr. Avalon, as if to say, "Are you not now fully convinced that this is no ordinary man, with no ordinary mission?"

"I will not, however," continued the Rev. P. Sampson, "detain this company longer from enjoying the wonderful illustrations of mediumistic power which these ladies can furnish.—Miss Victoria Woodruff, who has

* See Edmonds's *Spiritualism*, p. 40.

made a study of physical manifestations, will please take her seat at the table."

Miss Victoria came forward and seated herself as requested. The gas, which had been burning brightly, was lowered until only her form and the outlines of the table could be dimly seen. A silence of five minutes ensued, in which no one stirred. The darkness and the silence were becoming very oppressive, when suddenly a series of loud raps was heard from the direction of the table. Miss Victoria then said in a solemn voice,

"It is a spirit which has announced itself as that of Daniel Webster. He says he has a communication to make. It is as follows :

" "My friends, it affords me unspeakable pleasure to be so candidly received as a visitor from the country which I find is no longer an unknown one to many of you.

"At this moment, friends, I realize my utter unworthiness of this blessing, this opportunity; nor should I so soon have enjoyed it had it not been for the kindness of old friends with whom I have met, and who have taken me by the hand as a broth-

er and assisted me. Not only in one sense unworthy, but in a thousand other respects do I feel how undeserving I am of being permitted to make my presence known to those who know I had no sympathy for such dreamings or imaginings, as I conceived them to be while here.

“‘Heaven knows I am as thankful and as humble as any of God’s creatures. I now truly see and feel my position in respect to my eternal welfare. Yes, God gave me a massive intellect, the world said, but that intellect now appears to have been very narrow in its development in the wisdom with which it now requires to be made acquainted, in order that the qualities of mind which were so richly bestowed upon me while on earth, may now become clear and unclouded in the conclusions of spirituality, without which, were I Solomon himself, I could not attain to more than the most commonplace mind on earth.

“‘It is not the material kind of wisdom which I now need to aid me in my new stage of development. I find I am what I believe you call an undeveloped individual

in my new stage of existence. But, thank God! I see ample fields opening for my research, which I might have entered long ago had I been so minded.

“‘It was a great, though not a grand, mistake of mine not to seek the truth before regarding this matter.

“‘In my day I sought out many truths, and many new truths to many minds; but now I see that the most important truth was altogether overlooked. My soul felt with an overwhelming force the mighty sense, the infinite power, of the Almighty in all his works. The grand and glorious hand of Nature imparted her divine revelation; but, friends, I never sought the voice which might touch my heart and receive an answer in the flesh.

“‘It is this I mourn for now. How clearly do I now perceive my shortcomings! But, thank God! my life has not been spent entirely in vain for my country or mankind. I speak not thus with a feeling of triumph or boastingly, but with a feeling of regret that I had not more wisely directed my talents, and had not enabled myself to

let the glorious gifts of God in me shine forth in a purer, broader and brighter light.

““ You wish to know my object in coming here to-night. It is easily told. You all know my former character. You cannot possibly believe I can so soon become spiritual-minded. Clouds of materialism, which darkened the finer elements of my mind, still cast their shadows around me, but I wish you to understand that I realize what I might have been, what I am and what I am to be.’”*

This long harangue, even though purporting to come from so respectable a personage as Daniel Webster, began to be wearisome. The Rev. P. Sampson seemed to realize this, and, without showing much respect for Mr. Webster, cut short the discourse by saying,

“I will now introduce to you Miss Irene Templeton. She belongs to a class of mediums whose hands are affected by a power manifestly beyond their control, and

* Copied *verbatim* from an account in Edmonds's *Spiritualism* of a Spiritualist circle in his house (p. 405). I have preferred to take this and similar extracts from works by Spiritualists, so that I might not be chargeable with misrepresenting them.—

not emanating from or governed by their own will. The numbers of this class are rapidly increasing. A vast amount of matter has been written by them which will yet be given to the world when it shall be prepared to receive it in a spirit of candid inquiry, and the mass is daily augmented through the instrumentality of new mediums who are being developed.”*

Miss Irene Templeton took her seat at the table, the gas being in the mean time turned down very low. Her hands began to move, at first slowly, but afterward rapidly. When she stopped writing, the Rev. P. Sampson stepped forward and took the paper out of her hand. It was a communication purporting to come from the spirit of Adam, and explained “that the Fall, as narrated in the Bible, was wholly allegorical.”

“Now, gentlemen and ladies, you may suspect,” said the Rev. P. Sampson, “that this was made up beforehand by Miss Templeton, and only now committed to paper; I will therefore afford an evidence that this mode of communication is wholly super-

* Edmonds's *Spiritualism*, Introduction, p. 37.

natural. Will some one please lay his hands firmly on those of Miss Templeton? Will Mr. Giles please step forward and do this? Will some one else see that the windows and doors are carefully shut? Now please extinguish the lights."

Ten minutes of perfect silence followed, while the company sat in total darkness. Soon an oblong light about the size and shape of a melon rested on the table, remaining there a considerable time without moving. Mr. Giles suddenly broke the silence by asking if it was able to rise, whereupon it rose into the air, flashing out occasionally and floating about the room; finally it returned to the table, shining with increased brilliancy. Mr. Giles had brought with him two very large blank cards, each with a private mark; he whispered to Mr. Avalon the character of the mark on the cards, and then deposited them with a small silver pencil on the table, near the light. They were soon taken from the table and conveyed near to the floor, remaining apparently suspended, however, some three or four inches above it; then a hand

appeared, holding the pencil over one of the cards. This hand moved quietly across from left to right, and when one line was finished moved back to commence another. At first it was a perfectly-shaped hand ; afterward it became a dark substance smaller than the human hand, but still apparently holding the pencil.*

The lamp was relit. Mr. Giles brought the card to Mr. Avalon, and, pointing to the secret mark to identify it, he read as follows :

“I am in the world of bliss. I send you this message to convince you that we have communication with our loved ones on earth: ‘Love one another, and you will have the bliss of heaven antedated on earth.’

“CHARLES HALLOWELL.”

Mrs. Hallowell was apparently about to faint, when Mr. Avalon called out to have the windows opened. After Mrs. Hallowell had been restored, Mr. Avalon suggested

* Adapted from a description of Mr. Livermore's experience, as related by R. D. Owen in his *Debatable Land*, p. 384. (See note on p. 85, in this chapter).

that it was time for her to leave; but the Rev. P. Sampson, overhearing his remark, stepped forward and said,

“I beg that no one will leave until the last and greatest of Spiritualistic manifestations has been seen. It will occupy but a short time. As the light can now burn brightly and plenty of air be admitted, I trust it will not prove so overpowering as the preceding manifestation has naturally been to our dear friend, so lately visited by bereavement. I will now introduce to you Miss Sarah Ketchum, who is a speaking medium. Some of this class speak when in a trance state, and some when in their normal condition. In these latter cases the invisible intelligence seems to take possession of the mind of the medium and compel the utterance of its ideas, sometimes in defiance of the will of the mortal through whom it is talking.* Miss Ketchum cannot control this, but I trust that this mediumistic influence may in this case come in the form of a trance, as it brings the soul into such intimate intercourse with departed ones.”

* Edmonds's *Spiritualism*, p. 37.

The words were hardly out of his mouth before the arms and limbs of Miss Ketchum became rigid. Her head fell back on the chair; her face, with the eyes closed, was turned upward. After a few moments her lips began to move.

"I see a form," she exclaimed. "It is coming near me! It is bending over me! Oh how beautiful he is! It is a manly form. It looks as if it once bore marks of pain, but even these are now transformed into lines of beauty. See! he evidently wants to say something to me. Keep quiet! Don't let a movement disturb his presence. Listen! He speaks! He says, 'Father, father! I come to thee again. I am Frank, thy son. I come to assure thee that I am still with thee. Though thou canst not see me, I see you, and am listening to every word you may speak.'"

Mr. Avalon trembled violently. His heart throbbed as if ready to burst; his eyes seemed to be straining to look into the world of spirits. Mrs. Hallowell wept audibly. Mr. Giles said in a solemn voice,

"I think, if our afflicted friend desires to

see his son once more, he has now the opportunity. I feel his presence here to-night."

Mr. Avalon was too much affected to speak. Mr. Giles, interpreting his silence as assent, said in a whisper to an attendant,

"Lower the light."

A bay-window quite near to where Mr. Avalon and Mrs. Hallowell were sitting, with its thick curtains hanging to the floor, formed a convenient cabinet. To this every eye was directed as if in expectation of some apparition. A deathlike silence pervaded the room. Suddenly, as if by unseen hands, the curtains were drawn apart, and there, through the dim light, could be seen a figure, apparently that of a young man. His robe of white shone with a luminous effect; his arms were outstretched, as if wishing to enfold some one.

Mr. Avalon, who had been wrought up to a high pitch of excitement, without a word of warning bounded from his chair, sprang into the cabinet and caught the figure in his arms. The curtain at once fell, and Mr. Avalon, with one blow of his foot, struck open the shutter of the bay-window. A

flood of moonlight poured in, and disclosed—the features and the substantial form of Miss Victoria Woodruff! One look Mr. Avalon gave, and, hurling the trembling woman from him, he sprang out of the window and rushed down the street.

All this took but a moment. Hardly had he disappeared before the curtain parted again, and Rev. P. Sampson came forward and announced to the audience that the *séance* was ended.

“Our dear friend Mr. Avalon,” he added, “has been so overcome with what he beheld behind this curtain that we thought he had better leave quietly, without meeting his friends here again.”

One person, however, was not deceived by this lie. In her intense interest, Mrs. Hallowell, unnoticed by any one, amid the darkness and confusion, by leaning over from her chair, had gently moved the curtain with her foot a little space from the wall and witnessed the whole exposure.

Hurriedly, as if fearing he would be overtaken by Mr. Giles or Mrs. Hallowell,

Mr. Avalon walked toward his home. After going a few squares he looked around, and, finding no one following, he relapsed into a slow gait, and with head bowed down walked on in deep meditation. He stopped to look at his watch.

“Good gracious!” he exclaimed; “it’s nearly eleven o’clock! How shall I explain this to Clara? I trust, however, she has retired.”

He quickened his steps, and was soon in front of the mansion. As he entered the grounds his Newfoundland dog began to bark.

“Hush, Nero! You will awaken your mistress.”

Hardly were the words out of his mouth, when the door opened, and in it stood Clara. Mr. Avalon braced himself up for the expected question—“Why, father, what has kept you so late?”—but, instead of that, Clara ran and flung her arms around his neck, kissed him and said,

“Father, I have such a pleasant surprise for you. Mr. Calvert has arrived.”

There never was a time before when Mr.

Avalon would not have rejoiced to see Mr. Calvert, but now he wished him a hundred miles off.

Mr. Calvert, however, soon appeared, and, grasping Mr. Avalon by the hand, said,

"Oh, Henry, how glad I am to be with you again! You will, I know, rejoice to hear that my wife has recovered. The first day she sat up she said, 'Edward, I want you to go back to Homewood, for I know Mr. Avalon is impatient to see you;' so, packing up my valise, I have run down to spend a few days with you."

"Father," said Clara, "suspecting that Mr. Calvert has not had any supper, I have prepared lunch for you in the parlor. Come, let us have a real home-time together;" and, slipping one arm in her father's and the other in Mr. Calvert's, she led them into the parlor and seated them at the table, then, taking her place opposite, said, "Oh what a treat it is to have you together again!"

Mr. Avalon thought of the table in that room at the Jones mansion. What a contrast between the lovely, pure face of that

daughter and the faces of those three women! What a reality of love here, compared to its travesty there! What a difference between Mr. Calvert and Mr. Giles! Yea, what was Mrs. Hallowell, with all her Grecian beauty and her subtle flatteries, compared to the honest, true heart of that daughter? He felt now that it was his duty to return some of this love by an effort to make his home pleasant, and, rousing himself from his lethargy, threw himself into agreeable converse with Mr. Calvert and Clara. It was late when they retired, but Mr. Avalon felt like a man who has taken a soothing draught after a day of straining excitement.

CHAPTER VII.

EXPOSURES AND REPENTINGS.

THE family had retired so late that Mr. Avalon overslept and did not respond to the breakfast-bell; this was not regretted by Clara, since it gave her the opportunity to make arrangements with Mr. Calvert for the evening. Mr. Calvert was to return to a late dinner, and then Clara was to leave him with her father.

When Mr. Avalon descended to breakfast, he found that Clara had prepared a most tempting meal; this she had done hoping to delay him, so as to have a pleasant chat. She was disappointed however, for her father hurried through his breakfast to meet an early engagement with a client.

On his way to his office, Mr. Avalon stopped to make a purchase at a village store. While examining the article, he heard, through a door opening into the next

room, the voice of his neighbor Mrs. Wilbur, whom he suspected of being the veiled lady at the *séance*. She was conversing with some friend, and was saying, "Poor man! how I pitied him! He sat there apparently incredulous until a most wonderful woman whom they called 'a speaking medium' fell into a trance. Oh, it was wonderful! It reminded me of what the Bible says about Stephen's 'looking steadfastly up into heaven.' And what do you suppose she saw?"

"Do tell!" sounded a chorus of female voices.

"Why, Mr. Avalon's deceased son, Frank, appeared to her, and afterward actually appeared in the cabinet to his father."

Mr. Avalon wanted to hear no more. He threw down a bill, and without waiting for the change, to the astonishment of the saleslady, rushed out of the store.

A little farther on he passed the shop of Mr. Cranch, the tailor, who was standing in its door. He rushed out to Mr. Avalon, and, grasping him by the hand, exclaimed,

"I was so glad to see you at the Jones

mansion last night! I have just been telling Dr. Goodwin, your pastor, who called for a coat he left to be mended, what a heavenly vision of your dear boy you enjoyed last night."

Mr. Avalon wrenched his hand from the tailor's and rushed on, only to meet Grimes, the shoemaker, who planted himself right in his path and said with a triumphant air,

"Now, Mr. Avalon, I trust you are convinced of the truth of Spiritualism?"

Mr. Avalon pushed him aside, and turned the next corner so hurriedly that he almost overturned a stranger, who proved to be no other than the Rev. P. Sampson. One brief glance of recognition, and before Mr. Avalon could mutter an apology Mr. Sampson had turned the corner and was out of sight.

"I wish I had secured a good look at that fellow by daylight," said Mr. Avalon; "I am not yet convinced that he is not that identical rascal Sam Patch." He hurriedly retraced his steps to the corner, hoping at least to get a look at his back; but the Rev. P. Sampson had disappeared.

Reaching his office, Mr. Avalon found his

client waiting. While talking with him Dr. Goodwin put his head into the room, but said,

“I see you are engaged ; I will call again.”

The interview with his client being terminated, Mr. Avalon was about to leave his office, so as to avoid a second call from Dr. Goodwin, when in walked Mr. Giles. Seating himself without waiting for an invitation, he took his handkerchief from his pocket, buried his face in it, and then, pretending to wipe his eyes, looked up and exclaimed,

“The most affecting sight I ever witnessed !”

Mr. Avalon making no reply, Mr. Giles continued :

“We were all melted to tears. Mrs. Hallowell was so prostrated by sympathy with you that I had to order a carriage, to convey her home. But oh how I wished you could have waited long enough to hear the further revelations of that angelic creature Miss Sarah Ketchum, and the sweet encouraging tidings wafted earthward through her from your dear deceased son !”

“Mr. Giles,” broke in Mr. Avalon, “I have always in the past esteemed you as a fellow-townsmen, but I tell you plainly, sir, my respect for you is gone. You have decoyed me to a house I should never have entered. You appealed to the worst motives when you represented me as safe from detection. Your very appeal should have opened my eyes to my folly—yea, my sin. I have never before in my life entered a place which I was afraid to be seen entering, and, with God’s help, I shall never do so again. What you are pleased to style ‘an affecting sight’ I regard as a most damnable attempt to work on my sympathy, and through ties so sacred that I shudder to think of their ever having been linked with that place and those people. You mistook my motive for leaving the room if you thought it was owing to my sympathies being excited. It was owing to my disgust for what pretended to be allied to heaven, but what really savored more, than I have ever seen on earth, of that which is allied to hell.”

Mr. Avalon was in such a towering passion that Mr. Giles looked furtively at the

door, as if meditating some way of escape. Mr. Avalon, interpreting his fears, said sarcastically,

“Though I confess to be in anger, for which I feel I have just cause, yet there is no danger of your personal safety, Mr. Giles; you can leave the room peaceably any moment you please.”

Mr. Giles, having his fears allayed, was in no haste to go. Pretending, however, to rise, he said apologetically,

“I would not have called had I understood the state of your feelings, but I still charitably hope that your present excitement is owing to reaction from the scenes of last evening. I also thought that you ought to know of the serious prostration of Mrs. Hallowell, and that you would like to call and tender her your sympathy.”

“Mr. Giles,” said Mr. Avalon, “what you are pleased to style my reaction is not from the excitement, but from the indignation and disgrace, of last evening; and, as to Mrs. Hallowell, if she is as prostrated as you represent, I advise you as her friend at once to see Dr. Holland, our esteemed physician,

and urge him to render her whatever medical aid may be necessary."

Mr. Giles saw that his case was hopeless, and had wisdom enough to see that his presence was only fanning the flame of Mr. Avalon's wrath. He meekly said, "Mr. Avalon, though you have treated me in a way I never expected, yet I assure you nothing shall destroy my friendship for you," and, making a low bow, left the office.

He had hardly departed before Dr. Goodwin entered. Mr. Avalon gave an inward groan, especially as he saw that the doctor wore a long face; but he had a high esteem for the pastor's wisdom and a grateful remembrance of his tender sympathy in past hours of trial. He took Dr. Goodwin by the hand and said,

"Doctor, perhaps you have come here to consult me, but you are just the one I want to consult."

Dr. Goodwin looked up inquiringly.

"I have," continued Mr. Avalon, "a case to lay before you."

"Go on," said Dr. Goodwin, "and may the Lord help me to guide you aright!"

“Well,” said Mr. Avalon, “a mutual friend of ours, a trustee of your church, a man who ought to have known better, has committed a most foolish—I might say wicked—act. He was fool enough to think it would not be found out. It has been found out, and he is afraid that his sin will bring dishonor on the church, and on the cause of the Master. What now ought he to do?”

Tears came into the old minister’s eyes.

“Henry Avalon,” he said, “I have always thought highly of you, and I think more highly of you to-day than ever. All men make mistakes; few men are wise enough to acknowledge their mistakes. When I heard it noised about the village this morning that you had spent last evening with certain Spiritualistic mediums at the Jones mansion, I said at first it was a lie; but when the proofs became too reliable to be gainsaid, I said, ‘I will go frankly to Mr. Avalon and ask him why he permitted himself to be led into such company; I will not condemn him till I have heard his side of the story.’ I find now the report is only too true, but,

thank God! I find that you are willing to face the truth and confess the wrong. I will tell you what to do with this case: confess your error—first to God, and then to man. God will forgive you; man, whose judgments are always less merciful than God's, will censure or laugh at you. Bear the censure with meekness; care not a whit for the laughter, for those that laugh at you are probably worse sinners than yourself. One thing more: you have a lovely daughter whose life is bound up with yours." Mr. Avalon sprang up from his seat and walked the floor. "I met her this morning shopping in the village. It is impossible for her to escape hearing of this from the hundred gossips we have here. You know how pained her heart will be; now, frankly tell her all. Her love for you will lead her to deal mercifully, and your confidence in her will keep unimpaired that bond of union which is so necessary for the happiness of you both in your lonely home."

"Dr. Goodwin," answered Mr. Avalon, "you are a true friend and a wise counselor. I thank God that I have laid this case before

you. I shall implicitly follow the advice you have given me."

No further interruptions came to Mr. Avalon that day. At an hour earlier than usual he betook himself home, but stopped for a long time in a secluded wood by the wayside. He was following out the first part of Dr. Goodwin's advice—"to confess to God." When he came forth, there seemed to be a calm radiance on his face. Clara noticed it as she ran to meet him at the gate. He sat down at the table, and, though engaging with his usual friendliness with Mr. Calvert, there was a quietness far different from his usual vivacity. Clara, with her anxious heart, marked it, and felt puzzled.

After dinner Mr. Avalon said,

"Edward, I want you to come with me to the library—and Clara too: there is something I want to talk to you both about. If it suits you, we will deny ourselves to all company and have a pleasant evening alone."

"Certainly," said Mr. Calvert; "that will suit me well."

"You know, father," added Clara, "no

evening is so pleasant to me as one spent at home with you."

Leading them both to the study, Mr. Avalon seated Mr. Calvert in a comfortable chair, Clara taking a seat on an ottoman at her father's feet.

Mr. Avalon began :

"Edward and Clara, I have something to confess to you, as I have already done to God. Hear me patiently through, and then, though you may justly blame me, yet forgive and try to strengthen me to avoid such folly in the future."

Mr. Avalon then detailed the whole history of his visit to the Jones mansion. He read Mrs. Hallowell's letter to him, and repeated Mr. Giles's argument that he would not be recognized.

"This," said Mr. Avalon, "wounds my conscience more than all else—to think that I could be induced to do a foolish act by the incentive that I would not be detected. It has convinced me of the deceitfulness of my heart more than anything I have ever done before. I see now the need of beginning my religious life anew. God has forgiven me,

and will you, my dear daughter, and you, my ever true friend, forgive me also?"

To the surprise of Mr. Avalon, the words were hardly out of his mouth when Clara exclaimed,

"Oh, do not speak of my forgiving you; I am the one that ought to ask your forgiveness."

"Why! What does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Avalon, with evident astonishment and affright. "Clara, what is this? Tell me quickly."

"Father," said Clara, "I saw you enter that Jones mansion."

"Why, Clara!"

"Yes. Fred, Susie and I were passing; you were in the light of the opening door, we were in the dark. After we had passed that house, James Hall called our attention to it, and said it was 'a house which if he should see his sister enter, he would disown her.' Father, I thought it was some dreadful place, but how could I ever have been wicked enough to think my father would so compromise himself?"

"Well, Clara, you were not foolish or

wicked in your suspicion, for it *was* a dreadful place. What spot on earth can be worse than that where men and women make a travesty of the holy things of heaven? But what is unaccountable to me is your having given me so warm a greeting last night."

This remark led Clara to give a vivid recital of her own experience, and of the kind counsel of Mr. Calvert about her reception of her father.

Mr. Avalon was much affected; he walked over to Mr. Calvert's chair, and, taking him by the hand, said,

"Edward, I have always thought you the best friend I had on earth outside the circle of my own family; I now am convinced that you are the wisest one. Perhaps God has ordered all this the better to prepare me to receive your teachings. Now, I ask that, as a proof that you do sincerely forgive me, you will fulfill your promise to teach me about heaven. Let Clara too be with us during our talks."

"Henry," answered Mr. Calvert, "while I blame your foolish act in attending that *séance*, and while I would urge you, in the

Master's words, to 'watch and pray, lest you fall into temptation,' yet I see in all this the natural questionings of the soul. Your mistake has been in seeking to answer these questionings by the use of wrong means. It is a singular providence that I should have been separated from you just when we planned seeking light together from the proper teacher, God, and through the proper instrument, the Bible. But the Lord permitted Peter to be sifted as wheat by Satan before he fully unfolded to him the things of his kingdom; perhaps the Lord has put you through the same process that you may be better prepared to receive the things of the Spirit."

A knock was heard at the door. Mr. Avalon opened it, and there stood Thomas, the colored waiter.

"Mr. Avalon," he said, "a lady has called; I told her that you were engaged, but she bid me hand you her card. I said, 'Missus, I do not want to offend you; but when massa says he is engaged, he means it.' But she said, 'Hand him my card immediately, for I am sure he will see me. Tell him, also,

that I am going away in the morning, to return home."

Mr. Avalon looked at the card and handed it back to the servant, saying,

"Tell Mrs. Hallowell that I am particularly engaged, and cannot see her."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE REASONS WHY SPIRITUALISM FAILS.

AFTER the interruption to the conversation caused by Mrs. Hallowell's attempted call, Mr. Calvert said,

“As the evening is far spent, perhaps we had better defer the talk about heaven until to-morrow; but since the subject of Spiritualism is fresh in your mind, and as we may not want to allude to it again, I would like to call your attention to some points which convince my own mind of its falsity. I would not be uncharitable enough to affirm that all its votaries are deceivers. Many of them are undoubtedly self-deceived; they have been carried away by their imagination, and have mistaken the noises they heard, or thought they heard, for celestial communications. Still, I hold that their deception is inexcusable, when they have a

Bible to unfold to them the true mode of spiritual intercourse between man and his God, between earth and heaven. The argument of probability ought to be sufficient of itself to convince any candid mind of the folly of Spiritualistic methods. If any one who believes in the existence of a great and holy God will reflect, he will see that God would not probably reveal himself to man through such ridiculous instruments as table-rappings and table-tippings: He that can use angels to carry his messages to man does not need to employ the gyrations of the legs of a table. Besides, the darkness which is necessary to the greatest feats of Spiritualism is directly opposite to God's mode of spiritual revelations. All the Bible conceptions of God associate him with light. He is said to 'dwell in light,' and we read that 'in him is no darkness at all.' His people are described as 'children of the day' and as 'walking in the light.' Darkness is constantly used to express the absence of God. The apostle John says, 'If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie.' Darkness is also asso-

ciated with the idea of wickedness. The Bible terms evil deeds, 'the unfruitful works of darkness.' Christ seems almost to foretell the modes of the Spiritualists when he says, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.' Now, the simple fact that a prerequisite to the greatest feats of Spiritualism is a darkened room shows how utterly it is opposed to the scriptural idea of communications with the 'saints in light.' When the ascended Saviour revealed himself to Saul, it was at noonday. Even then the light of a midday sun was not bright enough for the revelation, for Paul himself testifies that the light shining around him was 'above the brightness of the sun.' The same holds true of God's revelation of himself to man through angelic agencies. When the company of angels appeared to the shepherds while they were 'keeping watch over their flocks,' 'the glory of the Lord shone round about

them,' and, though it was in the night-time, yet evidently everything was illumined by their presence."

"I agree with you in your main thought," said Mr. Avalon, "but are there not some exceptions to your historical illustrations? For example, we are told that when God descended on Mount Sinai it was shrouded with darkness."

"If we examine the account carefully," answered Mr. Calvert, "we will find nothing to lead us to infer that it was thus shrouded except to the Israelites, who were fitly in darkness, for at its base they were worshipping a golden calf. Indeed, we have every reason for inferring that Moses, while there holding communication with God, was encircled with the radiance of heaven; for he descended from that mountain with his face bathed in the reflection of that radiance: 'the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance.' From the accounts in the Bible of intercourse of men with beings in heaven, we should, therefore, infer that it would be accompanied with

light. Therefore, if, on entering a Spiritualistic *séance*, we found the lights turned down, we might infer from that fact alone that the intercourse is not to be with the spirits of heaven. I might also cite hundreds of instances where sudden turning on of light has revealed the fact that the spirit who was rapping was not a visitor from another world, but a very ordinary mortal from our own. I also ask you to reflect on this question: Even supposing that God purposed in these last days to make a new revelation of himself, is it supposable that he would employ such characters as those who claim to be spiritual mediums?"

"Certainly not, if they were such as I saw at the Jones mansion last night," replied Mr. Avalon.

"I do not mean to say," continued Mr. Calvert, "that all men and all women who think themselves mediums are morally bad; but I have carefully looked over the list of the best of these mediums, and I have never yet found one who was a full believer in the religion of Jesus Christ as that religion is

interpreted by the common creed of Protestantism, nor one who was known for sanctity of life as that sanctity is defined in the Bible. It is true, I allow that there seem to be occasional exceptions to this, but wherever I have been able to trace out the history of these exceptions I have found that this error of Spiritualism is accompanied with other serious departures from the pure doctrines of God's word. I might also point you to reports of the Spiritualistic conventions in this country, where the prevailing sentiment is opposition to evangelical religion. I have in my pocket an extract from the so-called *Christian Spiritualist*, of London; it is from the issue of September 1st, and is written by its editor, Dr. Sexton. He announces the discontinuance of that journal 'on account of the scanty support afforded it by those whose principles it was intended specially to set forth, and to which it has been conscientiously devoted.' It is a significant fact, therefore, that the only attempt ever made by a periodical to ally Christianity with Spiritualism has signally failed. Indeed, Mr. F. I. Young—Sexton's

predecessor in the editorial chair—thus wrote in a former issue of that paper: ‘You may be an atheist, a pantheist, a deist, or almost anything you like, and your theological opinions will not be used to your disadvantage; but if you are so unfortunate as to be a Christian, and say so, if you tell the Spiritualist body that you believe in Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life and the Teacher from whose verdict there lies, and can lie, no right of appeal, it is true you are not excommunicated—the fact that you are a Spiritualist is still admitted—but you are looked upon with eyes more or less unfriendly, and a wonder is expressed how, believing in Spiritualism, you can at the same time be a Christian.’”

“I am fully convinced,” said Mr. Avalon, “that Spiritualism and Christianity cannot go together. But I would like to know how you propose to meet the assertion, which is made by a certain class of Spiritualists, that Spiritualism is a better revelation than Christianity. These men say they do not need a Bible or a Christ—they have something better than either.”

“If the class of Spiritualists to whom you refer were also candid seekers after light,” said Mr. Calvert, “it would not be difficult to confute them on their own ground by showing the immeasurable superiority of the revelation of the Bible to any which Spiritualism has produced; also that it better meets every proper want of humanity, and more clearly answers every proper question about our life here and hereafter. But if there is nothing in the longings and aspirations of the heart which is satisfied by what the Bible unfolds, then I would meet the arguments of this class by showing, as can easily be shown, that Spiritualism is one of the greatest frauds ever invented. The proof of this lies at hand in the history of those who were really its originators in this country—the Fox sisters. They made such an impression for a time on the public mind that people flocked from a distance to see them. In November, 1849, a large meeting was held in Corinthian Hall, Rochester, New York, to inquire into this phenomenon, and the meeting ended its labors in a decidedly mystified condition. These Fox sisters, en-

couraged by their success at home, traveled through the country, gathering large sums of money from their exhibitions. Some people, generally considered level-headed, were so convinced of these women being mediums of intercourse with the other world that they firmly pinned their faith to them. Yet, this bubble was afterward pricked by the deposition of a connexion of the family, Mrs. Norman Culver, of Arcadia, New York. She swore before a magistrate that one of the girls had instructed her how to produce the raps with her toe-joints. This testimony Mrs. Culver clinched by producing raps similar to those of the Fox sisters yet without any movement of her person visible to the spectators.

“The case of Daniel Home is another proof of the humbuggery of Spiritualism. Home fairly electrified England with his remarkable ‘spiritual manifestations.’ He held *séances* not only in public halls, but in the private parlors of the nobility. One of his greatest feats was ‘levitation,’ or floating in the air; others were the handling of red-hot coals and making accordeons play without

the touch of hands. He even professed 'to call spirits from the vasty deep' and to work miracles of healing by their aid. Thousands of people usually regarded as intelligent bowed before him and acknowledged that his performances were unaccountable except on the ground of aid from another world. Even pious divines who thought they could not escape the conclusion that his feats were above the power of man took refuge in the theory that he was aided by the devil himself. Two cool-headed men undertook to examine this wonder; one was Lord Brougham, and the other was Sir David Brewster. After patient investigation they rendered the verdict 'that he was a mere conjurer.' For this honest exposure of him they were violently attacked by a part of the press of Great Britain. But this Daniel Home eventually came to grief. A Mr. Addison offered Home fifty pounds if he would float in the air in his presence, but he declined the challenge. The emperor Napoleon proposed to test Home by having Robert Houdin, a celebrated magician of that day, present at one of Home's *séances*, but Home declined this test. Shortly after,

a suit of law was brought against him by a Mrs. Lyons for having induced her, by the pretended raps of her dead husband, to hand over to him a sufficient sum from her own income to yield him a revenue of seven hundred pounds a year, and, besides, to transfer to him six thousand pounds upon his birthday. Fortunately, the vice-chancellor, Giffard, before whom the suit was brought, decided that the gifts and deeds were fraudulent and void, and Mrs. Lyons regained her money. But this Spiritualistic idol of British drawing-rooms, this celebrity who had been invited to court, who had married a lady who was god-daughter of the late emperor Nicholas—this man who accomplished Spiritualistic feats far excelling any which have ever been attempted by other mediums—is at last found out to be a common fraud. The recording angel of history is also the avenging angel on Spiritualism.

“The true way, I believe, to deal with the Spiritualist who cannot be argued with on the basis of the Bible is to take him up on his own grounds—the facts of the case.

He says to all your arguments, as Mr. Giles did to you, 'But look at the facts.' Now, let him repeat these facts in a lighted room, without any opportunity for deception, and I challenge him to show anything which cannot be accounted for by natural causes, or which surpasses the feats of such men as Hermann, Anderson—the 'Wizard of the North'—or Robert Houdin. Yet the latter class of men, when they take your money, are honest enough to confess that all their feats are performed by sleight-of-hand. The money they take from you is at least honestly earned, because they give its worth in amusement, which you pay for simply as such.

"Now," said Mr. Calvert, "to bring my long talk to a conclusion, I will cite but two facts more. You know that one trick of Spiritualism is for its mediums to see through opaque substances: in 1837 this feat was so frequently performed in Paris that it awakened the attention even of the French Academy. To give it a fair test, a Mr. Burden offered a prize of three thousand francs to any one who would perform it in

his presence, he taking care to guard against all deception. Numerous competitors appeared, but *not one* was found to stand the trial. Dr. Austin Flint, to satisfy himself about the rappings of the Fox sisters, made special investigation, and at last discovered that precisely the same effects could be produced by a snapping and jerking action of particular tendons in the legs, feet and toes of certain muscular people. These are but a few from hundreds of examples which might be cited to prove that all that has ever been accomplished by Spiritualism has been equaled by the avowed tricks of our leading conjurers and magicians."

Before retiring for the night Mr. Avalon happened to remark,

"I forgot to tell you that a robbery took place in our village last Friday night."

Clara at once recalled the fact that that was the evening of the memorable *séance* at the Jones mansion.

"It seems," continued Mr. Avalon, "some one broke into the store of Timms Brothers and took all the jewelry from it. The singular fact is that there is not the slightest

clue to the villains. The theft displayed the ingenuity of skilled burglars ; we have none such in our village, and no suspicious characters have lately been seen loitering around. No one could have come that night by a train, for there is no evening train to our village."

"Is there not a train which arrives here about one o'clock in the morning?" asked Clara.

"Yes," answered Mr. Avalon, "but that was after the time of the robbery ; for a man passing the store about twelve o'clock found the door open, and, entering, saw traces of a robbery and gave the alarm. But why do you ask so particularly about that train?"

"Because, though no one could have come by it, some one might have left by it."

"Well, what of that?"

Clara answered,

"You remember that that *séance* occurred on Friday evening?"

"Yet you surely do not mean to intimate that those women who came from New York were the robbers? Women may steal, but they are not usually skilled burglars."

"But," said Clara, hesitatingly, "what of the Rev. Phineas Sampson?"

Mr. Avalon started, thought a moment, and said,

"Well, give me a woman for ingenuity in jumping at once to a conclusion! I do believe this is a suggestion that it will pay to follow up."

The next morning Mr. Avalon quietly sent for a detective. What passed between them was not mentioned, but as they came out of Mr. Avalon's private office the detective said,

"I will start for New York to-night."

"All right," answered Mr. Avalon; "the sooner, the better."

CHAPTER IX.

HEAVEN, AND ITS CONTRAST WITH EARTH.

THE next evening Mr. Avalon was careful to give direction to the servants that no guests should be admitted; so when he sat down with Mr. Calvert and Clara in the library, he said,

“Edward, you have a clear coast and a pair of good listeners; let us hear fully your views about heaven.”

“I will commence, then,” said Mr. Calvert, “at what I believe to be the secret of all right understanding of heaven—that which the apostle Paul declares to be the secret of all knowledge of spiritual things—*‘renouncing the wisdom of this world.’* That wisdom argues from things seen up to things not seen, thereby reversing the method of the Bible, which makes spiritual truths not deductions, but revelations. It is merely the logical carrying out of this false in-

terpretation of heaven which has made some modern writers speak of there being 'pianos in heaven;' also of 'orchestral halls where the highest possibilities of music will be realized to singer and to hearer;' 'pictures, statues, planets turned into galleries of art.' Indeed, in one of the books from which these absurdities are quoted, one character says 'his idea of heaven is to lie on a sofa and read novels.' What are these absurdities but the natural sequence of the theory that heaven is but the development and perfection of earthly associations—in fact, simply a spiritualized earth? The falsity of this theory is manifest when we consider a few facts revealed in the Bible. One is that the spirit enters heaven disembodied, and that even when reunited with the body it is, as Paul so earnestly insists, with 'a changed body.' When we also recall the fact that the conditions of our earthly life are so obliterated that they 'hunger no more, neither thirst any more,' 'neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God,' we realize that to base our conceptions of heaven on the associations

of earth is as ridiculous as the method is false.

“Observe, again, that the Bible assures us that our future bodies are to be fashioned like to Christ’s glorious body; also ‘that we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is;’ and again, that we shall be ‘changed into his image.’ We know from the Bible that Christ’s glorified body is very different from the body he had on earth. Read the descriptions of Daniel and of the apostle John of the form in which Christ appears in heaven, and you will see how entirely different they are from the picture painted of him by the four evangelists who companied with him on earth. Dean Trench mentions that he once saw in a shop-window in London a picture attempting to delineate Christ as he appears in heaven. The conception was drawn from John’s description of him in the first chapter of the book of the Revelation. The effect was so horrible, says Dr. Trench, that a man passing by and seeing the picture, ‘in righteous indignation dashed his hand through the window, seized and destroyed it.’ Bengel—with, no doubt, right

intention—prefixed to his *Commentary* on the Apocalypse a picture based on the same description of Christ by John, and Dean Trench well styles it ‘degrading, and only not deeply offensive to every feeling of reverence and awe because we know that it was not so intended by this admirable man.’ Now, if these attempts to delineate the appearance of Christ’s glorified body are so fruitless, must it not follow that any attempt to conceive of the appearance of a glorified human body will be equally fruitless? for the Bible assures us that that body will be ‘fashioned like unto Christ’s glorified body.’ ”

“Why, you are an iconoclast, Mr. Calvert,” exclaimed Clara. “You would sweep away all those beautiful pictures of angels and ransomed spirits which the old masters so beautifully painted.”

“No,” answered Mr. Calvert, pleasantly; “I would treat them as I would a good novel—accept them as romances, admiring the skill which invented them, but at the same time would recognize that they savor of fiction, not of fact.”

“But,” said Mr. Avalon, “though I do not dispute the logic of your reasoning, yet it seems to me it militates against that precious expectation the recognition of friends in heaven. I do not want to give this up, for to me one of the sweetest anticipations of heaven is again meeting with my wife and children.”

“To the subject of recognition of friends in heaven,” said Mr. Calvert, “I hope to devote a whole evening at some future time. Let me say now that I fully sympathize with your expectation, but you need have no fear of any change of the body interfering with this. When Stephen looked up into heaven, he had no difficulty in recognizing Christ, though Christ possessed his glorified body, since it was after his ascension; for Stephen exclaims, ‘I see the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.’ The reason why this change to the glorified body will not hinder our recognition of our friends in heaven is that we shall then possess the spiritual sight which Stephen had.”

“But,” said Clara, “did not John fail to recognize Christ when he saw him from

Patmos? and did not Christ have to identify himself by laying his hand on John and saying, 'Fear not; I am he that liveth and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore'? Yet we are told that at that time John was 'in the Spirit on the Lord's day.'"

"Miss Clara, if you will read that account carefully again, you will see that John *did* recognize Christ; and it was this recognition of his Saviour clothed in his glorified body which so overpowered the apostle that he 'fell at his feet as dead.' Though even assuming that John did not recognize him at that time, yet he must still do so after entering himself into heaven; for John was one of the twelve who Christ said 'when he came in his glory' should 'sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'

"But to return to the subject in hand—the entire difference of the heavenly life from the earthly. Reflect for a moment what a complete revolution of our ideas is a state in which the body needs no food—'hungers no more, neither thirsts any more.' Then, again, think of being destitute of that nervous organization which so responds to

the malaria of the atmosphere or the slightest mote in the eye that we here experience pain and sickness, while of heaven it is written, 'Neither shall there be any more pain;' and again, 'The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.'

"It may seem," added Mr. Calvert, "to make my illustration very common, but think of being in a state where money is never required. What a large part of our existence here, and of our associations, occupations and amusements, is connected with the use of money! What an entire reversal, then, of a great portion of our earthly life will it be not to have a single thought connected with the use of money enter our minds! How utterly impossible is it for us to conceive of a state of society with which money has no relation! for on earth both the civilized and the savage, the good and the bad, have very much of their existence associated with the use of money, or what represents money.

"Speaking of the contrast of heaven to earth reminds me of another point unfolded in the Bible—namely, that heaven itself is

very different now from what it once was. Before this earth was created there were none ransomed from earth. It is very different from what it was before the death and resurrection of Christ. He that sitteth on the throne now wears not only 'the glory which he had with the Father before the world was,' but the superadded glory of his exalted humanity, still bearing, however, the marks of his sacrifice; for John sees 'in the midst of the throne a lamb as it had been slain.' Christ seems to intimate that heaven needed some further preparation before it was fitted completely to be a home for the redeemed, when he said to his disciples, 'In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to *prepare* a place for you.' The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to have the same thought when he utters this remarkable declaration: 'It was therefore necessary that the pattern of things in the heavens should be purified with these'—you will see from the context that he is referring to the sprinkling of the tabernacle and its furniture with the blood of the sacrifices—'but the heavenly things themselves with

better sacrifices than these;’ and that by these ‘heavenly things’ he means heaven is evident, because he thus explains his allusion: ‘For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands’—the tabernacle or temple—‘but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.’

“Indeed, we may add that heaven will become increasingly glorious until the last ransomed one from earth is gathered in and the union of Christ with his Church is made perfect. Therefore, the last vision in the Apocalypse—that which occurs even after the final resurrection and judgment-day—is of ‘a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.’ Then comes the announcement of the perfected heaven of the redeemed, so wonderful, so different from aught seen before, that it is ushered in before the apostle’s vision with ‘a great voice out of heaven.’ Indeed, his attention is especially directed to it by that voice saying ‘Behold.’

“Then follows a description of a heaven of which you will find no counterpart in

any previous portion of the Bible. Yea, that voice does not cease until it reaches its final emphasis in these words: 'He that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things *new*.' Now, when you remember that this is a picture of heaven after the final completion of man's redemption, you see what entirely new features are introduced into it, when God himself declares that 'former things have passed away' and that he 'makes all things new.' I, therefore," said Mr. Calvert, "anticipate entering a heaven as much more glorious than the one Adam entered when he died, as the final heaven which John beheld at the end of his vision is more glorious than the one I shall enter."

"But if heaven is so entirely different from earth, where can we find a starting-point for investigating it?" inquired Mr. Avalon.

"That starting-point," answered Mr. Calvert, "is found in the Bible, in its description of the person of Christ and of the offices which he executes as our Redeemer. Christ himself is the centre of heaven. The glorified, enthroned Jesus of Nazareth is he who

takes the book which contains its mysteries 'and looses the seals thereof.' Heaven is arranged in view of the person of Christ. He is its King, and heaven is his palace; he is the Priest, and heaven is his temple; Christ is the Prophet, and heaven is the school where we shall know even as also we are known. The heaven to which the Christian goes at death is, then, a place where everything is arranged to show forth the glory of the enthroned Saviour and to subserve the objects and ends of his redemption. Therefore is it that the Being around whom centres the adoration of heaven is the Son of God in his mediatorial character. 'I beheld,' says John, 'and, lo! in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, stood a lamb as it had been slain.' So connected is this sacrificial character of Christ with the very presence of the redeemed in heaven that only those are admitted from earth who 'have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'

"It is also evident, from the descriptions in the Apocalypse, that the saints have constantly fresh discoveries of the glories of

Christ's sacrificial work, for they are represented as continually bursting out into new songs of praise when he looses seal after seal of that wonderful book which unfolds God's redemptive dealings with man. Therefore is it that eminent saints of God who have been inspired to unfold to man God's plans concerning heaven have centred all their anticipations of its bliss around the crucified One of Calvary. Paul's idea of heaven was 'to be with Christ' and to be 'present with the Lord.' John, after having been shown through the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, after beholding its glorified inhabitants, after having his eye dazzled with its delights and his ear charmed with its melodies, yet, as if expressing them all in one thought, exclaims, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'

"Indeed," added Mr. Calvert, "starting with this single thought as the centre, we can expand the circumference of our heavenly anticipations until the mind becomes fairly dazzled with the beatific prospect. Think, for example, that Christ as a prophet is the eternal Teacher of the glorified soul. What realms of knowledge must open up

under such instruction ! for we shall know even as also we are known. What a light of truth must flood the soul ! ‘for the Lamb is the light thereof.’ Think of Christ as the soul’s eternal priest ! It is true that the soul no longer requires pardon, but it will need continued nourishment. For the soul, like the body, develops in proportion as it is nourished ; therefore ‘the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them.’ Then there is that crowning office of our Saviour, his kingship. This was the conception of heaven on which Christ himself was fond of dwelling. How constantly he uses these phrases, ‘The kingdom of God,’ ‘The kingdom of heaven’ ! What a magnificent power the participants in that kingdom will exercise ! for they are ‘joint-heirs with Christ ; and has he not said, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth’ ? Did not the ransomed saints whom John heard voicing the triumphs of their kingly powers declare, ‘We shall reign on the earth’ ?* Probably this thought partly lay

* The author has carefully avoided introducing any discussion on the subject of an intermediate state or on the relations,

in Christ's mind when he said, 'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.'

"Christ gives us an additional idea of the special dominion which shall be delegated to special persons when he said to his apostles, 'Ye shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Christ concludes one of his messages to the churches in Asia with this thought of the dominion delegated to every Christian: 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.' Christ also indicates that this dominion shall extend even over the nations, for he says, 'He that overcometh and keepeth my words

in point of time, of the second coming of Christ, since the aim of this book is to discuss heaven simply as far as the true view of a spiritual heaven antagonizes the false views of materialism and Spiritualism. As to the question, What is the state of saved souls between the death and the resurrection of their bodies? the reader can find it ably discussed and elucidated in Dr. Robert M. Patterson's work entitled *Paradise*. (Published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication.) As to the most widely-accepted views on the meaning of the phrase "we shall reign on earth," the author refers the reader to an excellent summary of them contained in Rev. Dr. A. A. Hodge's *Outlines of Theology* (first edition), Chapter XXXVI.

unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.'

"We are apt," concluded Mr. Calvert, "to confine our thoughts of heaven to its elements of rest and pleasure, but the Bible has even a grander element to announce—that is, the celestial dignity and power of the ransomed soul: 'What! know ye not that we shall judge angels?'"

Mr. Avalon and his daughter hung with rapt attention on these words of their friend. When he had finished, Mr. Avalon said,

"Edward, you have made me see so much of the grandeur of a ransomed soul that I realize as never before the felicity—yea, as you say, the celestial dignity—of my loved ones in heaven. I have often before tried to console myself for their absence by thinking what they are enjoying, but now I see that the greatest element of consolation is to think what they are."

As her father seemed to look inquiringly at Clara, she said,

"I agree with you perfectly, father, and I realize as never before the force of that declaration which closes the book of Reve-

lation: 'He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen,' and feel like echoing the prayer which follows it: 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'"

CHAPTER X.

MINISTERING ANGELS.

WHEN they were gathered for their conversation on the next evening, Mr. Avalon said,

“I have been thinking, Edward, of what the apostle John declares he heard the saints say in heaven: ‘We shall reign on the earth.’ It occurs to me that this might be used by the Spiritualists as an argument for their reappearance to mankind. Does it not show that even after leaving this earth they have much to do with it?”

“Not in its present state,” replied Mr. Calvert; “for if you will notice, their reign is prospective. They themselves speak of it as being in the future: ‘We *shall* reign on the earth.’ Christ has told us when that reign will begin: ‘Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the

regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' His glorified saints cannot reign now on earth, for Christ has not yet come in his glory. His reference, as well as that of the saints themselves, undoubtedly is to that future regenerated earth of which Peter says, 'Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.' "

"But," said Clara, "did not a ransomed saint appear to John while on Patmos? He was certainly a human being; for when John attempted to worship him, he exclaimed, 'See thou do it not, for I am of thy fellow-servants, and of thy brethren the prophets.' "

"You must remember, Miss Clara, that John's spirit was at that time transported to heaven, and the ransomed saint was showing him, not through earth, but through heaven. Besides, we have another order of heavenly beings to do kind offices to us on the present earth—the angels; for the promise to the

Christian is, 'He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.'"

"You have now introduced a subject," said Mr. Avalon, "which has always greatly interested me—the ministering of angels to men. The Bible is full of it; indeed, I have often wondered that it is not more magnified in sermons and books."

"You are perfectly right," rejoined Mr. Calvert; "but I suspect that one of the reasons of avoiding this subject among Protestants is the fear of running into the errors of Romanists, who invoke in their prayers the help of angels. Then, again, Spiritualism has so caricatured the intercourse of heavenly beings with mankind that it may have driven some to the other extreme. But if there is any truth clearly taught in the Bible, it is that angels are an order of beings whose special duty it is to minister to the people of God. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews answers the question, 'Who are these angels?' thus: 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' Let me recall a few of the many instances of the

visits of angels to earth. These will show what wonderful and varied duties they perform in their intercourse with God's people.

"Angels appeared to Abraham at Mamre and to Lot in Sodom; to the one they announced the birth of Isaac, the other they delivered out of the doomed city. An angel appeared to Manoah and his wife and foretold the birth of a son, Samson. Gabriel does the same to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. An angel blocks the way of Balaam, and so frightens the beast on which he rides that it shies and crushes Balaam's foot against the wall by the wayside. An angel shuts the mouth of lions, so that Daniel escapes from their den unharmed. An angel with his own hands rolls away the stone from the door of the sepulchre; another opens the doors of the prison into which Peter and John had been cast, and practically appoints the subject of the discourse they afterward delivered in the temple. An angel stood by Paul on the night of his shipwreck and assured him that not a life of his fellow-voyagers should be lost. The first tidings that Cornelius re-

ceived that his prayers and alms had gone up as a memorial before God were by the lips of an angel. Another directs Philip what road he should take, in order that he might have his memorable meeting with the Ethiopian eunuch.

“It is interesting to observe in Bible history how often angels have filled the place of comforters to God’s people. One comforted Hagar in the wilderness when she fled from the face of Sarah, sending her back to her home with the promise that she should become the mother of a son whose seed could ‘not be numbered for multitude.’ Again, an angel consoled the weeping bondwoman, when in despair she cast her boy under one of the shrubs and withdrew that she might not see him die. ‘A vision of angels’ comforted Jacob when, with a stone for his pillow and the ground for his bed, he saw the mystic ladder traversed by these heavenly messengers. A troop of angels met Jacob before he went through the ordeal of meeting Esau. In one of the darkest hours of Israel’s history an angel appeared to Gideon and comforted

him with the tidings that he should lead his people to victory over their enemies. When Elijah, one of the greatest of Israel's prophets, was in a fit of despondency over the religious condition of his people, an angel of the Lord came and ministered to him. He pointed the famishing prophet 'to the cake baken on the coals and the cruse of water at his head,' both evidently provided through angelic instrumentality. Was it not an angel that was detailed from heaven to perform the delicate mission of strengthening Christ while undergoing his bitter agony in Gethsemane?

"Another wonderful fact recorded in the Bible about angels is their power to assume a human form. We are expressly told that those who visited Abraham at Mamre appeared as 'three men.' Angels ate with Abraham in his tent and visited Lot; angels sang in a voice audible to the shepherds on Bethlehem's plains. Indeed, in these interviews of angels with men living at such remote periods from each other as did Abraham, Lot, Daniel, Peter and Paul, they must have uttered their messages in

many different languages—or, at least, different dialects of the Hebrew.

“A remarkable instance of their power to assume a human body is that connected with the angels whom the women saw in Christ’s sepulchre. We are distinctly told that one company saw a ‘young man sitting on the right side clothed in a long white garment.’ Others saw one ‘sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had lain.’”

“Stop there a moment,” said Mr. Avalon. “You speak of the angels assuming the bodies of men. Now, I have heard it contended that angels are but men; that they were a pre-Adamite race who occupied this earth before man’s advent on it; that some of these fell just as Adam did subsequently; that the good were then removed to heaven and the bad were sent to hell. How would you disprove this theory?”

“Simply by quoting the book from which alone we can learn anything of the nature of angels,” answered Mr. Calvert. “The Bible draws a distinct line between men and angels. It tells us that man was ‘made

a *little lower* than the angels.' John in the Apocalypse carefully distinguishes between ransomed saints and angels. In the fifth chapter the elders—representatives of the ransomed Church—are described as forming one distinct chorus, and the angels another. The arrangement of the heavenly orders, as he describes it, is as follows: nearest to the throne the representatives of the ransomed Church—four and twenty elders; next, the living creatures; in the outer circle, the angels. Indeed, he represents the angels as not joining in the song which the ransomed sing. This only coincides with the general teachings of the Bible that while man by creation was made but a little lower than the angels, yet by redemption he is made higher than the angels, so that in the great day he shall 'judge angels.'

"Angels also differ entirely from man in respect to mortality, for Christ himself tells us 'they never die.' Man fell from his first estate and became susceptible to death; but when angels fell, they became susceptible only to punishment, as it is written, 'The

angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.' I also ask you carefully to notice this important fact: that wherever angels appeared—as, for example, to Abraham at his tent door, or to the women at the sepulchre—though for the time they assumed a human body, *in no case was this assumption made use of for the purpose of personating the spirit of any one who was dead.*"

"What do you think, Mr. Calvert," asked Clara, "about the theory that there is a special angel detailed for each Christian, or, in other words, about what are called 'guardian angels'?"

"If I were an Israelite, I should certainly have been educated in that belief," answered Mr. Calvert; "for, with the exception of the Sadducees, the Jews held to it firmly. You find an illustration of this in the Hebrews gathered in the house of Mary, the mother of the apostle John, to pray for the release of Peter from prison. When their prayer was answered and Peter appeared and

knocked at their home, little Rhoda ran 'and told how Peter stood before the gate.' They did not believe that it was the apostle, but his guardian angel; for 'then said they, It is his angel.' If we take the words of Christ just as they were uttered, they seem to endorse this view of the Jews. Christ says, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.' Now, the term 'angel' here used can refer only to two orders of beings. First, to ransomed saints. This would make Christ's meaning to be that the spirits of these children, after entering heaven, behold the face of God. But this needed no such statement, for the Bible clearly teaches that every redeemed soul in heaven beholds God's face. The only interpretation, then, left is the natural one that Christ referred to the angels appointed to minister to these children. A precious thought it is that our little ones have these angelic ministrations continually about them."

"But," asked Mr. Avalon, "do not some

give this interpretation—that by ‘these little ones’ Christ meant weak believers?”

“There are,” answered Mr. Calvert, “many good commentators who hold to the interpretation you have mentioned, but it has always seemed to me that it is refuted by the very context. From it we learn that before speaking these words Christ had ‘called a *little child* and set him in the midst.’ It was this child that he used as the example of the ‘little ones’ of whom he was then speaking. Besides, the occupations ascribed in the Bible to angels show how naturally they would be appointed guardian spirits to children, for their tender ministries are just what children need. The fact, also, that they were often sent to announce births shows how deeply interested they are in every human life at its very commencement.

“But to return to the subject of angels in their general relations to God’s people. They have a wonderful relation to the providences exercised by God for us. We are told: ‘He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.’ Abraham seems to have held to this doctrine; for even when

sending his steward to seek a wife for his son Isaac, he declares, 'Jehovah, God of heaven, shall send his angel before thee.' When the servant of the prophet Elisha had his eyes opened, he found his master and himself surrounded by a wonderful host of angels. We are also told that 'the angel of the Lord encampeth round about' us, and that the Lord 'giveth his angels charge over' the righteous."

"But," said Clara, "the many remarkable instances which you have cited from the Bible lead me to ask where enough angels can be found to guard so many individuals of the human race."

"Miss Clara, you can find an answer to this question in the Bible, which gives us an idea of how thickly heaven is populated by this order of beings. The Bible, speaking of them, says, 'The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels;' Daniel, in his vision of the Ancient of Days: 'Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;' in the time of Elisha's peril at Dothan: 'Behold, the mountain was

full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.' Our Lord asserts his power to summon to his help 'more than twelve legions of angels.' John, in the Apocalypse, says, 'The number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.' Milton well wrote,

'Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep.'

Probably Milton estimated the number of angels on the data furnished by Paul when he styled them 'an *innumerable* company of angels.'

"In this connection," continued Mr. Calvert, "let me call your attention to an interesting fact revealed about angels—namely, that they are of different ranks and orders. Gabriel is distinguished as one that 'stands in the presence of God;' Michael, as 'one of the chief princes.' He is also called 'the archangel.' This term occurs but twice in the New Testament, and in both instances it is used in the singular number and preceded by the definite article. Thus the term is evidently restricted to one

person, whom Jude calls 'Michael the archangel.'* He appears also in Daniel, where he is styled 'the great prince.' In the Revelation he is said to have fought with his angels against the dragon and his angels. Some have supposed he was the Son of God, but it is to be noticed that the Bible ascribes no divine attributes to him. The different terms applied to heavenly beings, such as 'archangel,' 'angels,' 'thrones,' 'dominions,' 'principalities' 'and powers,' show there must be different ranks of heavenly orders. Gabriel, though of a high order, yet has different offices ascribed to him than Michael. The angel selected for strengthening Christ in the garden, we infer from his mission, belonged to a high order.

"There is another question about angels which is suggested by your last query, Miss Clara; it is this—whether one angel has care of each Christian through his life, or whether the care is delegated at different times to different angels. I am myself inclined to adopt the latter view, as the Bible seems to

* See, on this, *Outlines of Theology*, Rev. A. A. Hodge, D. D. (edition of 1860), chapter on "Angels," question 6.

indicate that the angels themselves have different adaptations. It is natural to infer that one might be better adapted to 'have charge over us' in our infancy; another, in our manhood. Be this as it may, I do not see how any one can read the Bible without seeing that there is not an hour of a Christian's life on earth in which he is not attended by some angel who has the charge over him. I have no doubt, also, that many of our deliverances from sudden danger are brought about by the intervention of our guardian angel. For does not God add to the declaration that 'he will give his angels charge over' the Christian this specification, 'They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone'? It is remarkable that Satan quoted this very passage when he tried to tempt Christ to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. Christ answered Satan, 'It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' This showed that he regarded this promise as intended to be literally performed, for where would be the temptation if there were no angels provided for this 'bearing up'?

The very point of the temptation lay in Satan's trying to induce Christ to presume on this provision of God, through guardian angels, for preserving his people from accidental danger."

Here Mr. Avalon interrupted Mr. Calvert by saying,

"Edward, you have incidentally touched on a point which has a deep interest to me. If angels are thus commissioned to guard Christians against dangers, why was such a good boy as my Frank suffered to die by a railroad accident? Does not your belief in angels being guardian spirits to the righteous reflect either on the character of my son or on the faithfulness of the angels to their mission?"

"My dear Henry," answered Mr. Avalon, "that is a very natural question for you to ask, and doubtless it has suggested itself to many a one who has suffered a similar bereavement; but I think, if you consider carefully two points, they will aid you in answering it. First, that it would reflect just as much on the Saviour; for, whether we believe or not that guardian angels are

always with us, one thing we know—that he is. The second point is this: One office of the guardian angels is to convoy the Christian soul home to heaven. Now, we know it is always better for a Christian ‘to depart and be with Christ.’ The angels doubtless, in not delivering us always from accidents, are doing what they know to be for our highest good. They have been in heaven and seen its glories; they well know that earth, with its utmost happiness, cannot equal heaven. Therefore we can see that at times they may willingly, in answer to the commission of their Lord, suspend their deliverance of a Christian from accident, so that they may be able to perform that still better part of their mission—deliver his soul safely at the gate of heaven. In the beautiful description of heaven in the Revelation we are told the city has ‘twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels. These are not to keep man out, but to bid him welcome to the palace of their great King.’”

Mr. Avalon sat silent, as if slowly revolving in his mind the comforting thoughts

which had been suggested by his friend. At length he said,

“But still the question remains, Why must the young and promising die so early? They seem to be so much needed here!”

“That question, my dear friend,” replied Mr. Calvert, “is one which cannot be answered until we reach heaven. It is one of those matters which Christ includes in his declaration, ‘What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.’”

CHAPTER XI.

AN ASTONISHING INTERRUPTION.

THE next morning, at the breakfast-table, Mr. Avalon remarked to Mr. Calvert,

“I find that these talks about heaven have a wonderfully calming effect on my mind. In meditating on heaven there is surely a comfort—yes, strength also—which Christians might more often utilize.”

“You are perfectly right,” answered Mr. Calvert; “God himself lays stress on the benefit of frequent contemplation by the Christian of his heavenly home. It was Abraham’s heavenly-mindedness that supported him under the trial of leaving his father’s house and sojourning in a strange country; ‘for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.’ How beautifully does the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews trace the effect of this heavenly-mindedness on the char-

acter and destiny of the patriarchs when he says, ‘And, truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned, but now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city’!”

“Do you think, then, that frequent meditation on heaven will preserve one from evil?” asked Clara.

“No, not strictly speaking, though it will aid in this direction. There is a danger to be guarded against even in our meditations on heaven—namely, that of overlooking the duties of earth. True devotion like that of the seraphim Isaiah beheld has a twofold character, contemplative and active. Their wings were not only used to veil their faces while gazing upon God, but also to speed on his errands: ‘Each one had six wings: with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, *and with twain he did fly.*’ There is also a tendency to reaction which needs guarding against. We are often tempted to live on the experience of our

delightful emotions, and thus be suddenly taken unawares by the devil."

The spirit of prophecy must at that moment have rested on Edward Calvert; at least, Mr. Avalon thought so a few hours afterward. He had reached his office, and had seated himself at his desk; while intent on some legal papers, hearing a knock at the door, he carelessly responded,

"Come in!"

The person entered, but Mr. Avalon was so occupied with studying an important legal point that he did not at once turn around. Suddenly recollecting himself, he wheeled round on his revolving chair-seat and faced—Mrs. Hallowell.

Mrs. Hallowell's graceful figure was poised with a dignity which well set it off. The beauty of her fine complexion was heightened by an unusual flush, which, however, might be the indication of a fire burning within. Still, there was nothing in her manner betraying the slightest emotion or embarrassment. One person, however, was fearfully embarrassed, and that was Mr. Avalon. He stood and looked at Mrs. Hal-

lowell, waiting for her to speak. Mrs. Hallowell stood and looked at Mr. Avalon, yet said nothing. At length Mr. Avalon, collecting himself, said politely, yet rather stiffly,

“Will Mrs. Hallowell please state what I can do for her?”

Without a change of feature, the lady responded in exactly his manner and tone:

“Will Mr. Avalon please state what I can do for him?”

“Why, Mrs. Hallowell, what does this mean?” gasped out Mr. Avalon. “I cannot imagine what you intend by such a question.”

“Neither can I imagine how it is possible for you to plead ignorance in this matter.”

“Mrs. Hallowell, there must be some misunderstanding.”

“Not the least,” responded she. “When one is sent for, one certainly has reason to suppose there is something one can do for the person sending.”

“Surely Mrs. Hallowell, some one has been deceiving you. I never,” speaking very decidedly, “sent for *you*.”

"I beg pardon, Mr. Avalon ; your memory has doubtless failed you. Your messenger took pains to come as far as Boston to search for me."

"A messenger from me coming to Boston to search for you ! Why, Mrs. Hallowell, some one has been playing a game of deception on you."

"If so," answered Mrs. Hallowell, "you will force me to believe, much to my regret, that one whom I have highly esteemed has lent himself to what you are pleased to style 'a game of deception.' For it was but day before yesterday, while sitting at the bedside of a sick friend, that I was told a gentleman wanted to see me in the parlor. I went down, and found there a detective. He had been tracing up the history of Rev. Phineas Sampson, trying to connect him with the robbery at Timms's store. He had found out that I was the one who induced you to visit the *séance*. He had established, as he thought, the guilt of Mr. Sampson, and he hoped to prove my complicity with it."

"Mrs. Hallowell," broke in Mr. Avalon,

"I beseech you do not for a moment entertain the thought that I regard you as in any way connected with such a crime as a robbery."

"Mr. Avalon," she calmly answered, "I beg you to give me the opportunity of answering the question which you have asked—why I supposed you wanted to see me."

"Excuse me," said Mr. Avalon, "for my impoliteness in interrupting you. Please go on, Mrs. Hallowell; I assure you I will not interrupt you again. But first please be seated;" for Mr. Avalon's limbs began to feel weak.

Mrs. Hallowell seated herself, and proceeded:

"As soon as I saw the object of this man I resolved on playing the detective myself, and while he supposed he was reading me I was really reading him. I thus found out in a quiet way that you had put him on this search—that whatever clues he had were furnished by yourself; I therefore, after he was through interviewing me, told him, to his astonishment, that I should immediately go to see Mr. Avalon and demand why he

should attempt to track me up by a common detective."

For the first time Grace Hallowell's face betrayed deep indignation. It was an expression which cut Mr. Avalon to the quick, but one which marvelously heightened her beauty. She stood before him the embodiment of an accusing angel. There was also an honesty of purpose, a determination to be righted where she felt that she had been wronged, which commanded his admiration.

"Mrs. Hallowell," he began, "I beg you to believe me that I never had a thought of this detective attempting to embroil you in the matter of that robbery. I did mention to him the *séance*, and to account for my presence at it told him of your invitation. I frankly confess that I can now see how to a mind like a detective's, accustomed to utilize every item of intelligence as a clue, this simple fact might have seemed to furnish one. Still, it was unparalleled impudence in this fellow to attempt to use it for the purpose of connecting you with that robbery."

"Permit me to interrupt you there," said

Mrs. Hallowell, "for my high respect for you"—and for the first time her voice trembled a little—"makes me wish that respect might not be put to a further strain. Your excuse for the detective may be the charitable conclusion of your heart, but certainly it cannot be of your judgment. Taking your own account of your conversation with that detective, if you stated my invitation as it was written, was there anything in it that could lead even the suspicious mind of a detective to infer that I had any object in bringing you into contact with Mr. Sampson except to convince you of the truth of Spiritualism? Must there not have been something in your manner, in the thoughts of your own mind, unconsciously though plainly expressed, which led the detective to view me as in some way an accomplice?"

Mr. Avalon began to feel like a self-condemned criminal. It was true that he had not formed a flattering estimate of Mrs. Hallowell's character from her invitation to that *séance*. He now saw that he had misjudged her, and the original admiration he had entertained for her was beginning to

return. She behaved in so ladylike a manner, and so modestly, yet so firmly, did she show her determination to have the reproach which he had put on her character removed—yes, so rightfully did she demand it—that he saw the only manly course was reparation. After a pause he said,

“Mrs. Hallowell, I hope you will accept my humble apology. I still claim that, though I have injured you, I did not do it intentionally. I respect you for your determination to be righted in this matter. Now, if you will not answer my first question, ‘What can I do for you?’ please tell me, I beg you, what I can do for myself to set myself right with you in this matter.”

“Mr. Avalon, you do not need to set yourself right with me; I believe every word you say. Ever since we first met I have realized that your chief desire was to know the truth, and it was my simple purpose to aid you in this effort which led me to cultivate your acquaintance; but, unfortunately, there are some wrongs against woman that cannot be condoned by a mere understanding that the party inflicting them

never really intended to do harm. A woman's character must be preserved in the sight of the public. You have no idea of the blow you have given to mine."

"Why, what do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Avalon. "Tell me, and be frank with me; for if there is any possible reparation I can make, I will gladly do it."

Without, apparently, noticing the interruption, Mrs. Hallowell continued:

"I ask you, Mr. Avalon, to consider, by taking it home to yourself, how this whole matter appears to the world and appears to me. Suppose a detective comes to your house, inquires for your daughter and holds a conversation with her, his expectation being to link her with the Timms robbery. His coming there is known to your village. He has talked with others about his suspicion. He is employed on this very errand by a citizen of your village—one regarded by the whole community as a man of honor and judgment. The very account given by this citizen has led the detective to make this visit. While making the visit he has handcuffs in his pocket, his expectation being so

to commit your daughter to a confession of her guilt that eventually he will slip them on her hands and lead her away to a station-house. Just imagine this, and then remember that such is the situation in which you have placed me."

Up to this time Mrs. Hallowell had preserved her calmness, though the mantling color in her face and a slight quivering of the lip gave evidence of the intense feeling she was suppressing. But when she began the last sentence, her voice trembled, her face became ashy pale, and with the concluding words, "Remember, such is the situation in which you have placed me," she fell fainting from her chair.

Mr. Avalon sprang forward and caught her before she reached the floor. He stood for a moment, with the lovely burden in his arms, perfectly dazed; then, spying a tumbler of water on the table, he began, as awkwardly as men generally do such things, to try to revive her by sprinkling water in her face. But the reaction from her high-strung nerves was too great to be so easily overcome. "Good gracious!" he exclaim-

ed; "what shall I do?" Just then the door opened, and in walked—Clara and Mr. Calvert.

It was no time for explanations, though both Clara's and Mr. Calvert's faces seemed to demand them.

"Clara, Edward, do help me carry this lady into my back-office. Clara, stay with her while I run for a doctor."

Mr. Avalon rushed out of his office, and fortunately found Dr. Holland almost at his very door.

The doctor and Clara were left alone with Mrs. Hallowell. Mr. Calvert, taking a seat by a window, looked out of it and said nothing. Mr. Avalon paced up and down his office. After some time Dr. Holland came out of the back room accompanied by Clara.

"Mr. Avalon," he said, "this lady-friend of yours is in a very critical situation. She has evidently been in a high state of continued, though suppressed, excitement. This very suppression of her feelings has worked on her nervous organization, which is a very delicate one; a reaction has set in that

leaves her in a very dangerous condition. Unless she is at once removed to some quiet home and tenderly cared for, I will not be responsible for the consequences."

"Take her, then, at once to my house," said Mr. Avalon.—"Edward, please go and order a closed carriage."

"Why not let her go to her friend Mr. Giles?" broke in Clara.

"Oh yes; I never thought of that. Suppose you go in and propose to her that she be taken to his house."

Clara came out after quite a long interval, and said,

"She absolutely refuses to go to Mr. Giles's, but begs that there may be ordered by telegraph a special car, and that her friends in New York City be telegraphed to meet her there."

"Impossible!" broke in Dr. Holland; "she cannot take such a journey except at the risk of her life."

"Then to my house she shall go," said Mr. Avalon, firmly.—"Clara, will you please go in and tell her this?"

The daughter obeyed, though with evi-

dent reluctance. After a few moments she returned and said,

"Father, Mrs. Hallowell absolutely refuses to go to our home. I really have tried to induce to do so, but she persistently declines our invitation."

Dr. Holland here evidently lost his patience.

"This foolishness," he exclaimed, "must stop. There is surely no reason why a lady whom you all evidently know so well should not avail herself of your proffered hospitality. Let me see her; I shall tell her it is simply a question of life or death."

Suiting the action to the word, the doctor went into the back-office, and on returning said,

"Mrs. Hallowell has consented on one condition—namely, that she shall be permitted to keep her room, and shall remunerate you for your hospitality. You had better indulge her in these whims, to avoid risking her life any farther."

The carriage was ordered, and Mrs. Hallowell was carried to the Avalon mansion.

After reaching home Mr. Avalon rehearsed

to Clara and Mr. Calvert all the episode of the morning. This recital had a great effect on his daughter; her heart, naturally warm, went out to the sick lady. Clara felt also that there was some reparation needed on her own part.

Toward evening the young girl stole noiselessly into the room with a little nourishment the doctor had ordered. Mrs. Hallowell's face was almost as white as the pillow which it pressed; her eyes were turned upward, as if gazing into the mysteries beyond. She was so absorbed that she did not notice Clara enter, but on noticing her she started.

Clara, fearing another reaction, said gently,

"I have brought you a little nourishment which the doctor ordered; I hope you will find it strengthening."

"Thank you," answered Mrs. Hallowell, with a trembling voice; "how kind it is in you to do this!" Then a gush of tears and sobs followed.

Clara was affrighted lest she should bring on another attack:

"Oh, Mrs. Hallowell, don't; I beg you, don't."

“Oh, let me weep,” she replied; “it is the first relief I have had. I feel better already.”

As Clara was leaving the room Mrs. Hallowell said,

“Miss Avalon, I asked the favor of being left alone in my room. Will you permit me to make one exception—in regard to yourself?”

“Certainly,” said Clara; and from that day she became Mrs. Hallowell’s constant nurse.

Thrown into such intimate relations, the ladies were unconsciously drawn to each other. There was something in Clara that Mrs. Hallowell realized she herself lacked; she would often lie and gaze on her with a wistful look. On the other hand, Clara found in Mrs. Hallowell what she had missed since her mother’s death—a female companion older, and in many respects wiser, than herself.

One day, as Clara was sitting by Mrs. Hallowell’s bedside while the latter slept, Mrs. Hallowell awoke and found her reading her Bible.

"Please read a little while to me," she said.

Clara answered,

"We have lately been having some delightful talks about heaven, and I was just reading that beautiful fourteenth chapter of John, which speaks of the place Christ has gone before to prepare for us in the Father's house."

Mrs. Hallowell, raising herself on her elbow and looking intently in Clara's face, said,

"Do you really believe that those are the words of Christ, and that he is the Son of God?"

Clara was shocked, and answered,

"Why, of course, Mrs. Hallowell; do you not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that this Bible is inspired?"

"Oh how I wish I could believe it!" she answered, with evident sincerity.

Nothing further was said, but Clara managed frequently to bring in the reading of the Bible, particularly of those portions which related to the redemptive work of Christ and his invitation to burdened hearts.

A few days after, Dr. Holland announced that Mrs. Hallowell would soon be well enough to leave. Clara really felt a regret to hear this, for she began to be deeply interested in her conversion. If it were not for her secret fear of Mrs. Hallowell's awakening an interest in her father's heart, she would have insisted on her staying longer. Yet even this fear was much relieved by a chance expression of Mrs. Hallowell. She was talking about her dead husband and her intense love for him, and incidentally remarked,

"I have a favorite theory—that a person never really loves but once. It seems to me that I could never consent to entertaining the thought of loving another man as a husband. My only aim is so to live that I can meet my husband again in heaven—if there be a heaven."

"Oh, Mrs. Hallowell, don't say that; you must believe that there is a heaven. If you don't know it now, it is surely your duty as well as your privilege to take up this Bible and learn of that 'rest which remaineth to the people of God.' Thus will you come

not only at last to heaven, but, what is the first requisite, to that Saviour who died to give us access to heaven."

"I somehow hope I may yet do this," replied Mrs. Hallowell. "But let me first tell you my past history, and then perhaps you will see that my present state of skepticism is not so surprising."

This was just what Clara wanted to find out, but, fearing to overtask the invalid, she proposed that they should defer the recital till the next morning.

CHAPTER XII.

GRACE HALLOWELL'S HISTORY.

“**I** PROMISED to give you a history of my life,” said Mrs. Hallowell to Clara, when the two ladies were seated in the sick-room. “My girlhood had nothing special about it, for it was quietly spent at home. My parents were wealthy, and I, as their only child, had all the comforts and pleasures wealth could provide. My father was so absorbed in business that he took no time to care for my religious instruction. My mother was an invalid, whose nerves brooked not the slightest noise; my play-days, therefore, became days of exile from a mother’s care.

“Probably to make amends for their neglect of my soul-training, my parents sent me to a fashionable boarding-school. I was turned out so completely ‘finished’ to the satisfaction of my instructors that on graduation-day

my neck was strung around with medals. My diploma, printed on satin, attested that I was well furnished in gifts of mind and graces of manner. The truth is, I was turned out a finished heathen, only that I lacked one idea which all heathen possess—that of worship. However, I managed pretty well to worship a trinity composed of myself, the fashionable world and handsome young men. These soon began to cloy on my taste, when my attention was directed to one whom I did worship with a devotion never surpassed by a heathen idolater—the one that was to be my husband. On both sides it was love at first sight, but, unlike most of such loves, it proved constant and increasing. Oh how I loved him! My whole being seemed wrapped up in his, and his in mine. I think the fact that I had never enjoyed those tender and intimate relations with my parents which most children possess gave a freshness as well as a pleasure to this, my first, and I sincerely believe my last, full soul-affection. He was worthy of it, for his manliness of person, his brightness and intellectuality, united with a tender solicitude

to anticipate my every want, made my heart go out to him in the fullest confidence of love."

Here Mrs. Hallowell paused and said,

"Miss Avalon, if anything would make me believe in God, it is the power God seems to possess of overthrowing any idol which the human heart enthrones as superior to himself.—But I anticipate a little. My father—for my mother had died during my last school-year—willingly gave his consent to our union, and proved his sincerity by giving me one of the finest weddings of the season and then settling on me a small fortune, which, united with the already large one of my husband, left us nothing to do except to enjoy life. We were both practically Epicureans, our only effort being to get all possible pleasure out of the present life. We spent our honeymoon in a tour through Europe, and had reached Rome, where, being so fascinated with its treasures of art and antiquity, we prolonged our stay into the early fall. We had been warned of the dangers arising from the fever which so fatally prevails during that season, but,

with the carelessness of youth and its presumption to rely on natural powers to overcome disease, we took not even ordinary precaution.

“One beautiful moonlight night I proposed to my husband that we should visit some of the historic ruins, as I had heard that the moonlight gave them a peculiarly weird effect. We found it even so, and were so fascinated that it was near midnight when we re-entered our hotel. Before retiring my husband complained of chilliness, but, as the night was damp, we thought nothing of it. Near morning I was awakened by his cry of distress. I sprang out of bed, lit the lamp, and discovered that he was in a congestive chill. I rang the bell, but could not for some time get assistance. When it came, it was in the form of a half-awakened Italian boy, whom I had fairly to shake before getting into his head the fact that I wanted him to run for a doctor.

“In the mean while, my husband was growing rapidly worse. Oh the horror of those moments of anxious suspense! I had not a single friend in the hotel—hardly an ac-

quaintance. I was totally inexperienced in the treatment of the sick. Rushing to the window, I leaned out and listened, hoping to hear the footsteps of some passer, but heard none. 'O God,' I cried, 'what shall I do?' The name of God, uttered more as an ejaculation than as a prayer, startled me with the thought that I did need the help of some one besides man. Involuntarily I fell on my knees and cried,

"'O God, if you will only spare my husband, I will, I will—' I did not know what to add.

"Miss Avalon, don't censure me; I really knew so little about God that to pray to him was like trying to speak an unknown language. However, I had seen in Rome many who accompanied their prayers with gifts of money. I thought there must be some price set by God on answered prayer, and I cried,

"'O God, if thou wilt spare my husband, I will give thee ten thousand dollars—yea, all the money I have.'

"But prayer and money were soon forgotten; for when the doctor arrived, he

shook his head and said, 'Too late! Too late!'

" 'Oh, doctor,' I cried, 'save him! I will pay you well.'

" 'I would if I could,' he replied, 'but he is even now in the last stages of death.'

" From that moment I knew nothing for a month. On regaining my consciousness I found myself in a hospital, to which the American consul had ordered me to be conveyed.

" 'Where is my husband?' I asked of the attendant.

" She could not speak English, but went for a sister of charity, who gently broke to me the tidings of his death.

" When I was able to go out, I hunted up his grave, and found it in a miserable place outside of the city. Why had they buried him there? Because, being a Protestant, he could not lie in what they term 'consecrated ground.' He, my pure, good husband, not fit to lie in ground in which I found they buried the very outcasts who had been shriven by some priest! I gathered up his precious remains, and brought them with me to

America, but I left Rome with a hatred of the religion of Christ, as they call it. I have since learned that it was only that religion as interpreted by Rome that would inflict such an outrage. Still, my first contact with the religion of Christ—or what they claimed to be Christ's—was of such a nature as to lead me to hate it. The only thing which kept me from becoming an atheist was the fact that it would force me to give up the idea of again meeting my husband. I therefore fell back on the idea that there must be a God and a heaven. But I cared nothing for that God except so far as he could aid me to meet Charles again. It really mattered to me very little who that God was; I would as soon have worshiped Buddha as Jehovah.

“My father took me to his home and nursed me with a care that seemed a new revelation of his heart. He was growing old, and I could, therefore, somewhat occupy my thoughts with caring for him. But soon he too passed away, and I was left alone, my only occupation being to nurse my grief and to care for the large fortune left me. Oh

how empty this then seemed! I would gladly have parted with it if I could only thus have had my dead back again. I could not go into the pleasures of the world and divert my attention by its amusements. No one seemed to care for me except for the sake of my money. I realized as never before the utter selfishness of mankind. The merchant who sold me my mourning, the beggars who wanted me to help them, and the men who managed my financial affairs were the only ones who seemed to feel any interest in me, except"—and Grace Hallowell's face assumed an expression of the utmost scorn—"that class of men who seemed to think a widow possessing wealth and the attractions of youth a matrimonial commodity to be dealt with simply at its market value.

"I confess that once I came near becoming a believer, as you term it. It was while visiting in a humble tenement a poor girl who had been fearfully mangled by the machinery in a mill where she was employed. I went to carry her money and comforts. As I stood at her door I heard her singing, and I have never forgotten the sweet—I may

say the triumphant—tone in which she sang these words :

‘ Now I have found a Friend
Whose love shall never end :
Jesus is mine.
Though earthly joys decrease,
Though human friendships cease,
Now I have lasting peace :
Jesus is mine.’

I left my gift at the door and turned away weeping.

“ Just at this time a lady whom I had met in my travels abroad, having heard of my heavy affliction, came to see me. She was of a very tender, sympathetic nature. She tried to comfort me by her firm belief that we could still enjoy the presence of our dead friends. In my groping for comfort I seized with avidity the consolation thus offered. She was really the only female friend in whom I could confide, and I gave her my entire confidence.”

“ Mrs. Hallowell, will you permit me to interrupt you there?” said Clara. “ Did I understand you to say that you were the only child of your parents? Did you not have a sister named Anna ?”

"Why, no," answered Mrs. Hallowell. "What made you think so?"

"Mr. Giles, when he first mentioned your name to my father, narrated an incident in which your sister Anna played part."

"Why, what a lie!" exclaimed Mrs. Hallowell. Then, recollecting herself, she said, "Miss Avalon, excuse me for my impoliteness, but really I felt indignant that Mr. Giles should frame such a willful falsehood. It only gives me another revelation of the deceitfulness of that man. I lent him five thousand dollars, and it was partly to collect this that I first visited your village. I have found, to my cost, that Mr. Giles is as dishonest as he is untruthful. I do not know what other falsehoods he may have circulated about me."

"Oh," said Clara, "none at all that I have heard of; he always spoke of you to my father in the highest terms."

"Well, really, Mr. Giles knows nothing about me: I met him only a few times before I came to this village. He was a friend of Mrs. Barnell, the lady of whom I have just spoken; she represented him to be a man of

great wealth, the president of a mining company. On Mr. Giles's representations I invested some thousands in his company, lending him, besides, on his personal note, five thousand dollars. But I received no dividends from my stock, nor any interest on his note; I waited, however, till the latter was due, and then wrote him that I would be in your village on the third of July to collect it. This was what brought me here when we first met. But I anticipate a little my story.

"The lady to whom I referred introduced me to several circles of Spiritualists, at which I really believed I had interviews with my dead husband. The circles were those of a high order; and if there was any deception, I could not detect it. My companion had several times spoken to me of a Rev. Phineas Sampson and of his wonderful assistants. When I arrived here, Mr. Giles told me of their presence in the village; and I was so much interested in having your father become a convert to Spiritualism that I invited him to be present. I was at first impressed with their apparent power, but before the *séance* ended I discovered that I had been

decoyed into the company of a miserable set of— I do not know what to call them. I refused to let Mr. Giles see me home that night, and told him that I should at once institute suit against him for obtaining money from me on false pretences. He begged very hard, but, finding me immovable, assumed a bold front and threatened that he would see Mr. Avalon and tell him that I was a companion of the women we met at that *séance*. I determined to see your father myself and prevent him from getting such an opinion of my character, and therefore drove over to your house that night when he refused to see me; and oh, Miss Avalon, when I found—” Mrs. Hallowell here checked herself and said, “Has your father told you the reason for my late visit to his office?”

“Yes,” answered Clara.

“Has he informed you of all that transpired between us?”

“Yes, all.”

“Then, I may add, when I found that he thought me even a companion of thieves, I could stand it no longer.”

Mrs. Hallowell came so near having another reaction that Clara said,

“Let us stop for a little while. I will gladly listen to the whole of your story, for I am intensely interested in it, but at present it is too much for your strength.”

“I cannot stop now,” answered Mrs. Hallowell; “I may never see you again, and I will not leave you—whom I have learned not only to admire, but to love—without telling you all. I don’t want you to think of Grace Hallowell as one whose character you cannot respect. Let me rest quietly a few moments, and then I will tell you what I meant chiefly to speak of—my struggles for light.”

Clara slipped out to get some nourishment for her patient. When she returned, while placing it before her, she said,

“Mrs. Hallowell, you must first eat, and then talk. You know that even Elijah had first to be fed by the angel before he could talk with God on Mount Horeb.”

“I am ashamed to say,” answered Mrs. Hallowell, “that I have read the Bible so little that I did not know that fact in his

history; but I do not want any better angel than yourself to feed me."

Clara looked pained, and Mrs. Hallowell, perceiving it, said,

"Excuse me; I ought not to have talked so lightly of what you regard as serious subjects. But I am sincere, Miss Avalon, in my admiration for you. If anything would convince me of the truth of Christianity, it would be such a life as yours.

"I was about, when my weakness interrupted our conversation, to tell you of my struggles after light. I really did experience some comfort from my Spiritualism, but I confess this—that the *séance* and the circle always left me in an excited state. I felt the need of something to calm my mind. Besides, after all, these reappearances are very intangible. I have had—or, at least, I think I have had—visions of my beloved husband, but they were very unsatisfactory. They only assured me of his happy condition; and though the rappings have always attested that he loved me still, yet I am as far from him as ever—that is, for all purposes of such a helpful intercourse as I

have with you, who are really present with me. I have sometimes felt that if there were some one who could stand between me and him, and that if I could talk with some one whom I knew to be with him, and yet with me, it would yield more real intercourse between my husband and myself than all these spiritual communications."

"Why cannot you have this intercourse through God?" asked Clara. "I understood you to say that you believe in a God and in a heaven; if you speak to God in prayer, you are speaking to one who is near your husband."

"Yes, but then God is far off from me. The very grandeur of this universe, which so proves his existence, seems to place an impassable gulf between him and myself."

"Mrs. Hallowell, will you let me ask you to rest a moment? I see that you are getting weak again. And while you are resting I want to read you a passage from the Bible." Clara read: "'For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his

hand upon us both. Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me. Then would I speak and not fear him.' ”

“Is that in the Bible?” said Mrs. Hallowell. “Why, it exactly expresses my feelings. Who wrote that?”

“It is in the book of Job,” answered Clara. “Like you, Job was in great perplexity of mind.”

“Well, did he ever come out of it?”

“Yes.”

“Then tell me how.”

“I can best do this by reading another passage from Job’s sayings: ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and not another.’ ”

“‘My Redeemer liveth’—*my* Redeemer!” repeated Mrs. Hallowell, slowly, over and over again.

Clara said not a word; she was praying that light might indeed break on that darkened soul.

“‘My Redeemer liveth’! And he, you say, is the same with God?”

“Yes,” answered Clara; “he is one with the Father, yet one with us—the God-man; God to help us, man to sympathize with us. He once came from heaven to die for us, so that our sins might be pardoned and we made fit for heaven. He once stood and wept, as you have wept, by the grave of a friend. He has, then, not only the power to aid you for which you are seeking, but the sympathy you so much need. Listen to his own words: ‘Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’”

“‘My Redeemer liveth’—‘Come unto me’—‘all ye that labor and are heavy laden’—‘I will give you rest,’” slowly repeated Mrs. Hallowell.

Clara wisely said not a word; she did not want the sound of her voice to distract the workings of that aroused heart.

At length Mrs. Hallowell said slowly and feelingly,

“But oh, Miss Avalon, I am such a sinner! If there be a Saviour, how I have been

treating him all these years! Then my life! how useless it has been! True, I have given thousands to the poor, but my life, my poor wasted life, has been given to the world. I have lived simply for myself. If the Saviour of the world came from heaven to die that I might live, and up to this time I have not given him even one serious thought nor one service as to my Lord, I tell you it shuts instead of opening the door of hope to hear you say, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'"

There was no deception here; it was the reality of deep conviction, but it was the conviction of remorse, not of repentance. Justice had awakened the conscience, but the heart had not been melted by mercy.

Clara felt herself puzzled. After a moment she said,

"Mrs. Hallowell, let me read you another passage from the Bible;" and she read: "'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.'"

"'Faithful,' 'worthy of *all* acceptation,' the chief of sinners!" said Mrs. Hallowell.

"Then there may be hope even for me."
Her eyes closed; her face was upraised,
her hands were clasped.

Clara stole quietly from the room. It
was a time for that soul to be alone with its
God and its Saviour.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRUE MEDIUM FOR SPIRITUAL INTER- COURSE.

“WHAT does all this mean?” inquired Dr. Goodwin of Mr. Calvert, whom he met about a year after the incidents recorded in the last chapter.

“Please explain what you refer to,” answered Mr. Calvert.

“Why, I supposed that so intimate a friend of the Avalons as yourself would have known that Mr. Avalon and his daughter are at Saratoga, and that George Mills and Mrs. Hallowell also are there.”

“Well, what of that?” responded Mr. Calvert. “I thought you would be glad, Doctor, to know that Miss Clara and Mr. George Mills were together, for it was only a few weeks ago that you told me you thought they would make an excellent match.”

“True, my friend, but I am no match-

maker. Yet I confess that Mr. Mills has developed so much since he became acquainted with Miss Clara that I hope he will yet become a Christian. He is now a regular attendant on my church, though I suspect it is more to look at Miss Avalon's pretty face than to listen to my sermons. Still, the other day he did compliment me by saying, 'Dr. Goodwin, that was an excellent sermon of yours to-day; it was so practical.' I am going to set him at some practical work by having him elected a trustee of my church, and I hope by thus getting him interested in the church he may yet become a member."

"Very bad means to use," responded Mr. Calvert; "I never knew a man converted by being made a trustee of the church. Indeed, I have known several cases where it rather hindered this end by flattering men with the idea that now they had some sort of connection with the Church."

"Well, friend Calvert, I won't dispute that point with you lest I should get the worst of the argument. But please tell me why you seem so unconcerned, when such

dear friends of yours as the Avalons are becoming so intimate with that Spiritualistic woman?"

"Dr. Goodwin," answered Mr. Calvert, with emphasis, "Mrs. Hallowell is a lady, and from my personal knowledge of her spiritual experiences I believe there is much more prospect of her than of George Mills becoming a Christian."

"Well, I have very little faith in Spiritualism," replied Dr. Goodwin.

"So have I—at least, in Spiritualism as a system," answered Mr. Calvert; "but I fail to see why that fact should not make us all the more interested to lead its votaries to the right faith."

"Well, I will not dispute that, either; but let me ask you to show the same charitable hope and effort in behalf of my young friend George Mills."

"Certainly;" and with this they separated.

In one of the beautiful summer homes at Saratoga were gathered a little circle of friends—the Avalons, George Mills, Mrs. Hallowell and Mr. Calvert. A year had wrought some

sad changes in the appearance of Mrs. Hallowell. Her face was not less beautiful, but it was very pale, except a slight flush on the cheek. Her eye had that unwonted brilliancy which betokens pulmonary disease; her form, though graceful as ever, was less erect; a hacking cough and panting breath frequently interrupted her speech. There was a calmer, more spiritual expression in her face, and she had a quietness of manner quite different from her former vivacity.

Mrs. Hallowell sat in an easy-chair, and by her side sat Mr. Avalon. Mr. Calvert was seated opposite them, behind a small table, on which lay an open Bible. On one side of him sat Mr. George Mills, and on the other, Clara Avalon.

"We have now a circle," pleasantly remarked Mr. Avalon; "and though it be not Spiritualistic, yet I have invited our friend Mrs. Hallowell to join it because I want her to enjoy with us Mr. Calvert's talks about heaven."

"It matters very little to me," said Mrs. Hallowell, "whether the circle be Spiritualistic or not, so that it lead me to the truth.

I am, however, growing in the conviction that the Bible is the best guide to that truth. My only regret is that I did not earlier discover this."

"Well, as for me," said George Mills, "I came here from a desire to call on Miss Avalon. I do not know but that she laid a plot to get me here, for she told me she would be out every evening but this one. Somehow, I have forgotten an engagement that I had for eight o'clock ; but, as it is now too late to fill it, I would like, if Mr. Calvert has no objection, to stay and hear what he has to say about heaven. I confess I have never been able to 'read my title clear to mansions in the skies.' Now, if it were an earthly title, I could soon get it determined by Mr. Charlton, our firm's examiner of titles. I suppose, however, the fault is with myself. But please go on, Mr. Calvert, and just regard me as a silent partner in this concern."

Mr. Calvert looked rather annoyed, but tried to conceal the fact by saying kindly,

"Mr. Mills, we will take you in now as a silent partner, but hope you will ere long become an active one." Then, taking his

Bible in his hands, he began: "I want tonight to show you, my friends, what a real, soul-comforting fellowship the Christian can even now enjoy with the ransomed in heaven."

"Why, you are not going to convert us to Spiritualism?" exclaimed George.

Mr. Calvert answered in a tone which contained gentle rebuke:

"I would like to convert you, Mr. Mills, to spirituality; and if you will permit me to proceed, I think you will find that that is something from which you need apprehend no danger."

George relapsed into silence, and Mr. Calvert, taking up his theme, proceeded:

"If we reflect a moment, we will see that the highest intercourse between the Christian on earth and those in heaven is not obtained by bringing the latter down to our plane, but by being ourselves uplifted to theirs. It is merely the dictate of selfishness to expect them to come back to earth so that we can enjoy their company—to force them to exchange the unalloyed happiness of heaven for contact with a world

of sin and sorrow. Closely analyze the feeling, and you will find that it does not come from pure affection; for that is always ready to sacrifice for its object. The mother will give up for years the pleasure of seeing her son that he may enjoy a thorough education in some distant college or start in business in some far-off city. The wife of a naval officer will part with her husband while he is sailing on a three years' cruise, content to sacrifice the pleasure of his company that he may win the laurels of his profession. This demand for our loved ones to come back is as if a mother, herself starving in a hovel, should demand back her child from some benevolent institution to share her experiences: she wants to comfort herself even at the risk of her child's very life. This is not pure love: it is selfishness. How immeasurably greater affection for his children did Job express, when, after their death, he said, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!'

"But is there not a natural grieving for a child and a longing to see it again even

though it be removed to heaven?" inquired Mr. Avalon.

"Certainly; the God-man himself wept at the grave of Lazarus, and one Bible illustration of God's love is, 'As one mourneth for his only son.' I believe our Saviour fully sympathizes with this feeling, for we are told that on meeting the widow of Nain bearing her only son to the tomb 'he had compassion on her and said unto her, Weep not.' But you notice that Christ never so sympathized with a bereaved heart as to bring its dead back from heaven for a mere transient appearance. The reason of this is manifest: it would again plunge the ransomed soul into a world of sin and sorrow. This would be as violent a shock—I might perhaps say as fatal to its happiness—as it would be to put a body into fire. The only possible way by which such a return could be brought about would be through a resurrection of the body. Even this, however, would compel the soul to come back to its mortal body and make it liable to suffering. We have no reason to infer that the son of the widow of Nain, or Lazarus, escaped by

resurrection the further pains and heartaches of a mortal existence.

“If this earth could become an Eden, then we might have ransomed saints back again to commune with man; for when it was an Eden, God himself ‘walked in the garden in the cool of the day.’ But, in its present state, to bring a ransomed soul back to earth would be like taking a king from his palace and placing him in the midst of the squalor and filth of the Five Points.”

“But might they not come back,” asked Mrs. Hallowell, “to teach us the way to heaven, just as refined, educated women have gone to heathen lands to teach the degraded inhabitants?”

“Your question,” said Mr. Avalon, “is a very natural one, and I confess that if we had been left to our own guessing we might have adopted this view. But the Bible emphasizes the fact that God has limited this work to man. We find in the Bible this declaration, ‘We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us,’ applied to living men, but never to ran-

somed spirits. Christ after his resurrection said, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth.' Now, if all power was committed to him in heaven, he certainly could have summoned back any of its ransomed saints and have made them the future heralds of his gospel. But observe: immediately after this, addressing only his disciples, he adds, 'Go *ye* therefore and teach all nations.'"

"But I understood you to say in starting out that you were going to show us from the Bible how real and soul-comforting is the fellowship of the Christian with the saints in light," said Mr. Avalon.

"That is just what I desire to do," answered Mr. Calvert, "but before doing so I wanted to impress you with the fact that this cannot be accomplished by bringing the saints down to us, but only by uplifting our souls to them."

"Do you, then, believe," asked Mrs. Hallowell, "in our present communion with the saints in heaven?"

"Yes, and all here present have often expressed their faith in this."

“How?” asked Clara.

“By repeating that part of the Apostles’ Creed which says, ‘I believe in the communion of saints.’”

“But if there be this communion with the saints in heaven,” said Mr. Avalon, “it must be either directly with them or through a medium.”

“True,” replied Mr. Calvert; “and God has provided that medium in his Son Jesus Christ. His person is so constituted that he unites in himself heaven and earth, the finite and the infinite, God and man. Through him man has not only communion with God, but also fellowship with the saints in light. Notice how forcibly Paul brings out this truth in his Epistle to the Ephesians. He opens the Epistle with the declaration that ‘God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.’ Then, after speaking of God setting Christ at his own right hand in heavenly places, he adds, ‘And gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.’ What is the Church but the united com-

pany of believers in Christ? As the hymn well expresses it,

‘One family we dwell in him;
One Church above, beneath.’

Christ, its Head, is now in heaven, but his body, the Church, has one part in heaven and the other on earth. His life binds them together. When we come to Christ, we come not only to ‘the Mediator of the new covenant,’ but also to ‘the spirits of just men made perfect.’ I kneel in prayer to Christ: I am praying to One before whom my ransomed ones in heaven are bowing in adoration. I sing praises to him: I am praising One whom my ransomed ones also are praising. My heart is filled with the influence of the Spirit: that is the very blessing the ransomed are enjoying. Christ himself loved to dwell on this union of all believers in him. He used the figure of a vine and its branches: ‘I am the vine; ye are the branches.’ We know that in the vine some of the branches are near the ground, others high up, some are small, others large; yet the lowest branch and the highest, the

feeblest twig and the strongest limb, are bound together in the closest tie of natural life."

"But," said Mrs. Hallowell, "this is just what the Spiritualists so much insist on—the reality of spiritual intercourse."

"Yes," answered Mr. Calvert, "but what they mean by that term is intercourse between mankind on earth and those who have passed from earth. The only and the true application of the term is to intercourse through one all-pervading medium—the Holy Spirit—between those on earth who have been regenerated by that Spirit and the ransomed in heaven. That Spirit unites them both to Christ and through him to each other. He is the Comforter who dwells in the hearts of God's people everywhere. The Bible says to Christians on the earth, 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?' Thus, through this Spirit, the holy catholic Church throughout the world is kept in intercourse with the saints in heaven. We have not, it is true, as in olden time, revelations through angels, but we have something better and higher: 'God

has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our heart, crying, Abba, Father !' Thus we have all the revelation we need, and all that in our present state we can contain : ' Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' "

George, who had been fidgeting all through this doctrinal exposition, said rather abruptly,

" Well, that may seem clear enough to you, Mr. Calvert, but to me it is as unintelligible as Sanscrit."

" Well, Mr. Mills, to speak candidly, I do not think it is possible to make it clear to your mind. The Bible says, ' The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' "

George relapsed into silence, and Mr. Calvert continued :

" Faith is the power which affords in some measure a present realization of our heavenly bliss, for it is ' the substance of things hoped for.' Without faith the glories of heaven are as unintelligible to men as beauties of color to the blind or musical sounds to the deaf. By the Spirit working faith in us, and thus

uniting us to Christ, we are uplifted to that very plane of existence on which our sainted ones dwell. Our souls are developed in the spiritual graces, tastes and feelings which they have; thus, instead of dragging them down to our level by a communion which requires their presence with us, we are uplifted to them. Thus their bliss is not diminished or interfered with, while our holiness is being surely perfected until we are prepared to go to them, though they cannot come back to us. Dr. Parker of London, in his *Paraclete*, well expresses this truth by saying,

“‘If we are yet in the flesh, we shall pine for the symbol, the dream, the half-seen whispering angel, because the carnal mind loves the spectacular, the marvelous, the outward and tangible. But if we are in sympathy with Jesus Christ, we shall see in the gift of the Holy Ghost the fulfillment of the richest promises, and, even from a philosophical point of view, the most rational confirmation of God’s elementary spiritual training of mankind. That training, apart from the Holy Ghost, is self-

concluding ; if continued, it becomes the gloomiest of all monotonies—a circle whose revolutions bring repetition, weariness and disappointment: the dreams come over again, the angels are but angels still, and thus reverence may drop into familiarity. But, on the other hand, that training, terminating itself in the Holy Ghost as the dawn terminates in the full light, is a training toward Fatherhood, Sonship and immortal progress.’ ”

“That is an awfully long process,” interrupted George. “I thought it took a long time for me to go through the education of my mind ; think of a boy having to begin at five with his letters, and only graduating at college about twenty, with three years more before he gets into his profession. But as you state it, Mr. Calvert, it takes a longer time for this spiritual education.”

“Have you ever regretted, Mr. Mills, the time spent in your mental education ?”

“No,” said George ; “my only regret is that I was so dull a scholar.”

“Exactly,” responded Mr. Calvert. “Yet if a man is willing to spend nearly a quarter

of a century in preparing himself for this life, so as to make his intercourse with his fellow-men pleasant and profitable, should he complain if God requires a lifetime—brief at best—for preparing for the enjoyment of a blissful eternity with him and the saints in heaven?”

“I suppose that is all true,” answered George, “but we business-men have really little time for these things. I speak frankly, for I do not want to play the hypocrite. I am not able, Mr. Calvert, to refute your views about what you term this blessed union with the saints in heaven through Jesus Christ, but really I enjoy a busy day in Wall street far more than I enjoy thinking of heaven. I can see how I might enjoy a good Spiritualist *séance*, if such a thing were genuine, for I have a natural curiosity to see a person who has actually gone from earth to the other world. I would give several thousand dollars to have the chance to ask him some questions—for example, whether all men eventually reach heaven, or whether some of them reach the bad place and stay there for ever. It does seem

to me that if he said any do go to the bad place and remain there it would make me become a Christian at once. But at present, so far as my tastes are concerned, Spiritualistic communion with heaven, as they call it, would be far more palatable than what you term spiritual communion."

"I admire your frankness," replied Mr. Calvert, "and believe you only voice the feeling of every man who is not a Christian; but may I ask you whether you believe the Bible?"

"Certainly," said George; "every word of it."

"Well, you remember the reply Abraham made to Dives when Dives requested that Lazarus might be sent back to warn his brethren: 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' Dives answers, 'Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.' Abraham replies, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.' The history of the race has proven the truth of Abraham's statement. The resurrection

of Lazarus, so far from making the rulers of the Jews believe in Christ, actually spurred them on to devise plans for his death. The very guards who saw the angels roll away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre went off and invented the lie that his disciples had stolen away his body while they—the guards—slept. In Jerusalem, where ‘many bodies of the saints arose after Christ’s resurrection, and appeared to many,’ unbelief still prevailed.”

“I suspect you are right, after all,” said George. “But I don’t see how a fellow like me can ever become what you call spiritually-minded.”

Clara looked pained, but Mr. Calvert said,

“Mr. Mills, I will speak as frankly to you as you have to me. I confess that I have had some doubts whether you would ever become spiritually-minded, but I begin to hope, from the very things you have said to-night, that you will yet become a true Christian. When a man honestly recognizes his condition, he has taken the first step toward bettering it.”

Mrs. Hallowell, who had listened intently to the words of Mr. Calvert, here remarked,

“Your talk this evening recalls to me the necessity of a prayer the disciples of Christ once offered to him: ‘Lord, increase our faith.’ I think I am beginning to see the reality and preciousness of this union with Christ, and through him of communion with the saints. But I am like the man whose eyes Christ opened, who first saw things so confusedly that men appeared to him ‘as trees walking.’ Yet I somehow feel that Jesus is answering a cry which I now daily send up to him: ‘Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.’”

A hush fell on the little group. Tears came into the eyes of Clara, and even Mr. Calvert’s voice trembled a little while he replied,

“I verily believe that no one ever sincerely offered that prayer without its being answered.”

CHAPTER XIV.

HEAVENLY RECOGNITIONS.

“THERE is one point,” said Mr. Avalon, “I have never felt satisfied about : that is the recognition of our friends in heaven. Most of the works on heaven which I have read treat of it as a probability rather than a certainty. I would like to ask you, Edward, whether the Bible makes it absolutely sure that we shall recognize our friends in heaven.”

“I also am much interested in this subject,” said Mrs. Hallowell, “because it was my desire to see my dear husband again that attracted me so much to Spiritualism. I believe, if the fact of recognition could be established on a foundation surer and wider than Spiritualism affords, it would be of great service to a certain class of seekers after light.”

“Well,” said George Mills, in his usual

abrupt way, "I hope Mr. Calvert will not be able to prove that we will recognize every professed Christian we have known on earth. It is all that I can do to tolerate some people here; if I must keep up their acquaintance in heaven, it is rather a gloomy prospect."

Mr. Calvert smiled and replied,

"Would it not be well, Mr. Mills, to settle first the question about your own entrance into heaven? If you are not sure of that, why bother yourself about whom you will know there?"

"Yes," answered George, thoughtfully; "that is true."

"I am very glad, my friends," said Mr. Calvert as he drew his chair to the table and bent over his Bible, "that you have suggested all these points, for I trust they will enable us to study this subject on a basis which will not merely settle the question whether we shall recognize our friends in heaven, but also enable us to understand the mode of recognition. I start first with the point suggested by Mr. Avalon—the absolute certainty of recognition. I do not wonder at his disappointment with this subject as treated

of by many writers, because they ignore the only proper basis of recognition of friends in heaven, which is the relation of all believers to Christ. When united to Christ, we are also united to one another by a tie which death cannot affect. From this union results communion, and, since the union is eternal, so must be the communion. The Bible asserts that we are not only 'members of Christ,' but also 'members one of another.' But it limits this membership by a condition: 'If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.' Therefore not only union with Christ, but holiness resulting from that union, is the basis of our fellowship. Man must be fitted for the heavenly society in which he is to move, else he would not be able to share in those holy exercises which is their perpetual felicity. Holiness being the basis of our fellowship, since our transference to heaven will render us perfect in holiness, it must also perfect our fellowship; thus shall we enjoy a closeness of intercourse and a sweetness of friendship far above what the best ever enjoy on earth.

“This union with Christ and this communion with his people are connected also with the indwelling of the Spirit in our hearts. One great fruit of that Spirit is love. Heart-unions are the most potent as well as the most lasting. The tie which binds Christians together is not mere natural affection nor animal instinct, but love. What is this love? It is not an emanation from our own nature, but a product of the Holy Spirit implanted at our regeneration: ‘Every one that loveth is born of God.’ That which is of regeneration is eternal; therefore love is eternal. The Bible explicitly declares that ‘charity never faileth.’ But love and knowledge are inseparable, for we must know a person to love him, and must love a person to delight in knowing him. The merely animal emotion which some call love, or the sentimental affection which is often dignified by that title, must perish, for each is ‘of the earth earthy;’ but that love which is the product of the Spirit, being a divine implantation, can find its full exercise only in heaven.”

“But,” said Mr. Avalon, “may not love

for God so absorb our hearts in heaven as to make us oblivious of other beings?"

"No," answered Mr. Calvert, "for the Bible makes our love to God and our love to man inseparable. The commandment which binds us to love God also binds us to love our neighbor: 'This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.' Therefore, if our love to God will be perfected in heaven, so must be that to our Christian brethren. Hearts which there centre around Christ will not only have a basis of eternal recognition, but of eternal love for each other. Here on earth the warmest love has its varyings, but there, like that of the seraphim, it will burn with unceasing devotion.

"One other thought in this connection we must remember—that the Saviour, through whom we are united to one another, possesses a human as well as a divine nature. That human nature interprets to us the characteristics of that love which binds one child of God to another. Now, I ask you carefully to note one point in Christ's affection—that he had his own particular friends. Among

the chosen twelve there were three whom he admitted to more intimate companionship than the others. Peter, James and John alone were permitted to behold his transfiguration, his agony in the garden and his raising of the daughter of Jairus. Notice, further, that one of these three is singled out by this peculiar title, 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' This remarkable affection for John seems to have continued after Christ passed to heaven, for John was the only apostle permitted 'in the Spirit' to enter heaven and behold its glory. The disciple who leaned his head on Christ's bosom at the Last Supper was the disciple whom, when he met the Saviour again in heaven, is represented as having that Saviour's right hand tenderly laid upon him, and hearing Jesus address him with the affectionate word of peace, 'Fear not.' This shows that not only will our love for our friends be continued, but the special objects of our affection will remain such in the heavenly home."

"You are certainly consistent in your theology," remarked Mr. Avalon, "for I

notice you make everything concerning heaven centre around Christ. I confess, also, that the basis on which you rest recognition is solid and permanent. There is only one objection which occurs to me—namely, that your view of recognition would limit its application to those who are united to Christ.”

“Certainly,” answered Mr. Calvert, “for there will be none in heaven except those united to him. Yet if you will reflect a moment, this basis vastly enlarges our acquaintance with those in heaven; for if our recognition rests on union with Christ and the possession of the Spirit, there is nothing to hinder our recognizing at once all whom we meet in heaven, since all there are thus united. There will be in a true sense ‘an elective affinity’ which will draw us together. I expect to recognize my loved ones, not because of their earthly features—for these must be vastly changed, if not wholly obliterated, in the glorified body—but I shall recognize them because of those lineaments of divine grace which were peculiarly developed in them. This is the

only explanation of the recognition of Moses and Elias by the three disciples of Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. They could not have recognized these ancient worthies from mere recollection: they had never before seen Moses and Elias. But these disciples, being themselves filled with the Spirit and experiencing thus a foretaste of heaven, at once identified these saints by their spiritual characteristics."

"Yet," said Mr. Avalon, "is there not a contradiction of terms in saying that the disciples *recognized* Moses and Elias? for how can a person recognize one he has never before seen?"

"You are perfectly right," answered Mr. Calvert, "if you limit the meaning of the term to its primary meaning, which is simply 'to know again.' But our usage of the term, as you will find by consulting any dictionary, embraces the idea of recalling a person from our knowledge of him. Now, our knowledge of a person does not depend on having seen him before; there are probably persons whom you have known by correspondence, or from the description of

others, whom at your first meeting you at once identified. We have a familiar illustration of this in the many arrests of criminals by detectives: though they never before saw these criminals, still they were able to identify them by the descriptions furnished. I myself think that the term 'recognizing friends' is not the best that can be used; a far better one would be 'knowing our friends' in heaven.

"Indeed, the whole mode of recognition in the other world seems to be different from that in this life. Here we recognize our friends only from external signs; there, by spiritual intuition. This intuition, however, is owing to union with Christ. Whatever, then, may be the changes which the other world effects in the personal appearance of our loved ones, this spiritual intuition will enable us to know them at once. I may incidentally remark that this basis disposes at once of anxiety about not recognizing our children in heaven. That these children must develop there is evident. Now, if our basis of recognition was simply the remembering of their forms and

features, we might conceive it impossible to recognize a child who passed to heaven a quarter of a century before us; but if recognition depends on this intuitive perception and spiritual communion, we can see how at once that child's soul might spring to its mother's as the needle springs to the magnet. What draws that child to the mother is simply the same power which binds that mother's soul to Christ.

"This view removes also the difficulty which Mr. Mills so frankly expresses, yet so naturally experiences. Looking at it candidly, there are some professed Christians on earth with whom we do not now feel like keeping up an eternal acquaintance. According to my theory of recognition, this difficulty is disposed of; for either these persons will not be in heaven, or, if there, will be so perfected in spiritual graces through union with Christ that it will be a joy to hold fellowship with them.

"I have only one remark to make," added Mr. Calvert, "in concluding this part of our conversation—namely, that this is the only basis which satisfies our reason

as well as our faith. Take, for example, the case just cited—of a mother meeting her babe in heaven after the interval of twenty-five years, that babe having all the while developed under the influences of its glorified state, to say nothing of a possible—I do not say probable—growth in its stature. How little prospect is there of that mother recognizing that child again from any past associations with it! Or take another case, which lately occurred in a family of my acquaintance. The wife of a naval officer absent on a three years' cruise gave birth to a child who lived a year and then died. The father never saw that child; how, then, by any associations of earth, could he recognize it in heaven?

“Therefore, if we look this matter fairly in the face, we will see that our hope of knowing our friends in heaven must rest on a better basis than our recollection of them on earth. This truth of the spiritual union of believers in Christ supplies that basis; on it you can meet every possible difficulty through change of appearance or through development. It enlarges, also, vastly, the

circle of our acquaintanceship in heaven. It enables us to know at once the saints of all ages. Indeed, my soul fairly leaps at the prospect of a knowledge so blissful. I sometimes feel that I cannot wait until I come 'to the general assembly of the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven.' Oh what a meeting that will be! Oh what a realization it will be, not only of recognition, but of eternal intimate friendship with 'the spirits of just men made perfect'!"

Mr. George Mills, who had quietly listened to this exposition of Mr. Calvert, here exclaimed,

"I do not know why it is, but, to speak plainly, there is something in me that rises up against the doctrine you have been advancing. Indeed, my antipathy to your views rather increases with each exposition of them. I thought I would come in here to-night and listen just once more, with the hope that you could make them more palatable; I supposed such a beautiful theme as the recognition of friends in heaven could not fail to be attractive. But I will not

conceal it: I fairly hate this whole thing as you put it. Why, where does it leave *me*? I believe that you all are certain of reaching heaven, and I want to meet you again and have a generally good time with you there; but, according to your views, if I should ever slip into heaven without first possessing union with Christ and without having his Spirit in my heart, I would not know a single friend or relative. I used to think myself a pretty good sort of fellow, but really, if this be Christianity and this a correct view of heaven, I do not know where I stand."

A painful silence reigned in the room. Every one was expecting Mr. Calvert to make some reply, but, to their surprise, he went calmly on, as if the interruption had not occurred.

"I have argued this matter," he said, "simply on the basis of our recognition; but if any of you desire to exhaust every argument on this subject, you need but to examine the many passages of Scripture where it is directly or inferentially taught. In speaking of the death of the patriarchs

the Bible uses the term, 'they were gathered to their people.' Jacob, when he supposed Joseph to be dead, says, 'I will go down into the grave *unto my son*, mourning.' David evidently expected to recognize his child when he declared, 'I shall go *to him*, but he shall not return to me.'

"Christ's teachings, also, in the Gospels, are full of expressions which clearly teach this doctrine. He represents those glorified spirits whom his people had befriended on earth as waiting to welcome their former benefactors: 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' The men of Nineveh and the queen of Sheba will be known as such after death, for as such they will rise in judgment against the generation Christ addressed. The transfiguration scene was to the disciples a foretaste of the Church glorified, yet here, evidently, Moses and Elias knew each other, and the disciples knew Moses and Elias. Christ told his disciples that 'in the regeneration' they should 'sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve

tribes of Israel ;' observe that the distinctive nationality of the Jews must be preserved to have such a promise fulfilled. Indeed, the preservation of individuality is inseparably connected with the truth that 'every one of us should give an account of himself to God.' Again, Christ's representations of heaven exalt the idea of its social feature. He portrays the redeemed as 'sitting down together with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets,' in the kingdom of heaven, 'and eating and drinking at his table in his kingdom.' This is held out as an inducement to press heavenward, but what inducement would it be to sit down at Christ's table with these saints as unknown strangers?

"The apostles taught the same doctrine. Paul frequently expressed the joy which he anticipated in meeting his converts in heaven and recognizing them as such. He writes to the Thessalonians, 'For what is our hope or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?' In another place he represents this recognition as mutual: 'Ye have acknowledged that we are your

rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

"In the Apocalypse the principle of identification of persons in heaven is wonderfully brought out. The martyrs are known as martyrs still. We hear names so familiar to us as those of 'prophets, saints, elders.' Christ makes himself known to John as his beloved Saviour. The guide who shows John through the heavenly courts identifies himself as 'thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren.' John talks with the elders as elders. Indeed, the whole description of heaven depicts the apostle as recognizing at once the individuality of those whom he sees or else having them pointed out to him in their individual character by his celestial guide.

"I have selected these passages," concluded Mr. Calvert, "not because they exhaust the subject, but because they show what a cloud of witnesses testify concerning the doctrine of recognition of friends in heaven."

During this talk Mr. Avalon had never once taken his eyes from Mr. Calvert. When the latter ceased, Mr. Avalon said,

“Now I feel sure that I shall recognize my loved ones in heaven.” Then, turning to speak to Mrs. Hallowell, he found her place vacant. “Where is Mrs. Hallowell?” he asked of Clara, who had also been listening attentively to Mr. Calvert.

“I do not know,” she answered; “she must have quietly left the room during our conversation. Perhaps she is ill; I will go and find out.”

CHAPTER XV.

RECOGNITION: ITS RELATIONS TO SOULS NOT SAVED.

CLARA appeared at Mr. Calvert's door next morning with an urgent request from Mrs. Hallowell that he should immediately visit her. On reaching her cottage he found that lady in great excitement of mind ; her eyes were inflamed with weeping, her usually pale face was flushed, and her whole mien betokened a great mental struggle. Several times Mrs. Hallowell attempted to speak, but found it difficult to express her feelings.

Mr. Calvert at once took in the situation. Turning to look at a picture that hung on the wall, he waited until Mrs. Hallowell had somewhat regained her composure, and then pleasantly remarked,

“ Mrs. Hallowell, you must have been

thinking of me while I was thinking of you, for I was about to come to bring you this book ;” and he handed her a beautifully-bound copy of Baxter’s *Saint’s Rest*.

Mrs. Hallowell glanced at the title, and, handing it back to Mr. Calvert, exclaimed,

“‘Saints’ rest’! Yes, that is all your narrow theology grants; when you find a book on *sinner’s* rest, I will be glad of a copy.”

Mr. Calvert took from his pocket a New Testament, and handed it to her opened at the passage, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

“Ah! ah! I have read that a hundred times, and I thought I had found rest,” said Mrs. Hallowell; then came a burst of sobs. After a long pause she resumed in a rather more subdued tone: “I have—yes, God knows it, I have—been trying to become a Christian; have prayed, yea, agonized in prayer. I had hoped that my past sins were pardoned and that I was accepted in Christ—yea, that I would yet meet my beloved husband in heaven; but your conver-

sation last night seemed to dash this last hope to the ground."

"Why so, Mrs. Hallowell?" inquired Mr. Calvert.

"Because, according to your doctrine, the only hope of recognizing our friends in heaven is their being united to Christ, which, if I understand your meaning of that phrase, is the same as saying they must be Christians."

"Certainly," answered Mr. Calvert.

"Well, what hope have I, then, of ever recognizing my husband in heaven, when he was not a Christian?"

Mr. Calvert paused before answering the question. He could easily have met it by the reply, "If he was not a Christian, how can you expect him to be in heaven?" but his aim in all his conversation with Mrs. Hallowell had been the salvation of her own soul. He had formed a high estimate of her character. Through his conversations with her, and indirectly through his counsels to Clara, he had for months been guiding her soul in its search after light. He had been delighted to mark the progress

she had made. "Now," thought he to himself, "is it wise to run the risk of arresting her progress toward heaven by raising a barrier which is connected with a question that time itself will resolve? Is what Mrs. Hallowell believes concerning the recognition of her husband in heaven as important as the recognition by her of Christ as her Saviour? How hard, too, it seems to lay the burden even of a true doctrine on this 'bruised reed,' or 'to quench' with even an important truth this 'smoking flax'!"

But another series of thoughts came into Mr. Calvert's mind. He said to himself, "Is there ever any comfort except what is associated with truth? The true surgeon does not hesitate to plunge the knife into the festering sore, though for the time it only increases the patient's pain, because he knows it will eventually save a life. Besides, if I once grant that a soul could enter heaven unregenerated without being united to Christ, how can I urge on Mrs. Hallowell the importance of these essentials for her own salvation? I must—I will—be faithful, and trust God for the result. He can take care

of the effects of his truth; my duty is to adhere to it and simply leave the rest with him."

Mr. Calvert was so lost in these ponderings that a long interval elapsed, and Mrs. Hallowell, noticing his silence, said apologetically,

"I am afraid I have affronted you by my plainness of speech."

"Not at all," answered Mr. Calvert. "I am glad that you have expressed your feelings so plainly, because it makes me feel free to be equally plain with you. Mrs. Hallowell, permit me to ask you this question: Why do you think what I said last night reflected on your husband? Have you ever told me anything about his religious history?"

"No," she answered.

"Then I certainly could not have known that what I said had any relation to him."

"No," she answered, but with apparent reluctance.

"Then this anxiety must have come from your own application of the subject to what you consider to have been his religious condition. It is, therefore, not for me, but for

you, to explain why this doctrine interferes with your hope of meeting him again."

Mrs. Hallowell replied,

"I fear that my husband knew nothing of this doctrine of union with Christ."

"That may all be," said Mr. Calvert, "and yet your husband be this day in heaven; for it is not the theoretical, but the experimental, knowledge of this doctrine which determines the salvation of a soul. If your husband exercised faith in Christ and repentance of sin, he was united to Christ."

"I am afraid he did not do even this," answered Mrs. Hallowell. "We were both young and entirely engrossed with this world; neither of us ever prayed or read the Bible—or, indeed, took any interest in religion: we lived entirely for this world, and made no provision for the next. Oh what a sinner I was, not to think of these things for my husband's sake! Why did I not set him a better example and try to have him ready for death? When he died, he was in such agony of body that he could not fasten his mind on Christ nor offer one cry for mercy."

Mr. Calvert saw it was useless to try to hold out hope in face of these facts. After a pause he said,

“Mrs. Hallowell, this is a subject neither you nor I can afford to discuss as a mere discussion. The question you have to look at now is your own salvation. The past is past, and cannot now be altered as regards your husband. Neither you nor I can be his judge; God alone is. He is as merciful as he is just, and as just as he is merciful. You can leave your husband in his hands, and say, with Abraham of old, ‘Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?’ But I ask you to think carefully of this point: If he is not regenerated, would it add to his happiness to be in heaven? Would not the employments, and even the delights, of heaven be repugnant to him? There must be a correspondence between our tastes and their objects to afford happiness. I verily believe that there is an element of mercy in God’s not permitting the unrenewed heart to enter heaven. A man who never had delight in praising God would find increased torment in being where God’s praise un-

ceasingly wells up; a man whose affections were wholly earthly would be in continual misery to be held in scenes which are wholly spiritual. You may now feel as if heaven could not be heaven to you without your husband, but remember that it could not be heaven to you if he were there without any sympathy with the aspirations of your own heart. It would but tantalize you to see him there, yet unable to join in the song of redemption in which you join, or to enjoy serving God day and night in his temple, as you will do, or to feel entranced at the sight of Christ, as you will in heaven. What made you love him so much on earth was the perfect unity of your feelings—you were then both worldly; but if you should enter heaven, having first been born again of the Spirit, and find your husband there not regenerated, there would be a dissimilarity between you and him which would perpetually mar your intercourse. Now, remember, in all that I am saying I am simply assuming your own estimate of your husband's relation to Christ. I, as you well know, am in no position to judge of his

religious character, but, assuming what you say of him to be true—that he evinced not the slightest interest in Christ or in his religion—I ask you to face this fact: that it would be more merciful not to force him to be by your side in a state which could not satisfy one taste or desire of his own heart.”

Mrs. Hallowell paused some time before replying, and then said,

“Mr. Calvert, I acknowledge the force of your reasoning; but will it be to me a heaven where sorrow or sighing never enters if I am continually missing there my husband?”

“I will answer your question by another one,” said Mr. Calvert: “Is all your anxiety to be in heaven and your sole idea of its bliss that you may again meet your husband?”

Mrs. Hallowell paused, hesitated, and at last said,

“No; I want to be there to be good and happy.”

“Is that all?”

“Why, yes. What more can a person expect of heaven? What more can even

you, Mr. Calvert, who are certainly a good Christian?"

Mr. Calvert replied,

"I want much more of heaven than that; I need much more. I want, first of all, to go there to be with Christ; I want to join in that song which tells what he has done for me, once a poor lost sinner; I want to see there unfolded the mysteries of his redeeming love and of his providence. I anticipate meeting there that innumerable throng who have the same tastes, and by whose pure society I expect my own soul to be filled with a rapture which the society of even the best Christians on earth cannot afford. I believe that I love my wife as sincerely as you loved your husband; and while one of the blissful prospects of heaven is being with her there, yet it is subservient to the prospect of being with Christ. Indeed, the reason why I anticipate sweet communion with her there is that she can fully share in my heavenly joys."

Mrs. Hallowell looked inquiringly at Mr. Calvert, as if trying to understand his feelings: between him and herself there was an

evident difference which she could not yet comprehend. At last she said,

"Well, Mr. Calvert, I see I must be like you, ever to be submissive to this arrangement."

"No, Mrs. Hallowell, do not say that, for you would find in me a poor example to copy: you must be like Christ."

"How? What do you mean?"

"I mean that when you are able to drink in his Spirit you will be able to say, 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.'"

Mrs. Hallowell sprang to her feet and paced the room; the mental excitement had given her momentary strength. Mr. Calvert saw that there was a fearful struggle going on. As if oblivious of his presence, she gasped out,

"I will not—no, I *will not*—give up the idea of seeing you again, my dear husband! Away with this religion of Christ! Away with this impassable gulf which it makes between me and my husband!" Then, with a sigh, she added, "But somehow I cannot away with it; I wish I only could. Oh, if

I could but believe this life to be an end of my existence! Ah! but that would not help me, for then I surely would not see my husband again. Well, then, I will not believe in recognition at all. Now, that is logical—recognize no one in heaven, and then we shall not miss any one.” Then, walking to Mr. Calvert’s chair and looking him intently in the face, she said, “What do you think of that, Mr. Calvert? Is it not a great deal better just to give up the idea of recognizing any one in heaven? Then we shall never know whether any of our friends have been lost.”

“Well, Mrs. Hallowell, if you choose to adopt that view, then, of course, you will never know whether any of them are saved. All through eternity they may be by your side and yet be, as far as recognition is concerned, perfect strangers to yourself.”

Mrs. Hallowell pressed her hands to her forehead and with streaming eyes and agonized tones exclaimed,

“Oh, Mr. Calvert, why don’t you help me? You see how fearfully my soul is tossed. I do want help.”

“I would do anything in my power,” said Mr. Calvert, “to help you find peace of mind, but I cannot help you with a lie. If you will calmly think of it, Mrs. Hallowell, you will see that according to the Bible the unregenerate cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”

“Then I will give up the Bible.”

“That will not aid you, Mrs. Hallowell; for even reason will still force you to acknowledge that a soul without any taste for the glories of heaven would find it a source of eternal sorrow to be there. One thing I do beg you to consider: Are you willing to lose heaven for yourself even if your husband will not be there? Take the worst possible view of his case: would it make hell any less a place of misery to him to have your company? If any true love for you remains in his heart, would he wish to have your agony added to his own? Even Dives did not desire to have there the company of his five brethren, his only earnest wish and plea being that they might be warned, as he expressed it, ‘lest they also come into this place of torment.’”

Mrs. Hallowell paused a few moments, and broke out again in agonized tones:

“What shall I do! Oh, my poor broken heart! O God, hast thou not afflicted me enough already?” Then, after a few moments of sorrowful meditation, she added, “But I deserve it all. I might have tried to save my husband, but I forgot thee, my Creator and my—shall I say it?—my Redeemer. Yet why do I talk thus? I am not a Christian. I am planning a heaven simply to suit my own earthly desires, even though it violate every principle of God’s justice. If he lets my husband enter there unregenerated, why not, then, every other unregenerated person? Yet I cannot thus give him up for ever. O God, why didst thou let me come into this world? Why didst thou not take me from earth before I met my husband? Ah! but then I might never have reached heaven, for this very sorrow seems to be driving me to Christ. Oh, I am so perplexed! I am in such deep trouble!” Then, turning to Mr. Calvert, “Mr. Calvert, please repeat to me that verse you pointed to—about finding rest in Christ.”

Mr. Calvert was himself so moved that he could hardly control his voice to repeat, “‘Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.’”

When he had finished, Grace Hallowell threw herself at his feet and, looking up pleadingly in his face, said,

“Mr. Calvert, pray for me! Oh, do pray for me! No, let me rather pray for myself; for you could not express my feelings. No one knows them but God and myself. But while I am praying will you not ask God to look in mercy on the cries of a poor heart-broken sinner?”

Mrs. Hallowell knelt down by a chair, at a little distance from Mr. Calvert; he also knelt down and prayed fervently for her. He could hear her smothered sobs, and occasionally some earnest, tearful ejaculation. His own heart was deeply agitated by sympathy for her, but he knew she was talking to One who had not only tender sympathy with her, but power to help and comfort.

Gradually, Mrs. Hallowell became calmer. At last she rose from her knees, her face wearing a tranquil, peaceful expression. Gently taking Mr. Calvert by the hand, she said,

“My dear friend, I thank you for your fidelity; I believe, under the blessing of God, it has saved my soul. I humbly hope that I have found pardon and peace in believing on Christ. At the foot of his cross have been rolled off not only the sins of my soul, but the burdens of my heart. But keep on praying for me, my friend. I am yet only a poor weak child, but Jesus has hold of my hand, and he must—and, I believe, will—guide me to heaven. The cup has not passed away, but I can now say, ‘Thy will, not mine, be done.’”

CHAPTER XVI.

ONE OF THE WATCHERS BECOMES SENTIMENTAL.

AFTER this conversation with Mr. Calvert, Mrs. Hallowell appeared very much changed. The expression of anxiety which had often attracted the notice of her friends disappeared from her face; a sweet serenity seemed to pervade her mind, and a gentleness of spirit quite different from her former self-assertion was apparent to all. One day, while sitting on the porch with her Bible in her hand, she turned to Mr. Calvert and said,

“I have been reading about that meeting of Christ’s disciples on the evening of his resurrection, when he came and stood in their midst and said, ‘Peace be unto you.’ I feel as if he had also entered into my heart and breathed his peace into my very soul. Sometimes my past life rises up before me, and my sins appear so great that I am

tempted to despair ; but I turn to that precious declaration, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,' and I find peace in believing. Oh how comforting it is to rest upon Christ ! And then the sense of his presence ! how sweet it is ! I wonder how I could have trodden my lonely path so long without him, when I might have had his arm to lean upon and his voice to comfort. But I have all this now, and can humbly say, 'I will fear no evil : for thou art with me.' "

"I declare, Mrs. Hallowell looks more like an angel than like a human being," once remarked George Mills to Mr. Avalon. "Notice that expression of perfect repose which rests on her countenance. I sometimes fear she will not be with us much longer. It seems to me as if the heavenly gates were opening to receive her and the light streaming through were casting its radiance on her beautiful face."

Somehow, these expressions of admiration jarred on Mr. Avalon ; indeed, for some time he was growing suspicious of the relations existing between Mr. Mills and Mrs. Hallowell. There was not sufficient difference

of age between them to remove all danger of sentiment. When Mr. Avalon arranged to spend the summer at Saratoga, he had not taken any one into consideration besides Clara and Mrs. Hollowell; indeed, the whole thing had been planned by Clara, whose love for Mrs. Hollowell had so strengthened that they were becoming inseparable. It was very much to Mr. Avalon's surprise, then, when George Mills appeared on the scene. Still more was he surprised when George frankly declared that one reason for his coming was that he could not stay away from Mrs. Hollowell. The latter merely smiled and replied with the utmost coolness,

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Mills; I have been thinking of you every day."

Mr. Avalon's suspicions were increased when on the day after Mr. Mills's arrival that gentleman drove up to the door with an easy carriage and a span of gentle horses, which he said he had brought up from New York for Mrs. Hollowell's use. Every day he appeared at her cottage with his stylish turnout, and a pang of jealousy shot through

Mr. Avalon's heart as he saw George tenderly lift her into the carriage and carefully enfold her in her wraps. Nor was this lessened by the beautiful flowers which were every day brought to Mrs. Hallowell's cottage by Mr. Mills's footman. One effect, however, of this was that Mr. Avalon always gave his consent to Clara's accompanying them on their drives. "It will at least," he said, "make things appear better to the public." Besides, Mr. Mills insisted that he could not be left alone with Mrs. Hallowell, as she might have a sinking spell, and he whispered confidentially to Mr. Avalon,

"You know that in that case she would require the presence of a lady. If it were not so, I would insist, Mr. Avalon, on your taking your daughter's place."

What still further increased Mr. Avalon's suspicion was that he frequently found Mr. Mills and Mrs. Hallowell in earnest conversation. Once Mr. Mills seemed to be urging a point, but Mrs. Hallowell replied,

"You had better take my advice and wait a while. Time may work some changes in your favor."

But Clara and Mr. Mills were a still deeper puzzle to Mr. Avalon. Clara seemed deeply interested in Mr. Mills's conversion—indeed, most skillfully planned everything to keep him beneath the influence of Mr. Calvert's conversations—but there she drew the line. If George asked her to ride with him alone, she had always some convenient excuse—never, however, when Mrs. Hallowell was also invited. Once, George sent Clara an exquisite bunch of cut flowers. Her father saw her meet him on his next call at their cottage, and heard her say,

“Thanks for the flowers, Mr. Mills. Knowing your kind interest in the poor, I sent them to one who is a bedridden invalid. It must please you to know they are brightening her sick-room.”

George bit his lip, and turned away without making any reply.

Mr. Calvert had changed very much in his opinion of George Mills. He once remarked to Mr. Avalon,

“If Mr. Mills is ever converted, he will make a noble, earnest Christian.”

“Edward,” replied Mr. Avalon, “do you

not think that George Mills is very much interested in Mrs. Hallowell?"

"Why? Do you think so?" rejoined Mr. Calvert.

"Certainly," said Mr. Avalon; "you yourself cannot but notice the attention he is paying her."

To Mr. Avalon's surprise, Mr. Calvert broke out into a hearty laugh and said,

"Why, Henry, I am astonished at your blindness. I guess, however, the scales will fall from your eyes some day."

Mr. Avalon answered rather testily,

"I am not so blind as you think, for I see as clearly as possible that they are desperately in love with each other."

"Well," said Mr. Calvert, with the same provoking laughter, "I hope it will end as I believe it will—by making them love Christ more;" and he added with a significant look, "Also one of Christ's children."

"That was a very strange remark of Edward's," said Mr. Avalon to himself as he sat pondering it some time after. "Could he have meant *me* by 'one of Christ's children'?"

Mrs. Hallowell, however, had done nothing to give Mr. Avalon the impression that she regarded him with anything more than friendly esteem. She seemed to take pains to show her respect for him; but whenever he became rather demonstrative in his attentions, she managed with rare tact to let him know that his attentions were not agreeable. At last Mr. Avalon took the hint, and their relations became cordial without being sentimental. Still, Mr. Avalon could not but feel some pangs of a feeling closely allied to jealousy when he thought he saw Mr. Mills admitted to relations more confidential than were granted to himself.

There was an entirely different view of the situation taken by Mrs. Hallowell. She was indeed George's confidante, and fully responded to what she knew was the great desire of his heart. One day, when alone with Clara, she said,

"Clara, you have been very kind to me, and have allowed me to speak to you freely on almost every point; but there is one matter about which I hesitate to speak to you, because it wholly concerns yourself, and it

is one with which the stranger has no right to intermeddle."

Clara started, looked up with a half-anxious air, then blushed. Mrs. Hallowell, drawing her gently to her side, said,

"Clara, may I go on?"

"Why, yes, Grace, but—" And then she paused.

"But what?"

"Is it about Mr. Mills?"

"Yes, my dear child, it is about Mr. Mills;" then, as Clara said nothing, she proceeded: "You must see how much he loves you. I do, and I know Mr. Calvert does; but I feel guilty about one thing: I verily believe your father thinks it is myself he loves. You know it is not, and I am afraid I am helping to deceive your father. Now, Clara, I know that Mr. Mills is perfectly miserable. He has urged me several times to speak to you, but I told him plainly that I could not see anything in your conduct to give him encouragement; yet I confess that I believe George Mills to be a man worthy of any woman's love. He often has said to me that you are the only

woman he has ever loved, and I feel that at least his state of feeling should be known to you, though I am perhaps unwise in bringing it before you just now."

Clara threw her arms around Mrs. Hallowell's neck, and, leaning her head on her friend's bosom, wept like a child.

"Why, what is the matter?" said Mrs. Hallowell, anxiously.

"Nothing," responded Clara.

"Ah, yes! there's something under all this. Now, speak to me, my dear Clara, as freely as I have spoken to you."

"Well, Grace, I can in one sentence say all I need to say, and please, after this, never mention this subject to me again. I shall never marry a man who is not a Christian."

That evening George called with a beautiful bouquet of flowers for Mrs. Hallowell. As he handed it to her he whispered,

"Did you ask her about that?"

"Yes, and I find I was right when I advised you to wait a while."

But George was not satisfied; he inwardly blamed Mrs. Hallowell for lack of sufficient interest. "I am determined," he

said to himself, "to try it; for if there is no hope for me now, why have I cause to expect any in the future? But what shall I say? How shall I begin? If this were a matter of business, I could settle it in a moment, but— Well, suppose I tell her right out, 'Clara, I love you;' but suppose she should say, 'Mr. Mills, I do not love you.' Well, that would end it, any way. Still, somehow, I don't want it ended. I guess Mrs. Hallowell was right. I will wait a little longer."

But George soon broke this wise resolution. He received a letter from his father asking him to return to New York, as there were signs of a panic in the stock-market. George felt he could not return with his mind in such an unsettled condition; he sat a long time pondering the situation. At last, as if a bright thought had struck him, he jumped to his feet exclaiming,

"Yes, that will do; I will try it."

The next afternoon, to the surprise of the Avalons, Mr. Mills drove up to their cottage with a new single-seated carriage. He inquired for Clara, and, passing beyond the

company seated on the porch, strolled into the parlor, then to a balcony looking out upon the side lawn. Clara soon appeared. George, after the usual greetings, said,

“Miss Avalon, I have a favor to ask of you. I have found a passage in the Bible on which I need light. Will you take a short drive with me and explain it to me?”

Clara hesitated and replied,

“Mr. Mills, why not wait until to-morrow, when our next talk about heaven occurs? We shall then have Mr. Calvert’s help in solving your difficulty.”

“Because,” answered George, “I will not be here then.”

“Why, Mr. Mills, what do you mean?” and Clara’s face showed so much regret that hope began to dawn in George’s heart. He answered quickly,

“I have received a letter from my father telling me of a threatened panic in the stock-market; I feel that I owe it to him to be by his side.”

Clara hesitated, but she thought to herself, “This may be the last opportunity to talk with Mr. Mills on the subject of re-

ligion." Her very conscientiousness added its argument to her inclination, and she answered pleasantly,

"Thank you, Mr. Mills, for your kind invitation; I will accompany you in a few moments."

Mr. Mills sauntered back to the porch and said carelessly to Mr. Avalon,

"I have just persuaded your daughter to take a ride with me, as I leave to-morrow, and I wanted to ask her about a passage in the Bible which has puzzled me."

"All right," said Mr. Avalon; "but why do you not also take Mrs. Hallowell?"

"I have already taken her a drive this morning," answered George, "and her strength would not, I fear, be equal to another one."

Clara then appeared, and the young couple drove off together.

Many were the envious eyes which greeted Clara as she drove off in the stylish equipage, for the advent of George Mills had created quite a flutter among the Saratoga belles: the handsome son of a rich banker in New York whose family was known to

move in the best circles of society was regarded as a great prize in the matrimonial market. Many had been the innuendoes thrust at him for his attentions to the fair widow, and many the suggestions from his lady-friends at the hotels that they wished they were invalids; but George proved painfully oblivious both to innuendoes and to hints. Now, to make his appearance on the public drive with a beautiful girl whose face was the picture of health, and who had kept herself in such seclusion that her very presence was unknown, set all his female acquaintances in a flutter. "Who can she be?" was the general inquiry.

Clara, perfectly unconscious of the sensation she was causing, rode quietly along by George's side. The drive extended to Saratoga Lake, and then, leaving the usual route home, George drove through the quiet country. He had exerted himself so much to be entertaining—and he had great capacities in that line when fairly aroused—that Clara forgot the professed object of their drive. Suddenly recollecting it and blaming herself for having overlooked Mr. Mills's

spiritual interests in her pleasant chat on other subjects, she turned to him and said,

“What is that Bible point you wanted to ask me about?”

Somehow, her simple query threw George off his equilibrium. He gave his horses a stroke of the whip; they started at a rapid speed, and his efforts to quiet them gave him the opportunity to calm himself sufficiently to reply,

“I was reading in the Bible this morning that in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God.”

“What did you find to puzzle you in that passage?” innocently asked Clara.

“Well, I was thinking that this verse seemed to be an argument against the marriage relation, for heaven, which is held up to us as a state of perfect holiness, has no provision for marriage. Indeed, I have heard that this is one of the arguments of the Romanists in favor of celibacy.”

“I wonder that you should draw such an inference from that verse,” said Clara; “for if you will reflect, the same kind of reason-

ing would prove that we ought not to eat our meals, for in heaven 'they neither hunger nor thirst.'"

George felt encouraged to proceed, as he had at least opened a conversation on marriage. With, however, some prickings of conscience, he went on :

"I am glad you have so satisfactorily relieved my difficulty on this point, because it is a matter of some importance to me, since I have met here a lady with whom, to tell the truth, I am desperately in love."

Clara inferred from the words he had used and from his tone that George referred to some one he had met in Saratoga for the first time. Surprised as she was by this frank confession of George's, she was more surprised by detecting a feeling of anxiety springing up in her own heart—one that she was loth to acknowledge. But she quickly answered,

"It is, of course, to be hoped, Mr. Mills, that the lady fully reciprocates your feeling."

George replied,

"That is the very point of my difficulty. I am so little versed in these matters that I

do not know how to find this out. You have been so kind in aiding me about heaven that I thought you would allow me to ask your advice on this matter of earth."

George was astonished at himself, that he had been able to get this off so glibly; but the fact was, he had committed his remarks to memory, and this was about the only sentence he had succeeded in remembering. He had also succeeded so well in diverting Clara's attention from his ultimate object that she pleasantly replied,

"Well, Mr. Mills, I am a poor one to counsel you on such a subject, but I will do my best if you will state the real situation of affairs."

"Well, then, I will tell you frankly how it stands. This lady has never given me the slightest encouragement. She does not exactly avoid me—indeed, she seems to take much interest in my general welfare; still, I fear she has no special interest in me."

For the first time a suspicion began to dawn on Clara's mind that something was behind all this. George was becoming wonderfully embarrassed; in all their con-

versation he had not once turned to look at her. To her own surprise, Clara found herself equally embarrassed; but soon she replied,

"Mr. Mills, I am afraid this is too important a subject for me to advise you about. Suppose we talk of something else."

George said nothing, but turned and looked into Clara's face. For the first time their eyes met—met as eyes can meet only when one heart is full of love and the other wakes up to the fact how intensely it is loved. For a moment Clara's look unconsciously responded to George's, but then, as if recalling herself, she said,

"Mr. Mills, I have always honored your frankness and believed you incapable of the slightest deception, but have you forgotten the reason you assigned for my taking this drive with you?"

George hung his head like a self-convicted culprit, but, turning again to Clara, said,

"Miss Avalon, I confess it all. You are right: I have for the first time in my life tried to deceive another, and I have miserably failed; and," he added, with a sigh,

“I fear my very deception has placed you farther from me than ever.” Then with a desperate effort he went on: “But I do not deceive you or myself when I say that I love you from the very depths of my heart and if I knew any way by which I could win your affection I would do it. You may have laid at your feet many a heart far better than mine, but I know this: none could love you more sincerely.”

Could any sympathetic girl like Clara have looked into that handsome, manly face and heard those words of sincere affection without being moved? For the first time she herself seemed at a loss what to say. George, seeing in this a ray of hope, eagerly exclaimed,

“Clara, do not banish all hope from my heart! You have been the angel that has already saved me from far more dangers than you ever knew; you have changed my whole life. If you do not love me now, grant me, I beseech you, some time to prove myself worthy of your affection.”

“Mr. Mills,” answered Clara, “you are worthy of any woman’s love. I—I am so

taken by surprise that I can hardly express myself with the care that I should, but this ought to be a sufficient reason why we should not talk any longer on this subject: I could never consent to unite myself with one who is not a professed Christian; and while I still hope that you may become one, yet I think you had better try to forget me, for I would not have the thought of my love in any way connected with your becoming a Christian. If you ever become such, it must be entirely from love to Christ."

George shook his head and mournfully said,

"Clara Avalon, it is as impossible for me to cease loving you as it is impossible for yonder sun to cease to shine."

Clara said nothing, and after a long pause the conversation turned on Mrs. Hallowell.

George looked perfectly dejected as he handed Clara out of the carriage—so much so that Mr. Avalon, who had been sitting on the porch, stepped forward and asked him whether he felt well.

"No!" replied George, decidedly.

CHAPTER XVII.

LOST, THOUGH ONCE IN SIGHT OF THE GATES.

AS Mr. Avalon was retiring for the night a loud knock was heard at the cottage door. On opening it he found a very rough-looking man, who handed him a note written on a dirty piece of paper. It read thus:

“Come to see me. I am dying.

“SAM PATCH.”

“What does this mean?” inquired Mr. Avalon of the bearer.

“Don’t know, boss; that fellow was shot to-day in a drunken fight. Guess he’ll die before long. Seems to want to see you awful bad.”

“Where is he now?”

“In Tim McCarthy’s shanty.”

“Where is that?”

"Out at the edge of the town. I'll show you the way if you'll go along with me."

Mr. Avalon hesitated. Saratoga bears the name of a model village for order, but it was the season of the races, and many suspicious characters had lately been seen loitering around. Fortunately, just at that moment Mr. Avalon recognized the voice of George Mills, who was passing by, and called out,

"Mr. Mills, please step here a moment."

Taking George into the parlor, Mr. Avalon showed him the note.

"Who is this Sam Patch?" asked George.

"A poor worthless vagabond," answered Mr. Avalon, "whom I once prosecuted for larceny, and who got off through an alibi. He so much resembles a certain Phineas Sampson—a man whom I afterward met under suspicious circumstances—that I have always thought they were one and the same person. I cannot imagine what he desires of me, but, as this is the request of a dying man, I feel as if I ought to grant it, though half suspecting that it

may be a plan to decoy me to some vile, dangerous place."

"Mr. Avalon," said George Mills, "if you will accept my company, I will go with you."

"But I don't want to expose you to danger, Mr. Mills."

"Do not let that hinder you a moment," answered George; "I can take care of myself. If there is anything to be done for a dying man, let us do it."

Mr. Avalon felt rebuked at the greater interest and courage shown by his young friend, and said,

"Well, let us, then, go together."

Following their guide for a long distance, they at last brought up at a miserable shanty. After sundry hard and peculiar knocks by their guide they heard some person within drawing away boxes which had been piled against the door; it was then opened just enough to enable a face to peep through. That face haunted Mr. Avalon for years afterward, for it was that of a young woman still bearing some marks of beauty, though sadly marred by vice and dissipation. See-

ing Mr. Avalon and George, she shrank back; but the guide exclaimed in a rough tone,

“What do you mean, Mag? Open the door and let the gemmen in. You know Sam sent for one of them, and t’other has come just to keep him company this dark night.”

Slowly the chain which still held the door was unhooked, and the three entered. The place was full of boxes and trunks, evidently containing stolen goods, serving also as seats and tables for the occupants. On two of these boxes had been piled a lot of blankets and shawls, on which lay a man writhing in agony, which, however, seemed more mental than physical, for it was expressed by cries for mercy intermingled with horrible oaths.

The woman had retreated to a corner, where she crouched down with her face buried in her hands. The guide, taking up a candle, went to the bed and said,

“Sam, here is the gemman you sent for, and you’d better talk to him quick, for you’re about done for, Sam.”

The man slowly and with evident pain turned over on his side. Mr. Avalon saw that it was the veritable Sam Patch. He also noticed that his clothes were bloody, and through his open shirt-bosom was visible a deep gash in his side, from which the blood was trickling.

Sam cast a glance at Mr. Avalon, then covered his face with his hands, then, again piteously gazing up into Mr. Avalon's face, said,

"Yes, Mr. Avalon, here I am at last. This is the end of Sam Patch. I am dying; the doctor says there's no hope." Then, with a countenance in which malignity and fear seemed struggling for supremacy, he cried, "Yes, no hope, for this world or the next!" ending the sentence with a fearful oath.

Mr. Avalon shrank back, but George Mills stepped forward and said in a kind tone,

"Friend, calm yourself a moment. You have sent for Mr. Avalon, and he has shown his interest in you by coming all this distance on this dark night to see you. Now

listen as he talks with you. There may be more hope for you than you suppose. But first let me look at your wound; I think it is beginning to bleed again."

Sam glanced up with a grateful look at George, and lay quietly while the latter tore his shirt farther open, revealing the blood flowing from his side. Taking a handkerchief from his pocket, George thrust it into the gaping wound, and then, having firmly bound a compress on it, called for some stimulant. The woman stole out of the corner and handed him a flask of whisky. Placing it to the sufferer's lips, George gently said,

"Take this, and try to tell Mr. Avalon, as fast as your strength will allow, why you wanted to see him, for your life is fast going, my friend."

"Fast going! fast going! I know it," said the miserable man. "Yes, I will tell it all. Mr. Avalon, I want to clear my conscience. You were right: I did rob that cornfield. The man they thought was me on that Albany boat wasn't me: it was Phineas Sampson; he looks so much like

me that no one can tell us apart. He is my pal; he and I have been carrying on this game for years. I did the stealing; then he always helped me prove an alibi. I broke into Timms's store; he divided with me the booty afterward, and stayed around your village to help throw the detectives off the scent. But this is not all; I have been a greater sinner than all that. I have tried almost every evil game. I was trying to murder a man in a fight when he gave me this wound;" and then, glancing at the woman who had crouched on the other side of his bed, he exclaimed, "Poor Mag! Ah! she is only one of many I have ruined. I threw the others off, but she, poor gal! has clung to me, though I have beaten and abused her many a time."

The miserable woman dropped on her knees by the side of the dying man and said with a tenderness which surprised Mr. Avalon,

"Sam, don't think of me, think of God; try to make your peace with him."

"Yes," said Mr. Avalon, taking Sam kindly by the hand, "try to make your

peace with God. Sam, I am glad that you realize what a sinner you are, for the Bible tells us that repentance is necessary to the forgiveness of our sins. Now, you seem to feel sorry for your sins; therefore I beg you to look to Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, and who never casts off any who come to him in repentance and faith. Remember, the Bible says, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'"

"Stop quoting Scripture to me," said Sam; "it only riles me. I have known that verse for years; I used to repeat it in Sabbath-school. Why, Henry Avalon, I have been a member of the church; yes, I was converted at a revival, and was once a great exhorter." Seeing Mr. Avalon's doubting look, Sam added solemnly, "I am not lying now, though God knows I've lied enough in my lifetime. I tell you I know the Bible as well as you do."

"Sam," said Mr. Avalon, deeply moved, "try to place your eyes on the crucified One. You evidently know the Bible; you

know how the bitten Israelite looked to the serpent and lived, and Christ bids the poor sinner thus to look to him and live."

"Too late! too late!" was the only answer the dying man made.

George Mills leaned down and whispered into Mr. Avalon's ear,

"Oh, is not this dreadful? Cannot you get him to fasten his thoughts on Christ as the Saviour of sinners? Do try again, for he is evidently now in the article of death."

"Samuel," said Mr. Avalon, speaking in soothing tones, "do not feel it is too late. It was when the thief was in the very shadow of death that he cried to Jesus, and Jesus promised that he should be with him that day in Paradise."

Opening his eyes and looking intently into Mr. Avalon's, he said,

"That thief never had the opportunities I have had and have lost. I have been warned, have been invited by that Saviour, many a time. Once I pretended to hear his voice, but I was all the time hearing the voice of Satan luring me on to sin. I do not hear Christ's voice any longer. Oh,

what is that I hear? It is a sort of fiendish laugh like that I have often given when I gloated over my victims. Oh how it pierces to my very soul!"

"Let us pray," said Mr. Avalon; and, falling on his knees, he uttered a fervent prayer for the dying man. While he was praying, to his surprise, he heard George Mills, who was kneeling by his side, repeating over and over the whispered cry, "God be merciful to this man, a sinner! God be merciful to *me*, a sinner!" Rising from his knees, Mr. Avalon once more bent over the dying man, and said, "Samuel, look to Christ. He came into the world to save sinners; his blood cleanses from all sin. It cries to heaven for mercy; oh, plead it!"

Raising himself with a last effort on his elbow and with an awful look of despair, Sam replied,

"That blood only cries against me for vengeance; I have trodden under foot the blood of the Son of God." Then came a long pause, when the dying man again exclaimed, "It is getting dark.—Mag! Mag! Where are you? Take hold of my hand."

The woman sprang forward, crying,

“Sam, I am here by your side.”

Then came a long, painful sigh. They thought it was all over, but the lips began again to move, and the woman, bending over him to catch his last words, heard him murmur,

“I am going—going.”

“Where, Sam?” cried Mr. Mills, who had sprung forward and was also bending over the dying man.

The answer came back with an awful shriek:

“Right straight to hell!”*

The poor wretched woman swooned; the man who had guided them to the house fled as if pursued by devils.

Mr. Avalon and George, having succeeded in bringing the woman out of her swoon, went in search of help; they at last found a man who with the promise of a large sum of money consented to stay in the house until the morning. On the way home

* If any reader thinks this scene exaggerated, the author has only to say that in the year 1864, in the city of Washington, he witnessed an almost similar one, which ended with the dying man's using this very expression.

George stopped at an undertaker's and directed him to go immediately to the shanty and see that the man was decently buried, also to see that the poor woman was sent to her friends, or, if she had none, to some asylum.

"When you have done all this," he added, "send the bill to me, and I will pay it."

Just as they were nearing home George said to Mr. Avalon,

"I must see Mr. Calvert to-night."

"Why, it is very late, Mr. Mills, and I think he has retired. Cannot you see him in the morning?"

"No," answered George; "I leave early in the morning for New York, and I am sure, when Mr. Calvert knows why I want to see him, he will not blame me for waking him up even at this late hour."

On reaching home Mr. Calvert was called and left alone with George in the parlor. What passed between them only they two then knew, but the next morning, after Mr. Avalon had given a vivid account of the awful scene at Patch's death-bed, Mr. Calvert quietly remarked,

“There is at least one ray of hope connected with that scene: it brought Mr. Mills to Christ.”

A few days afterward, while the Avalons and Mrs. Hallowell were seated on the porch of the cottage of the former, they heard the newsboys crying the New York papers and noticed they were eagerly bought.

“There must be some special item of news,” exclaimed Mr. Avalon; and, leaving the ladies, he purchased a *Tribune*. When he returned to the porch and opened the paper, he exclaimed, “Why, there’s an awful panic in Wall street. Ah, yes! here is something about the banking-house of our friends the Millses. Good gracious!” he exclaimed; “it has gone down in the general crash. Ah, yes! here is an item about it;” and he read to the group of eager listeners the following:

“FAILURE OF THE HOUSE OF MILLS & CO.

“We are sorry to have to number among the many large houses swept under by yesterday’s panic that of the above firm. It has sustained a long and honored repu-

tation. We understand that the cause of the failure was the sudden and excessive stringency of the money-market, which rendered it impossible for them to realize on their assets. They immediately called a meeting of their creditors and turned over to them all their property, both real and personal. A great deal of sympathy is felt for the firm; for though it is thought they will be able to pay their creditors dollar for dollar, yet there will be nothing left for themselves."

Clara immediately left the porch and hurried to her room. Mrs. Hallowell also withdrew, and soon sent the following telegram:

"MR. GEORGE MILLS: I have just learned from the papers of your financial disaster. Can I be of any service to you pecuniarily? If so, let me know at once, and feel perfectly free to command

"GRACE HALLOWELL."

The answer came back:

"Thank you, but no. I will write and explain further."

The next morning Mrs. Hallowell received the following letter from Mr. Mills:

“MY DEAR AND TRUE FRIEND: I thank you most sincerely for your proffered help, but I must firmly decline it. Thank God, we shall be able to pay every cent of our indebtedness, and then our firm will be wound up. In the kind providence of God, I have been offered a situation which will enable me to sustain my father and mother in a humble but comfortable home. Edith has a rich aunt who will provide for her. Do not feel worried about me, for I am happier to-day than ever I have been before in all my life. My money is lost, but I hope, before I left Saratoga, my soul was saved. Henceforth my great aim will be to lay up treasures in heaven. Hoping and believing, my dear friend, that you are rejoicing in the same hope, I sign myself

“Yours in Christian bonds,

“GEORGE MILLS.”

Mrs. Hallowell showed the letter to Clara, and said,

"Clara, don't you think you ought to write a note to Mr. Mills expressing at least your sympathy with him under this severe trial?"

"Not now," was all the reply Clara made.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LAST EFFORT OF THE SPIRITUALISTS WITH MRS. HALLOWELL.

A FEW days after the departure of George Mills a gentleman appeared at Mrs. Hallowell's cottage; his card bore the name of "Edgar Thurston, Boston." With his card was handed a letter of introduction from Mrs. Barnell, the lady-friend of Mrs. Hallowell who first led her into Spiritualism. The letter stated that Mr. Thurston was a highly-accomplished gentleman and a particular friend of the writer, that he proposed to spend a week at Saratoga, and that Mrs. Barnell desired him to become acquainted with her dear friend Mrs. Hallowell. The correspondence between these two ladies had lately fallen off; indeed, Mrs. Hallowell had been quietly dropped by her former Spiritualistic friend, but, as she felt indebted to Mrs. Barnell for

sympathy extended in the time of loneliness after Mr. Hallowell's death, she made an effort, though feeling very weak, to meet Mrs. Barnell's friend.

Mr. Thurston answered very well to the description given in the letter of introduction; he was what would be styled in fashionable society a highly-accomplished gentleman. Though evidently a thorough man of the world, he continually emphasized his respect for religion, yet it was with that patronizing air which indicated that Edgar Thurston thought he could help religion more than religion could help him.

Mrs. Hallowell's first words were kind inquiries after Mrs. Barnell. Mr. Thurston answered that "she was well and enjoying the constantly fresh revelations made to her through Spiritualism." Here was a mistake on Mr. Thurston's part; he did not know Mrs. Hallowell, or he would have known that her quick eye read in his answer the purpose of his call.

"Here," thought she, "is a gentleman sent by Mrs. Barnell to convert me back to Spiritualism; may God give me strength to show

him how much better a religion I have found !”

Allowing Mr. Thurston to direct the drift of conversation, she quietly waited until he had turned it on Spiritualism ; this he soon did. Inferring from Mrs. Hallowell’s attention that he had made a favorable impression, he assumed a confidential tone, and remarked,

“You will doubtless agree with me, Mrs. Hallowell, that, after all, there is no revelation so clear and convincing as that afforded by Spiritualism.”

“I beg leave to differ with you,” quietly replied Mrs. Hallowell ; “I think we have a far clearer and better one in the word of God.”

“Why, Mrs. Hallowell !” exclaimed Mr. Thurston, with an air of great surprise. “I understood from Mrs. Barnell that you were a Spiritualist.”

“I was once led into that delusion, but through the mercy of God my eyes have been opened to see its sin and folly,” she replied.

The battle was now drawn, the lines were

formed, and the only question was as to who should make the first onset. Mrs. Hallowell had at least succeeded in bringing the enemy out of cover; Mr. Thurston had nothing to do but advance or retreat. He saw that little was to be gained by a temporary cessation of hostilities; indeed, it would be an acknowledgment that he was not prepared. He, however, thought it best first to resort to a little skirmishing.

"You have referred to the Bible, Mrs. Hallowell," he said; "certainly a lady so well versed as yourself both in Spiritualism and in the Bible must see that Spiritualism is not a foe, but a friend, to the Bible. For example, how much it aids in establishing in the human mind a belief in the immortality of the soul!"

"That was established long before Spiritualism was ever heard of," answered Mrs. Hallowell. "As well read a man as Mr. Thurston must know that the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans all held to this doctrine, and that Spiritualism in its modern form is an American invention and belongs to the present century."

“It is true,” answered Mr. Thurston, “that Americans have the honor of being the first to whom the wonders of Spiritualism were revealed in its present perfection, but the learned Greeks and Romans had much in their beliefs which recognized its main doctrine. Indeed, the idea of intercourse with the dead by and through the living is as old as the race.”

“Not exactly as old as the race,” answered Mrs. Hallowell, “but as old as heathenism. The doctrines and methods of Spiritualism are recognizable in the Delphic oracle, in Pythonism and in that necromancy which the Old Testament classes with idolatry. Egyptian priests and Babylonian and Jewish sorcerers had practiced all the modern tricks of Spiritualism as a trade for ages, and had reduced it to an art. One of your most accepted authors, in commenting on Plato’s *Phædo*, says, ‘Let us translate “Orcus” “intermediate state,” and for “the gods” let us read “advanced spirits,” and we have here substantially an important tenet of modern Spiritualism.’ I infer, Mr. Thurston, from Mrs. Barnell’s letter, that you have traveled

much and are conversant with modern languages?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Thurston, evidently flattered by Mrs. Hallowell's supposition.

"Have you ever met with Jung Stilling's *Theory of the Science of Spirits*?"

"I have heard of it."

"Well, if you read it, you will find that all modern reported manifestations of spirits and their very Spiritualistic feats were far better performed by the magicians, necromancers and sorcerers of the ancient world. As some one has well expressed it, 'in this respect Spiritualism is nothing but a new edition of these old superstitions—or, rather, heathenism in modern and genteel dress.'"

"So you have been reading works against Spiritualism, Mrs. Hallowell? I am afraid you have not studied the arguments on the other side."

"You are mistaken; I have read little about Spiritualism except what is written in its favor. The strongest arguments, outside of the Bible, against it, I have found in the puerile character of its professed revelations, in the lies and juggleries I have myself wit-

nessed at its *séances*, and, above all, in the direct antagonism of its doctrines to those of the Bible.”

“But Spiritualists have a great respect for the Bible,” said Mr. Thurston. “Examine the writings of its acknowledged interpreters, such as Robert Dale Owen and Judge Edmonds, and you will find that they accept the teachings of the Bible.”

“Yes,” answered Mrs. Hallowell, “as many do—with certain reservations. I have carefully studied the writings of both these men, and nothing has impressed me more than their covert attacks on the Bible. Owen in his *Debatable Land* attacks the fundamental doctrine of the Bible—the vicarious atonement rendered by the death of Christ. In the same book he has the presumption coolly to cut out of the New Testament as uninspired portions parts of John’s Gospel and Paul’s Epistles. As for Judge Edmonds, he relates with amusing simplicity ‘that the spirits told him that, finding men were more ready to ask who they were than what they had to say, they assumed such names as they thought would

carry weight with them, in order to make people more ready to receive what they wished to tell them.' This is certainly a view of honesty directly opposed to the view of the Bible on that subject."

"Why, Mrs. Hallowell, I am surprised at your familiarity with the writings of Spiritualists. I see that you have examined the subject, yet there is, to such an intelligent mind as yours, one argument of which you must surely feel the force. See the millions of persons in this intelligent age who believe in Spiritualism; must there not be some truth in a revelation which gains so many adherents?"

"The answer to your last question is very simple. I deny the assertion that there are millions of believers in Spiritualism; it is a noteworthy fact that, while Spiritualistic books make this assertion, there has never been a census which endorses it. But, even granting that it is true, your line of argument would prove that heathenism is worthy of our credence. There are to-day millions of believers in Buddhism and Mohammedanism. If the proof you offer of the truth

of Spiritualism is the number of its adherents, then you must excuse me from becoming a Spiritualist ; I have on this ground a stronger argument for becoming a Buddhist or a Mohammedan."

"But, Mrs. Hallowell, you seem to have changed in your opinion of Spiritualism ; you certainly were once persuaded of its truth, and were, I understand, quite an active advocate of its doctrines."

"Yes, I am ashamed to say that is so ; but I witnessed one *séance* which awoke me to investigating the whole subject, and I find Spiritualism to be one of the grossest deceptions."

"But, Mrs. Hallowell, you know there are hypocrites and deceivers in all religions ; you must not condemn Spiritualism because you have witnessed in one *séance* the doings of impostors."

"I do not depend on my own experience," she answered, "but have talked with many others who have had similar experiences. Why, Mr. Thurston, you have only to read the newspapers to find almost daily records of similar exposures. Yea, even if it be

impossible to look behind these *séances*, the testimony of God, 'who brings hidden things to light,' is a sufficient warning against the deception and sin of those who profess to bring the living in contact with the spirits of the departed."

"Will you please prove that assertion?" said Mr. Thurston, glad to have the opportunity of throwing the burden of proof on Mrs. Hallowell.

Mrs. Hallowell took her Bible from the centre-table, and remarked,

"Since you have asked for Bible proof, I trust you will listen patiently while I read the following passages. In Deuteronomy xviii. 10-12 we read: 'There shall not be found among you any one that . . . useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee.' Isaiah viii. 19 says: 'When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that

have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?" This latter phrase explicitly states the abhorrence God has of the living seeking information from the dead. In the enumeration of the sins of Manasseh in 2 Kings xxi. 5, 6 it is stated that he built altars for all the host of heaven, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards. Again, in 2 Kings xxiii. 24 we are told in praise of Josiah that he put away familiar spirits and wizards and images and idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land. In Isaiah xix. 3 we find the same classification of those who 'seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.' In Leviticus these same sins are classed together and forbidden, with the reason appended, 'for I am the Lord your God.'"

Mr. Thurston's line of battle rather wavered under this volley of scriptural proofs. He, however, tried to reform his scattered ranks and make another onset.

"Mrs. Hallowell," he said, "there is one Bible passage you have not quoted which certainly shows that departed spirits appear at the request of men: I refer to Samuel's reappearance at the beck of the witch of Endor."

"Whether Samuel really appeared then is a point much disputed," replied Mrs. Hallowell, "and therefore I did not quote this as one of my Bible proofs. But if you wish to assume this as an instance of a Spiritualistic *séance*, then I beg you to remember that all it did for Saul was to seal his doom and hasten his death."

"Oh no," answered Mr. Thurston, rather triumphantly; "the Bible asserts that the cause of Saul's death was his disobedience to God."

"Yes," quietly answered Mrs. Hallowell, "and the Bible states, as one element in that disobedience, this very attempt of Saul to hold intercourse with the dead." Turning to the tenth chapter of the first book of Chronicles, she read as follows: "'So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the

word of the Lord, which he kept not, *and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it.*'”

“Mrs. Hallowell,” said Mr. Thurston, with a polite bow, “is so much better versed in the Bible than myself that I acknowledge my inability to cope with her on that ground. But—I appeal to her own experience—dare you assert that since becoming a Christian you have not felt the necessity of communing with your loved ones in another world?”

Mrs. Hallowell felt wounded that he should assume to speak of a subject which he must know would cause her pain, but, with characteristic dignity, she replied,

“Mr. Thurston, I might properly ask you to spare my discussing a point which pertains so entirely to myself. But, lest you should infer from my silence that I am not able to render an answer, I will say that never since I found Christ as a Saviour have I felt the necessity of communing with my departed ones. Now you have opened this subject, let me say to you plainly, Mr. Thurston, that my experience with the religion of Christ is

that it alone affords true intercourse with the departed. This it does by preparing us here, not for the unsatisfying and deceptive glimpses of Spiritualistic revelations, but by making us ready for an eternal fellowship with the redeemed in heaven. The presence I now need to comfort me is not that of my departed friends, but that of my precious Saviour. He can do for me what no spirit in heaven, however pure and lovely, can do, for he can cleanse me from my sin, strengthen me to bear my trials and prepare me for duty on earth and for eternal felicity in heaven." Then, fixing her eyes, full of earnestness, on Mr. Thurston, she said, "I beseech you, Mr. Thurston, to throw away Spiritualism and turn and cling to Christ. You will find in him, as I have found, the only rest for your soul's inquiries."

Mr. Thurston seemed moved, especially as he saw he was talking with one who was not herself far from the other world. He merely replied,

"Mrs. Hallowell, I acknowledge that you have placed this matter in rather a new light—at least, to my own mind. I notice

that I have already trespassed too much on your strength ; permit me to bid you adieu."

"Stop," said Mrs. Hallowell; "stop just one moment more: I have a message to you which I believe God in his providence has arranged that I should deliver. Mr. Thurston, beware lest you grieve the Spirit of God and cause him to leave you for ever."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Hallowell?"

"I mean simply this—that, since the only agent who is known to man as the revealer of God is the Holy Spirit, when we attempt to use any other means of communication we are encroaching on his prerogative. You have probably read the Bible enough to know that awful warning of Christ: 'Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.' Now, I beseech you, as having an immortal soul to be either saved or lost, to consider carefully whether in attempting to usurp the prerogatives of the Holy Spirit you may not make yourself liable to this anathema of Christ."

CHAPTER XIX.

CEMENTING OF SOME EARTHLY LOVES.

THE time was drawing nigh for the departure of the Avalons from Saratoga. One question caused them great perplexity: "What was to become of Mrs. Hallowell?" That lady had ample means to command the attention of those who serve for pay, but, excepting the Avalons, was peculiarly bereft of those who minister from affection. She had no near relatives, and her Spiritualistic friends had quietly dropped her after hearing of her conversion.

Clara was perfectly convinced of Mrs. Hallowell's preparation for heaven, but this did not relieve the anxiety about her remaining time on earth. One day, drawing her father aside, she said,

"Father, I cannot stand this any longer. Mrs. Hallowell is evidently going so fast that I have serious fears lest she should not have

sufficient strength ever to leave Saratoga. Something must be done at once; would you consent to my inviting her to return with us directly to our own home?"

"Certainly," answered her father; "and I will go with you to invite her."

"I think you had better let me see her first alone," said Clara.

"Well, just as you think best, my daughter; only so that you induce her to consent."

That day Clara carefully watched her opportunity for a time when Mrs. Hallowell was strong enough to converse. Drawing her chair to the side of her friend's couch, she said,

"Grace, it is a little singular that in all our talks together we have never talked about our plans after leaving this place. Now, before I hear your plans, I want to tell you what mine are." Then, seeing that Mrs. Hallowell was about to speak, she added, "Please, now, keep quiet till you hear me through, for you know that I am your doctor, and a patient must always obey the physician. You are to go directly home with me and occupy the same room in which we be-

came so well acquainted, and you are to stay there until I, your physician, say you may leave."

"Dear child," said Mrs. Hallowell, patting Clara affectionately on the cheek, "how kind and thoughtful you always are! I thank God that I ever was brought under your roof and nursed by you. But, Clara, since I have listened patiently to your plan, do not interrupt me until I have told you mine. I do not want to be separated from you, and have been planning for some time how I could be near you during the few days that remain to me on earth; I have therefore arranged to return with you, but not to become an inmate of your house."

"But, Grace dear, there is absolutely no place in our little village where you can stay; there is no hotel nor any desirable private boarding-house."

"But there is the Mills mansion," answered Mrs. Hallowell.

"'The Mills mansion'!" exclaimed Clara. "Why, Grace, have you forgotten Mr. Mills's failure, and that the house, with all the furniture, was sold at auction?"

"I ought to remember," quietly answered Mrs. Hallowell, "for I had Mr. Calvert buy both furniture and house for myself."

Clara sprang to her feet and exclaimed,

"Why, Grace, you own the Mills mansion?"

"Yes, my dear child; and, though I do not own the servants, they are there to-day, and the house is all ready for my arrival. If you will only promise to go there and stay with me a few weeks, I shall be ready to start to-morrow."

Clara sat and pondered as one entirely stunned, then said,

"Grace, give me time to think a moment; I am so overwhelmed with astonishment that I don't know what to say or do."

After a few moments Clara continued:

"Grace, let me first go and advise with my father, and then I will give you a definite answer."

"Wait a moment," said Mrs. Hallowell; "I have a message for you to carry to him, and, Clara, I trust you with it, depending on your giving it just as I word it. Say to your father this: 'Mrs. Hallowell depends

on Mr. Avalon now to redeem a solemn promise he once made in the presence of two witnesses. That promise was that if I consented to go to his house he would allow me to remunerate him for his kind hospitality. He must remember that the mode of remuneration was left open; I, as the stipulator, have a right to determine this point. Now, I ask that he shall in return come and stay under my roof as long as I remained under his.' If your father hesitates—which I do not think he can do, since he is a man with the strictest regard for his word—then add this, 'That Grace Hallowell believes she is very near her end, and makes this as her last request of Mr. Avalon.' Clara, promise me solemnly that you will convey my message just as I have worded it."

The next day witnessed the departure of the Avalons, together with Mrs. Hallowell, from Saratoga, and the day following the arrival of the whole party at the former mansion of the Millses. To the Avalons' surprise, Mr. Calvert was there with their own family-servants; even Nero was there to give a welcome bark to his master and mistress.

Clara, on being shown to her room, saw it fitted up as an almost exact counterpart of the one in her own home. Mr. Avalon found the same with the one assigned to him; there was also an elegant library-room allotted to him, fitted up with every convenience for his legal pursuits.

The person who seemed most to enjoy the surprise of the Avalons was Mr. Calvert. Mr. Avalon, assuming a serious air, said,

“Edward, it is the first time I ever found you an accomplice in a deception.”

“That may be,” answered Mr. Calvert, laughingly, “for it is the first time I ever acted on the principle that the end justifies the means.’”

Mrs. Hallowell, calling Clara to her bedside, handed her the keys of the house and said with an assumed air of authority,

“Miss Avalon, I hereby appoint you for the present the mistress of this mansion; the servants understand that they are implicitly to obey your orders. There is only one request I make, which is that you allow no visitors to see me except Dr. Holland, Dr. Goodwin and a particular friend of

mine. Bend over a moment, and I will give you his name."

Strange, was it not, how deeply Clara blushed when that name was whispered in her ear?

That friend appeared the next morning, and every one noticed a wonderful change in George Mills. There was the same frank, outspoken manner, but he was wonderfully softened; his face was as cheerful as ever. The most noticeable change, however, was in his conversation; it seemed strange to hear George, who formerly talked about nothing but stocks, now talking on religious matters. Still stranger it seemed when on the next morning, at family worship, Mr. Calvert handed George the Bible and asked him to lead the devotions.

To Mrs. Hallowell, George devoted himself with kind attention. He read to her from her Bible, prayed with her and fanned her fevered brow. Being so much with Mrs. Hallowell necessarily threw him in continual contact with Clara. Still, while he treated Clara with the utmost politeness, he seemed to set a limit to his

attention beyond which he never passed. He never spoke of Saratoga except in the most casual way. Once he remarked,

"I never really admired Saratoga, and I hope it is numbered with my forgotten past—except the good I received there from that awful scene at Patch's death-bed."

Clara felt a little hurt that in the good received at Saratoga George had not even once hinted at her own efforts, which she felt had been directed to his highest good.

Things went on in this way for about two weeks, when George was again summoned away. The first Clara knew of it was through Mrs. Hallowell. "Strange," thought she, "that Mr. Mills should not have had the politeness at least to mention it to me, as I have been with him daily in Mrs. Hallowell's sick-room."

The next morning Clara happened to be alone in the parlor; George came in and said,

"I expect to leave here this morning."

"Yes, Mr. Mills," answered Clara, with rather an air of indifference; "I so understood from Mrs. Hallowell."

George evidently felt her indifference, and seemed to hesitate what to add. He turned and walked to the window, and while looking out soliloquized thus: "So she doesn't care whether I go or stay! What does this mean? Why this change in Clara's conduct toward me? Perhaps she wants to give me the hint that I must cease my attentions. I have been careful to avoid acting the lover during my stay here; still, if she really loved me, would she treat me so coldly?"

Clara, who apparently had been busying herself with a book, was thinking: "Why is Mr. Mills so changed in his conduct toward me? He is actually going away without speaking one kind parting word."

Thus the gulf was widening simply because each misunderstood the other. George, after gazing out of the window for some time, looked at his watch and exclaimed,

"Why, it is time for me to leave for the train!" He turned and looked at Clara, but she said nothing. Advancing to her side and stretching out his hand, he said rather formally, "Good-bye, Miss Avalon."

Clara rose, and, putting out her hand, replied with scarcely less formality,

“Good-bye, Mr. Mills.” Her eyes were cast down, so that George did not notice the tears which were beginning to start; had he seen them, how different might have been the result! As it was, he turned and hurriedly left the house.

Clara threw herself on the sofa and wept as if her heart would break. “It’s too bad!” she cried. “I did try to do my duty in refusing him when he was not a Christian. Ah! but he no longer loves me.” Her wounded pride caused a revulsion of feeling; rising from the sofa, she brushed away her tears, saying, “Well, I must try to forget him, but oh how hard it will be!”

“O God,” inwardly prayed George Mills as he left the house, “strengthen me to bear this disappointment. Strengthen me to do my duty. Thou knowest I have tried to act honorably to Clara, but oh, it is so hard!” Then thought George, “Can it be possible that I wholly misunderstood her character? The only reason she assigned during that drive at Saratoga for not accept-

ing me was that I was not a Christian. Now I have become a Christian, what reason is left? Yes, I understand it now: George Mills has also become poor. Well, if that's the character of Clara Avalon, I have made a fortunate escape."

Clara passed a miserable week; so did George, yet somehow he was the less miserable of the two. Grace Hollowell cast frequent wistful, anxious glances at Clara, yet said nothing. At last Clara could stand it no longer, and, going to Grace, poured into her sympathetic ear the whole history of her heart-troubles.

"Foolish child!" said Grace, drawing Clara to her; "foolish child! Why, I know that George Mills loves you to-day more than ever; he has told me so. He has acted with such restraint toward you simply because he has lost his fortune."

"What has that to do with it?" answered Clara, half angrily. "Have I not enough money in my own right for us both? and does he think that money would be any consideration in my affection for him?"

Grace replied,

“George Mills is, as you know, one of the noblest and most honest-hearted of men. Indeed, his very love for you makes him shrink from asking you to share his poverty.”

“I think he might have asked me, any way, and let me express my own feelings on the subject.”

“But, Clara, you must remember that he has once before asked you, and has been refused.”

Nothing more was said, but the next day Mrs. Hallowell sent a private note to George Mills.

Two weeks passed, and Mrs. Hallowell was sinking so fast that Mr. Calvert wrote to George asking him to return immediately; he quickly responded. Entering Grace's sick-room, he found her alone with Clara, who was sitting by her side with her hands in Grace's. After a few words of tender greeting on George's part to Mrs. Hallowell, the latter stretched out her hand and took George's. She was too weak to speak. Casting a look full of affection on him and then on Clara, she took Clara's hand and

placed it in his, then, withdrawing her own, left their hands clasped together. She cast another look full of meaning on them both as they sat by her side.

George waited a moment to see whether Clara would withdraw her hand from his, but there it still lay in his open hand, though trembling violently. He turned and looked at Clara; their eyes met as they had met before on that memorable drive at Saratoga. There was no mistaking their love for each other. George hesitated a moment, then, with his natural impulsiveness, threw his arms around Clara and pressed her unresisting lips to his.

Mrs. Hallowell looked up, smiled and whispered,

“Thank God my last wish is fulfilled!”

CHAPTER XX.

ONE OF THE WATCHERS ENTERS THE HEAVENLY GATES.

IT was a beautiful morning in the late fall. The sun shone brightly through the clear air; the leaves, arrayed in all the brilliant tints of the changing season, yet falling one by one to the earth, seemed indeed the emblem of death. Mrs. Hallowell's bed was so placed that she could look out of the window and gaze at the view. She was repeating to herself the familiar hymn,

“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.”

“Clara,” she exclaimed, “how true is that verse in the Bible, and how beautiful, which compares the peace of a Christian to a river widening and deepening until it blends with

the ocean of eternity! Oh what glories are beyond that stream of death!"

Clara turned with her face bathed in tears and said,

"Grace, do you now feel any desire for communication with the spirits over there?"

Mrs. Hallowell replied,

"I cannot express the abhorrence I now have of Spiritualism. Why, it seems to me a profanation to think of calling back those pure spirits from that holy place to hold intercourse with this sinful earth."

Grace was unusually strong that morning, and Clara was so entirely preoccupied with this delightful conversation that she was not watching her friend's symptoms with her usual care. A knock at the door was heard, and Dr. Holland entered. After examining Mrs. Hallowell's pulse he beckoned Clara aside and said,

"Miss Avalon, you had better summon the friends: Mrs. Hallowell is dying."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Clara. "Why, doctor, see how strong she is."

"Yes," answered Dr. Holland, "but it is that strength which often precedes death."

Clara immediately sent for her father, Mr. Calvert and George Mills. Grace, interpreting Clara's anxious look, said with a sweet smile,

"Yes, dear Clara; I know it all. I am about to depart and be with Jesus. I thank God he has given me this special strength in my last moments. I prayed earnestly for it, so as to say a parting word to each of you." Looking at Clara, she whispered, "Open the blinds and let in all the light you can. I have been many a year seeking for light, and, blessed be God! I have found it—even in Him who is 'the Light of the world.' I am now for ever to bathe in that Light. Precious Jesus! thou hast gone before to prepare a place for me in that home where there is no need of the sun or the moon to lighten it; for the Lamb is the light thereof."

Mr. Avalon, Mr. Calvert and George Mills had quietly gathered in the room of the dying woman. Recognizing them all, she pointed Mr. Avalon to a chair at the foot of her bed; then, beckoning Clara and George to sit by her side, she pointed with her finger to the Bible on the centre-table and looked at Mr.

Calvert. He at once interpreted her meaning, and, opening the Bible, read the twenty-third psalm and the latter part of the eighth chapter of Romans. Then Grace looked at Mr. Avalon, and he knelt down and tried to utter a prayer, but his emotions checked his words. A pause ensued, when a strong, manly voice lifted up its fervent petition in words which thrilled every heart: it was that of George Mills.

After George's prayer Mrs. Hallowell seemed wonderfully revived. The little group was hushed to such silence that the faintest whisper became audible.

"Come near me, friends—nearer still," she whispered.

The little group pressed to her very side.

Looking at Mr. Avalon, she said,

"I thank you for all your kindness to me; it was your taking me to your home which first brought me near to those who have led me to the light."

Looking at Mr. Calvert, she said,

"You, dear friend, will have the consolation of remembering Grace Hallowell as one snatched from Satan's hand through God's

blessing on your efforts. Your faithfulness led me to Christ. Oh how I thank you for that faithfulness! Grace Hallowell might not now be so near heaven had you not dealt so faithfully with her bruised heart. You have taught me much about heaven, Mr. Calvert, but I shall soon know more than mortal eye has seen or ear heard."

Turning to George and to Clara, who sat leaning her head on George's shoulder, half supported by his arm, Grace said,

"Dear George and Clara, how I love you! Somehow, I've always felt that you were both my children. Yet, Clara, you have been a spiritual mother to me." Then, seeing how overwhelmed Clara was with sorrow, she added, "Clara, don't weep for me; I am only leaving you a little while. We shall soon meet again in heaven."

Then, turning to George, she said,

"George Mills, if ever sister loved a brother, I have loved you; for you have indeed been a true brother to me. I thank God that I have lived to see the two great desires of my heart fulfilled—your being united to Christ, and your prospective union

with Clara. My dear loved ones, receive the dying blessing of your friend ;” and, placing her feeble, emaciated hand on their heads, she said, “ Lord Jesus, bless, I beseech thee, with thy richest spiritual and temporal blessing, these young hearts.”

Clara exclaimed,

“ Oh, Grace, we can never forget you. We love you as dearly as you do us. Oh that you could only have been spared to us a little longer !”

“ Now let me rest a moment,” said Grace ; and, turning her eyes upward, her lips moved in prayer. A deep hush fell on the group. Suddenly she cried, “ Oh how light it is becoming ! Is this dying ? No ; I am only beginning to live. Peace ! perfect peace !”

There was a long pause, when, lifting up her eyes and fixing them steadily as if on some object, she exclaimed,

“ Oh, who are these I see ? Clara ! George ! the gates are opening ; the angels at their doors seem to be beckoning to me. Who is that Person so glorious ?” Then, stretching up her hands, as if for some one to

take hold of them, with a strong voice she cried, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

One short breath, and Grace Hallowell was within the heavenly gates.

THE END.